

B.C. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

MARKET GUIDE FOR B.C. AGRIFOOD AND SEAFOOD EXPORTERS

PHILIPPINES



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist B.C. agrifood and seafood exporters targeting the Philippines market by informing them about key topics such as: the business environment; key regulatory agencies; finding and assessing buyers; distribution channel options; social and business customs; and the development and maintenance of relationships in the Philippines. The following table summarizes the key information in this guide:

Introduction to the Philippines market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Philippines is one of the most populous countries in the world and has experienced one of the fastest rates of economic growth in Asia over the past 5-10 years. • The strong economic growth, combined with one of the youngest average-aged populations of any country, has strengthened agrifood and seafood export potential for B.C. suppliers as the middle class in the Philippines grows and adopts an interest in imported products. • The Philippines has vast agricultural production, but remains a net importer of food products. Canada was the 16th largest supplier to the Philippines in 2016, with exports totalling more than \$220 million.
Market Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market readiness means you have taken the steps to ensure that the product(s) you want to export to the Philippines are fully compliant with the Philippines' laws and import/export regulations. • Several government agencies are involved with regulating agrifood and seafood imports and safety, including: the Food and Drug Administration, the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, and the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). • All imported agrifood and seafood products must comply with the Philippines' food, health and phytosanitary laws. All meat and milk, fish and seafood products, and fresh fruits and vegetables require certificates attesting to their safety and compliance prior to export. All processed and packaged foods must be registered with the Food and Drug Administration.
Selling to the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC firms have the option of direct export, indirect export, and use of e-commerce as potential methods for gaining market access into the Philippines. • Direct export can result in higher profits and more control over the process but requires enhanced capabilities in your firm and advanced knowledge and connections with the major retail chains in the Philippines. • Intermediaries can include agents, distributors and export management/trading firms. These entities can assist your expansion into the Philippines by selling your product, leveraging distribution channels and contacts, handling import documentation, promoting your products in market and helping you overcome language and cultural differences. • E-commerce is emerging in the Philippines but has several barriers to overcome before it is an appropriate distribution channel for most B.C. agrifood and seafood exporters.
Building Relationships in the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filipino people prefer to do business with people they trust. Ideally you can secure third-party introductions through mutual contacts. • Filipino and English are the official languages of the Philippines, with English the official business language. You will find that most correspondence, contracts and other documents are written in English. • The concept of saving face and maintaining self-esteem are important to Filipino people and present in business negotiations and partnerships. The concept of shame (Hiya) is also an important consideration within Filipino culture.
Export Support and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.C. Trade and Investment Representatives and Canadian Trade Commissioners are located in Manila to assist you with exploring and entering the Philippines' market. • Exporters should make themselves aware of cost-sharing programs and promotional support provided by provincial and federal agencies and organizations.

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILIPPINES MARKET

2.1 – THE PHILIPPINES ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Philippines is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, owing to strong growth in exports and a high level of international remittances made by Filipinos working throughout the world. Still, major infrastructure challenges remain, such as having some of the highest costs for electricity in the world and inefficient distribution networks. In fact, many exporters to the Philippines find that it costs more to move goods from Manila to nearby islands than it does to export goods from North America to Manila.

The strong economic growth over the past decade has resulted in a growing consumer base; there are now an estimated 20 million people in the middle class. The population is young and has increasingly sophisticated tastes and access to supermarkets. However, income inequality is significant and limits the total number of potential consumers of agrifood and seafood products imported from British Columbia or other advanced economies.

The population of over 100 million is spread across the numerous island chains that make up the country. There are over 7,000 islands classified under three major island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Distribution networks are incomplete and fragmented so it is important for exporters to the Philippines to ensure that prospective importers or distributors can distribute into each of the three major cities: Manila, Cebu and Davao.

2.2 – THE AGRIFOOD AND SEAFOOD SECTOR IN THE PHILIPPINES

Agriculture is a significant component of the Philippines economy, accounting for about 15% of national GDP and employing up to one-third of the population. The main commodities include sugarcane, cassavas, coconuts, rice, corn, bananas, pineapples, mangos, eggs, pork, beef and fish. While the country is a net importer of agrifood and seafood products, domestic production and exports are important and protected by the government through maintenance of a two-tiered tariff policy and tariff rate quotas for sensitive agricultural goods.

2.3 – THE PHILIPPINES AGRIFOOD AND SEAFOOD IMPORTS

In 2016, Canada was the 16th largest supplier of agrifood and seafood to the Philippines, with exports totalling approximately \$220 million, an increase of 73% over the value exported in 2012. However, over the same period, Canadian supplier's share of total Philippines imports fell by 10% because of large increases in the value of agrifood and seafood supplied by neighboring countries in Asia, including Indonesia (190% increase in total value from 2012 to 2016), Singapore (145%), Thailand (137%), Malaysia (134%), and China (121%). *Table 1: Value of Agrifood and Seafood Exports to the Philippines, Top 10 Supplying Countries and Canada 2012-16*

Country	Value of Exports (\$ Billions)			Market Share		
	2012	2016	%-Change	2012	2016	%-Change
USA	1.73	3.12	80%	24%	23%	-6.3%
China	0.57	1.27	121%	8%	9%	15.1%
Indonesia	0.40	1.16	190%	6%	8%	50.6%
Thailand	0.43	1.03	137%	6%	7%	23.4%
Malaysia	0.44	1.03	134%	6%	7%	21.5%
Australia	0.72	0.71	-1%	10%	5%	-48.4%
Viet Nam	0.52	0.61	17%	7%	4%	-38.9%

Singapore	0.24	0.59	145%	3%	4%	27.5%
New Zealand	0.42	0.49	16%	6%	4%	-39.7%
Argentina	0.21	0.41	94%	3%	3%	0.9%
...Canada (16th)	0.12	0.22	73%	2%	2%	-10.2%

Source: [International Trade Centre Trade Map](#). Accessed December 2017.

The following table describes the class (by 2-digit HS code) of agrifood and seafood products that, for each of the top supplying countries, achieved the highest rate of growth in value of exports to the Philippines between 2012 and 2016.

Table 2: Largest percentage increases in exports, by 2-digit HS code for top 10 supplying countries, 2012-16

Country	Product (by HS Code), Growth Rate in Value of Exports 2012-16
USA	Beverages, spirits and vinegar (1,372%)
	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other invertebrates (1,199%)
	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (992%)
China	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other invertebrates (361%)
	Coffee, tea, maté and spices (312%)
	Cereals (283%)
Indonesia	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (2,052%)
	Beverages, spirits and vinegar (1,845%)
	Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons (594%)
Thailand	Sugars and sugar confectionery (738%)
	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (653%)
	Cereals (592%)
Malaysia	Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates (900%)
	Coffee, tea, maté and spices (600%)
	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other invertebrates (568%)
Australia	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other invertebrates (5,260%)
	Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons (1,840%)
	Cocoa and cocoa preparations (1,137%)
Viet Nam	Miscellaneous edible preparations (3,569%)
	Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants (1,544%)
	Residues and waste from the food industries; prepared animal fodder (907%)
Singapore	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (1,171%)
	Lac; gums, resins and other vegetable saps and extracts (1,139%)
	Miscellaneous edible preparations (331%)
New Zealand	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other invertebrates (2,244%)
	Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants (847%)
	Products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included (576%)
Argentina	Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants (3,496%)
	Cereals (1,361%)
	Miscellaneous edible preparations (406%)
...Canada (16th)	Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates (1,894%)
	Products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included (1,176%)
	Products of the milling industry; malt; starches; inulin; wheat gluten (599%)

Source: [International Trade Centre Trade Map](#). Accessed December 2017.

The following table describes BC agrifood and seafood exports to the Philippines from 2014-2016.

Table 3: Top 5 BC Agrifood and Seafood Exports to the Philippines

Commodity	Value of Exports (\$ Millions)			2015-2016 %-Change
	2014	2015	2016	
Poultry Products	9.7	5.4	10.2	89
Pork Products	2.1	2.4	3.4	43
Food Preparations for Manufacturing & Natural Health Products	1.7	2.5	1.5	-38
Beef Products	0.0	0.2	1.2	677
Condiments, Sauces, Seasonings & Soups	0.4	0.5	0.7	40
Total top 5	14.0	10.9	17.0	53
Rest of Products	1.3	3.2	2.7	-16
Total – All Agrifood & Seafood exports to the Philippines	15.3	14.1	19.7	40

Source: CATSNET. Accessed February 2018.

2.4 – CULINARY CULTURE, CONSUMER LIFESTYLES AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

- Economic growth in the Philippines has grown the size of the middle class, which has increased the level of consumption in the country.
- Consumer confidence surveys have recently put Filipinos as the most confident in Asia. This signals a positive outlook for agrifood and seafood exporters.
- The Philippines population is one of the youngest in the world, driving demand for convenience foods and imported items from North America and Europe.
- There is a preference for smaller package sizes for processed and packaged foods.
- The demand for products that purport to be healthy is growing, and there has been recent growth in the organic sector.
- The retail landscape in the Philippines is changing drastically with the broad expansion of supermarkets and convenience stores.

2.5 – MARKET INTELLIGENCE

As with any market, prior to expanding sales to the Philippines you will need to conduct market research specific to your product line. While it can often be a lengthy process, it should not be overlooked as many of the problems that foreign companies encounter when doing business in the Philippines could have been avoided by carrying out reliable intelligence at the outset. In addition to answering any specific questions you might have, good market research allows you to:

- Determine if there is a potential market for your product;
- Understand the strategy, strengths and weaknesses of your major competitors;
- Strategize how best to position your product (e.g. price, packaging, value proposition) and leverage the highest potential competitive advantage;
- Minimize the risk of making a poor investment decision.

The following approaches and sources can be used to gather market information:

- **Consult with government agencies and industry and trade associations in your sector.**

- These could include: [B.C. Trade & Investment Representative](#), [Canadian Trade Commissioners, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada](#), [Small Business B.C.](#), [Global Affairs Canada](#), [The Embassy of Canada in the Philippines](#), and chambers of commerce including the [Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines](#).
- **Conduct online research for available material.** Many of the following resources provide market-specific information free of charge, but there may be a fee to access larger quantities of intelligence or information that is particularly valuable or hard to come by.
- [Canada Business Network](#) is a hub for the Canadian export market that includes links to market and sector information, trade statistics and sources of trade leads and potential partners.
 - [CIA World Factbook](#) is a reference resource with almanac-style information about the countries of the world. It provides summaries of the demographics, geography, communications, government, economy, and military of most of the countries in the world.
 - [Economist Intelligence Unit](#) is the research and analysis division of The Economist Group and world leader in global business intelligence.
 - [Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations \(Statistics Division\)](#) is a source of knowledge and information related to agriculture, forestry and fishery.
 - [Global Trade Tracker \(GTT\)](#) offers original trade statistics from the world's principal trading countries.
 - The [Philippine Statistics Authority](#) produces and makes available national statistics.
 - [Santander Trade Portal](#) is a resource that provides access to 40+ worldwide databases, 10,000 pages of information on 185 countries, and more than 150,000 suppliers and importers.
 - [United States Department of Agriculture's Global Agriculture Information Network \(GAIN\)](#) provides information and reports about the agricultural economy, products and issues in foreign countries that are likely to have an impact on trade.
- **Access a global research firm that conducts regular market intelligence in the Philippines.** The following are a sample of intelligence companies which are available to exporters, and it is possible you will find a suitable firm that is not listed below. Information from these sources will generally not be provided free of charge, but may be the only way to obtain certain information.
- [Development Bank Canada](#) provides industry experts to identify the right collection tools and to handle data mining and analysis.
 - [Euromonitor International](#) is a leading provider of global business intelligence and publishes industry, country and global reports.
 - [Global Research & Data Services](#) publishes reports from over 200 industries and 100 countries, providing difficult-to-find market data.
 - [Hoovers Research](#) provides reports across a range of industries, including the food & beverage sector. Global reports by Hoovers Research provide regional and country-level market analysis.
 - [Nielsen](#) studies consumer trends and habits in more than 100 countries.
 - [Planet Retail](#) is a leading provider of global retail intelligence.
 - [Statistics Market Research Consulting](#) reports provide strategic recommendations, market forecasts, and competitive landscaping.
 - [VPG Market Research](#) publishes international market research for corporate executives and key decision-makers in the food & beverage industry, among others. VPG has clients in 70 countries and provides market intelligence and strategic insights.
- **Visit the market personally:**

- Do not underestimate the value in simply taking a trip to the Philippines yourself to gather first-hand insights and intelligence. It can be very powerful, not only in terms of talking to potential buyers and distributors, but also in terms of identifying competing products. Visiting different supermarkets and retailers can be invaluable as it allows you to get a sense of products and packaging in the Philippines and allows you to assess the price range and market approach used by potential competitors.

SECTION 3: MARKET READINESS

The first step to achieving sales in the Philippines is ensuring that you are market ready. This means that your product is eligible for export to the Philippines and you are compliant with all necessary requirements, standards and regulations. Only then can you actually sell your products to in-country buyers.

3.1 – AGENCIES INVOLVED IN OVERSEEING IMPORTS TO THE PHILIPPINES

There are several government agencies involved in establishing and enforcing food safety standards in the Philippines:

- **The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**
 - A function of the Department of Health (DOH) responsible for the safety of processed food products.
 - Agency is responsible for developing standards for imported agrifood and seafood products, including labeling requirements and certificate requirements.
- **The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS)**
 - Under the Department of Agriculture (DA), BAFPS is responsible for setting and implementing standards for fresh and processed agrifood and seafood products, including standards related to processing, preserving, packaging, labeling, importing, exporting, distribution and advertising.
- **The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)**
 - Responsible for establishing standards for quality in the manufacture, importation, labeling, advertising, distribution and sale of livestock, poultry, meat products, dairy products and animal feeds. The agency is also responsible for preventing, controlling, containing and eradicating communicable animal disease by regulating the flow of animals and animal products in the country.
- **The Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources (BFAR)**
 - BFAR is primarily responsible for the development, improvement, management and conservation of the Philippines' fisheries and aquatic resources, however the Fisheries Post-Harvest Technology Division (FPHTD) of BFAR issues commodity clearances (i.e. import permits) and other requirements for the import of fish and seafood products.
- **The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)**
 - The Plant Quarantine Law authorizes the BPI to exercise inspection and certification and/or treatment activities on imported and exportable plant products such as fruits and vegetables, including the enforcement of phytosanitary measures for the export of plants, plant products and regulated articles.

3.2 – REQUIREMENTS, STANDARDS & REGULATIONS

- **Labeling requirements**
 - The requirements for labeling are not excessively stringent in the Philippines and it is likely that your Canadian label will be suitable for products being exported to the Philippines. At a

minimum, the following information is required: description or name of the food; list of ingredients including additives, flavorings and preservatives; net contents; name and address of the manufacturer, packer or distributor along with the country of origin and the name and address of the Philippine importer/distributor.

- Labels that make nutritional and health claims must include information on the vitamin, mineral and other dietary properties. The Food and Drug Administration can require any manufacturer, distributor or advertiser to cease inaccurate or misleading nutritional or health claims.
- The Food and Drug Administration requires that importers provide advance copies of the labels of the products they intend to import to ensure that the labels satisfy the existing regulations.

➤ **Certificates required for import/export of agrifood and seafood products**

- All imported food or agriculture products are required to comply with the Philippines' food, health and phytosanitary laws.
- Certificates attesting that products meet the standards are required for: poultry and poultry products; meat and meat products; beef and beef products; live animals; milk and milk products; fresh fruits and vegetables; fish and seafood products; and pet food and animal feed.

➤ **Processed food registration**

- All processed food products offered for retail sale in the Philippines must be registered with the Food and Drug administration.

➤ **Customs and logistics**

- Depending on the product, required documentation for entry can include: bill of lading; invoice; shipping list; customs declaration; insurance policy; purchase and sale contract; inspection certificates, if applicable.
- The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) is an international goods classification system to categorize imported and exported goods in international trade, determine appropriate duty fees, identify goods and is used for freight documentation, etc. HS compliance is the mandatory classification and declaration of goods when entering or exiting a country. If you are unaware of the correct HS code(s) for your product(s), they can be looked up using [Canada Post's online tool](#).

SECTION 4: SELLING TO THE PHILIPPINES

4.1 – ROUTES TO MARKET

B.C. companies that want to export products must make a choice: become an indirect export business and rely on brokers to ship, market and sell your goods; or manage the process directly and handle all the work and profits yourself. Many first-time exporters will enlist the services of a local intermediary, however, exporting directly, particularly utilizing options available through e-commerce, are also viable approaches for some companies. Considerations should be given to your business needs and available resources, as well as the tax implications of each of these options before making a decision.

4.1.1 Direct Exporting

- **Direct exports lead to higher profits for successful companies.**
 - Exporting directly involves supplying your product to your customer without the involvement of any intermediaries, such as an in-market importer. This allows for the potential of higher profits and increases operational flexibility by affording end-to-end control of every transaction.

- **However, it requires your firm to have enhanced capabilities and ample available resources.**
 - This approach can require a level of effort and expense that may strain your firm's resources. Be prepared to deal with a large amount of client communication and the likelihood of needing to spend a great deal of time in the Philippines at the outset to conduct promotional activities, build an international brand and become familiar with customs and distribution requirements.
 - You will also need to consider whether your product needs to be adapted for the local market. Research into regulatory issues, tax laws and customs processes, which could impact product shipping and distribution, should also be explored.

- **If you decide you want to sell direct, knowledge of the Philippines' retail food markets are crucial.**
 - Middle-class markets are concentrated in Manila, Cebu and Davao.
 - Only a few retail supermarkets have the capacity to import directly. While some may be wary as they may have encountered problems in the past with imported items in terms of delivery schedules, stock availability and pricing, and would prefer to deal with an importer to handle such logistics.
 - Exporters ought to secure listings with major supermarket chains as traditional grocery retailers, such as wet markets and independent small grocers, are losing market share.
 - Remember that retailers demand high slotting fees plus year-round marketing support.
 - Due to insufficient cold chain infrastructure in the Philippines, products should be packed to withstand extreme heat and humidity.
 - Be mindful that the high cost of inter-island shipping makes imported products more expensive in areas outside of the large cities.

4.1.2 Indirect Exporting - Partnering with a Local Intermediary

- **Intermediaries can include agents, distributors and export management/trading firms.**
 - An agent: an individual or firm you employ, usually on commission, to sell your product.

- A distributor: a firm you choose for its distribution channels. It buys your product outright and then sells it onwards.
 - Export management/trading firm: a full-service business that handles multiple aspects of exporting. Some firms buy your product outright and others act as agents on commission.
- **Most exporters use the services of agents, distributors, and intermediaries for distribution, who distribute on the traditional channels and are mostly located in Manila.**
- Good intermediaries will be familiar with local conditions and can help you find customers, arrange distribution channels, handle documentation, ensure you comply with import requirements, clear your goods through customs, promote your product in market, provide after-sales service, and help you overcome language and cultural differences.
 - Given Filipino's affinity for North American products, Filipino companies are generally eager to pursue discussions.
 - Some Filipino firms focus only on the Metro Manila area, whereas others also serve provincial commercial centres such as Cebu, Davao, Iloilo and Baguio. Be sure your selected intermediary aligns to your intended geographic scope.
 - Any Filipino agent/distributor should be registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission.
- **Establishing a formal relationship requires finding the right intermediary for your firm and product.**
- Finding the right intermediary is not an easy process as it often requires you to spend time in the Philippines vetting and forming relationships. Be sure to invest necessary resources towards securing a good partnership before signing a formal agreement or contract.
- **Exclusive distributorship agreements are preferred by Philippine importers.**
- Exporters can work with one or several importers provided the market coverage of each importer is properly identified.
- **When deciding which route best suits your company and product you need to consider the unique two-tiered distribution landscape in the Philippines.**
- Due to concentrated economic activity in the national capital region (NCR), underdeveloped infrastructure and archipelagic geography, the Philippines' distribution landscape consists of a master distributor along with a sub-distributor network.
 - This structure gives disproportionate power to distributors in the Manila area and makes it difficult for exporters to crack the system without the help of master distributors.
 - If you decide to go alone, you will need to replicate this structure, requiring a broad network of subcontractors.

4.1.3 E-commerce

- **E-commerce in the Philippines has the potential for massive growth but significant challenges exist.**
- Further investment in infrastructure is needed – internet speeds are low and few households have reliable access to the internet.
 - Grocery retailers currently tend to use the internet to provide information on outlets and promotions, but not for direct sales of grocery items. Among other challenges, expansion in

grocery retailing is limited by low digital payment penetration. An estimated 70% of Filipinos do not use bank accounts and less than 3% use credit cards.

- In a bid to overcome this barrier, online stores in the Philippines provide a cash on delivery payment option or payment centers (i.e. 7/11 branches). In addition, telecom companies have offered mobile wallet solutions; PayMaya (PLDT) and GCash (Globe). If you pursue a digital approach to exporting, you may consider replicating some of these payment options.
- The vast majority of e-commerce in the Philippines is conducted using mobile devices, so ensure your strategy to e-commerce supports this.

➤ **Popular e-commerce sites include:**

- b2bpricenow – A trading portal with close to 8,000 members that are mostly from cooperatives. It's endorsed by Congress as the Philippines e-Marketplace for Agriculture and Fisheries.
- Philippines trade key – A B2B marketplace connecting Filipino exporters with overseas buyers.
- Philippines tradeford – Provides global importers with information on products, exporters, suppliers, manufacturers and wholesalers.

➤ **If you do pursue an e-commerce strategy be mindful not to undercut your in-market partners if you begin to sell online as a secondary route.**

- Due to reduced costs, you may be able to afford lower prices when selling online. However, your price will be visible for anyone to see. You should consider this and be sure to account for it when designing your pricing strategy.

4.2 – DEVELOPING IMPORTER AND CONSUMER DEMAND

To succeed abroad you'll need to find customers, intermediaries or partners. Use networking to establish contacts in the industry, and promote your product to create consumer demand that will ultimately drive your export sales.

4.2.1 Exhibition Trade Shows

Trade shows are a popular marketing component for many exporters. Among other benefits, they allow attendees to: conduct market intelligence and research prior to entering a market; introduce and promote the company and convey the value proposition of products; initiate relationships with potential customers or intermediaries; maintain relationships and contacts already made; and, demonstrate long-term commitment to the market. However, trade shows can be costly investments, so you want to make sure that your approach is designed to give you the best possible chance at turning interest developed at the show into actual business. Unprepared exhibitors tend to be disappointed that the large number of conversations and apparent interest at shows do not translate to real sales.

➤ **Preparing for the show.**

- The first step to trade show success is to find the most suitable exhibition for your product(s) and market access strategy. If you are not yet prepared to exhibit you can simply attend shows to gather contacts and market intelligence.
- Many show organizers offer pre-show training sessions for exhibitors. If you are new to exhibiting at trade shows these on-site sessions are recommended and will likely impact your success during and after the show.

- You will need to develop professional displays and promotional materials and should strongly consider bringing product samples to distribute. Begin trade show material development early. Incorporate potential delays and complications into your time frame.
 - Determine customs and import regulations that pertain to your sample products. At a minimum, you can consider bringing empty packaging to showcase how your product appears on the shelf.
 - If the purpose of your trade show attendance is to begin selling be sure to have determined your price for the local market prior to the show and make sure you bring sufficient stock to sell.
 - Book appointments with prospective buyers ahead of time and be sure to inform any current clients or contacts that you have in the market that you will be at the show.
- **Differentiate your products and brand from other exhibitors.**
- Larger booths tend to create a bigger impact.
 - Consider joining a delegation of Canadian firms to be part of a large presence and to effectively trade on the Canadian brand. Joining an [AAFC Canada Pavilion](#) is a great approach to attending trade shows, especially for new or smaller exporters.
- **Develop a strategy for converting inquiries into meetings and business.**
- Participating in trade shows can be relatively costly, so it is important to understand the show and the audience you will be interacting with and to be sure that your approach is designed to give you the best possible chance at turning interest developed at the show into actual business.
 - Your exhibit should target specific prospects that are interested in the products you are selling.
 - The longer prospective leads are left unattended, the less likely they are to evolve into business opportunities. Do not rush to be on the first plane out as the event ends. Being available for meetings with potential buyers the week after a show is a good strategy.
- **The Philippines has a wide and changing calendar of shows and exhibitions.**
- Key events include the International Food Expo (IFEX), Franchise Asia Philippines, Manila Foods and Beverages Expo and Agrilink/Foodlink.
 - Although the Philippines is your export destination, that does not mean you are confined to attending trade shows only in the Philippines. An alternative strategy is to attend other large trade shows domestically or elsewhere in Asia as these shows are typically well attended by buyers from many countries.

4.2.2 Websites, Web-portals and Social Media

You can use your website and social media to boost consumer demand by providing real-time client interaction and tailored content for your target audience.

- **Establishing an online presence can be an effective way to drive consumer and importer demand for your product.**
- A well-constructed and easy-to-navigate website provides great opportunities for international inquiries and sales, while also establishing credibility with your contacts, clients and distributors.
 - A local .ph web domain will help internet users in the Philippines easily find your website and to reinforce that you are established in the country.

- Most Filipinos use mobile phones to access the internet and conduct e-commerce, so your site build should support this.

➤ **Engage in social media.**

- Many Filipino people use social media.
- The proliferation of social media and online platforms directly contributed to the growth of digital marketing. Businesses are continuing to transition to digital marketing to reach an even wider market for potential customers; this is a strong and growing trend.
- Social media can be an effective way to build up a network and drive demand in the Philippines. As it continues to grow rapidly, it offers businesses new and meaningful ways to engage with other businesses, people, events and brands that are relevant to them.
- Decide on the best social media tools to reach your target audience and develop engaging and innovative content to differentiate yourself from competitors. For example, Facebook has more reach than any other social network, while Instagram and Twitter are also popular.
- Regularly track and monitor the content viewed and feedback received.

4.2.3 Utilizing In-market Resources to Find Buyers

- **Connect with industry associations and other professional bodies in the Philippines.**
- **Engage [B.C. Trade and Investment Representatives](#) and [Canadian Trade Commissioners](#) with connections and on-the-ground expertise.**

4.3 – DUE DILIGENCE

Filipinos in general are professional and moral individuals who are committed to their work. However, corruption still exists. As such, reasonable precautions should be taken when conducting business in the Philippines. You should conduct due diligence checks once you have chosen your method of entry into the market and have begun negotiations with potential importers and buyers. Many of the problems that foreign companies encounter when engaging in business transactions in the Philippines could be avoided by carrying out due diligence at the start of proceedings.

- **Ask questions and avoid doing business with companies or agents that cannot provide you with necessary details.**
 - You might consider asking to see a notarized and translated copy of their business licence to determine information such as the establishment date, registered capital, name of legal representative, business scope, etc.
 - You could ask for a description of the scale of the company, including audited or unaudited financial statements or records for the past few years.
 - You could ask for a list of their major customers, including references.
- **Independently verify the information you have received.**
 - Use external data from government agencies, other authorized bodies and local experts to verify information provided by your potential partner.
 - Use the internet to conduct additional research. There may be comments, positive or negative, about the company or individual you are investigating online.
 - The [Trade Commissioner Service](#) can assist with some basic due diligence.

- **Your own preparedness is also integral to successful due diligence.**
 - Ensure you allow sufficient time to conduct your verification and due diligence.
 - Ensure that you have conducted the necessary market research.
 - Remain especially vigilant immediately after trade shows and similar events where your company details and contact information may have been widely displayed and or distributed.
 - Be sure to examine and trace the email address of any email that appears suspect. Avoid clicking on any links within unsolicited email.
 - One proven method of testing legitimacy and protecting your company is to request payment up front. If your buyer is truly interested this request will not be problematic as it is standard in many industries. You could also require a letter of credit.
 - Remember, common sense is your best defense. If the order appears “too good to be true” it probably is.

- **Transparency is an on-going process.**
 - Rules and regulations, business environments and business partners are constantly changing. As such, due diligence is not a one off, standalone task. It is necessary throughout the exporting process, but is particularly important in the initial building relationship phase.

SECTION 5: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PHILIPPINES

5.1 – INITIATING RELATIONSHIPS

The business environment in the Philippines is built on personal relationships, with business matters always best left to face-to-face encounters. While many Westerners generally want to get to the point immediately, Filipinos are indirect. They enjoy exchanging pleasantries, sharing a joke or two and talking about mutual contacts before discussing business. To a Filipino, cultivating a friend, establishing a valuable contact, and developing personal rapport is what moves business along. To initiate business, you must first initiate relations.

- **If possible, be introduced to a Filipino company by a third party.**
 - Filipinos typically only do business with people they trust. One way to gain initial levels of trust is to be introduced via a mutual contact.
 - Without an introduction it can take a lot longer to gain that credibility and trust but there are other methods for achieving this. Trade shows offer one of the next best alternatives. Here you can meet potential buyers while maintaining plenty of credibility, particularly if you display alongside industry associations, the Provincial or Federal Governments.
 - Industry associations, provincial investment promotion bodies and even your freight forwarder are valuable sources for introductions. They are often aware of events at which you may meet prospective customers or can provide third-party introductions.

5.2 – COMMUNICATION

- **Filipino and English are the official languages of the Philippines.**
 - However, English is the official business language with almost all correspondence, contracts, and other documents written in English. As such, exporters are unlikely to require the skills of an interpreter.
 - It is common to hear a mixture of English and Filipino known as "Taglish" in everyday conversations in the Philippines.
 - Spanish is also spoken by many Filipinos. While Spanish may be welcomed by the elite, it is regarded as a language of oppression and domination, therefore best avoided.
- **Business communications can often be indirect. You should be aware of this to avoid miscommunication.**
 - All communication, direct or otherwise, should be courteous.
 - Filipinos avoid openly expressing their disagreement and rarely raise their voices, as this would be considered impolite.
 - You should pay attention to body language as it is often more important than spoken word.
 - Focus on how something is said – relational meanings often outweigh literal meanings and you will often be required to read between the lines to find meaning.
 - If Filipinos don't understand a question, they open their mouths.
 - "Yes" is signified by a jerk of the head upward. "No" is signified by a jerk of the head down. Since the Filipinos rarely say no, the non-verbal sign for "no" is sometimes accompanied by a verbal yes, which would still indicate "no."
 - Standing with your hands on your hips means you are angry.

- Never curl your index finger back and forth (to beckon). This is an insult. To beckon, extend arm, palm down, moving fingers in scratching motion.
- Touch someone's elbow lightly to attract attention. Do not tap on the shoulder.
- Filipinos will point by puckering their lips in the direction or person they are referring to. They may also shift their eyes to do the same thing.
- "Eyebrow flash" -- a quick lifting of eyebrows -- is a Filipino greeting. Raised eyebrows also signify recognition and agreement.
- Filipinos usually favor direct eye contact. However, staring is considered rude.
- Raising your thumbs means something is OK. Do not use the Canadian way of saying OK, i.e. by forming a circle with your fingers, as this is the symbol for money, and could insinuate that you are offering a bribe.

5.3 – SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

When working in the Philippines, you ought to follow a few guidelines in order to avoid alienating your colleagues and business partners. In general, it takes time to establish strong business relationships. Try to be patient while you stick to these tips on social and business etiquette:

- **To Filipinos, the concept of saving face and maintaining self-esteem is important.**
 - Face is a quality that reflects a person's reputation, dignity, and respect. It is closely linked with personal pride, forming the basis of an individual's social status and reputation.
 - Face can be given, lost, taken away or earned. You give someone face by complimenting them, showing them respect or doing anything that increases their self-esteem. Public displays of anger, trying to prove someone wrong in front of others, or disrespect of one's rank or position can cause loss of face.
 - The concept of Shame (Hiya) is also a motivating factor behind much Filipino behaviour. Filipinos believe they must live up to the accepted standards of behaviour and if they fail to do so they bring shame not only upon themselves, but also upon their family. Filipinos will behave so as to avoid shame at all costs.
- **Filipinos, generally tend to not be on time but this is changing in the corporate world as timeliness is emphasized to avoid creating a bad impression.**
 - A degree of flexibility is expected with start and end times for appointments and deadlines.
 - It is important to adjust your Western expectations and forego any feeling of frustration.
 - That said, more often than not, meetings do not start on time. Plan to arrive promptly or even early, in the event your meeting does run to schedule.
- **Conservative dress is expected though the degree of formality differs depending on the workplace.**
 - Most Filipinos dress well and take pride in their appearance. You should echo this.
 - Filipinos usually wear light and loose clothing due to the heat.
 - Meetings, particularly the first meeting, will require slightly more formal attire. However, only in air-conditioned offices will a full business suit be required.
 - Men should wear a dark coloured, conservative business suits with a tie or formal office apparel, at least for the initial meeting.
 - Women should wear well-tailored conservative, light business suits or dresses and blouses. Women's clothing may be brightly coloured if it is of good quality and well-tailored.
 - You may find after the initial meeting that more informal clothing is suitable.

- Male counterparts may appear in a simple embroidered formal top called Barong Tagalog - also called a Barong. This is the national dress for men and is worn over black pants and shoes. Similarly, your female partners may wear Maria Clara dresses which are traditional hand-embroidered clothing.

5.4 – TYPICAL MEETING PROTOCOL

Meeting etiquette will differ depending on the type of company you deal with. However, certain characteristics are likely to be constant regardless of the background of the people being met. The following points identify such constants:

- **Prior to the meeting**
 - Schedule meetings at least three to four weeks in advance. Avoid scheduling meetings the week before Easter and the two/three weeks before Christmas.
 - Mid-morning or afternoon meetings are preferred.
 - Provide details on titles, positions, and responsibilities of attendees ahead of time.
 - Clearly communicating your objectives for the meeting and agreeing on an agenda upfront is useful, even though the latter may not be strictly followed.
 - Always confirm the date by phone a few days prior and provide advance copies of whatever materials are necessary.
- **Seat arrangements are determined by rank, status and hierarchy.**
 - At business meetings, the key people sit in the middle, flanked on either side in descending order by their aides, with the people in junior positions sitting at the ends of the table farthest from the middle, and closest to the door.
 - The arrangement is mirrored on the other side, because the rules of hierarchy demand that everyone must be able to speak with their opposite peers and those who rank below.
 - Seating arrangements are not dissimilar to this for social events.
- **When conducting business in the Philippines it is best to address people by their professional title or Mr., Mrs., Miss, followed by the surname.**
 - An individual might request a more informal approach after the formal introduction. There is such wide spread use of nicknames that there may be a collective search for a nickname, often only indirectly related to your own name or some characteristic.
 - There is a formal address in Filipino when addressing superiors in the office: "po" equivalent to "sir" is included in the address even when the Filipino is speaking in English. "O po" literally means yes sir. While these linguistic conventions are not required they are usually appreciated.
- **The exchange of business cards is not overly formalized, albeit still of some importance.**
 - Business cards are usually exchanged at a first meeting. It is not necessary to have it translated into Filipino, but you should include your title and position on the card.
 - If you are the visitor, it is customary to offer your business card first. Note that you may not receive one in return depending on your rank as some senior executives only give business cards to those of similar rank.
 - Present and receive business cards with two hands so that it is readable to the recipient.
 - Look at business cards you receive with interest. It is best to place them in a holder and be sure to never write on or fold a business card you are given.

- If a Filipino contact gives you a personal number aside from what is indicated on the business card, it is usually an invitation to call, and is a good sign for establishing cordial relations.
- **Initial greetings are formal and follow a set protocol of greeting the eldest or most senior person first.**
- Firm handshakes and smiles are considered the standard form of greeting. They are usually gentle and not too prolonged. Friends and acquaintances may greet and acknowledge each other with a simple raising of the eyebrows.
 - Men and women shake hands with everyone present at a business meeting or social occasion and when saying "goodbye." Handshakes should be friendly and informal, but limp. Men should wait for women to extend their hand.
- **Beginning the meeting.**
- There is normally some small talk at the start. This allows participants to become personally acquainted and helps establish a base for the relationship which is typically the primary purpose of the initial meeting. Only then may discussions of business matters begin.
 - A good conversation piece is asking about their family – which region or province they come from, whether they have children and their ages. Do not be surprised to be asked very personal questions. Topics such as politics, religion and corruption are best avoided.
- **During the meeting.**
- Business may or may not be discussed in the first meeting. Don't try to push an agenda forward, let the locals set the pace for the meeting.
 - Depending on who is in attendance the meeting structure can be quite formal with a number of preliminaries which sometimes includes prayer, an opening address and brief speeches from key players before getting into the business of the day.
 - As a guest it may be expected that you will say a few words of introduction and appreciation.
 - Light refreshments are often served at business meetings; never offend your host by declining.
 - The actual decision maker may not be at the meeting. Try to determine if this is the case.
 - Presentation materials should be attractive, with good and clear visuals. Use diagrams and pictures wherever feasible, cut down on words, and avoid complicated expressions.
 - Avoid making exaggerated claims. If you make exaggerated claims in an effort to impress the other side they will likely investigate your claims before responding.
 - Food is a huge part of Filipino culture and socialisation, so expect business meetings to be conducted over lunch, an afternoon snack known as "merienda," or dinner.
 - Meetings should end on a cheerful note, no matter what the outcome. Having some social conversation at the end is expected. Do not leave before the meeting has concluded.

5.5 – NEGOTIATIONS

- **Exporters should expect negotiations to be slow and protracted due to the decision-making process taking a long time as group consensus is sought. That said, the final decisions are usually reserved for the top-level executives.**
- People from fast-paced cultures tend to underestimate how much time negotiations actually take and often make the mistake of trying to 'speed things up.'
 - Be prepared to make several trips if necessary to achieve your objectives.
 - Keep track of the bargaining progress at all times, and often emphasize areas where agreement already exists to progress discussions.

- **Throughout the negotiation process you should remain positive, patient, control your emotions and accept that delays occur.**
 - Opening with written offers and attempting to introduce written terms and conditions as a negotiation tactic is rarely successful.
 - Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
 - Filipino people tend to avoid saying 'no' when answering questions even if they really mean it. Likewise, 'yes' may merely mean 'perhaps'.
 - You may never actually meet with the decision maker or it may take several visits to do so.
 - Decisions are often reached based more on feelings rather than facts.
 - Make requests, not demands. Be subtle in your approach.
 - Never change members of your team midway through the negotiation process. It typically resets the relationship building phase.

- **The bargaining stage of negotiation can be extensive, and Filipinos may use a wide array of negotiation techniques.**
 - Prices often move more than 40% between initial offers and final agreement. Leave yourself sufficient room for concessions at different stages.
 - Filipinos may place less stress on the absolute selling price and place more emphasis on percentages, unit cost or rounded figures.
 - Negotiators may sometimes use emotional techniques such as attitudinal bargaining, , grimacing, or appealing to personal relationships, in an attempt to make you feel guilty,
 - On occasion, deceptive techniques may be used during negotiation. Do not take such tactics personally. Do verify information received from the local side through other channels.
 - Negotiators in the country may occasionally use pressure techniques that include making final offers or nibbling – that is, asking for agreements on smaller items one at a time until they have gotten a lot. Final offers may come more than once and are rarely final.
 - Do not use tactics such as applying time pressure or making expiring offers.
 - Periods of silence are frequent and usually reflect a natural inclination rather than the intentional use of a negotiation technique.
 - Be cautious when echoing Filipino's negotiation style. What may be perceived as appropriate action for a Filipino person or company may not extend to Non-Filipinos.

- **Where possible get a written agreement at each stage of your negotiation.**
 - Written contracts tend to be lengthy and often spell out very detailed terms and conditions.
 - Contracts need to be registered with the Philippines' government administration to be legal.
 - It is recommended to consult a local legal expert before signing a contract. However, do not bring your attorney to the negotiation table as it may be viewed as a sign of mistrust.
 - Business partners usually expect the other side to remain somewhat flexible if conditions change, which may include agreeing to modify contract terms.

5.6 – SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

Many business deals are completed informally over a round of golf, during meals (lunch and dinner) and entertainment. Therefore, it is imperative to accept invitations to social events and actively participate if you are serious about advancing your exporting endeavours in the Philippines. These occasions also represent opportunities for developing personal relationships which can always benefit from additional investment.

- **In restaurants as well as private homes, always follow the lead of your host.**
 - Don't accept an invitation unless repeated at least three times.
 - Punctuality is appreciated but not demanded when attending social affairs. It is not uncommon to be "fashionably late" to dinner engagements - up to 30 minutes.
 - Let your Filipino associates take the lead on business discussions at a meal. At a minimum it won't be discussed until after establishing a convivial ambience, usually after soup or appetizers.
 - Don't bring your spouse to a business lunch. Business is unlikely to be discussed if you do.
 - The person who invites pays the bill although the guest is expected to make an effort to pay.
 - In most instances, important guests accept requests to sing.
 - The day after the meal, send a thank-you note to the host.

- **General table manners which ought to be adhered to are as follows:**
 - It is polite to decline the first offer of seating, food, drink, etc. Accept the second offer.
 - Wait to be told where to sit. There is likely to be a seating plan.
 - Wash your hands before you sit down to eat. Many restaurants have washrooms and sinks out in the open specifically for this purpose.
 - Filipinos will usually order food for sharing or family style. Be observant, as being the first to get food may be seen as rude. It is safe to politely decline or offer the food to others first and then wait until it is offered to you a second time before getting your portion.
 - Do not start eating until the host invites you to do so or if the host is located at another table you may start eating only when everyone at your table has been served their portion of food.
 - Chopsticks are used to eat Chinese food. Otherwise, forks, spoons, and knives are used with Filipino and Western food.
 - In some Filipino restaurants no utensils at all are used. If you absolutely cannot eat without a utensil, it's usually understandable to ask for spoons in such establishments. Avoid using your left hand for any kind of eating and passing of food.
 - Never lick your fingers or any utensil or plate.
 - You will always be offered more food. Leave a bit on your plate if you do not want more food. You will be implored to take more, two or three times. If you really don't want more, take very little and leave it on your plate.
 - Do not take the last bit of food from a central serving plate.

- **Drinking customs in the Philippines.**
 - People who drink too much are regarded as greedy. It is not a problem if you don't drink since not everyone does, and fruit juices and soft drinks are very popular.
 - You must never pour your own drink. Only your neighbour can fill your glass. If it is less than half full, it needs refilling. If your neighbour does not notice you need a refill indicate your need by pouring a little more drink into your neighbour's glass, even if it doesn't really need it.
 - As a guest you may be expected to make a toast, usually soon after the host does, or at the end of the meal, just before everyone departs. An appropriate toast is to the health of the host and all those present, and to the prosperity of the business under discussion.
 - If alcohol is being served, pre-dinner drinks may begin with beer or rice wine, then move on to beer during the meal, and end with a sweet wine and/or coffee or tea.

- **Gift giving is widely practised in Filipino business culture. You should be prepared to frequently accept and give small gifts.**
 - You may want to bring a small gift to your first meeting.
 - Keep in mind that a lot of weight is given to how beautifully it is packaged. There are no color prohibitions so the more festive the package the better.
 - Your gift will not be opened in front of you and is often reserved for when you leave.
 - Gifts should not be overly extravagant. Gifts such as books, small electronics and items unique to your own country are appropriate business gifts. Imported brandy and whisky are also welcomed, even if the recipient does not drink alcohol.
 - If you are invited to a colleague's home, flowers (with the exception of lilies and chrysanthemums) are always appreciated. As far as edible gifts, stick to candy. Do not refer to the lady of the house as your hostess because that term in the native tongue of the Philippines means prostitute.
 - If you are given a small gift, accept it amiably, but do not open it in front of other guests.

5.7 – MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Once you have begun to work with a Filipino company, it is strongly advisable to continue staying in touch and maintaining the trust of your business partner. You should continue to invest time and energy into nurturing the relationship by regularly engaging with your contacts. Avoid the temptation to focus on other activities and other deals once a contract is signed. You can demonstrate your long-term intent by some of the following examples:

- **Touch base frequently.**
 - An ongoing exchange of information helps each party understand the other, so they can build on their mutual interests. Often there is nothing in particular to discuss yet your partners will continue to communicate frequently. Relationships maintained in this way tend to have fewer problems and raise fewer complaints.
 - Frequent contact can also provide you with an opportunity to gain insight on other products and services that you can offer to gain new business and can serve as a reminder of the need your product or service.
 - Holidays such as Christmas represent opportunities to reconnect and show your appreciation to people with whom you have regular dealings with. You may consider sending them a gift which can range from baskets of goodies to company giveaways to plain calendars or office items with your company logo.
- **Continue to make visits to the Philippines.**
 - Given their preference for face-to-face business, visits to the Philippines should remain a regular feature of your export venture even after the relationship has been established. These trips help maintain your already established relationship. You should also try to bring the same team with you on each visit, so your buyers will be dealing with people they've already gotten to know.
 - Between visits, you should pick up the phone as much as possible, remembering how important personal interaction is to business relationship with those in the Philippines.
- **Consider hosting your partners through reciprocal visits.**

- You may also like to consider reciprocal visits. Paying for your partners in the Philippines to visit your Canadian operations is a good way of keeping them informed and motivated. About half of the trip should be devoted to rest and relaxation, leaving time for building the relationship and an affinity for Canada and Canadian products. When hosting Filipino guests, remember the effort they put into hosting and looking after you in the Philippines and reciprocate this.
- **Be prompt with inquiries.**
 - Promptness shows your commitment to a high level of service and establishes confidence in you and your company.
 - Also, if an issue arises, take action and make it your priority to resolve it immediately. Sometimes errors and how we resolve them provide an exceptional opportunity to show our commitment to the customer; take a bad situation and make it a positive.
- **Remember to remain patient.**
 - If you really want to work with someone, be purposeful and consistent. If there's potential for real synergy between you and your potential partner be persistent in your efforts.

SECTION 6: EXPORT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

6.1 – B.C. TRADE AND INVESTMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONERS

Both the Canadian and British Columbian governments support export market development by locating staff in priority markets to provide current and on-the-ground advice and guidance to B.C. companies. Making use of these individuals is highly recommended, particularly if you have limited on-the-ground experience in the Philippines market.

[B.C. Trade and Investment Representatives](#)

British Columbia's trade and investment team is based in Manila to assist you with accessing the Philippines' market.

- **B.C. Trade & Investment Representatives can assist current and potential B.C. exporters with a variety of services, including:**
 - Generating market intelligence and trade leads for specific B.C. products;
 - Advising on market entry and development strategies;
 - Providing contacts to an extensive network of international industry, government and community influencers and partners;
 - Supporting B.C. exporter participation in trade missions, tradeshow and related events; and,
 - Providing training to introduce B.C. exporters to world markets.

[Canadian Trade Commissioner Service](#)

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, with on-the-ground-intelligence and practical advice on foreign markets, helps Canadian companies make better, more timely and cost-effective decisions in order to achieve their goals abroad. As part of Canada's embassies and consulates, Trade Commissioners have privileged access to foreign governments, key business leaders and decision-makers.

- **Whether doing business abroad for the first time, or looking to expand into new markets, Trade Commissioners can work with you to:**
 - Determine if you are internationally competitive; decide on a target market; collect market and industry information and improve your international business strategy;
 - Determine the level of opportunity that exists in a particular market, advise on appropriate approaches to the market and gauge the amount of effort and resources required;
 - Connect with industry associations, potential buyers and partners, professionals in financial and legal institutions, agents and other business representatives to support the execution of your export strategy;
 - Assist with due diligence by conducting basic preliminary research on a local company from public sources, and the resolution of business problems and issues that you face in foreign markets.

Please note that conducting thorough background checks on local companies or providing translation or interpretation services is not part of the mandate of either the [B.C. Trade and Investment](#)

[Representatives](#) or the [Canadian Trade Commissioners](#). These services should be acquired directly by private sector service providers operating in foreign markets.

6.2 – LOAN AND COST SHARING PROGRAMS AND PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Provincial and federal governments (and other agencies) offer several programs and engage in promotional activities aimed at supporting and developing exporters.

- [BC Ministry of Agriculture – Market Development](#)
 - The Ministry delivers the BC Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program aimed at further enabling B.C.'s agriculture, food and seafood sectors to increase export sales. This includes support for marketing skills training, market research and strategic planning, as well as participation in international market development activities.

- [Canada Pavilion Program](#)
 - The AAFC Canada Pavilion Program, a key component of markets and trade development, is aimed at making trade show participation easier at the world's premier food and beverage events 'where the world shops'. Trade shows continue to be integral in taking advantage of opportunities arising from market access gains.

- [Canada Brand](#)
 - Agriculture and Agri-food Canada has developed a suite of free tools to help Canadian Agri-food and seafood companies gain a marketing advantage by linking Canada's positive image to their products. These include Canada Brand graphics and a photo library of high-quality images for use in marketing and promotional materials.

- [Export Guarantee Program](#)
 - Export Development Canada (EDC) will provide a risk-sharing guarantee on behalf of program participants to their financial institutions in order to provide firms with access to increased working capital and term financing.

- [Expansion Loan Program](#)
 - A loan program offered by the Business Development Bank of Canada aimed at companies wishing to expand their market, including export markets. Eligible activities include launching new marketing campaigns, developing new products, obtaining a certification, expanding foreign or domestic markets, and others.

SECTION 7: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

B.C. Trade and Investment Representatives

Website: <https://www.britishcolumbia.ca/global/trade-and-investment-representatives/southeast-asia/the-philippines-manila/>

Email: international@gov.bc.ca

Manila Office

Office #23, LKG Tower
37th Floor, 6801 Ayala Avenue
Makati City 1226
Philippines

Canadian Trade Commissioner Service

Website: www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/ph or <http://philippines.gc.ca>

Email: infocentre-manila@international.gc.ca

Manila Office

RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue
Level 8, Tower 2
Makati City, 0707
Philippines

Key Government Agencies of the Philippines

Food and Drug Administration
Central Office

Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Philippines 1781 Trunkline: (+63) 2 165 332 Fax: (+63) 2 807
0751 / (+63) 2 807 8511

Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards

BPI Cmpd. Visayas Ave. Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila
1101 Philippines
(632) 928-8756 to 65 *local* 3301-3305, 3308-3309, 3312