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Agri Q4 2025 growth output up 0.5%

January 29, 2026 | Jordeene B. Lagare | Philippine Daily Inquirer

Strong livestock, poultry offset weak crop production

Agriculture and fisheries production value grew a modest 0.5 percent overall in the fourth quarter of 2025 from a year earlier, with official data showing strong gains in livestock, poultry, and fisheries offsetting continued weakness in crops output.

Agriculture and fisheries output rose to P487.04 billion in the three months to December 2025, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported on Wednesday.

At constant 2018 prices, agricultural output in Q4 2025 improved from P484.59 billion in the same quarter a year earlier, reversing the 2 percent contraction recorded in the October to December quarter of 2024.

For full-year 2025, the agriculture sector expanded by 2.6 percent, a turnaround from the 2.1 percent decline posted in 2024.

Crops drag agri performance

Crops remained the sector's largest component, accounting for 56.3 percent of total output, or P274.30 billion, in the fourth quarter. However, crop production declined 2.5 percent year on year, weighed down mainly by lower palay output.

Palay production fell 5.2 percent to 6.85 million metric tons (MT) from 7.23 million MT a year earlier. Corn, however, provided some relief, rising 3.1 percent to 1.99 million MT from 1.93 million metric tons.

National Statistician Claire Dennis Mapa said output declines were also recorded in sweet potato, abaca, ampalaya, potato, pineapple, cassava, calamansi, and banana during the quarter. These losses were partly offset by growth in mongo, coffee, tomato, cacao, rubber, onion, cabbage, tobacco, mango, eggplant and coconut.

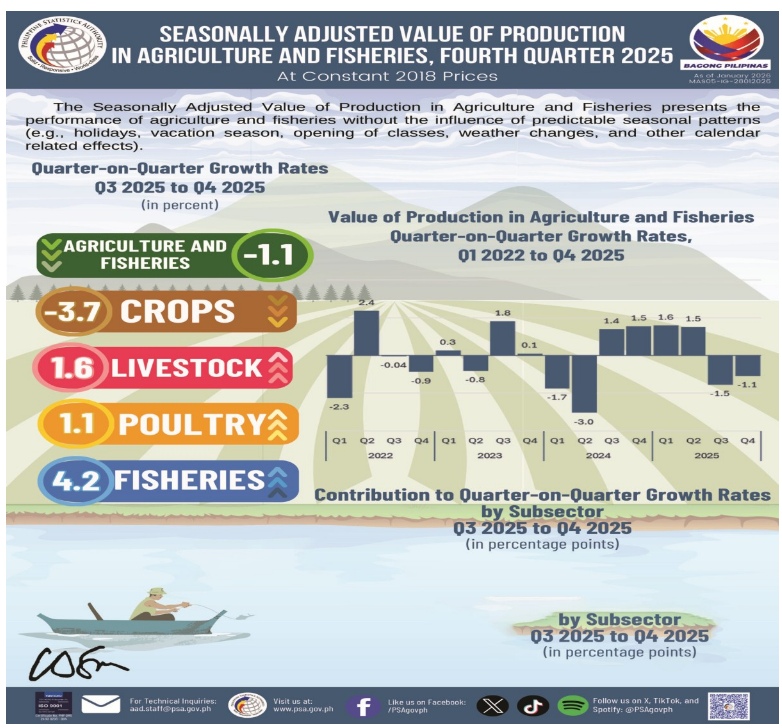
For the full year, the crops subsector still managed a 2.8 percent increase in value to P986.81 billion from P960.2 billion in 2024.

Livestock, poultry show strength

Livestock, which accounts for 14 percent of total agricultural output, grew 1 percent to P68.42 billion in the fourth quarter, supported mainly by hog and dairy production.

Hog output rose 1.6 percent to 454.98 metric tons, while dairy production surged 35.8 percent to 11.59 metric tons. These gains offset declines in goat, cattle, and carabao production.

[Cont. page 2]



Agri Q4 2025 growth output up 0.5%

[Cont. from page 2]

Despite the quarterly improvement, livestock output value for the full year slipped 2.3 percent to P246.42 billion from P252.3 billion in 2024.

Poultry delivered the strongest performance among subsectors, expanding 8.9 percent in the fourth quarter to P78.18 billion. Chicken production rose 9.4 percent, chicken eggs increased 8.9 percent, and duck output grew 1.4 percent. Only duck eggs posted a decline, falling 9.6 percent.

For the entire year, poultry production climbed 9.1 percent to P304.71 billion.

Fisheries' gains offset crop losses

Fisheries output rose 4 percent in the fourth quarter to P66.13 billion, led by higher production of squid, milkfish, talakitok, sardines, skipjack, alumahan, tilapia and tuna varieties.

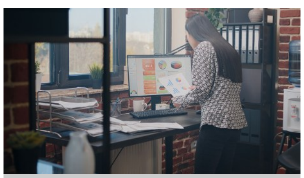
The PSA noted that output declines in several species, including galunggong, tamban, seaweed, and prawns, tempered overall gains.

For full-year 2025, however, fisheries production edged down 0.3 percent to P233.67 billion from P234.31 billion in 2024.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/business/agri-q4-2025-growth-output-up-0-5/

Exemption from audits seen to encourage MSME growth

January 29, 2026 | Beatriz Marie D. Cruz | BusinessWorld



STOCK PHOTO | Image by DC Studio from Freepik

A MOVE to exempt Philippine micro enterprises from submitting audited financial statements is expected to encourage the creation of more micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), analysts said, but it should be paired with increased funding and training to help these businesses scale.

"Policies that incentivize and create a more conducive environment for MSMEs in terms of regulation, compliance, taxation, easier doing business/requirements, lower cost of doing business, among others, would encourage the creation of more MSMEs in the country as a major economic driver/player," Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message.

In the Philippines, MSMEs are classified based on assets and number of employees. Micro enterprises are those with assets of P3 million or less, excluding land, and typically employ fewer than 10 people. Small enterprises have assets between P3 million and P15 million and employ 10-99 workers, while medium enterprises have assets between P15 million and P100 million and employ 100-199 workers.

Under the Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) Memorandum Circular No. 4, Series of 2026, stock and non-stock corporations with total assets or liabilities not exceeding P3 million are exempt from submitting audited financial statements. Previously, stock and non-stock corporations with total assets or liabilities under P600,000 were exempt from a mandatory audit. The new threshold primarily benefits micro enterprises, reducing compliance costs and encouraging formalization.

John Paolo R. Rivera, senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, said the regulation "reduces compliance costs and administrative burden, freeing up time and resources for core operations and potentially improving their cash flow and survival rates."

"It also lowers barriers to formalization, making it easier for very small firms to stay in the regulated economy without heavy reporting costs," he added in a Viber message.

Under the SEC circular, those below the new threshold must submit certified financial statements accompanied by a Statement of Management's Responsibility (SMR).

Beyond regulatory changes, micro enterprises would benefit from simplified tax and licensing processes, access to affordable credit, digital adoption support, and targeted business development services such as bookkeeping, marketing, and skills training, Mr. Rivera said. *[Cont. page 3]*

Exemption from audits seen to encourage MSME growth

[Cont, from page 2]

The government must also ensure proper implementation of the Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBE) Act of 2002, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman George T. Barcelon said.

Under Republic Act No. 9178, or the BMBE Act, micro enterprises with assets under P3 million (excluding land) are entitled to tax exemptions and simplified registration.

“It aims to foster growth in the informal sector, provide training, and improve access to finance,” Mr. Barcelon said in a Viber message.

MSMEs account for more than 99% of Philippine businesses and contribute around 40% of the country’s economic output. Of the total, 90.66% of 1.13 million are micro enterprises, 8.6% or 106,799 are small, and 0.37% or 4,633 are medium-sized businesses, according to 2024 data from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/corporate/2026/01/29/727120/exemption-from-audits-seen-to-encourage-msme-growth/

Philippine GDP growth slumps to post-pandemic low of 3% in Q4 2025

January 29, 2026 | Nyah Genelle C. De Leon | Philippine Daily Inquirer

Updated on January 29, 2026 at 11:02 a.m.

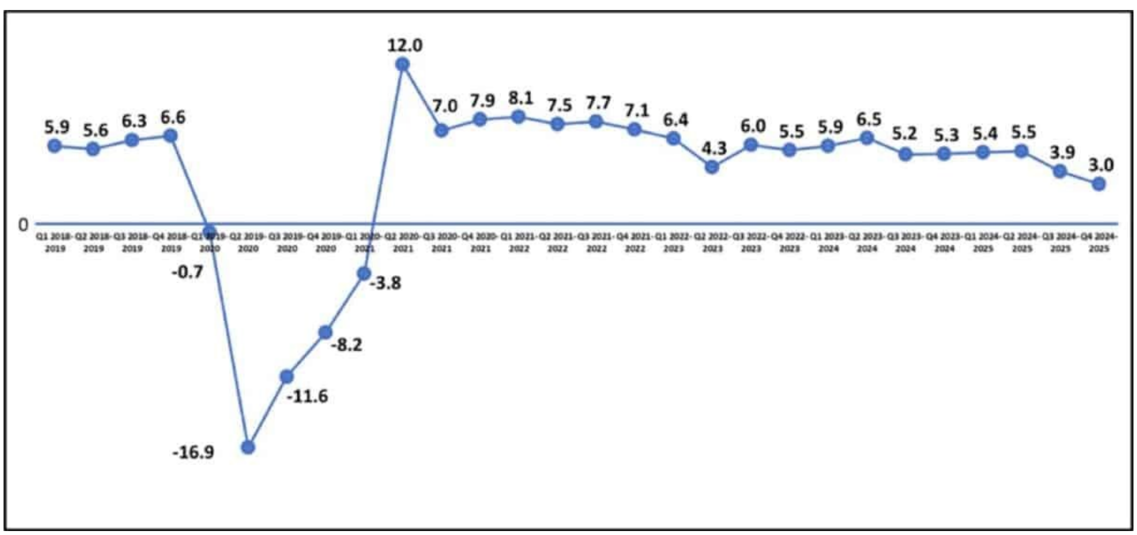
FILE: Makati CBD

MANILA, Philippines — The country’s economic growth slumped to a post-pandemic low of 3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025 amid fallout from the graft probe and a string of devastating typhoons.

As gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the final quarter further slowed from the already disappointing 3.9 percent revised third-quarter growth, the country thus closed 2025 with below-target performance.

The economy expanded by just 4.4 percent for the whole of 2025 as subdued momentum persisted throughout the year, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported on Thursday.

This marks the third consecutive year the Marcos administration has missed its growth target, falling short of the 5.5 to 6.5 percent goal set for 2025.



”This outcome reflects several converging factors. These include the adverse economic effects of weather and climate-related disruptions. Admittedly, the flood control corruption scandal also weighed on business and consumer confidence,” Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

The 3-percent fourth-quarter growth marked the country’s worst economic performance since the 3.8-percent economic contraction recorded in the first quarter of 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

Excluding the pandemic period that resulted in economic recession, it was the worst performance since the 1.8-percent economic contraction seen in the fourth quarter of 2009. *[Cont. page 4]*

Philippine GDP growth slumps to post-pandemic low of 3% in Q4 2025

[Cont. from page 3]

Growth also eased from the 5.7-percent economic expansion in 2024.

Missing the target

As it stands, the figure missed even the government's 4.7 percent to 4.8 percent forecast, which was set after they had already anticipated a slowdown following the four-year low growth recorded in the third quarter that rattled the economic confidence.

Yet again, the subdued momentum was driven by the sweeping flood-control corruption scandal, which dragged government spending in infrastructure to a nearly 42-percent contraction.

"While these developments weighed on short-term growth, the Marcos Administration emphasizes that the investigations into the flood control corruption controversy had to be undertaken," Balisacan said.

"In infrastructure, we are resuming and accelerating the completion of public works while enforcing stricter anti-corruption safeguards," he added. /dda

Source: https://business.inquirer.net/571342/philippine-gdp-growth-down-to-3-in-q4-2025

PEZA approves 18 projects worth P12.86—B in first meeting in 2026

January 28, 2026 | Joan Villanueva | Philippine News Agency

MANILA – Eighteen new projects worth around PHP12.86 billion have been approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) Board during its first meeting this year.

In a news release on Wednesday, PEZA said three of these projects are big-ticket items worth PHP11.89 billion, involving a tourism economic zone enterprise in Parañaque City, and two economic zone development projects in Misamis Occidental and Batangas.

All these projects — covering manufacturing, IT-BPM, utilities, economic zone development, logistics, and tourism — are expected to generate 1,005 jobs across several areas and produce about USD59.74 million in projected exports, PEZA added.

(Infographic courtesy of PEZA)

The projects will be located in Calabarzon, National Capital Region, Central Visayas, Bicol Region, Northern Mindanao and Soccsksargen.

PEZA said most of these investments are from businesses from Japan, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore and China.

The latest approvals are, however, lower than the PHP30.16 billion approved by the Board during the same period in 2025.

"Investors today are taking a more deliberate approach — prioritizing resilience, efficiency, and long-term value. What is encouraging is that the Philippines continues to offer stable fundamentals that allow export-oriented investments to move forward with confidence," PEZA Director General Tereso Panga said.

"Resilience is built not just in times of expansion, but in how economies navigate transition. What we are seeing today is a steady recalibration — one that keeps the Philippines firmly in investors' long-term plans," he added.

PEZA targets to have PHP300 billion investment-approvals this year, which could create around 100,000 new jobs.

Source: https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1267910

MBC: Modernize financial laws to attract 'right kind' of investors

January 29, 2026 | Dexter Barro II | Manila Bulletin

The influential Makati Business Club (MBC) is urging the Marcos administration to amend the Bank Secrecy Law and institutionalize transparency reforms to curb corruption and entice more investments into the country.

In a statement, the MBC said the government should pursue reforms to make the country's institutions more transparent and accountable, creating a more predictable environment for investors.

Failing to act, the business group warned the country will stay trapped in weak investor sentiment, shadowed by last year's multibillion-peso flood control scandal.

MBC urged the government to enact amendments to the Bank Secrecy Law to ensure greater transparency in the country's financial system. In particular, it calls for the passage of Senate Bill (SB) No. 1047, authored by Senator Jinggoy Estrada, who, ironically, has been linked to the flood control issue.

Under the proposed measure, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the courts will be authorized to examine bank accounts suspected of involvement in serious crimes, including bribery, fraud, and money laundering.

Likewise, the BSP can check bank deposits if there is a reasonable reason to believe that illegal or suspicious activities are taking place.

SB No. 1047 also outlined that any review of bank accounts must first be approved by the BSP's Monetary Board and can only be done for official purposes like investigating financial crimes or dealing with banks that have already been closed.

Through these efforts, the MBC said the government can take a significant step towards combating corruption.

The business group is also calling for continuity in budget process transparency, as initiated by the government for the 2026 national budget.

It urged the government to maintain public access to bicameral conference committee deliberations, ensure the timely publication of budget documents, and preserve civil society organizations' participation in budget hearings.

"A more transparent budget process can improve the quality of public spending, boost investor confidence, and ensure that resources are directed toward programs that support inclusive growth and long-term development," the MBC said.

In addition, the MBC urges the government to prioritize the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill to ensure unrestricted public access to official government records and documents, thereby promoting transparency in government transactions.

It is also pushing government agencies to actively disclose relevant information related to programs and initiatives on their websites.

To further attract investors, the MBC is asking the government to improve the implementation of the Ease of Doing Business Act, particularly in its mandate to establish an electronic business permitting and licensing system among government agencies and local government units (LGUs).

With this, the business group appeals to the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) for greater authority to penalize non-compliant agencies or LGUs, as implementation levels still vary.

Through transparency reforms, the MBC said the government can play a decisive role in attracting the "right kind of investor" to uplift the lives of Filipinos.

"Transparent, accountable, and rules-based institutions reduce corruption, improve public service delivery, and create a more predictable environment for investors, helping lower the cost of doing business and attract long-term investment," it said.

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2026/01/29/mbc-modernize-financial-laws-to-attract-right-kind-of-investors

Outsourcing industry upbeat on 2026 growth

January 29, 2026 | Chynna Grace Ong | The Manila Times

THE head of the IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (Ibpap) is confident that the industry will expand this year.

"We are fairly certain to [achieve] positive growth," Ibpap President and CEO Jack Madrid told reporters on Wednesday.

The gains will be driven by global capability centers (GCCs), he noted.

GCCs are specialized, company-owned offshore or nearshore units established by multinational corporations to perform core business functions like IT, research and development, finance and engineering. Unlike outsourcing, GCCs are fully-owned extensions of the parent company, focusing on driving innovation, digital transformation and leveraging global talent pools to increase efficiency and value.

There are 160 GCCs in the country, Madrid noted, saying he expects the number to increase, potentially outpacing the overall growth rate of the information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) sector, leading to higher revenue rates for workers.

There is a need to shift on how the IT-BPM industry is measured from job growth to revenue per employee, Madrid said.

"We need to measure and determine success by the level of capability of the [digitally skilled] Filipino. This is why talent development [including] upskilling and reskilling is very important, especially now that automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are integrated into the services we deliver," Madrid explained.

"[Workers] can leverage and take advantage of generative AI, which needs human judgment, human decision-making and human empathy," he said.

In 2025, the country's IT-BPM industry posted $40 billion in export revenues, provided 80,000 jobs and earned $2 billion.

This year, Ibpap projects $42 billion in export revenues with a 5-percent growth in sector revenues and 1.97 million jobs.

It identified three priorities to sustain its growth trajectory: scaling AI responsibly; expanding global capability centers; and enriching and protecting present and future talents.

Source: https://www.manilatimes.net/2026/01/29/business/top-business/outsourcing-industry-upbeat-on-2026-growth/2267147

Industry group backs trade remedies against import surges

January 27, 2026 | Othel V. Campos | Manila Standard

The Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) expects a rise in trade remedy cases this year as domestic manufacturers seek relief from sustained surges in imports, according to the Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Import Services.

FPI chairperson Beth Lee said that international trade is vital to the Philippine economy, particularly when imports are dumped, subsidized or enter the market in disproportionate volumes that injure local producers.

"Safeguards are lifelines, not barriers. We welcome decisive action to protect Philippine industries and consumers," she said.

From FPI's perspective, the most urgent safeguards sought by industry must rest on fair competition, evidence-based intervention and timely policy action.

Lee cited the DTI's imposition of definitive safeguard duties on cement imports from Jan. 19, 2026 to Jan. 18, 2029, amounting to P14 per bag, following the Tariff Commission's (TC) finding that surging imports caused serious injury to the domestic cement industry.

"This safeguard is a critical step to stabilize the market, protect local producers, and ensure Philippine cement is not displaced in government infrastructure projects," Lee said.

Cement, however, is only one front, she said, adding that the local steel industry also faces sustained import pressure.

While the Philippines remains import dependent, substandard and artificially cheap steel products can crowd out domestic supply and weaken competitiveness.

"Steel is a foundation industry. Without a viable domestic base, downstream manufacturing – from machinery parts to wires, springs, and bearings – cannot compete," Lee said.

Other sectors, including food manufacturing, also face growing competitive pressures from imports that require policy responses.

Source: https://manilastandard.net/business/314696222/industry-group-backs-trade-remedies-against-import-surges.html

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