



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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1100 Quezon City

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

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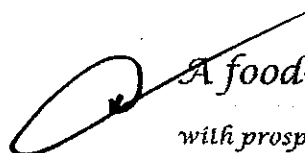
**SUBJECT : Mentoring and Attracting Youth in Agribusiness (MAYA)
Program 2020**

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent development in the Philippine agriculture sector includes the full implementation of free trade agreements with improved market access and near zero-tariff conditions for agricultural exports. The globalization of economies resulted to a more robust trade, with the recent full implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade between the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) and the ASEAN Hongkong-China Free Trade Agreement (AHKFTA) signed by the President Rodrigo Roa Duterte in 2019 stipulating tariff reduction schedule on products covered by the Schedule on Tariff Commitments. Thus, Philippine companies, both big and small have better market opportunities by capitalizing on broad-based market access as they develop efficient production systems, food safety standards and competitive workforce.

However, with the global health pandemic and global supply chains disrupted by the Corona virus (COVID-19) crisis, even the fiercely powerful countries such as United States, China and 190 countries are feared to experience recession in the coming months. Global growth rate is predicted to lower at 2% per month and global trade could fall between 17% to 32%. This requires government to adopt monetary and fiscal policies that will provide immediate support to credit and markets to stimulate economic activities, create jobs and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Of late, Agriculture has not been an enticing entrepreneurial choice. Though there are those who invest in food processing and manufacturing, we cannot set aside food production. There should be a fluid bridge between production and manufacturing. Even before the COVID-19 Pandemic, it has been noted that the average age of a Filipino farmer is between 57 and 59 years old (Villar, 2017). This is a clear indication that the Filipino farmers are already aging. The Report of Nucum (2018) stated that Agriculture is the fifth among the popular course choice of Filipino students. This report can be considered a ray of light in the Agriculture sector. The scenario is a wide range of age between the graduating Agriculturists and the average age of Filipino farmers. This existing landscape presents a challenge to the government to make farming profitable, lucrative, and enticing.



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It is in this context that the Department of Agriculture (DA) is pursuing a new program called “**Mentoring and Attracting Youth in Agribusiness**” (MAYA), a 6-month internship aimed to develop competent, highly-skilled and employment-ready youthful workforce. Through experiential learning, it seeks to level-up the agriculture sector beyond its production-focused orientation, and progressively expand to the entire gamut of input production, farm operations and management, equipment and supplies manufacturing, food/non-food processing, marketing, trading and retailing. The minds of the millennials or the youth can be harnessed in making agriculture an entrepreneurial choice among them.

2. BASIC POLICY

- a. As enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifically on Social Justice and Human Rights (Article XIII, Sections 1,2) for the State to enact measures that “*protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good; and to promote social justice by creating economic opportunities based on freedom of initiative and self-reliance,*” and recognizing the role of the youth in nation-building.
- b. The State shall accelerate agricultural development and enhance the production of agricultural crops, fisheries, and livestock by optimizing the use of resources and by applying modern farming systems and technology in order to attain a resilient and food secure Philippines that is able to optimize resources and create more market opportunities; expand and diversify agricultural production; successfully mainstream smallholder farmers and fishers in regional and global food value chain.
- c. It shall also encourage cooperatives and private sector initiatives in agribusiness ventures in five (5) sub-sectors namely: (1) Crop production (includes cereals and high value crops), Animal Production (includes livestock and poultry), (2) Forestry and Logging, (3) Fishery (including aquaculture and capture fishery), (4) Agri-support Services and (5) Manufacturing.
- d. Training, skills and other qualifications required for competent manpower in the abovementioned Agribusiness sub-sectors shall depend on the scope and nature of, not to mention the conditionalities required for agile and younger workforce in the New Normal.
- e. The DA shall catalyze a favorable career path for the youth and enhance a favorable business climate to surpass the employment of **10 Million workers employed in the agriculture sector (2018)**; create more opportunities for **own-account workers** that reached 5.3 million; generate more opportunities for **wage and salary workers** which account for 3.36 Million; and further **decrease the number of unpaid workers** which account for 1.34 million through agri-entrepreneurial activities.

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- f. Agribusiness provides formal employment, the highest in the industry includes *“hog farming which led the sector with 511 establishments or 18.0 percent of the total number of establishments; followed by chicken broiler production with 371 establishments or 13.1 percent of the total; and growing of sugarcane including muscovado sugar-making in the farm with 342 establishments (12.1%). Other industries reporting more than a hundred number of establishments were as follows:*
- i. *Ocean fishing, commercial (using vessels over 3 tons), 201 establishments (7.1%)*
 - ii. *Growing of banana, Cavendish, 189 establishments (6.7%)*
 - iii. *Contract animal growing services on a fee basis, 152 establishments (5.4%)*
 - iv. *Chicken egg production, 131 establishments (4.6%)*
 - v. *Chicken production, layer, 114 establishments (4.0%)”¹*
- g. As the Department intensify its campaign towards a food secure and resilient Philippines with prosperous farmers and fishers, it cannot be ignored that the way to realize the campaign is to mobilize, capacitate and develop the next generation to become the country’s frontliners. To attract the youth into the agribusiness sector, the strategic eight-paradigm called “The New Thinking” being championed by the DA Secretary, provides the platform for young farmers to participate in the attainment of food security, profitability and resilience. The New Thinking intends to transform the sector from mainly production-oriented focus to an inclusive, innovation-enabled, and market-driven agro-industrial development systems. It is through this vision that the MAYA program is strategically oriented to develop a young cadre of highly-skilled, committed workers and future officials in government, and innovative and highly-competitive agribusiness entrepreneurs.
- h. The MAYA Program is a service-based function that will complement the holistic and systems-based implementation of **Inclusive Agribusiness** with the setting up of **Start-up** Ecosystem and Agri-Technology business incubation with strong research-based support; by establishing a venue for **Strengthened** Big Brother-Small Brother Partnership in farm consolidation, and value chain integration; and **Catalyze** massive proliferation of Agro-Industrial Development Areas (AIDA) and regional growth zones as the sector transitions to the “New Normal”. Thus, the MAYA program is expected to capacitate, train through learning-by-doing and ensure a continuing pool of human resource for the following: (1) as understudy for the DA’s succession planning and be deployed at the central and regional offices; (2) as support personnel to cooperatives and small enterprises to augment manpower with skilled interns; (3) as future agribusiness entrepreneurs to create competitive products and services that are successfully integrated to food value chain. Collectively, the program shall be operationally directed to realize the agency’s vision and objectives, considering the ageing population besetting the sector.

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016 Annual Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (ASPI)



- i. As in any development endeavor, its success will depend on the capability and commitment of the DA Central Project Coordinating Unit, through this Implementation Guidelines which outlines the necessary enabling conditions, institutional readiness particularly delivery and receivership, and the required systems and procedures to carry out the plan, as intended.

3. OBJECTIVES

General:

The **Mentoring and Attracting Youth in Agribusiness (MAYA)** program was conceived to address the increasing gap in the development of the Philippine Agribusiness sector, improving matches between labor supply and demand and ensuring that the skillsets required meet industry standards and global competitiveness.

Specific:

- i. To develop a young cadre of youth agribusiness leaders that are market-ready, have the necessary skillsets capabilities and, commitment to excellence with the right attitude to ensure success that will ultimately benefit the stakeholders, especially the farmers, fishers and the consuming public.
- ii. To advance the agency's **youth in agriculture strategy** through two tracks: Employment track (DA Succession Planning) and Entrepreneurship track (Inclusive Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship) to provide a steady pool of competent manpower and technically-abled workforce.
- iii. To develop and deploy a young cadre of abled, competent, committed and job-ready human resource pool that matches industry requirements.
- iv. To provide equal opportunities to poor but deserving students by creating career pathways and economic opportunities based on freedom of initiative and self-reliance;
- v. To support growth and institutional development of farmers' cooperatives and associations (FCA) as well as micro and small enterprises in realizing food security, resiliency and economic prosperity.
- vi. To develop applicable training modules for the Agribusiness Development Academy (ADA) which includes career path and post-graduation industry-specific occupations in primary agriculture, agricultural manufacturing/processing occupations, and agri-preneurial and support occupations².

In summary, the objectives aim to build a robust workforce with the right attitude at the workplace, acquired experience and skillsets and competencies necessary in the social economic transformation of the Philippine agriculture sector. It shall pursue conscious effort to professionalize the agriculture in all facets of agricultural occupations including

² Based on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) agribusiness occupational classifications

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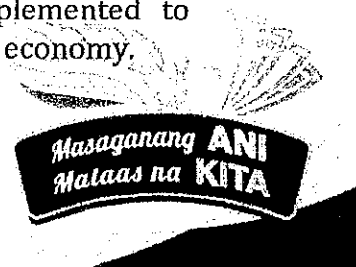


primary production and processing, agricultural manufacturing operations, and agri-entrepreneurial and support operations towards a Food Secure and Resilient Philippines, with prosperous farmers and fishers, beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

4. Definition of Terms

- a. **Agriculture.** Refers to primary production (inputs) and management of farm.
- b. **Agricultural manufacturing/Processing Occupations.** Includes the service and manufacturing process of agribusiness known as agro-processing.
- c. **Agribusiness.** Covers the production and management of farms, manufacture and distribution of farm equipment and supplies, and processing, storage and distribution of farm commodities. Its core sector is agriculture supported by manufacturing and services sector.
- d. **Agri-entrepreneurial and support occupations.** This covers professionals from various fields of specialization joining the industry as it does not require any specific agricultural specializations; it completes the agribusiness system combining downstream and upstream manpower support to fully meet the production and marketing cycle.
- e. **Agro-processing.** A subset of manufacturing, that which transforms raw materials and intermediate products derived from agricultural harvest to finished consumer product; it is a major contributor of growth and source of employment for local and export production.
- f. **Primary Agricultural occupations.** Includes agricultural worker that perform the whole spectrum of daily chores including crop and livestock preparation and production, fishing and processing, breeding and management in a farm.
- g. **Internship.** A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.
- h. **Basic Training Module.** An internship component where qualified Filipino student is accepted to the MAYA program as part of their post-graduation curriculum which may last for 2 weeks; in collaboration with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), University of the Philippines-Diliman (UPD) and University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP).
- i. **MAYA Intern.** Refers to a young Filipino (20 -30 years old) who is a college graduate or a career changer with recognized potentials, able to pass the pre-qualification exam and interview and will undergo the training program and graduate to occupy "positions of responsibility" or to be considered in the DA's succession line.
- j. **Management Training Module** - a 4-week intensive training module where a qualified intern, after post-work evaluation of internship, will undergo career path development, a specialization training course by external providers, and a job offer by the DA.
- k. **Host Agency/Institution.** These are offices that will receive interns during the duration of the internship program. These may include DA offices and its attached agencies and corporations, accredited cooperatives, private agricultural establishments, or DA accredited farms and research centers.
- l. **Employment Track.** A monitoring device which shall be implemented to determine the employment rate of graduate-interns into the formal economy.

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- m. **Entrepreneurship Track.** A monitoring device which shall be implemented to determine the rate of graduate-interns who have started their own business or are into entrepreneurial activity.

5. Program Components

a. **Duration.**

The Program will be implemented within six months every year with each new set of interns who shall be taken in on a full-time basis.

b. **Tracks.**

The Program has two (2) types of internship pathways: 1) Employment Track and 2) Entrepreneurship Track which is aimed to contribute to job generation, employment and livelihood in the agribusiness ecosystem.

c. **Internship.**

This includes one-week basic orientation and expectation-setting followed by 3-week preparatory training in the workplace aligned with the academic curriculum; 20-weeks of onsite internship to include observation, reflection, and evaluation.

As the intern becomes more immersed, he/she shall undergo corresponding management training with learning objective goals under a localized setting. This includes experience-based exposure under the supervision of a professional with relevant and related background in the agribusiness field and/or industry-related specialization and soft skill development within the DA central office and attached bureaus and regional field offices (RFOs).

d. **Call for Application**

The Office of the Secretary of the Department of agriculture will publicly launch and announce the open application for MAYA internship through quad-media including print, radio, television and various social media platforms. Application forms shall be made available subsequently, completed documents shall be submitted to online, to be evaluated by a **technical panel** composed of selected representatives from DA central office units and agencies.

The shortlist of selected candidates shall be endorsed to the DA Secretary for approval and for referral to the DA Regional Field Offices (RFOs) for signing of Internship contract and orientation to undergo basic training modules prior to deployment on actual assignment.

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Who may Qualify?

Graduates of a four-year degree course, aged 20 to 30 years of age willing to be undergo hands-on training and deployment for office work assignment (for Employment Tract) or to a field assignment (Entrepreneurship Track) to perform agribusiness activities from input production, farm operation, farm operations and management, food/non-food processing equipment and supplies manufacturing, trading, marketing and retailing.

Career Changers are also welcome to apply provided they are willing to transition to a new industry that which they are hoping to expand professional network and incorporate their professional skills into the MAYA Internship program.

Selected resource persons from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and representative from the business sector and secondary-level cooperatives.

e. Needs Analysis and Feedback Mechanism

There will be a MAYA Coordinating Unit, to be chaired by a representative from the Office of the Secretary of the DA to oversee the planning and implementation, monitoring and post-project evaluation of the program based on approved Implementation Guidelines, and in accordance with government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Based on the DOLE's study on Agribusiness Industry Career Guide, a needs analysis and supply-demand matching of skills will be conducted in consultation with the DA-RFOs to determine the occupational needs of the Department and the agribusiness industry, at large. Relative to regional distribution/concentration of subsectors, industry organization of each subsectors, type of establishments and recent developments (e.g. impact of COVID-19 in the agriculture and agribusiness system), the feedback mechanism shall also be established.

f. Recruitment

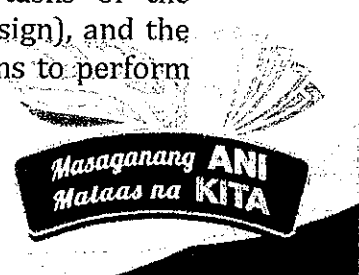
Applicants who successfully hurdled the first qualifying evaluation shall be considered and assessed based on their interests and potential, and to be matched with the needs of the different participating entities, institutional partners and officers.

g. Orientation

A three-week orientation will give the interns the chance to understand the program and its components, the obligations and expected tasks of the department and the interns (to be included in the Orientation Design), and the conduct of the Introductory skills training to capacitate the interns to perform

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the basic tasks upon deployment. Content of the skills training shall be varied and customized according to the office requirement, or commodity- or industry-based they will be assigned to.

h. Deployment/ Actual Internship, Hands-on Training and Observation

- i. Actual posting and work experience with ATR (Action-Training-Research) can be supervised by work supervisors which may include attendance reporting, daily journals and reflections, final evaluation and may lead to a formal hiring interview.
- ii. There are three (3) broad areas of employment in agribusiness employment which the intern can be deployed, namely: **primary production and inputs** where employment activities range from buying, selling, transporting of inputs, land preparation and financing activities; **actual farming and agro-processing** where farmers and professionals engage in efficient production and value-adding innovations; and lastly, on the **agribusiness activities** that employs people with various skills such as biotechnology, logistics, finance, e-commerce and retailing.
- iii. Working hours for interns, except those deployed to perform office work, is very distinct as it responds to the cycle of production activities in every specific commodity. Internship in agribusiness (i.e. Entrepreneurial track) is generally collaborative where interns are expected to apply skills and techniques to ensure the quality of input-output progression. Thus, the wider landscape of agribusiness which provides variability of day-to-day work in a rural setting can offset the hard work and standing risks with immense opportunities for productivity and profit.

j. Monitoring and Evaluation

There will be a two-stage evaluation: 1) Mid-program implementation, 2) End of Internship Evaluation.

k. Exit Strategy

After completing the MAYA Internship program and having passed the employment selection process by the DA and its attached agencies, the qualified intern can be posted to any appropriate vacant position, under the terms of engagement by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

For interns that completed the Entrepreneurship track, they can be endorsed for permanent employment by the DA's institutional partner (private sector or cooperative), form a social enterprise and qualify for a loan under the Expanded SURE-Aid program of the Agriculture and Credit Council (ACPC), Agriculture and Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) and/ or qualify for DA's technical and production inputs assistance from its various programs and projects.

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l. Institutionalization thru the Agribusiness Development Academy (ADA)

To institutionalize the gains from MAYA Program, the DA shall establish the Agribusiness Development Academy (ADA) in partnership with the University of the Philippines (Diliman, Los Baños, and Visayas), University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP), Xavier University, and Central Luzon State University in the development of quality training modules, industry-relevant skills, pioneering ideas and innovative technologies that can address national and local problems, with global significance.

The ADA shall be located at the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and shall capacitate the youth, committed individuals and development stakeholder organizations in government and the agribusiness sector in general to perform their respective roles and mandates in countrywide development in a more efficient, timely and sustainable manner.

Lastly, the ADA shall promote partnerships and facilitate the integration of strategic policies, programs/activities/projects, and systems towards an integrative perspective, through the conduct of hands-on training, experiential learning, policy/action-oriented researches, technical assistance, and publications in agricultural productivity, agribusiness development, good governance and productivity improvement.

6. Method of Implementation

a. DA Office Responsibilities

The MAYA Coordinating Unit shall be created to ensure the full and effective implementation of the program. The team shall be composed of three persons who will be appointed by the DA Secretary, to engage and coordinate with the DA service office and attached bureaus, DA regional field offices and institutional partners. Being an integrative program, various offices are mandated to assist and provide the following support, in particular:

- i. Promoting the program
- ii. Setting qualifications,
- iii. Screening and Selecting Application – setting qualifications
- iv. Conduct Needs Analysis for all offices/ units who shall participate in the MAYA Program
- v. Recruitment
- vi. Organize and coordinate the conduct Orientation activities
- vii. In coordination with the handling agency, monitor the progress of the interns, and
- viii. Conduct mid-program and end of program Evaluation and Assessment.

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b. Handling office

In charge of Hands-on Training; ensure monitor daily attendance and participation of the assigned interns. The Handling Office is responsible for the identification and assigning of *supervisors* who will mentor and monitor the skills development of the interns.

c. Institutional partners

Including State Universities and Colleges (SUC), TESDA, DTI, and DOLE to send qualified graduates who will participate in the program, and provide needed skills certifications and/or academic credits for students whose participation are mandatory.

7. BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS

The total estimated budget for the MAYA program within its first year of implementation is One hundred million (P 100 Million) pesos, breakdown is as follows:

a. Interns' Monthly Allowance.

Is an all-inclusive amount of twenty thousand pesos (P 20,000.00) to be paid-out on a bi-monthly (15th and 30th day of each month) basis by the DA central office and DA-Regional Field Offices. Inclusive to this is a communication allowance and travel insurance to be availed of by the intern from a reputable company offering such services.

A total of ninety-six million eight hundred forty thousand (P 96,840,000.00) shall be expended within six months for the first batch of interns.

Place of Assignment	Number	*Allowance	Number of Interns office/unit	Total Interns for Deployment	Total Amount Required
DA Central Office and attached bureaus	10	20,000	3	30	3,600,000
Regional Field Offices	16	20,000	3	48	5,760,000
Location, By District	243	20,000	3	729	87,480,000
TOTAL				807	96,840,000

*Allowance is inclusive of monthly communication expense/mobile phone load and one-year limited travel insurance from a reputable entity.



b. **Administration and Operating Expenses (MOOE)**

This shall cover overhead expenses for communication allowance, to the amount of three million one hundred sixty thousand pesos (₱ 3, 160,000) by the MAYA Coordinating Unit, travel and conduct of mid-program assessment and end-of-program evaluation, subject to government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

c. **Fund Management and Continuity**

Upon official request from the DA Regional Directors, corresponding amount for the Internship Allowance shall be transferred to the agency's account. The DA-RFOS are encouraged to provide ample support including provision for transportation and meals for meetings, assigning supervisors for interns and other ancillary support to ensure successful implementation of the MAYA Program.

The program funds shall be eventually included through DA's regular funding and to be incorporated as a new line item proposal in the 2021 and future budgets of the Department. Likewise, Official Development Assistance (ODA) may be sought for specific actions and/or projects that may be gain support from development funding institutions.

8. **DOCUMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- a. Monitoring and evaluation will be implemented in process throughout the program's implementation and post-project assessment. As a highly structured, experiential learning modality, it will cover the following: reaction level, focusing on the content, process and various factors affecting learning; learning level, knowledges, skills and attitude acquired; application of the learning on the job; benefits and advantages derived by the units due to the application of learning/program implementation and benefits derived by the ultimate beneficiaries of the organization from the program.
- b. Minutes of the Meetings shall be maintained regularly. Main agreement point and resolutions shall be kept in one file for transparency and accountability. Modules developed for the trainings and orientations will likewise be stored for further review or for reference.
- c. The Interns shall also be required to submit monthly accomplishment report to their supervisors who will be responsible in collating and submitting such report to the Project Coordinating Team. The Project Management Team will likewise submit a progress report to the Secretary, bi-monthly.
- d. Evaluation and Assessment of the Program both during the mid-program and end of program evaluation shall be kept for analysis and further enhancement of the program, in accordance to the DA's vision of a ***"Food Secure and Resilient Philippines with Prosperous Farmers and Fisherfolk."***

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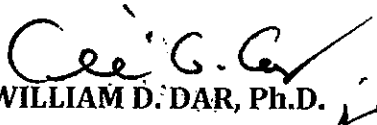
9. INCENTIVES AND PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Interns with exemplary performance shall be accorded high performance rating and favorable recommendation for employment. Interns who have shown entrepreneurial skills may be endorsed to use DA-supported agribusiness incubation facility and other programs that will further enhance his/ her enterprise and may also avail of existing loan facility or project grants from the DA and attached bureaus and councils.

10. EFFECTIVITY

The program shall take effect one week after it is published in a national daily.

Approved:


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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