DEVELOPMENT OF THE JEWELRY INDUSTRY
(source: Board of Investments)

The Philippines is endowed with an abundant supply of gold. Gold and silver, the two most important raw materials used in fine jewelry production, are sourced from Camarines Norte and other parts of Mindanao. In the world of gold mine production, the Philippines is the 25th highest gold-producing country, with a total production of 33 tonnes of gold in the year 2001. Aside from gold deposits, the Philippines is also rich in gemstones such as opal, jasper, quartz, tektite, Zambales and Mindoro jade, garnet, epidote, jadeite, and blue and green schist.

There are about 250 firms in the country that are engaged in the jewelry industry, employing a pool of more than 100,000 workers. Small and medium-scale jewelry enterprises hold about 50 percent of the industry, while the top 10 largest jewelry chains and manufacturers hold less than 25 percent. Majority of the companies/manufacturers which fall under the small and medium scale industries are geographically located in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Camarines Norte, Davao, Cebu, and Baguio City. Production of fine jewelry encompasses a wide range of medium to high priced products. The most popular product category is gem-set jewelry, particularly diamonds set in 14K or 18K gold, pearl jewelry, and silver jewelry.

The Philippine exports of fine jewelry have been consistently growing in the last five years with the United States, Hong Kong, and Italy as the top three export markets. In the first semester of 2006, the country’s export of jewelry reached US$57.84 million, up by 22.71 percent compared to the same period in 2005. On the average, only 20% of the total jewelry production is being exported, while the remaining 80% is being sold in the domestic market.

Prospective investors may put their capital in the jewelry industry. For a small plateria, a minimum capital of P1,000,000 is required. This initial capital is normally spent on basic equipment (50%), raw materials such as gold and precious stones (30%), and working capital (20%). Marketing techniques include distribution of sales kits, brochures and flyers, joining in exhibits/trade fairs, putting up display centers, supplying to jewelry shops and accepting orders from agents.

Training centers specifically for the jewelry industry workers have already been set-up and operationalized jointly by the government and private sector to upgrade the skills of the workers and improve productivity. These centers are the: Philippine Jewelry Training Center in Bulacan, San Eligius Jewelry Training Center located at the Cottage Industry Technology Center in Marikina City, Technology and Livelihood Resource Center in Makati, Gemlab Philippines in Quezon City, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in Taguig, Metro Manila.

The Department of Trade and Industry, having identified the jewelry industry as one of the key export sectors under the 2005-2007 Philippine Export Development Plan has a Business Development Team that provides various forms of assistance to the industry to further spur its growth and development. They maybe reached at:

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