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PHILIPPINE COMPETITION BULLETIN

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**PHILIPPINE
COMPETITION
COMMISSION**

Ensuring businesses compete and consumers benefit

PCC's partner SUCs champion fair competition in CLAN Year 1 rollout

By Lea Marie Diño

The Philippine Competition Commission's (PCC) partner-state universities concluded their first year of activities to promote competition law and policy under the Competition Local Advocacy Network (CLAN) Project.

The CLAN Project is part of the Champions of Competition (CoC) Program, one of PCC's strategic initiatives aimed at engaging various stakeholders to raise awareness on competition law.

Under the CLAN Project, the PCC, through its Capacity-Building and Advocacy Division, tapped 10 state universities and colleges (SUCs) to help in raising awareness of competition law and policy in their respective localities. Partner SUCs include the Batangas State University, Bukidnon State University, Bulacan State University, Mariano Marcos State University, Mindanao State University, Negros Oriental State University, Palawan State University, Sultan Kudarat State University, University of Eastern Philippines and West Visayas State University.

On their first year as PCC partners under the CLAN, the SUCs conducted a combined 18

orientation seminars. As part of the project, each SUC organized a training team composed of members of their law, economics and business faculties who served as resource persons during the seminars.

The seminars covered the basics of market competition, the Philippine Competition Act and the National Competition Policy, and targeted government agencies, businesses, and the academe in the localities where these SUCs operate.

On November 11-15, the CLAN training teams underwent a refresher course organized by the PCC to assess the conduct of the first wave of seminars and to map out plans for the following year. The project is gearing up for expansion, with the introduction of competition compliance for businesses.

PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo emphasized the CLAN's role in promoting competition. "By working together, we can create a world where everyone benefits from fair competition," he told CLAN training team members during the refresher course.

—with Paul Jeffrey Ballentos



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo highlighted the key role CoC-CLAN plays in promoting market competition during the refresher course for CLAN teams held on November 11-15.



Bulacan State University Professor Rolando Garcia discussed the PCA and PCC's mandates at the local stakeholders' orientation on June 5 in Malolos, Bulacan.



Stakeholders across the country received competition law and policy training from PCC's partner SUCs, including Bukidnon State University (top left), University of Eastern Philippines (top right), and Mindanao State University (bottom).



PCC Commissioners Marah Victoria Querol (front row, second from left) and Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano (front row, third from left) with participating lecturers and lawyers during Day 1 of the PCC MCLE Program held on November 20 at the UP BGC.

Inaugural MCLE program on competition law launched

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) successfully completed its inaugural Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Program on Competition Law, aimed at deepening legal practitioners' understanding of competition law and its application in the Philippine legal framework.

The PCC's first MCLE lecture-series was conducted on November 20, 28 and 29, and December 5 and 6 at the University of the Philippines Bonifacio Global City campus. Over five days, subject matter experts from the PCC, the academe, and the private sector discussed various aspects of competition law, including economic theories, procedural rules, emerging trends and development.

In her closing remarks, PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano emphasized the importance of the MCLE program in equipping legal professionals with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of competition law. She highlighted the PCC's commitment to democratizing competition education and making it accessible to practitioners and stakeholders. "This program is not just about compliance with MCLE requirements; it is about elevating the quality of legal practice in competition law," she said.

The MCLE program aligns with the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 deliverable to capacitate competition specialists. Medrano announced plans to make the MCLE lecture series a regular program of the PCC, with the second round planned for the second quarter of 2025. ■

ADVOCACY ROUNDUP

Specialized academic programs for competition law eyed

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

Members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) from the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) and the Legal Education Board (LEB) convened on October 3 to discuss the creation of the Post-Graduate Certificate Program and Juris Doctor Academic Track for Competition Law. This initiative aims to elevate the competence and proficiency of legal practitioners and compliance officers in competition law.

PCC Commissioner Michael Peloton and LEB Commissioner Lorenzo Reyes currently serve as co-chairs of the TWG. Its members include representatives from the PCC, the LEB, and the University of the Philippines Competition Law and Policy Program (UP CLPP), namely PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano, Legal Services Division Chief Michelle Diana Maniwang-Basa, Mergers and Acquisitions Office lawyer Mario Rosete III, and Competition Enforcement Office Monitoring and Investigation Division Chief Alyssa Carmelli

Castillo; LEB Commissioner Salex Alibogha; and UP CLPP Program Director Gwen Grecia-De Vera and lawyers Paolo Emmanuel Tamase and James Daniel Donato.

Following the meeting, the PCC, LEB, and UP CLPP held a public consultation on December 2 to gather feedback on the proposed specialized academic track and post-graduate certificate program in competition law. Representatives of legal education institutions attended the event to review and provide inputs on the proposed programs, with the goal of implementing these in law schools across the Philippines.

During the consultation, Medrano highlighted the importance of incorporating competition law into legal education and the need to equip future lawyers with the knowledge and skills to navigate complex legal and economic landscapes, especially in the era of rapid technological advancements and evolving business models. —with Davinci Maru ■



Members of the TWG from the PCC, LEB, and UP CLPP with representatives from various legal education institutions during a public consultation on the proposed specialized academic track and post-graduate certificate program in competition law held on December 2.

Dialogue held with Quezon City LGU on competition, local governance

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

On December 3, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) and the Quezon City Government (QC LGU) held a dialogue on competition policy at the Quezon City Hall.

Representatives from the PCC Enforcement Office, Mergers and Acquisitions Office, and Economics Office provided an overview of the Philippine Competition Act and the National Competition Policy for city councilors and unit heads of the QC LGU.

PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo underscored the critical role of LGUs in fostering fair competition to benefit consumers and businesses.

“By ensuring fair competition, we can achieve better quality products, more reasonable prices, and increased innovation,” Aguinaldo said. He also highlighted Administrative Order No. 44, which mandates all government agencies to adopt pro-competitive policies.

Quezon City Mayor Ma. Josefina Belmonte recognized the importance of collaboration in addressing competition issues and welcomed further dialogue. Belmonte and members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod committed to exploring opportunities for cooperation with the PCC. ■

PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo and Quezon City Mayor Ma. Josefina Belmonte during the PCC-QC LGU dialogue on the role of competition law and policy in local governance on December 3.

WORKSHOP ON COMPETITION IN DIGITAL MARKETS

18-19 November 2024

Manila, Philippines



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo delivers his welcome remarks during the PCC-OECD/KPC's Workshop on Competition in Digital Markets on November 18 in Quezon City.

Competition authorities learn from international experts at ‘Competition in Digital Markets’ workshop

■ ■ ■ By Lea Gomez

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Korea Policy Centre (OECD/KPC), hosted the “Workshop on Competition in Digital Markets” on November 18-19 in Quezon City. The event brought together international experts to guide competition authorities in understanding the digital market landscape through discussions and practical exercises, including team-based hypothetical casework.

In his opening remarks, Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo highlighted the need for regulators to better understand the rapidly changing digital landscape. He noted the PCC’s commitment to staying informed on digital trends and expressed optimism that insights from global

experts would enhance the agency’s regulatory efforts to promote fair competition.

Day 1 of the workshop covered digital markets and anti-competitive practices, including the US vs. Google case, which were discussed by Patricia Brink of the US Department of Justice. It was followed by a presentation on an abuse of dominance case by Chan Park from the Korea Fair Trade Commission. Day 2 focused on digital mergers, with OECD Senior Competition Expert Alessandra Tonazzi discussing theories of harm and Brink analyzing the US vs. Sabre case. Experts from Australia, the EU, and the Philippines shared insights on market studies and regulations, concluding with key takeaways on the importance of strong competition policies in digital markets. ■





PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo (center) participates in a panel discussion titled "Sustainability and Antitrust: What Challenges in Asia-Pacific?" at the 10th Antitrust in Asia Conference held in Hong Kong on November 7. (Photo courtesy of Jason Chung for Concurrences).

PCC highlights synergy between antitrust and sustainability at Hong Kong panel

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo highlighted the growing overlap between antitrust regulations and sustainable development initiatives at the "10th Antitrust in Asia Conference" held in Hong Kong on November 7.

In a panel discussion, Aguinaldo explained that the PCC is actively integrating sustainability into its work, particularly when reviewing mergers and acquisitions (M&As) and crafting new policies. To date, the PCC has approved 25 mergers in the renewable energy sector, supporting the Philippines' goal of transitioning to cleaner energy sources.

The PCC has also contributed to various bills on sustainability and submitted position papers advocating for fiscal subsidies to electric vehicles and the institutionalization of a framework for clean energy transition policies. In 2021, the PCC Economics Office published studies on the refined petroleum industry and the fertilizer sectors, both of which considered environmental impact in their assessments. Currently, the same

office is conducting a study on the impact of Sustainable Development Goals on merger reviews and the substitutability of energy-efficient appliances.

The National Competition Policy (NCP), as noted by Aguinaldo, is the most relevant government policy that balances environmental sustainability and competition. This whole-of-government approach encourages agencies to adopt pro-competitive policies, and tackles how restrictions to trade may be allowed when they are the only way to achieve policy objectives, which include environmental outcomes.

"It is clear from the foregoing cases, when it comes to both M&As and policymaking, that competition and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can often complement each other. By considering both economic efficiency and environmental impact, antitrust authorities can make decisions that benefit both consumers and the environment," Aguinaldo emphasized. ■

BulSU, PCC explore collaboration on competition research and advocacy

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, Commissioner Marah Victoria Querol, and Executive Director Kenneth Tanate welcomed a delegation from Bulacan State University (BulSU) led by its president, Dr. Teody San Andres, at the PCC office on December 3. The courtesy visit was aimed at exploring potential academic research collaborations and advocacy initiatives to promote competition.

The BulSU delegation included College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) Dean Rolando Garcia, College of Business Education and Accountancy (CBEA) faculty members Rolando Ofiaza and Antonina Santiago, and College Research Development Unit (CRDU) Research Coordinator Ruth Sealmo. BulSU is a partner institution of the PCC's Champions of Competition – Competition Local Advocacy Network (CLAN) Project. This initiative empowers state universities and colleges to promote the National Competition Policy in their respective regions. ■



(From left to right) BulSU CBEA faculty member Antonina Santiago, CRDU Research Coordinator Ruth Sealmo, CBEA faculty member Rolando Ofiaza, CCJE Dean Rolando Garcia, President Teody San Andres, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, Commissioner Marah Victoria Querol, Executive Director Kenneth Tanate, and Communications and Knowledge Management Office Director Arnold Roy Tenorio.



PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo (center) together with the attendees of the *Fostering the Competitive Neutrality of State-Owned Enterprises* book launch held on October 17 in Quezon City.

Top PCC officials weigh in on competitive neutrality, competition policy design

■ ■ ■ By Amylyn Castro

The launch of two new books became occasions for the Philippine Competition Commission's (PCC) top officials to share their insights on competitive neutrality and competition policy design.

Fostering the Competitive Neutrality of State-Owned Enterprises, Volumes 1 and 2, published by the University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance, was launched on October 17 in Quezon City. The book delves into the regulatory frameworks and best practices for ensuring fair competition involving state-owned enterprises.

In his message during the book launch, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo emphasized that the agency is committed to fostering competition and ensuring competitive neutrality, noting that the Philippine Competition Act and the National Competition Policy are foundational elements in this effort. He also highlighted the PCC's collaboration with various regulators to ensure a cohesive approach to competition enforcement across sectors.

Meanwhile, *Designing Competition Policy for Economic Development in Asia and the Pacific* was launched at the Philippine Economic Society's (PES) 62nd Annual Meeting and Conference on November 7. The book explored the role of competition policy in fostering economic growth and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Following the launch, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted an online discussion on the publication on November 27. In the webinar, PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano highlighted the importance of coordination between regulatory agencies and sectoral regulators to enhance market efficiency and consumer welfare. She emphasized the role of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 and the National Competition Policy in providing a comprehensive framework for competition enforcement. This collaborative approach aims to minimize regulatory overlap and uncertainty for businesses, fostering a more competitive and efficient market environment. ■



(From left to right) Dr. Yesim Elhan-Kayalar, advisor to the ADB-Economic Research and Development Impact Department; Dr. Yasuyuki Sawada of the University of Tokyo; Chief Economist and Director General Albert Park of the ADB-Economic Research and Development Impact Department; PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano; and Secretary Arsenio Balisacan of the National Economic and Development Authority join the ADB online discussion on *Designing Competition Policy for Economic Development in Asia and the Pacific*.

Competition's role in economic growth highlighted at Ateneo lecture

■ ■ ■ By Davinci Maru

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) held a lecture for students of the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) School of Law on October 30 to discuss the role of PCC in economic development.

During a lecture titled "Free & Competitive Markets: Market Competition and the PCC's role as Regulator," Commissioner Ferdinand Negre explained that competition drives business growth and innovation. Competition also empowers consumers by offering a wide range of high-quality goods and services at affordable prices.

"Fair competition is key to economic growth and consumer welfare," Negre said. He further highlighted the PCC's pivotal role

in implementing the National Competition Policy, a whole-of-government strategy adopted in the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, that calls on all agencies—from national line agencies to local government units and government-owned or -controlled corporations—to integrate competition principles into their policies, rules and guidelines.

Hosted by the Ateneo Law and Liberty Circle (ALLC) and Intellectual Property Society of Ateneo, the lecture featured Negre and Ateneo Law School professor Anthony Abad. The event was aimed to spark discussion on the complexities, importance, and challenges of enforcing the Philippines' competition law. ■



(From left to right) ADMU School of Law faculty member Anthony Abad, PCC Commissioner Ferdinand Negre, and ADMU School of Law faculty member and ALLC adviser Laurence Arroyo.



(From left to right) OECD competition expert Despina Pachnou, CNMC President Cani Fernandez, US-DOJ Antitrust Division Deputy Assistant Attorney General Manish Kumar, EU Directorate-General for Competition and Director of Cartels Maria Jaspers, UK-CMA Competition Enforcement Senior Director Lucilia Falsarella Pereira, and PCC Enforcement Office Monitoring and Investigation Division Chief Alyssa Carmelli Castillo.

PCC presents BiRST at 2024 ICN Cartel Workshop

■ ■ ■ By Leanne Croisette Gorosin

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) showcased its Bid Rigging Screening Tool (BiRST) at the 2024 International Competition Network (ICN) Cartel Workshop held on October 2-4 in Mexico City.

Atty. Alyssa Carmelli Castillo, chief of the PCC Enforcement Office Monitoring and Investigation Division, served as a panelist at the workshop, where she presented how BiRST helps investigators target suspicious behavior in government projects and streamline data analysis. BiRST has evolved into an online platform that has supported the PCC's investigations since 2022. The Enforcement Office is now preparing to pilot BiRST with a partner agency, enabling real-time data input for quicker detection of bid rigging.

Hosted by the Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission (COFECE), the ICN Cartel Workshop explored the challenges

competition authorities face in cartel investigation. The workshop also featured sessions on proactive detection tools, the impact of new technologies on collusion, and the future of international cooperation in cartel enforcement.

Joining Atty. Castillo in the panel were Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia (CNMC) President Cani Fernandez, United States Department of Justice (US DOJ) Antitrust Division Deputy Assistant Attorney General Manish Kumar, European Union (EU) Directorate-General for Competition Director of Cartels Maria Jaspers, and United Kingdom Competition and Markets Authority (UK CMA) Competition Enforcement Senior Director Lucilia Falsarella Pereira. The panel was moderated by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) competition expert Despina Pachnou. ■

Call for papers on competition economics

■ ■ ■ By Leanne Croisette Gorosin

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) has launched a call for papers for the Philippine Review of Economics (PRE) Journal special issue on competition economics.

Announced at the 33rd ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC) Meeting and Related Meetings held from October 28 to November 1 in Thailand, the PRE journal special issue seeks to gather papers from all over the world on the topics of strategic behavior and market structure; technology change, internal organization of firms, and productivity analysis; and antitrust regulation and competition policy.

This special issue, focusing on industrial organization and antitrust regulation, is set to be published in June 2026, in time for the PCC's 10th anniversary. The journal is published biannually by the University of the Philippines School of Economics in collaboration with the Philippine Economics Society.

In addition to the call for papers, Dr. Carlos Vega of the PCC Economics Office presented during the meeting the PCC's contribution to helping the AEGC keep abreast of emerging issues in competition policy and law. ■



The PCC announced a call for papers for the special issue on competition economics and regulation, in partnership with the PRE. (Poster courtesy of the UP School of Economics Facebook page.)

IN THE NEWS

[PH Competition Commission at National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council, nagkaroon ng dayalogo para sa patakaran ng importasyon ng isda](#)

Nagsagawa ng dayalogo ang Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) at National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC) upang pagusapan ang findings ng competition impact assessment hinggil sa regulasyon sa importasyon ng isda.

(Melany Valdoz-Reyes, Radyo Pilipinas News, October 29, 2024)

[PCC conducts workshop to equip gov't agencies with competition knowledge](#)

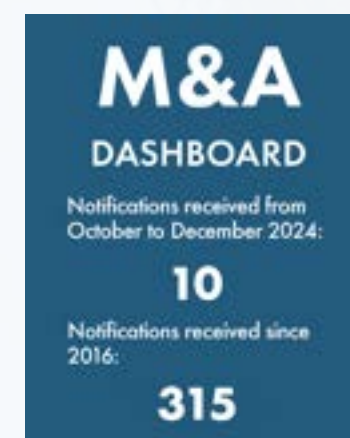
The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) conducted a workshop aimed at equipping government agencies with the tools and knowledge needed to conduct competition impact assessments (CIAs).

(Othel Campos, Manila Standard, November 11, 2024)

[Deal among Meralco, San Miguel, Aboitiz: PCC green lights \\$3.3-B LNG facility, with conditions](#)

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) on Monday said it approved the \$3.3 billion deal between the country's three largest energy firms, paving the way for plans to establish what is considered to be the most extensive liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Batangas to move forward.

(Alden Mozon, Philippine Daily Inquirer, December 24, 2024)





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