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|< prev [next](#) >|**Calabarzon LGUs streamline business registration and licensing processes**by [Charlie S. Dajao](#)

Calamba City (26 November) -- In a bid to simplify and speed-up business registration and licensing at the local end, nine (9) local government units (LGU) in Calabarzon took part in a workshop to streamline the business permit and licensing system (BPLS).

The streamlining project is in line with the Philippine Development Forum's (PDF) Growth and Investment Climate agenda, of which the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is lead convener agency.

Local governments of the cities of Lipa, Tanauan, Lucena, Antipolo, and Santa Rosa, and the municipalities of Carmona (Cavite), Cabuyao (Laguna), Lopez (Quezon) and Taytay (Rizal) participated in a three-day workshop held on November 16-18, 2009, at the Legend Villas, in Mandaluyong City.

Under the pilot phase, ten LGUS will implement the streamlined BLPS before end of December this year.

Background

According to the World Bank Doing Business Report, the current process to register a business will take 48 Days, 11 Processes, and \$237.12 (more than P11,000) to register a start-up business in the Philippines.

In 2008, it listed the Philippines at 151 out of 181 countries in the area of starting a business. The following year, the Philippine rank fell down to 155th.

The poor ranking prompted the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), a public-private task force on Philippine Competitiveness to address the improvement of the country's competitiveness from the bottom third of competitiveness rankings to the top third by 2010.

As a result, the NCC concentrates on six (6) areas expected to improve the country's competitiveness. One major area is improving transaction costs and flows, under which streamlining of the BPLS is among the solutions.

At the workshop's assessment phase, participating LGUs found that their licensing system was too burdensome for businessmen.

Thus, many businesses opt to pursue unregistered. As a result, these underground enterprises are deprived of access to services such as bank loans and state-provided business services. Since they are unregistered, taxes are not collected thus a loss of revenues for local government units.

Moreover, the scores of process steps and lengthy transaction times make a fertile ground for red-tape and corrupt practices.

Reforms

As the workshop, participating LGUs trimmed down processing steps from as high as 19 steps down to the minimum 4 steps.

The reforms included the reduction of requirements in documents, clearances and the number of signatories, and the setting of maximum transaction times for every sub-process.

The streamlined - now "business-friendly" system - minimizes, if not eliminate, red-tape and would increase revenues from local taxes due to increased business registrations encouraged by a business-friendly registration system.

The reform would improve the ranking of the Philippines from its

current post in the World Bank Doing Business Report, consequently improving the Philippine's business climate and competitiveness thus making the country more attractive to investors.

Models

Resource persons from Danao City, Cebu; Ormoc City, and Calbayog City - LGUs that have already operated streamlined systems - shared their experiences.

Moreover, the National Economic Research and Business Action Center (NERBAC) in Central Luzon added inspiring experiences for the participants by recounting the enthusiastic support of the region's governors to the streamlining project.

During the third day at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel, LGUs from Central Luzon joined the Calabarzon group to pay attention to yet another round of sharing knowledge and best practices.

Four city governments in the National Capital Region - Manila, Mandaluyong, Marikina and Quezon City - presented their respective approaches and strategies in crafting and implementing the reforms in their respective governments.

The 10 pilot LGUs will then be the models for Calabarzon and in turn would assist in the reforms for rest of the region.

Due on the first quarter of 2010 will be another set of Calabarzon LGUs to reform and implement a streamlined BPLS.

It is envisioned that by the end of 2010, majority of the local governments in Calabarzon will be operating a fast and efficient BPLS - most likely an IT-driven system interconnected with the Philippine Business Registry (PBR) - to be online that would be accessible from any point of the globe.

The PBR is a web-based business registration system to cover all legal business establishments under different authorities, and a service tool for trade facilitation.

The workshop was organized by the Department of Trade and Industry along with the Department of Interior and Local Governments, and supported by the International Finance Corporation, and the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit). (DTI 4A)

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