

DA-BFAR to Boost Aquaculture Production through the Bayanihan 2 Stimulus Package

The government, through the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), is set to further develop the country's aquaculture industry through the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2's stimulus package.

The stimulus package worth Php 500 million, which will fund culture of certain fish and aquatic species with good market potential such as glass eels, sea urchins, and seaweeds; and establish multi-species hatcheries across the country, among others, is projected to boost aquaculture production by 9.6 thousand metric tons. This will augment and open up more livelihood opportunities for fisherfolk, particularly fish farmers.

"Glass eels, sea urchins and more species of seaweeds are only some of our many locally-abundant fisheries commodities in the Philippines with culture technologies that we have yet to sustainably develop. Through the Stimulus Package under Bayanihan 2, we are investing on the potential of these commodities to help the fisheries sector meet its production target for food security while providing livelihood support to our fisherfolk," BFAR National Director Eduardo B. Gongona said. Adding that the Bureau is now about to download the funds to its regional offices while coordination works is being prioritized to ensure effective and immediate utilization of the allotted funds.

Culture technology of glass eel will be introduced through demonstration projects, while fingerlings will be distributed to selected regional production areas such as the Cagayan Valley and North Cotabato in order to maximize production capacity.

To promote sea urchin production, especially in production areas like Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, CARAGA, Bicol and Zamboanga, fisherfolk will be trained on Grow-out and Cage culture technology. Aside from that, equipment and infrastructures such as sea urchin hatcheries, improved nursery tanks, and processing areas will be established.

For seaweeds, DA-BFAR eyes improvements such as establishment of more seaweed hatcheries, nurseries, seaweed solar dryers, farmhouses and technology demonstration projects, rehabilitation of land-based nursery facilities or laboratories, and provision of seedlings and farm implements to seaweed farmers.

The establishment, rehabilitation, and repair of multi-species hatcheries and broodstock facilities, including of high-value species like seabass, siganids, and blue swimming crabs, among others, will also continue in order to ensure production of good quality fingerlings and broodstock. Technology Outreach Stations across the country will be further developed while hatchery operations including technical assistance and production support will also be enhanced.

The DA-BFAR's Stimulus Package aims to help the fisheries sector, especially aquaculture, to recover and improve amid various challenges such as natural calamities and the COVID-19 pandemic.