Gov’t surveying firms on non-tariff barriers

EXPORTERS and importers are being polled on non-tariff measures they are encountering, with the government looking to identify concerns that may arise in free trade negotiations.

A nationwide survey is currently being conducted by the Trade department in partnership with Geneva-based International Trade Center (ITC) and research firm Nielsen, Bureau of Export Trade Promotion director Senen M. Perlada yesterday said.

It will assess responses from 1,200 exporters and importers, 450 of whom will be interviewed face to face. Results of the nationwide survey, which will run from July to November, are scheduled to be released in the second quarter of 2015.

The goal, officials said in a briefing, is to “improve competitiveness and market access” as the country considers joining trade deals such as the United States-led Trans-Pacific Partnership and China’s Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Poonam Mohun, ITC project market analyst, noted that “more and more tariffs are getting eliminated due to free trade agreements. However, what we’re seeing are more non-tariff measures.”
DTI to conduct survey on non-tariff measures

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the International Trade Center (ITC) are conducting a survey focused on non-tariff measures (NTM) to help exporters access markets.

According to DTI, the ITC-funded nationwide survey is intended to increase the transparency about NTMs by collecting, classifying and disseminating relevant information on NTMs and by understanding the non-tariff obstacles to trade the business sector is facing.

Nielsen Ltd. was selected by the ITC and their researchers for the conduct of the survey here in the Philippines.

ITC, a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations based in Geneva, aims to enable small businesses in developing countries to succeed by providing trade development solutions to the private sector, support institutions and policy makers.

The survey would involve getting responses of 1,200 exporters and importers, 450 of whom would be interviewed face to face. It would be conducted beginning this month until November and the results would be released in the second quarter of 2015.

Poonam Mohun, the NTM project market analyst of the Market Analysis and Research Division of ITC, said a similar survey has been conducted in 23 countries including Indonesia and Thailand.

"The survey results will show the obstacles that exporters and importers face when they are trading their goods. So it will bring all those issues to the limelight so everybody will know about the problems that are occurring in the Philippines," she said.

DTI Export Management Bureau director Senen Perlada told reporters the responses obtained through the survey would be processed by the ITC to determine whether such are NTM and become barriers to trade.

"Then based on that result, it will be shared by ITC in its database... and we will come up with policies, administrative order, executive order to address those NTMs," he said.

The results of similar surveys done in 23 countries show that the top three NTMs identified as burdensome when exporting are conformity assessment (27 percent), export related measures (26 percent) and the rules of origin and related certificate of origin (16 percent).

Other identified barriers include technical requirements, pre-shipment inspection and other entry formalities, charges, taxes and other para-tariff measures, quantity control measures as well as finance measures.

– Louella Desiderio
Non-tariff survey. The Trade Department and the International Trade Center launched the Philippine Nationwide Survey on Non-Tariff Measures on July 8. The nationwide survey spearheaded by the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Geneva, Switzerland, aims to increase transparency about non-tariff measures. Shown after discussing the mechanics of the survey are (from left) Trade director Senen Perlada, PTIC-Geneva commercial attaché Magnolia Uy, ITC project market analyst Poonam Mohun and ITC associate market analyst Abdellatif Benzakri.