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DOST joins SIDA Council to tip up salt industry

The mounds of fine, rocky crystals lining the shores shone bright white. The picture fills one with a sense of gratitude and awe for what commodity can challenge the multifarious uses of salt?

While the volume of this seasoning available in our seas can cover the whole of earth's surface with a layer 500 feet thick, it's a wonder that a coastal country like the Philippines is suffering from its lack.

Much of what the country is enduring can be traced to 14 years back. The braided circumstances happened in slow cycles and therefore went unnoticed.

Salt Bill Signed

But, very soon the tides of change will turn the clock back.

On March 11, 2024, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed into law Republic Act 11985 or the "Philippine Salt Industry Development Act" or SIDA.

With SIDA, science, technology, and research will pave the way for key government agencies to work through the maze of policies, economics, marketing, and other support services to enable salt farmers to bring back the glory days of the industry.

The challenge? For the Philippines to become salt-sufficient again and become a net salt exporter.

Inspired by Technology, Driven by Innovation

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SIDA Defined

With DA as lead agency and DOST as one of eight member institutions, SIDA will engage farmers in production of artisanal sea salt, food processors in food fortification and salt iodization, and the creation of large- and medium-scale salt farms that will establish a combination of inland fishpond and salt farm.

At the foundation of the law is the preservation, protection, and rehabilitation of the country's ecological system.

Farther than the road, is the drafting of a Philippine Salt Industry Development Roadmap to ensure the attainment of the objectives of SIDA while aligning it with the objectives of and continued implementation of Republic Act No. 8172, or "An Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN)."

In addition, the "Salt Council" will ensure the unified and integrated implementation of the salt roadmap in order to accelerate the modernization of the salt industry.

Meanwhile, other council members include DTI as vice-chairperson with representatives from the cooperatives to be chosen by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. (AMGuevarra\ ITDI S&T Media Service)

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