

Tycoons tapped to boost domestic energy resiliency



Courtesy of [Manila Times](#)

THE Department of Energy (DoE) is boosting its energy resiliency efforts in the Philippines by tapping business tycoons.

In a statement on Thursday, the DoE said it signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Philippine Disaster Resiliency Foundation, Inc. (PDRF) as part of its push to promote energy resiliency to stakeholders, the public, and the business sector.

PDRF has for its board members the top officials of some of the county's biggest companies.

Under the MoU, both parties agreed to regularly hold a dialogue and develop activities towards energy resiliency, conduct joint exercises to test disaster response protocols, and engage other sectors in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

The MoU was signed between Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, PDRF President Rene Meily, and PDRF board members Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Erramon Aboitiz, Ayala Corp. CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, and First Pacific Co. Ltd. CEO Manuel Pangilinan.

During the signing ceremony, Cusi stressed to the business moguls the DoE's Energy Resiliency Policy (ERP) that outlines the government's disaster risk reduction plans, programs and activities intended to minimize the impact of calamities like earthquakes, typhoons and floods.

The DoE, he said, has been moving to ensure that the impacts of disasters on electricity will be minimal.

"I am proud to say that prior to the issuance of the ERP, the energy sector has already been proactive in developing resiliency measures," Cusi said.

Cusi said a country's energy sector is only as strong as the weakest link in the energy chain. As such, each element in the energy chain should be equally resilient to function properly, he added, citing the "need to institutionalize resiliency measures at every phase."

In January this year, the DoE promulgated Department Circular DC2018-01-0001 or Adoption of Energy Resiliency in the Planning and Programming of the Energy Sector to Mitigate Potential Impacts of Disasters to strengthen the country's resiliency to disasters.

The circular aims to adopt a resiliency program to help industry partners to plan and address potential impacts of disasters in the country.

The DoE would work on strengthening existing infrastructure facilities; integrating the Build Back Better principle in reconstruction and rehabilitation; enhancing existing operational, maintenance and practices to ensure continuous operations and energy supply; and developing resiliency standards that will be used as basis in the future construction of energy facilities.

One of the circular's salient points is the inception of the Resiliency Compliance Plan (RCP), which provides both structural and non-structural measures to ensure infrastructure and human resource disaster preparedness.

The RCP shall cover the following: systems, stockpiling, response and recovery, and strengthening infrastructure.

It also calls for companies to earmark a budget for implementing this provision.

President Duterte in July signed into law Republic Act 11039 or the Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund (ECERF) which aims to aid ECs restore and rehabilitate their respective infrastructure following a natural disaster.

The P750-million fund will be initially taken from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRMMF). The National Electrification Administration (NEA) will be responsible for managing and disbursing the fund solely dedicated to restoration or rehabilitation efforts of power co-ops after a force majeure or a fortuitous event.

Afterwards, the ECERF shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The NEA is finalizing the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 11039.