

ISSUE 2025-03

PHILIPPINE COMPETITION BULLETIN

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**PHILIPPINE
COMPETITION
COMMISSION**

Ensuring businesses compete and consumers benefit



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo delivers the opening message at the "Fair Business Forum: Launching of the Competition Compliance Program Toolkit" in Pasig City on May 30.

Competition compliance toolkit for businesses launched at PCC forum

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has released its Competition Compliance Program (CCP) Toolkit to help businesses avoid violations of the country's competition law. The launch happened during the PCC's Fair Business Forum held on May 30 in Pasig City.

With representatives of 80 trade associations and private firms in attendance, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo presented the Toolkit as a key resource for businesses in managing competition risks and contributing to a level playing field.

"The Competition Compliance Program Toolkit is more than just a guide—it is a strategic resource that helps businesses uphold integrity, mitigate anti-competitive risks, and contribute to a level playing field. By making compliance practical and accessible, we are enabling businesses to grow responsibly and sustainably," Aguinaldo said.

Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCCS) Chief Executive Officer Alvin Koh also delivered a video message at the launch, underscoring the shared commitment across ASEAN to promote fair and open markets.

CCCS was a key player in the development of the ASEAN Competition Compliance Toolkit, which inspired the development of PCC's own Toolkit.

The CCP Toolkit was developed through key informant interviews and focus group discussions with business leaders across the country. The initial draft benefited from insights raised by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which had partnered with the PCC to promote competition law and policy.

The CCP Toolkit features the fundamentals of market competition, its benefits, and the importance of compliance, including a step-by-step guide to developing and implementing an effective internal compliance program, as well as a sample compliance program that businesses can adapt to their needs. The Toolkit also includes a glossary of competition-related terms for quick reference.

The CCP Toolkit is available for download through the PCC's website at bit.ly/PCC-CCPToolkit. ■

PCC bags international award for anti-bid rigging initiative

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) bagged an award for its three-pronged approach to detecting bid rigging in public procurement at the 2025 International Competition Network (ICN) and World Bank Group (WBG) Competition Advocacy Contest.

The award was conferred during the 24th ICN Annual Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, where PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo also presented the country's major competition advocacy milestones. The PCC's winning initiative combined advocacy, inter-agency collaboration, and the development of the Bid Rigging Screening Tool (BiRST), a data-driven system inspired by global best practices. BiRST analyzes publicly available procurement data to flag suspicious patterns and has been pilot-tested with key government institutions since its soft launch in 2023.

"This award validates our commitment to combating bid rigging, a practice that diverts public funds, harms consumers, and erodes trust in governance. It highlights the global relevance of proactive antitrust measures in protecting public welfare," said Aguinaldo.

At the advocacy plenary of the same conference, Aguinaldo emphasized the broader efforts of the PCC to embed a culture of competition in government and in the business sector. He highlighted the implementation of the National Competition Policy, which promotes pro-competition regulations across government agencies and local government units.

He also showcased the Champions of Competition program, which has expanded stakeholder awareness through partnerships with universities and the private sector. ■



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo accepts the award for winning the 2025 ICN-WBG Advocacy Contest during the 24th ICN Annual Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland on May 9. The PCC was recognized under Theme 3: Enhancing public procurement and curbing bid rigging for government savings.

Partnerships formalized in legal education, transport sectors

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has recently inked partnerships that support legal education and promote fair competition in the land transportation sector.

On May 14, the PCC signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Manuel L. Quezon University (MLQU), establishing an externship program that allows Juris Doctor students to gain practical training in competition law. The partnership, which is aligned with the Supreme Court's Clinical Legal Education Program (CLEP), enables law student practitioners to work directly with the PCC under supervised conditions. The initiative aims to develop a new generation of legal professionals who are both academically prepared and practice-ready in the evolving field of competition law.

"This MOA with Manuel L. Quezon University underscores our shared commitment to academic engagement and the promotion of a culture of competition in the country through experiential learning," said PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo.

On June 25, the PCC formalized its 34th MOA, this time with the Land Transportation Office (LTO), to bolster competition safeguards in the transport sector. The agreement lays the groundwork for cooperation in identifying anti-competitive conduct, aligning policies with competition principles, and supporting investigations and enforcement. Both agencies

also committed to regular knowledge sharing, joint capacity-building activities, and task force formation when necessary.

Aguinaldo emphasized the broader vision behind the agreement: "We hope this joint objective helps steer us toward a future where every Filipino enjoys a dynamic, competitive, and accessible transport system."

These two MOAs reflect the PCC's continued efforts to embed competition principles in different sectors and institutions, thus laying the groundwork for a more inclusive, efficient, and consumer-friendly economic environment. ■



(From left) Atty. Jose Perpetuo Lotilla, Dean of the School of Law at MLQU, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, Commissioner Ferdinand Negre, and Executive Director Kenneth Tanate at the MOA signing between the PCC and MLQU at the PCC's Quezon City office on May 14.



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo (third from left), LTO Executive Director Greg Pua Jr. (second from left), and PCC Executive Director Kenneth Tanate (leftmost) sign the MOA between the two agencies, with PCC Commissioner Ferdinand Negre (rightmost) serving as a witness at the LTO office in Quezon City on June 25.

New thresholds for merger notification take effect

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

New thresholds for mandatory notification of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) took effect on March 1. With the adjustment, a transaction having a size of party (SOP) of PhP 8.5 billion and size of transaction (SOT) of PhP 3.5 billion must be notified to the PCC for review before the transaction is consummated.

The new thresholds replace the previous SOP of PhP 7.8 billion and SOT of PhP 3.2 billion, which were in effect from March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. Notifications filed before March 1, 2025, those undergoing M&A reviews, and transactions already decided by the Commission will not be affected.

This marks the eighth adjustment to the thresholds since the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) was enacted in 2015, when the

baseline threshold was set at PhP 1 billion. The thresholds for compulsory notification are adjusted annually based on the previous year's nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

The PCC is mandated to review M&As to prevent deals that could substantially lessen competition in the relevant market. Entities are required to notify the PCC when both the SOP and SOT thresholds are met. However, even if a transaction falls below the notification thresholds, the PCC may still initiate a review *motu proprio*, or by its own initiative, if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that the transaction could significantly harm competition, or preliminary findings suggest it already has. ■





(From left to right, onstage) UEP training coordinator Janeca Lagrimas, PCC CBAD Chief Inah Geneve Mangilin, DILG Region 8 LGCDD Chief Rudith Roca, and UEP Professors Daisy Lily Balanquit, Emily Adora, and Precious Jade Villegas, along with the participants of the "Orientation on the Philippine Competition Act and the National Competition Policy" held on April 29 in Tacloban City.

PCC sustains joint competition advocacy activities with state universities

By Erica Mae Libero and Davinci Maru

As part of its efforts to promote fair competition nationwide, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has entered the second year of its partnership with state universities to roll out forums across the country under its Competition Local Advocacy Network (CLAN) Project.

The PCC held an orientation in Tacloban City on April 29 in partnership with the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)

Region 8. The event brought together representatives from local government units (LGUs), state universities, trade associations, and business groups to deepen their understanding of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the National Competition Policy (NCP). PCC officials and experts from the UEP discussed the benefits of market competition, the consequences of anti-competitive practices, and the value of compliance in fostering integrity among market players.

Continuing the campaign, the PCC collaborated with the Batangas State University to organize the Multisectoral Forum on the NCP and the Competition Advocacy Pledge (CAP) in Calamba City, Laguna, on June 5. The orientation was designed to engage business groups and LGUs across CALABARZON, home to the country's second-largest concentration of micro, small, and medium enterprises per data of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The forum highlighted the role of competition in protecting consumers and boosting innovation.

Backed by regional offices of the DTI, the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development, and the DILG, the CLAN series is being held in various cities across the country until October. The PCC aims to build a strong culture of competition at the local level through the CLAN, a component project of its Champions of Competition Program. ■



PCC CBAD Chief Inah Geneve Mangilin introduces the CAP to local stakeholders at the orientation in Calamba City on June 5.

New initiative to train local agencies in competition assessment kicks off

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has begun the rollout of the PCC Resource Training on National Competition Policy and Competition Impact Assessment Engagements (PRINCE) initiative, seeking to equip local agencies across the country with tools for integrating fair competition principles into public policy.

Kicking off in Baguio City on April 2-3, the training gathered regional staff from key agencies and local governments in Northern Luzon. Through lectures and interactive workshops, participants gained a deeper understanding of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the benefits of competition. They also learned how to conduct competition impact assessments (CIA) using PCC's checklist. The training supported the implementation of Administrative Order No. 44, which mandates a whole-of-government approach to promoting fair competition.

On May 7-8, the PCC conducted the Cebu leg of PRINCE, where officials from regional agencies and local government units (LGUs) explored how

competition policy intersects with emerging economic trends, such as artificial intelligence and e-commerce. Participants welcomed the opportunity for future collaboration and emphasized the need for stronger regional presence by the PCC.

The most recent leg was held in Legazpi City on June 18-19, drawing participation from 15 individuals from Bicol's regional agencies, justice sector representatives, and the Legazpi City LGU. The session clarified the PCC's broader mandate and highlighted how competition policy can safeguard consumer welfare and economic efficiency. It also helped dispel misconceptions about the scope of the PCA, underscoring its applicability to both public and private institutions.

Through the PRINCE initiative, the PCC empowers local institutions in embedding competition principles into governance and development planning. With the inclusion of more regions, the PRINCE program hopes to reinforce a nationwide commitment to building inclusive, responsive, and competitive markets. ■



Staff from various PCC offices join representatives from the DepDEV-Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley Region, and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR); local government units of Benguet Province, Baguio City, and the Municipality of Kapangan; Anti-Red Tape Authority Northern Luzon; and regional offices of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Trade and Industry in CAR at the Baguio leg of PRINCE on April 2-3.

Strategic policy dialogues with ARTA, DA, NWRB advance regulatory reform

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) conducted a series of strategic policy with key government agencies to discuss competition concerns and explored reforms in the agriculture and water sectors.

In the dialogue with the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) on May 5, the PCC discussed the impact of non-tariff measures (NTMs) in the livestock and poultry subsectors. Findings from a recent PCC study revealed that while sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures serve important health functions, overly burdensome regulations can hinder competition and market access. The dialogue identified opportunities for streamlining procedures and aligning regulatory mandates to foster more efficient and competitive outcomes.

The PCC also held a dialogue with the Department of Agriculture (DA) on May 26 to discuss ongoing efforts to modernize and

simplify NTMs. The discussion highlighted initiatives such as Administrative Order No. 20 and the amendment of Administrative Circular No. 6, both of which aim to reduce regulatory friction in agricultural trade. The DA expressed intent to adopt risk-based inspection protocols and emphasized alignment with international standards, such as those of the Codex Alimentarius (also known as the Philippines' "Food Code"). Both agencies agreed on continued collaboration and joint capacity-building efforts to embed pro-competition principles in future policymaking.

On June 11, the PCC convened with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to assess competitive dynamics in the water distribution sector. While natural monopolies present inherent challenges, both agencies explored innovative approaches to improve accountability, including stricter tariff oversight and global best practices such as retail competition models. ■



PCC Commissioner Marah Victoria Querol (ninth from left), Economics Office Acting Director III Kirsten Dela Cruz (eighth from left) and other PCC staff with Dir. Marbida Marbida (sixth from left) heading the ARTA delegation during the strategic policy dialogue held on May 5 at the PCC office in Quezon City.



PCC Legislative Liaison Office Chief Maria Dominique Lucenario begins the BACON session for representatives of the DA with a presentation of the agenda on May 2.

PCC boosts ties with DOH, DA, DOJ-OFC to promote fair competition in key sectors

By Amylyn Castro and Ana Maria Mijares

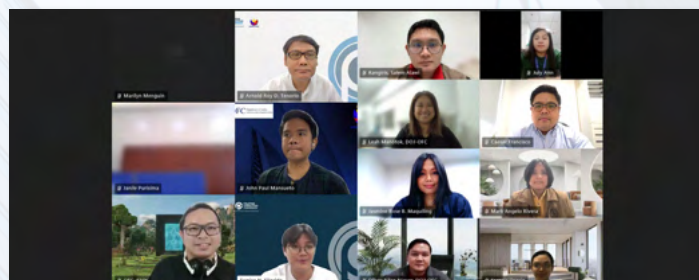
The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) sustained its efforts to reinforce partnerships with key government agencies in promoting the integration of competition principles into public policymaking and enforcement through a series of targeted engagements under its Best Advocates of Competition Network (BACON) and Competition Orientation Outreach Program (COOP).

In the health sector, the PCC hosted a BACON session with the Department of Health (DOH)–Legal Services on May 2 to explore areas of collaboration on competition-related policies. Discussions included an overview of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA), the National Competition Policy, and the PCC’s competition impact assessment (CIA) checklist, designed to help agencies evaluate the pro-competitiveness of policies and regulations. The session supported ongoing negotiations for a formal memorandum of agreement and set the stage for future data sharing, policy consultations, and capacity-building activities.

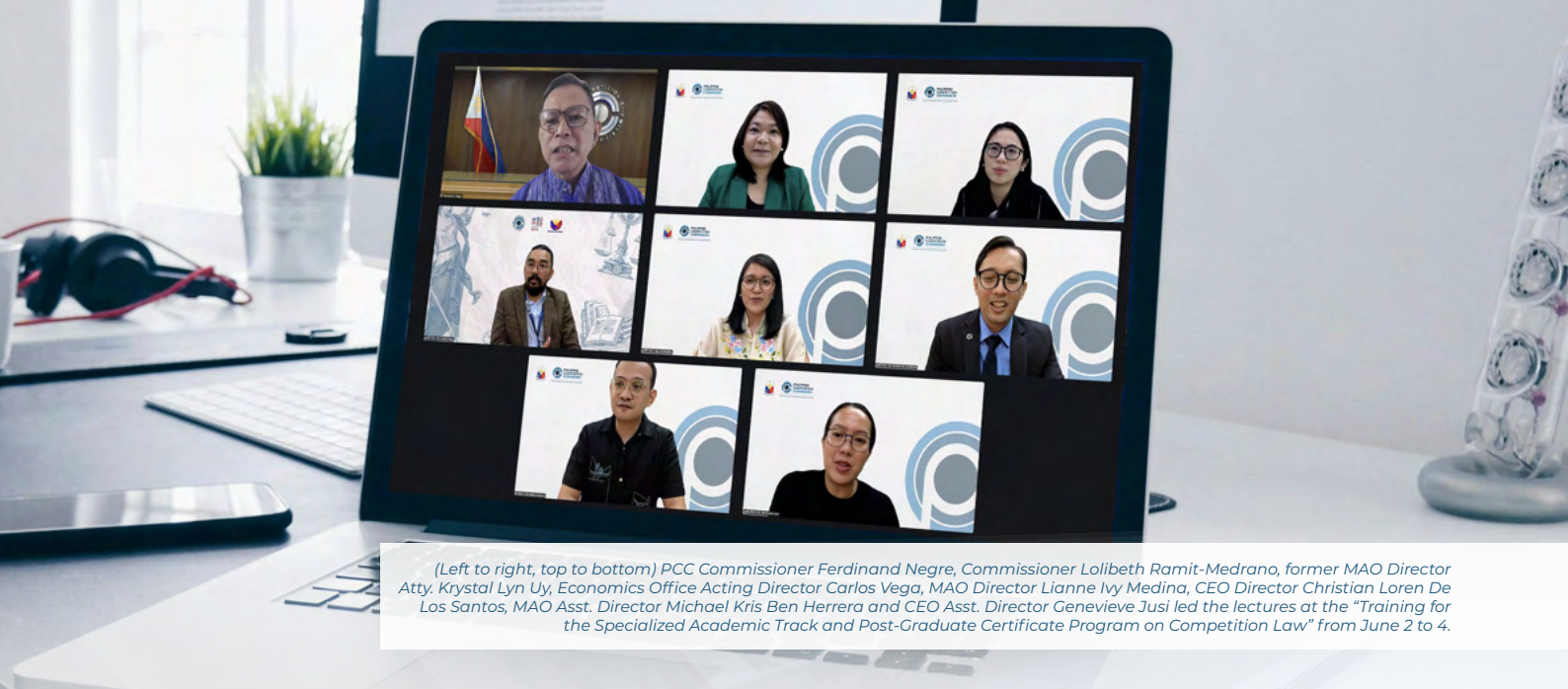
The PCC also conducted a BACON activity with the Department of Agriculture (DA) through a sectoral briefing on June 26 that built on previous policy dialogues. The session brought

together representatives from various DA bureaus and attached agencies to discuss the application of competition principles in agriculture. The forum addressed practical policy challenges and explored how CIAs could be systematically integrated into the DA’s internal policymaking and legislative review processes.

To enhance institutional coordination on enforcement, the PCC also held an online orientation for new members of the Department of Justice–Office for Competition (DOJ-OFC) on May 16. The session provided a deep dive into the PCA’s prohibitions, enforcement mechanisms, and DOJ-OFC’s vital role in case resolution. ■



CKMO Director Arnold Roy Tenorio, CEO Litigation Division Acting Chief Jasmine Rose Maquiling, and DOJ-OFC OIC Director Caesar Jose Francisco, together with new DOJ-OFC employees, during the COOP activity held on May 16.



(Left to right, top to bottom) PCC Commissioner Ferdinand Negre, Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano, former MAO Director Atty. Krystal Lyn Uy, Economics Office Acting Director Carlos Vega, MAO Director Lianne Ivy Medina, CEO Director Christian Loren De Los Santos, MAO Asst. Director Michael Kris Ben Herrera and CEO Asst. Director Genevieve Jusi led the lectures at the "Training for the Specialized Academic Track and Post-Graduate Certificate Program on Competition Law" from June 2 to 4.

Law professors trained for specialized competition course offerings

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

To prepare law professors for the rollout of two new specialized programs on competition law, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) conducted an intensive online course titled 'Training for the Specialized Academic Track and Post-Graduate Certificate Program on Competition Law,' on June 2-4.

The initiative is part of the PCC's advocacy to equip law professors with substantive and procedural knowledge, as well as practical tools, to teach competition law effectively. The training supports the specialized academic track and post-graduate certificate on competition law that the Legal Education Board (LEB) approved last March 14. In his welcome remarks, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo underscored the importance of strengthening legal education in competition law, which remains relatively new in the country. He acknowledged the limited presence of competition law in law school curricula and emphasized the need for more equipped educators. Quoting from the LEB resolution, Aguinaldo said, "such program supports not only the development of legal expertise in this critical area but also fosters a deeper understanding of how competition law shapes industries, impacts economic development, and protects consumers."

The pilot training drew widespread interest from over 100 law professors and lecturers across the country. Key topics covered during the three-day lecture included the following:

- Overview of the Philippine Competition Act by Commissioner Ferdinand Negre;
- Introduction to Economics of Competition Law by Economics Office Acting Director Carlos Vega;

- Notifications of Mergers and Acquisitions (M&As) by Mergers and Acquisitions Office (MAO) Director Lianne Ivy Medina;
- Review of M&As by MAO Asst. Director Michael Kris Ben Herrera;
- Anti-Competitive Agreements and Abuse of Dominance by Competition Enforcement Office (CEO) Asst. Director Genevieve Jusi;
- Remedies in Competition Enforcement and Leniency and Dawn Raids by CEO Director Christian Loren De Los Santos;
- Cross-border Cartels and M&As by former MAO Director Krystal Lyn Uy; and
- Comparative Competition Law and Emerging Trends by Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano.

In her closing message, Medrano said, "This training marks the concrete implementation of academic reforms in collaboration with the LEB. What was then a proposal is now a living, functioning curriculum." She added that these activities form part of the PCC's "broader commitment to make competition law more accessible, relevant, and implements the government's goal of building a competitive and inclusive economy in the digital age."

The training ended with a call to recognize competition law as a vital and evolving field in legal education. Participants were encouraged to deepen their expertise and join future initiatives, including the upcoming PCC Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Program on Competition Law in the third quarter of the year. ■

Insights on competition law tackled during forum for Asia-Pacific judges

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

Commissioner Ferdinand Negre of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) shared insights on the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) during the 15th Competition Law Seminar for Asia-Pacific Judges in Makati City on May 29-30. His discussion covered the PCA's fundamental pillars, common violations, and essential procedural matters, which is particularly beneficial for the Philippine judges who will be handling competition cases.

Negre emphasized the PCA's threefold purpose: enhancing economic efficiency and promoting free and fair competition, preventing economic concentration, and protecting consumer welfare, primarily by penalizing anti-competitive agreements, abuses of dominant position, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions. He emphasized the PCA's broad applicability across Philippine trade, industry, and commerce.

The highlight of his presentation was the PCA's extra-territorial application—that business conduct outside the Philippines can be covered if it has direct, substantial, and reasonably foreseeable effects on Philippine markets. Exceptions were also clarified, such as collective bargaining agreements. Procedural discussions included the Supreme Court's 2019 Rules on Administrative Search and Inspection (RASI).

Negre also underscored that fines shall be tripled for PCA violations involving basic necessities and prime commodities. Lastly, he highlighted the PCC's original and primary jurisdiction in the enforcement and regulation of all competition-related issues.

Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo delivered the opening remarks for the event, where he cited the PCC's strengthened collaboration with the Supreme Court, leading to the enactment of rules for inspection orders. These rules empowered the PCC to conduct "dawn raids," a tool it used in September 2023 for an ongoing probe into a suspected onion cartel.

The 15th Competition Law Seminar for Asia-Pacific Judges was organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Korea Policy Centre together with the Philippine Judicial Academy of the Supreme Court. ■



PCC Commissioner Ferdinand Negre presenting the basics of the PCA, common violations, and procedural matters before Philippine judges at the 15th Competition Law Seminar for Asia-Pacific Judges in Makati City on May 29-30. (Photo courtesy of the Supreme Court Communications Office.)

IN THE NEWS

PCC taps Korean-donated system to streamline competition review

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) is set to unveil a new case management system as part of its bid to streamline the handling of competition-related cases.

[*\(Alden Monzon, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 24 April 2025\)*](#)

PCC, MLQU partner to train law students in competition law

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) and Manuel L. Quezon University (MLQU) have signed an agreement aimed at equipping future legal professionals with practical experience in the field of competition law.

[*\(Kris Crismundo, Philippine News Agency, 16 May 2025\)*](#)

Philippines plans to improve livestock, poultry import rules

Measures are under way to improve the country's livestock and poultry import regulations amid concerns over non-tariff measures that may be stifling market competition, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) said on Thursday.

[*\(Alden Monzon, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 29 May 2025\)*](#)

Philippine antitrust watchdog rolls out compliance toolkit

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) on Saturday said it has launched a practical compliance toolkit designed to help businesses align themselves with the country's competition laws.

[*\(Alden Monzon, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1 June 2025\)*](#)



(From left) PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, South Korean Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Sang-Hwa, KOICA Philippines Country Director Jung Youngsun, and U-plus IT project manager Boo Kyeongung at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the case management system at the PCC's Quezon City office on April 23.

New case management system promises more efficient reporting of anti-competitive practices

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) will begin using a new case management system from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to enhance the antitrust agency's case processing capabilities.

PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, South Korean Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Sang-Hwa, and KOICA Philippines Country Director Jung Youngsun attended the turnover ceremony of the system at the PCC's office in Quezon City on April 23.

Aguinaldo emphasized that the system promises a faster, simpler, and more secure experience for the public when reporting potential anti-competitive practices.

The new system streamlines the process of reporting, which currently requires users to email requests for Microsoft SharePoint access, wait for PCC staff to create dedicated folders, and receive login details. The public will be able to directly submit their reports and securely upload relevant documents through the official PCC website.

"This new system represents a significant leap forward in making it easier for the public to contribute to a competitive marketplace. We are deeply grateful to KOICA for their invaluable support in this crucial initiative," Aguinaldo said. ■

Philippines shares approaches to merger review, digital finance at OECD forum

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

Commissioner Marah Victoria Querol of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) engaged with international counterparts to share the Philippines' perspectives on merger control and digital finance regulation at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Competition Committee Meetings held on June 16-26 in Paris, France.

In a roundtable discussion, Querol shared the PCC's approach to assessing efficiency claims in merger reviews. The delegates to the roundtable discussed the types of efficiencies that may be considered, the criteria for assessment, as well as the type of evidence necessary, and who has the burden of proof.

In another roundtable discussion, Querol discussed the rapidly evolving mobile payments landscape in the Philippines and the ongoing efforts by the government to support the growth of digital transactions and improve the security and efficiency of transactions. She also shared PCC's experience in merger review, demonstrating the PCC's commitment to maintain fair competition while supporting innovation and financial inclusion.

The OECD Roundtables serve as a vital platform for sharing best practices and strengthening international cooperation in competition policy. The PCC's active engagement reflects its dedication to aligning with global standards and advancing fair and competitive markets in the Philippines. ■



PCC Commissioner Marah Victoria Querol engaged in discussion on merger reviews and digital finance at the OECD Competition Committee Meetings conducted in Paris, France on June 16-26.

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