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PHILIPPINE COMPETITION BULLETIN

WHAT'S INSIDE

PHILIPPINE COMPETITION COMMISSION

Ensuring businesses compete and consumers benefit

Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo welcomes stakeholders to the 2026 Manila Forum on Competition in Developing Countries held on February 2-3 in Pasig City.

2026 Manila Forum reflects on institutionalizing competition enforcement

By Lea Marie Diño

Competition experts and stakeholders convened at the Philippine Competition Commission's (PCC) 2026 Manila Forum on Competition in Developing Countries, held on February 2-3 in Pasig City, to discuss the need to institutionalize antitrust enforcement in the digital age.

With the theme "Institutionalizing Antitrust: Legal and Economic Reflections on Competition Enforcement in the Digital Age," this year's flagship event brought together competition authorities, regulators, industry experts, policymakers, and members of the academe to examine emerging challenges in market regulation, identify actions that will foster inclusive growth, and assess how competition law and policy can effectively address these issues. The event also marked the PCC's 10th anniversary.

In welcoming participants, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo underscored the need for resilient institutions that can adapt to increasingly data-driven markets. "For developing economies, resource constraints and uneven institutional maturity compound the challenges of digitalization. Competition policy must align with broader development objectives while remaining credible and effective," he added.

Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan delivered a message on behalf of the Philippine government, echoing the call to enforce policies aligned with the national development agenda and to mainstream competition policy in government decision-making.

Senator Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, principal sponsor of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA), delivered a video message highlighting the law's role in strengthening the economy and fostering innovation in a rapidly evolving digital market.

In his keynote address, Benoît Durand, partner at RBB Economics, cited the importance of grounding competition law and policy in local realities rather than merely replicating frameworks from other jurisdictions that may not be effective. He added that enforcement must be guided by sound economic principles and designed to deter anti-competitive conduct while promoting inclusive growth.

Durand outlined four strategies for building resilient institutions: strengthening institutional foundations, promoting market contestability, modernizing technical toolkits, and maintaining economic rigor in enforcement.

The forum also featured five panel sessions on key themes, including competition and innovation, legal and institutional reforms in developing economies, the role of economic analysis in enforcement, competition issues in e-commerce and fintech, and pathways toward institutional resilience.

Speakers included representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCCS), the Trade Competition Commission of Thailand (TCCT), and the Competition Authority of Kenya, alongside experts from the government, academia, and industry. ■

RBB Economics Partner Benoît Durand delivers keynote address on building resilient competition institutions.

Students gather at the PCC's booth during the UP Law Student Government's career fair on January 28-30.

PCC Competition Academy expands student outreach through campus engagements

By Judielyn Agua

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), through its Competition Academy, rolled out student-focused initiatives in the first quarter of 2026 to strengthen awareness of competition law and policy, engaging students from five universities through campus tours and career fairs.

On January 28-30, the PCC, through the Administrative Office-Human Capital Management Division (AO-HCMD) and the Communications and Knowledge Management Office (CKMO)-Competition Academy, participated in Destinations 2026, the annual career and internship fair organized by the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Student Government. The event provided an opportunity for the PCC to promote competition law as a viable career path for law students.

On February 9, the PCC served as an impact partner at the UP Diliman School of Economics (UPSE) Career in Public Service (CiPS) Job Fair 2026. Representatives from the Competition Academy and the Economics Office (EO) engaged students through booth activities and panel discussions on careers in government and competition policy. On March 4, the PCC joined the UP Career Assistance Program (CAP) Career Fair 2026, where the Competition Academy and the AO-HCMD shared educational resources and discussed the PCC's mandate with graduating students and job seekers.

PCC Economist I Vincent Doctama (second from right) presents career pathways in the PCC and in the field of competition law and policy during the UP Diliman School of Economics (UPSE) Career in Public Service Job Fair on February 9.

Beyond career fairs, the Competition Academy launched its Competition Campus Tour, which brings competition principles directly to academic institutions.

The tour began at UPSE on the afternoon of February 9, following the UP CiPS Job Fair earlier that day. Students were introduced to competition principles and prohibited conduct under the Philippine Competition Act (PCA). Subsequent sessions were held at the University of Santo Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, University of Asia and the Pacific, and De La Salle University, engaging students from economics, business, and legal programs.

CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero noted that these initiatives aim to foster greater interest in competition law among students and future professionals. The Competition Academy also offers complementary student-focused programs, including the PCC Internship Program, Competition Cup, Competition Career Expo, and a research conference on competition. ■

CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero (12th from left), alongside PCC economists Samantha Louise Nepomuceno and Vincent Doctama, and CKMO Senior Learning Specialist Rosette Anne Consolacion together with participants during the first rollout of the Competition Academy Campus Tour at the UP Diliman School of Economics (UPSE).

CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero (16th from left) together with DLSU School of Economics (SOE) Dean Arlene Inocencio, EO's Business and Economics Division Chief Edgardo Manuel Jopson, DLSU SOE Associate Dean Jason Alinsunurin, and CKMO Senior Learning Specialist Rosette Anne Consolacion during the fifth and final stop of the quarter for the Competition Academy's Campus Tour at DLSU.

CLAN expands reach to SOCCSKSARGEN and Central Luzon

By Jannel Ventura

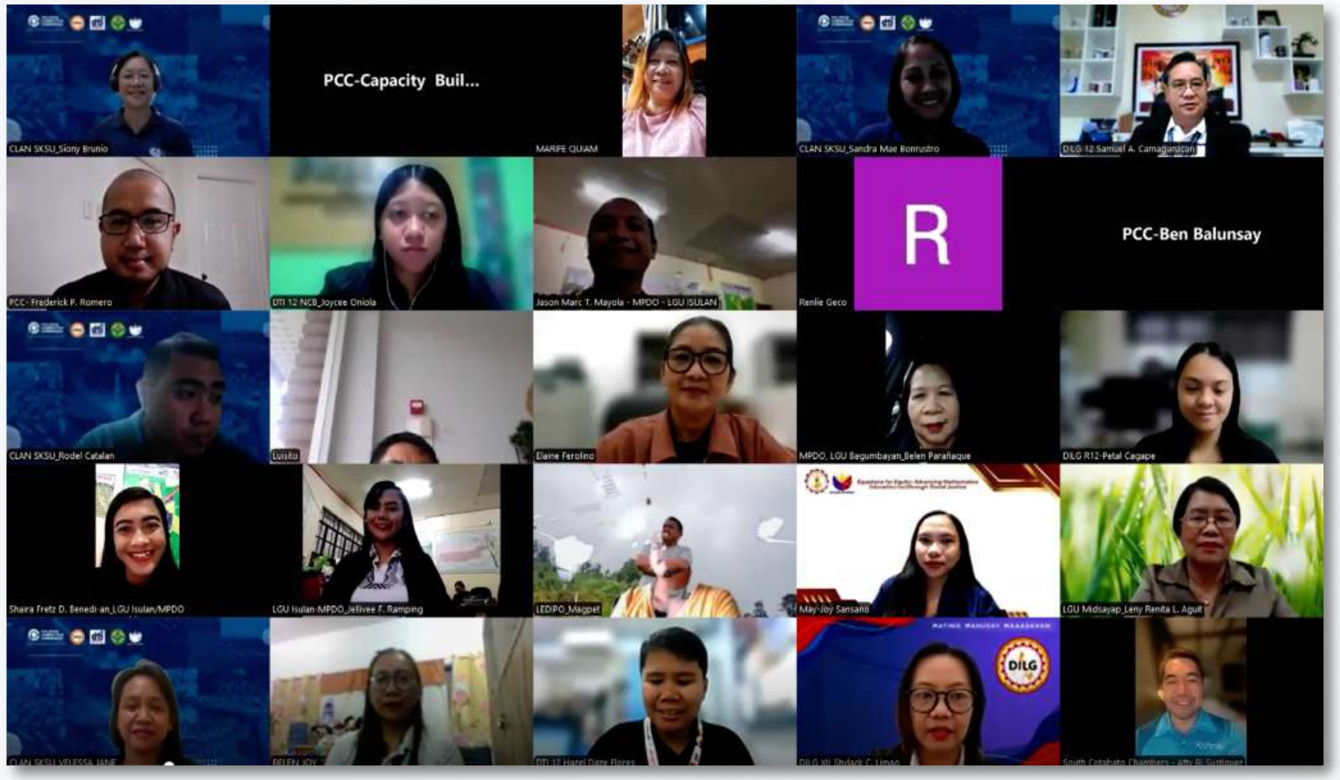
As part of the Competition Local Advocacy Network (CLAN) Project, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), through its Capacity Building and Advocacy Division (CBAD), conducted orientation sessions on both the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the National Competition Policy (NCP), for stakeholders in SOCCSKSARGEN as well as for those in Central Luzon, during the first quarter of the year.

The PCC partnered with the Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region XII, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region XII for the SOCCSKSARGEN session on February 20.

The Commission then collaborated with the Angeles University Foundation (AUF) and Bulacan State University (BulSU) for the Central Luzon session on March 27. Both activities were conducted virtually.

The sessions brought together participants from micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives, business groups, academe, and government agencies.

PCC Communications and Knowledge Management Office (CKMO) Director IV Frederick Romero emphasized the importance of fair competition in regional economies, noting that it drives innovation, attracts investments, and improves consumer welfare.



Competition Local Advocacy Network (CLAN) session in the SOCCSKSARGEN region on February 20 via Zoom with almost 150 participants representing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives, business groups, and local government units from the region. Joining them are DILG XII Assistant Regional Director Samuel Camaganacan (first row, rightmost) and CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero (second row, leftmost).

Partner institutions expressed their support for the initiative, highlighting the importance of both ethical business practices and equal opportunities. Government agencies, on their part, reaffirmed their role in supporting MSMEs and advancing inclusive development.

The orientation sessions covered key concepts in competition law, including anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominance, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions. Resource speakers explained how competition promotes lower prices, better product quality, increased innovation, and greater consumer choice.

Participants were also introduced to the Competition Compliance Program (CCP) Toolkit, which guides organizations in integrating competition principles into their operations through leadership commitment, risk identification, internal policies, and monitoring mechanisms.

Now in its third year, the CLAN continues to expand its reach, with the PCC strengthening its partnerships with both the academe and the industry to promote a fair and competitive business environment.

(Clockwise from top left) CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero; Bulacan State University-College of Business Education and Accountancy Instructor Rolando Ofiaza; CKMO-CBAD Chief Inah Geneve Mangilin; and College of Criminal Justice Education Dean Rolando Garcia during the CLAN session for Central Luzon on March 27 via Zoom.

PCC scales up advocacy outreach through COOP

By Lea Gomez

Through its Competition Orientation Outreach Program (COOP), the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) continues to expand its engagement with both students and academic institutions.

On January 22, the PCC conducted a competition orientation session for senior high school students and faculty members of La Salle Green Hills (LSGH), introducing key principles under both the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) and the Commission's mandate. The program, which included an office tour, highlighted the importance of fair market competition in the everyday lives of consumers.

Communications and Knowledge Management Office (CKMO) Director IV Frederick Romero led the session, discussing how competition influences prices, consumer choices, and product quality. CKMO Training Specialist III Licelle Varias, Competition Enforcement Office (CEO) lawyers Anthalia Rodrigazo and Ken Lennart Millar, and Investigation Agent II Angelo Rayos Del Sol also presented the Commission's enforcement and advocacy initiatives.

PCC CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero (left photo) and CEO Attorney II Ken Lennart Millar, Investigation Agent II Angelo Rayos Del Sol, and Attorney III Anthalia Rodrigazo (right photo) engage participants during the Q&A session at the LSGH orientation.

CKMO-CBAD Training Specialist III Licelle Varias discusses the PCC's mandate during the COOP session with LSGH.

EO CPRO III Antonio Miguel Ventura (left) and CKMO Training Specialist III Aislynn Fabiola Manuel (right) deliver their talk as session speakers during the competition orientation with UPSE students.

CKMO Senior Learning Specialist Rosette Anne Consolacion welcomes UPSE students during the COOP session.

On March 9, the PCC hosted 40 students from the University of the Philippines Diliman School of Economics (UPSE) for a COOP session and educational tour at its office. CKMO Training Specialist III Aislynn Fabiola Manuel provided an overview of competition law and policy in the Philippines, while Economics Office (EO) Competition Policy Research Officer (CPRO) III Antonio Miguel Ventura discussed anti-competitive practices, market structures, and the role of market studies in policymaking.

A career talk also encouraged students to explore internship and professional opportunities at the PCC.

Since its launch in 2020, the COOP has served as the PCC's primary platform for engaging external stakeholders. As of end-2025, the Commission has received 24 orientation requests from government agencies, private entities, cooperatives, and academic institutions, reflecting sustained demand for competition-related learning. ■

PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo (center), flanked by CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero and Executive Director Kenneth Tanate, joins UPSE students during the educational tour on March 9.

PCC Commissioners Marah Victoria Querol and Ferdinand Negre (first and second from left) join former PCC Commissioner Johannes Benjamin Bernabe (third from left) and OECD representatives during the Training Course on Bid Rigging in Public Procurement held on February 4-5 in Mandaluyong City.

PCC ramps up enforcement, procurement integrity efforts through capacity building

By Lea Gomez

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) strengthened its enforcement and procurement integrity efforts through capacity-building activities conducted in partnership with local and international institutions.

In collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the PCC held the "Training Course on Bid Rigging in Public Procurement" on February 4-5 in Mandaluyong City. The program aimed to enhance the capacity of government agencies in detecting and preventing collusion in procurement processes.

PCC Commissioners Marah Victoria Querol and Ferdinand Negre cited the importance of safeguarding public funds, and the need for strong inter-agency collaboration for effective enforcement, respectively.

Experts from the OECD shared insights on identifying collusion indicators and designing procurement processes to reduce risks. Former PCC Commissioner Johannes Benjamin Bernabe discussed the enforcement of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) in bid rigging cases, while ESSEC Business School Professor Frédéric Jenny and PCC Competition Enforcement Office (CEO) Director III Genevieve Jusi presented approaches in evaluating evidence. CEO Director IV Christian Loren De Los Santos also discussed key provisions of the New Government Procurement Reform Act.

The training brought together procurement officials from various government agencies, including the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), Office of the Ombudsman, Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and the Procurement Service–DBM.

Meanwhile, the PCC CEO conducted its annual refresher course on March 9-13 in La Union to strengthen the technical and institutional capabilities of its personnel in handling competition cases.

The five-day program covered key enforcement areas, including econometrics and statistics, witness handling and interviews, strategic leadership, responses to subpoenas, surveillance safety protocols, and the use of artificial intelligence tools. Sessions on procurement fundamentals and internal administrative processes were also conducted.

The activity gathered participants and resource speakers from the CEO and other PCC offices including the Office of the Chairperson and Commissioners, Office of the Executive Director, Adjudication Services Division, Economics Office, and Legal Services Division as well as from partner agencies such as the National Maritime Council (NMC), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the National Privacy Commission (NPC). ■

PCC CEO Director IV Christian Loren De Los Santos (front row, ninth from left), Director III Genevieve Jusi (front row, seventh from left), and National Maritime Council (NMC) Usec. Alexander Lopez (front row, eighth from left), together with CEO personnel and representatives from other PCC offices, during the CEO annual refresher course held on March 9-13 in La Union.

CEO Director IV Christian Loren De Los Santos (right) with NBI-Anti-Organized and Transnational Crimes Division Agent III Rehom Pimentel (left) during the annual refresher course.

PCC officials share expertise on bid rigging, MSME competition advocacy at local and international fora

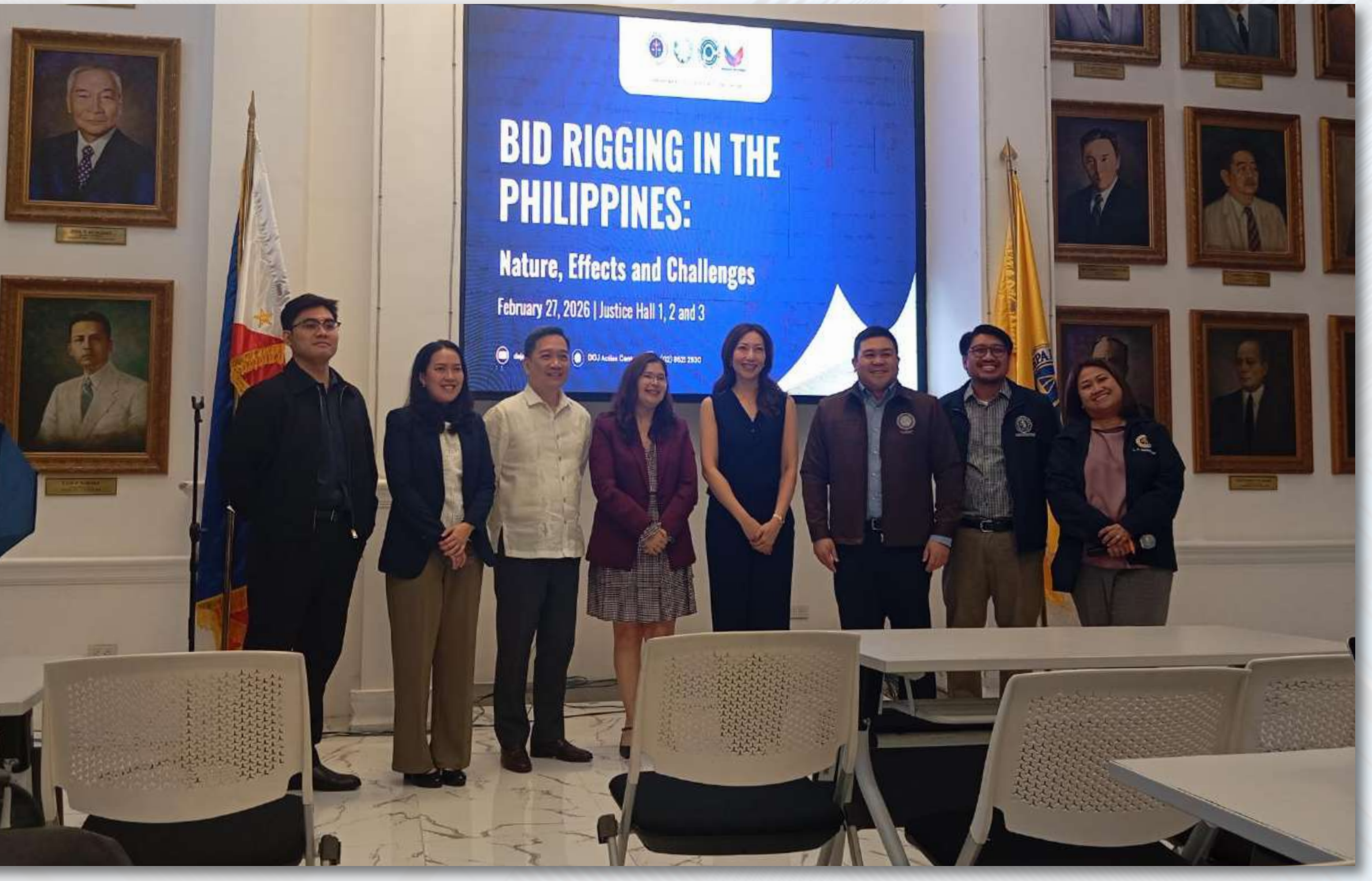
By Judielyn Agua

Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) officials shared their expertise in local and international engagements on bid rigging and competition advocacy for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), reinforcing the Commission's efforts to promote fair and inclusive markets.

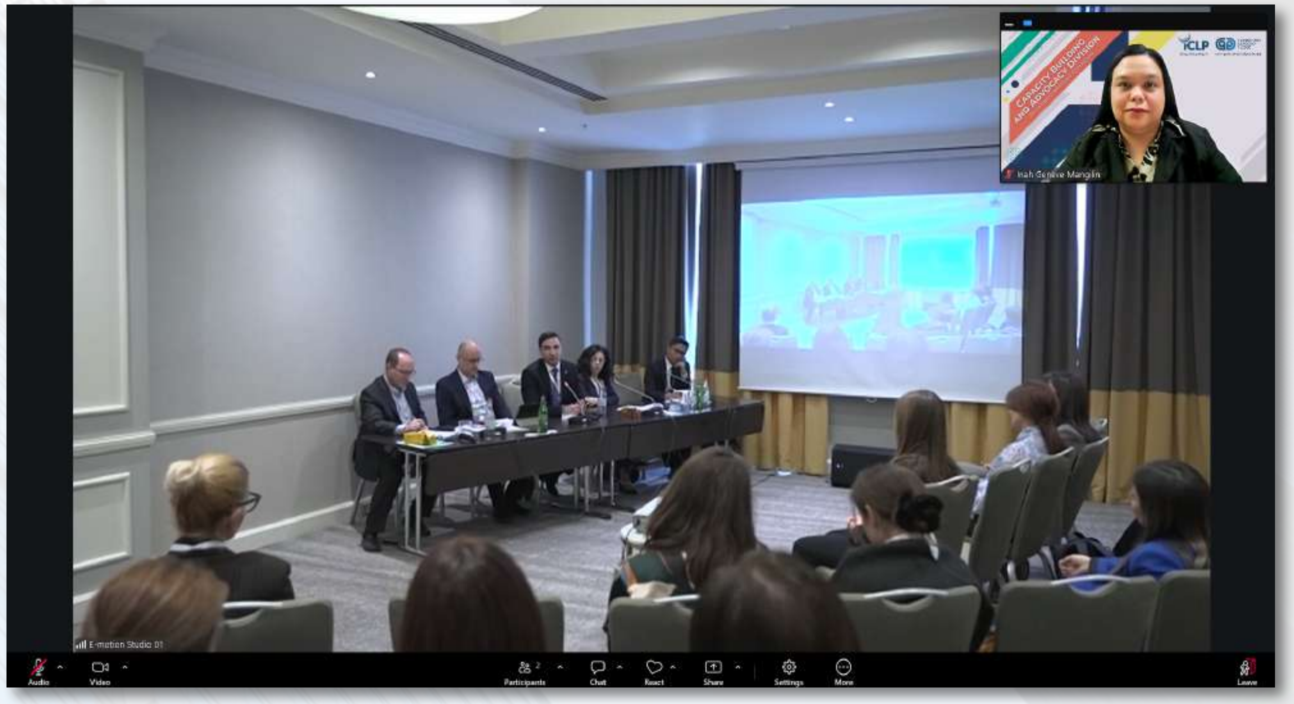
PCC Competition Enforcement Office (CEO) Director III Genevieve Jusi served as a resource speaker at the Department of Justice Action Center (DOJAC) activity titled "Orientation on Bid Rigging in the Philippines: Nature, Effects, and Challenges" held on February 27 in Manila.

In her presentation, Jusi outlined the elements and common forms of bid rigging and discussed prohibited conduct under the Philippine Competition Act (PCA). She also introduced the PCC Bid Rigging Screening Tool (BiRST) and its application in detecting and investigating bid rigging cases.

Participants included lawyers from the Public Attorney's Office and DOJAC's legal aid partners, such as the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Philippine Association of Law Schools. The activity supported efforts to strengthen capacity in handling complaints involving possible anti-competitive practices.



PCC CEO Director III Genevieve Jusi (second from left) with former PCC Commissioner Johannes Benjamin Bernabe (third from left), resource speakers, and DOJ officials and representatives during the "Orientation on Bid Rigging in the Philippines: Nature, Effects, and Challenges" held on February 27 in Manila.



CKMO Director IV Frederick Romero (top photo) and CBAD Chief Inah Geneve Mangilin (bottom photo, inset) share PCC's competition advocacy initiatives for MSMEs at the 2026 ICN Advocacy Workshop on March 17 in Armenia.

Separately, PCC Communications and Knowledge Management Office (CKMO) Director IV Frederick Romero and Capacity Building and Advocacy Division Chief Inah Geneve Mangilin served as panelists at the 2026 International Competition Network (ICN) Advocacy Workshop on March 17 in Armenia, where they discussed strategies for promoting competition among MSMEs.

Presenting via video conference, Romero and Mangilin highlighted the PCC's initiatives for promoting a competition-conscious society that supports MSME development. These include the Competition Local Advocacy Network, the Competition Compliance Program Toolkit, and the Competition Academy.

Mangilin also discussed the PCC's multi-channel approach, including the Fair Business Fora for compliance programs, online learning platforms such as the Competition Orientation Outreach Program, and the iCLP: Online Learning Hub on Competition Law and Policy, as well as partnerships with business chambers, universities, and regional development councils.

The Philippine approach was presented alongside strategies from competition authorities in Poland, Malaysia, Spain, and the Eurasian Economic Commission. Discussions emphasized the importance of clear communication, practical tools, and sustained engagement in advancing competition awareness and supporting MSME competitiveness. ■

How are enforcement proceedings initiated?

By Judielyn Agua

Enforcement proceedings before the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) may commence through any of these three "triggers": (1) verified complaint, (2) referral by a regulatory agency, and (3) *motu proprio* directive. These mechanisms determine how cases are formally brought to the PCC for inquiry and possible enforcement action under the Philippine Competition Act (PCA). The PCC's authority to investigate motu proprio, act on verified complaints/referrals, and conduct preliminary inquiry is anchored on its "original and primary jurisdiction" and its "sole and exclusive authority" to initiate preliminary inquiry for PCA enforcement.

Verified complaint and referral

One mode by which the PCC, through the Competition Enforcement Office (CEO), may initiate an investigation is through a verified complaint. Through this means, the PCC receives information from the public regarding possible violations of the PCA or other existing competition laws.

A verified complaint from an interested party must contain the following:

a. Complete name, address, email address, and contact number of the complainant;

b. Identity of the entity complained of;

c. Description of the acts constituting the violation of the PCA, its implementing rules, or other competition laws;

d. Documents and other materials supporting the allegations;

e. A statement of the present status of any other case or proceeding involving substantially similar facts, issues, and entities, and an undertaking to inform the Commission of any such case or proceeding within five days from knowledge thereof; and

f. A verification statement that the interested party has read the allegations and verified that these allegations are true to the best of their knowledge and can be supported by records.

By definition, a verified complaint must be made under oath. The verification requirement ensures that allegations are made in good faith and discourages frivolous or unfounded complaints.

Verified complaints may be filed personally at the PCC office, by registered mail, or by private courier. They may also be filed electronically.

A second way of initiating an investigation is through a referral from another government regulator, when potential competition issues arise within the scope of its mandate.

A referral must contain the following elements:

a. Identity of the entity complained of;

b. Acts constituting the violation of the PCA, its implementing rules, or other competition laws; and

c. Documents and other materials supporting the allegations.

Upon receipt of either a verified complaint or referral, the CEO conducts a due course assessment to determine whether a preliminary inquiry is warranted. In doing so, the CEO considers factors such as the PCC's jurisdiction, public interest, resource allocation, likelihood of a successful outcome, compliance with procedural requirements, and existence of reasonable grounds to commence a preliminary inquiry, with due regard to enforcement priorities set by the Commission.

For the years 2024-2028, the Commission has identified six priority sectors, namely: 1) water; 2) food and agriculture; 3) health and pharmaceuticals; 4) transportation and logistics; 5) telecommunications, financial services, and digital platforms; and 6) energy/electricity.

New online case reporting system

On December 18, 2025, the PCC opened to the public its case reporting system, enabling citizens to directly submit reports of potential anti-competitive practices through the PCC website.

Developed with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency, the system streamlines the reporting process by allowing users to securely upload documents and submit cases online. This replaces the previous procedure that required multiple steps and staff interventions.

According to PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, this system empowers the public to take part in safeguarding competition. By making reporting faster, simpler, and more secure, the Commission strengthens the collective effort to ensure fair and competitive markets for all.

The case reporting system can now be accessed at https://ccms.phcc.gov.ph.

Motu proprio

Finally, the PCC is also empowered to initiate a *motu proprio* investigation. *Motu proprio* is the Latin term for "by one's own initiative". This allows the PCC to commence an investigation based on its own intelligence and market monitoring, as well as information from complaints, referrals, reports, or other credible sources.

Through the CEO, the Commission need not wait for the filing of a formal complaint before acting on indications of potential anti-competitive conduct in the market. Some indicators that the CEO takes into account in commencing a *motu proprio* investigation are the PCC's jurisdiction, facts of the case, industry, relevant market, resource allocation, prioritization considerations, and other reasonable grounds to conduct an enforcement action.

In sum, an enforcement investigation is initiated through any of the aforementioned mechanisms—a verified complaint or a referral from another government agency—or the PCC may commence an investigation by its own initiative (*motu proprio*).

The various mechanisms for initiating investigations reflect the PCC's commitment to fairness, efficiency, and rigor in enforcing the PCA. The public and businesses are encouraged to take part in safeguarding the market through filing of verified complaints, while enforcement is also strengthened through coordination with other government regulators which can refer cases for investigation to the PCC. Finally, the Commission is also empowered to conduct its own investigation, consistent with its mandate as the guardian of fair and competitive markets. ■

An **entity** can be any individual or organization—such as a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or association—whether domestic or foreign, government-owned or private, that is engaged directly or indirectly in any economic activity in the country.

Due course assessment is an internal, preliminary screening step conducted by the PCC's CEO upon receiving a verified complaint or a referral. Its purpose is to determine whether initiating a formal preliminary inquiry is warranted.

Source: 2017 Rules of Procedure of the Philippine Competition Commission

Editorial Note: In line with the Philippine Competition Commission's (PCC) continued efforts to educate the public on competition law and policy, the Philippine Competition Bulletin will feature a series of articles on the Commission's enforcement procedure to provide a clearer understanding of how cases are initiated, assessed, and resolved under its mandate.

Overview of PCC's Rules of Procedure: Understanding how the PCC handles cases on anti-competitive agreements and conduct

By Lea Marie Diño

As the country's primary enforcer of Republic Act No. 10667 or the Philippine Competition Act (PCA), the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) is mandated to investigate and decide on cases involving anti-competitive conduct.

As a quasi-judicial body, the PCC establishes facts, conducts hearings, and evaluates evidence to reach a formal decision. Guiding this process is the PCC Rules of Procedure, which took effect on September 15, 2017. The document covers the full enforcement process, from preliminary inquiry and investigation to adjudication, appeal, and enforcement. It also outlines available remedies, penalties, compliance mechanisms, and legal tools such as subpoenas and interim measures. Since its issuance, the PCC has periodically reviewed and updated specific provisions, including those on consent orders and fees.

The Rules of Procedure apply to all investigations and proceedings involving violations of Sections 14 and 15 of the PCA, which cover anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominance. Merger review is governed by separate rules and guidelines.

Anti-competitive agreements include practices such as price fixing, bid rigging, output restriction, market allocation, and other agreements that substantially lessen competition in the market. Abuse of dominance includes predatory pricing, imposing barriers to entry, discriminatory pricing, tying arrangements, restrictive supply conditions, limiting production, and imposing unfair purchase or selling prices, subject to statutory exceptions for legitimate competitive conduct.

The procedure has three main stages: preliminary inquiry (PI), full administrative investigation (FAI), and adjudication and appeal. The PCC's Competition Enforcement Office (CEO) conducts the PI and FAI while the Commission handles adjudication. Appeals, meanwhile, are filed with the Court of Appeals.

Preliminary inquiry

A preliminary inquiry is a fact-finding stage that determines whether there are reasonable grounds to proceed with a full administrative investigation. In particular, the CEO looks at whether a conduct or agreement could harm consumers or weaken competition in the relevant sector or industry, and whether it could adversely affect public interest.

The PI begins 10 days from receipt of a verified complaint, referral by a regulatory agency, or receipt of latest amended/supplemental/related complaint or referral and must be completed within 90 days. If the CEO, during the course of the PI, finds no violation or infringement of the PCA and its IRR, or determines that the facts or information are insufficient to proceed, the PI is terminated. Otherwise, if there are reasonable grounds to conduct an FAI, the CEO proceeds accordingly.

The PCC may also file a criminal complaint before the Department of Justice (DOJ) for violation of the PCA or other competition laws, for purposes of preliminary investigation and prosecution, after the termination of the PI. This is because the PCC's PI and the DOJ's criminal preliminary investigation are separate proceedings with distinct purposes and standards. Sufficient evidence is necessary to file a criminal complaint with the DOJ.

Full administrative investigation

The FAI determines whether there is sufficient basis to charge an entity for violation of the PCA, its IRR, and other competition laws. When the PI advances to the FAI stage, the CEO, provided that disclosure will not prejudice the integrity of the investigation, may issue a notice of investigation to the entity. The PCC then publishes the commencement of the FAI, including a description of the industry involved, and the provision of the PCA, its implementing rules, or other competition laws possibly violated, on its official website. To view the list of FAIs, visit https://www.phcc.gov.ph/public/resource-category/full-administrative-investigations.

During the FAI, the CEO may confer with the entity involved to request and clarify facts, issues, and other matters. The CEO may also issue subpoenas; summon and examine witnesses; receive evidence; and conduct dawn raids or unannounced on-site inspections to uncover evidence.

If no sufficient basis to charge the entity is found during the FAI, the CEO closes the investigation. If there is sufficient basis, the CEO files with the Commission a Statement of Objections (SO).

If a verified complaint or referral is withdrawn, the FAI is not automatically terminated. The entity involved must still comply with the investigation process and may remain subject to administrative sanctions or penalties. After all, a violation of the PCA affects not just private parties but the market, consumers, and the economy at large.

Entities may also submit a proposal for settlement after the PI begins, but before the FAI concludes. The Commission may approve or deny the settlement proposal upon recommendation of the CEO. There are also other non-adversarial remedies available to entities throughout the investigation and adjudication process. Such non-adversarial remedies are made available to encourage voluntary compliance and address the competition harm at the earliest opportunity.

Adjudication, decision, and appeal

During adjudication, the Commission determines if there is substantial evidence of the entity's violation of the PCA, its IRR, or other competition laws, and if there is justification for imposing the appropriate penalties and remedies.

The adjudication begins upon CEO's filing of the SO. Within 15 days after the SO is filed, the Commission issues a summons with a copy of the SO to the entity involved, now referred to as respondent, or dismisses the SO if there is failure to state a cognizable violation. The summons, addressed to the respondent, instructs them to file a verified answer and informs them that if they fail to do so, the Commission may decide the case based on available records and evidence, and impose the appropriate penalties and remedies. A list of summonses is available at https://www.phcc.gov.ph/public/resource-category/summonses.

After the verified answer is filed, the Commission may either submit the case for decision and render a decision within 45 days, or conduct further proceedings through a preliminary conference or orders to aid in the expeditious and judicious resolution of the case. If the respondent does not submit a verified answer within the required time, they may be declared in default, allowing the Commission to decide based on the SO and available evidence.

COMPETITIONARY

The **Statement of Objections** is similar to a charge sheet in court cases and contains the details of an entity's alleged violations of the PCA, its IRR, or other competition laws.

A **verified answer** is a pleading in which the respondent shall set forth its defenses. It shall contain the following:

a. Admissions and denials, if any, of material facts alleged in the SO. Denials shall be made with particularity and, whenever practicable, the respondent shall state the substance of the matters supporting its denial;

b. Facts or circumstances relevant and necessary to explain why the respondent should not be held liable for the alleged violation stated in the SO;

c. Legal grounds on which such answer is based;

d. Evidence to support respondent's claims or arguments;

e. The express consent, if any, of the respondent or its counsel to the Electronic Service of Papers emanating from the Commission, and the e-mail address at which he agrees to accept such service; and

f. Such other matters the respondent deems necessary to include.

Source: 2017 Rules of Procedure of the Philippine Competition Commission

In a preliminary conference, the Commission discusses key matters such as the issues to be resolved, deadlines for submitting position papers, affidavits, and other documents. The Commission also addresses the possibility of settlement and other matters that may help resolve the case. If the respondent fails to appear at the preliminary conference, the Commission may render a decision based on the records or allow the CEO to present evidence *ex parte*—that is, without the participation of the party adversely interested, in this case, the respondent. Clarificatory hearings or requests for additional documents may also be made by the Commission before a decision.

After the last pleading is filed, the deadline to file it passes, or the final hearing is held—whichever applies—the Commission will issue an order stating that the case is submitted for decision. The Commission must then issue its decision within 60 days, unless more time is needed.

The Commission may also issue a partial or separate decision at any stage of the proceedings, either on its own initiative or upon request. All decisions must clearly state the Commission's findings, the legal basis for the ruling, the penalties or remedies imposed, and other relevant matters. The decision shall be published on the PCC website at https://www.phcc.gov.ph/commission-issuance?category=commission-decisions.

A motion for reconsideration may be filed by the respondent within 15 days from receipt of the Commission's decision and must also be sent to the other concerned parties. The motion must be based only on insufficient evidence or contravention of law. Certain procedural motions are prohibited, though requests for extensions or postponements, with compelling reasons, may be allowed. Final decisions can be appealed to the Court of Appeals, which may suspend implementation of the decision at its discretion.

Order in the court, and in the market

The Rules of Procedure provide a clear and structured framework for enforcing the PCA. These ensure that investigations and adjudications are fair, transparent, and efficient. This predictability not only protects businesses from arbitrary action but also strengthens public confidence in the Commission's ability to uphold the PCA and foster a competitive market.

Competition benefits consumers and the economy by promoting better prices, higher quality, and more innovative products and services. The Rules are essential tools that help maintain a level playing field, prevent abuse of market power, and ensure that businesses compete on merit rather than manipulation. In doing so, they support a vibrant, dynamic, and fair marketplace that encourages growth and protects the public interest.

To read the PCC's Rules of Procedure in full, visit https://www.phcc.gov.ph/enforcement/rules-of-procedure. To get a copy of the Rules for offline use, download the Enforcement Handbook at https://www.phcc.gov.ph/storage/pdf-resources/1683855052_PCC-Enforcement-Handbook.pdf. ■

IN THE NEWS

PCC opens Korea-backed tip line for unfair trade

Consumers and businesses can now report anti-competitive practices directly to the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) through a new online system, making it easier to protect fair market competition.

(Maria Bernadette Romero, Daily Tribune, 5 January 2026)

DOE, PCC review auction rules to boost energy competition

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) are reexamining the design of the Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP) after regulators flagged potential competition concerns that could be limiting bidder participation and raising energy prices.

(Daily Guardian, 4 February 2026)

Canada's Assistant Deputy Minister for Global Affairs Patricia Peña (10th from left) joins participants after her talk. Beside her (right) are CKMO Policy Research Officer III Paul Jeffrey Ballentos, EO Economics Investigation Division Chief Emmanuel Garcia, and Head Executive Assistant and OGC Acting Director IV Nina Remedios Mejia.

Local, int'l training programs sharpen PCC staff leadership, enforcement skills

By Mikaela Edpalina

Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) personnel participated in a series of capacity-building activities in March to enhance leadership and technical expertise in competition enforcement.

On March 4, selected staff attended the dialogue "Leadership Journeys and Insights for Emerging Public Sector Officials" held at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) headquarters.

Canada's Assistant Deputy Minister for Global Affairs Patricia Peña shared insights on leadership in public service, emphasizing the importance of strategic thinking, financial literacy, and adaptability in governance. She also highlighted the role of evidence-based decision-making and effective communication in advancing policy objectives.

Participants included PCC officials from the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), the Economics Office (EO), and the Communications and Knowledge Management Office (CKMO), alongside representatives from other government agencies.

Separately, a PCC delegation participated in the Competition Law Workshop on Key Challenges in Abuse of Dominance Cases, organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Korea Policy Center (OECD-KPC) on March 11-13 in Seoul.

The workshop examined complex issues in abuse of dominance cases, including exclusionary conduct and challenges in digital markets. Participants engaged in comparative jurisdictional analysis with experts from the European Union (EU), Australia, and across Asia, applying insights from case exercises involving market definition, assessment of dominance, and evaluation of anti-competitive behavior.

Sessions were led by experts from the OECD, OECD-KPC, Sejong University, and the competition authorities of the EU, Australia, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia. ■

(From top to bottom) EO CPRO II Emmanuel Viktor Guiam, ASD Attorney II Alexandra Vitasa, and CEO Attorney III Anthalia Rodrigazo and Attorney II Miguel Bautista receive their certificates for participating at the OECD-KPC Competition Law Workshop on Key Challenges in Abuse of Dominance Cases on March 11-13 in Seoul, South Korea

(Back row, sixth from left) PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo joins other officials from international competition authorities at the 20th East Asia Top-Level Officials' Meeting on Competition Policy on February 5 in Tokyo, Japan. Photo courtesy of the Japan Fair Trade Commission.

PCC exchanges best practices with UK, Asia-Pacific counterparts in int'l events

By Lea Marie Diño

Officials of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) participated in international engagements in January and February to exchange knowledge and best practices on various issues in competition law and policy.

On January 19-23, PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano and Executive Assistant IV Rohnwald Marcelo conducted a study visit at the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). They also met with First Secretary and Consul Ira Micheline Valdez of the Philippine Embassy to discuss opportunities for strengthening institutional cooperation.

The visit included discussions on enforcement approaches, institutional frameworks, and potential areas for collaboration, including benchmarking and formal cooperation arrangements.

On February 5, PCC Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo represented the Philippines at the 20th East Asia Top-Level Officials' Meeting on Competition Policy in Tokyo, where he shared insights on the role of economic analysis in competition advocacy and enforcement.

He also participated in the 17th East Asia Conference on Competition Law and Policy, which addressed competition issues in digital markets and regional cooperation.

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) First Senior Officials' Meeting held on February 7-8 in China, PCC Commissioner Medrano presided over the Competition Policy and Law Group (CPLG) meeting under the APEC Economic Committee as convenor.
In the same event, PCC Executive Director Kenneth Tanate moderated a policy dialogue on managing confidential information in competition enforcement.

These engagements support the PCC's efforts to strengthen international cooperation, promote best practices, and advance a transparent and effective competition policy framework. ■

PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano (center), along with Executive Director Kenneth Tanate (left) and Executive Assistant IV Rohnwald Marcelo (right) attend the Competition and Policy Law Group (CPLG) meeting during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) First Senior Officials' Meeting on February 7-8 in China.

PCC Commissioner Lolibeth Ramit-Medrano (second from left) and Executive Assistant IV Rohnwald Marcelo (rightmost) with CMA International Director Eleni Gouliou (second from right) and International Graduate Policy Adviser Will Green (leftmost) during their study visit at the CMA in London on January 19-23.

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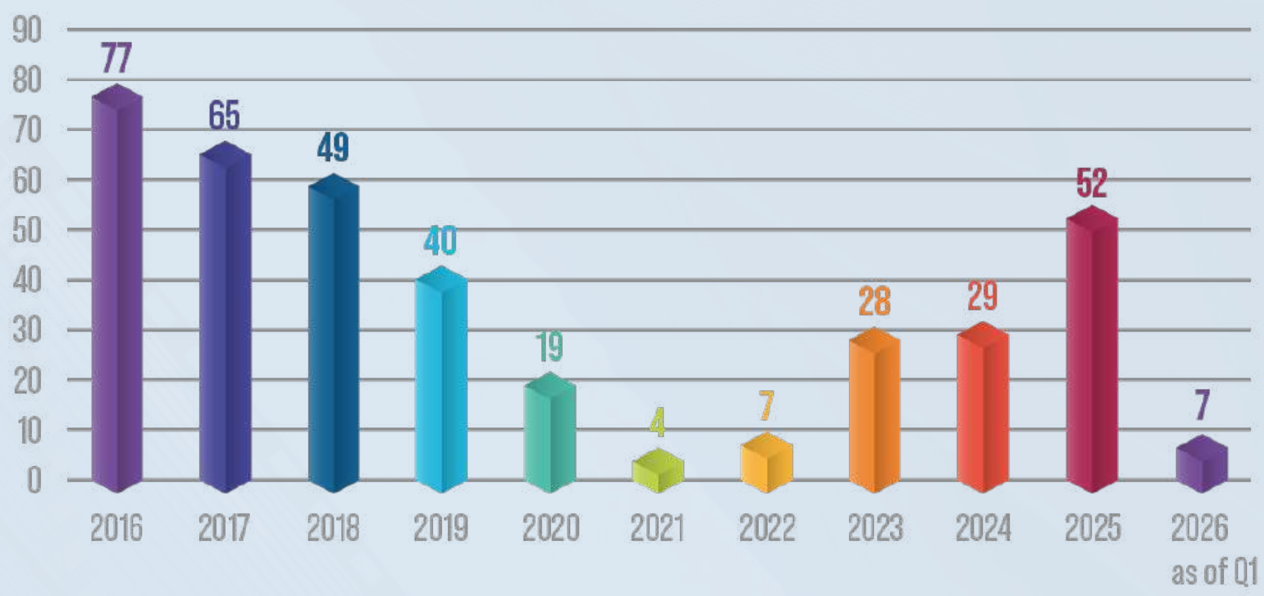

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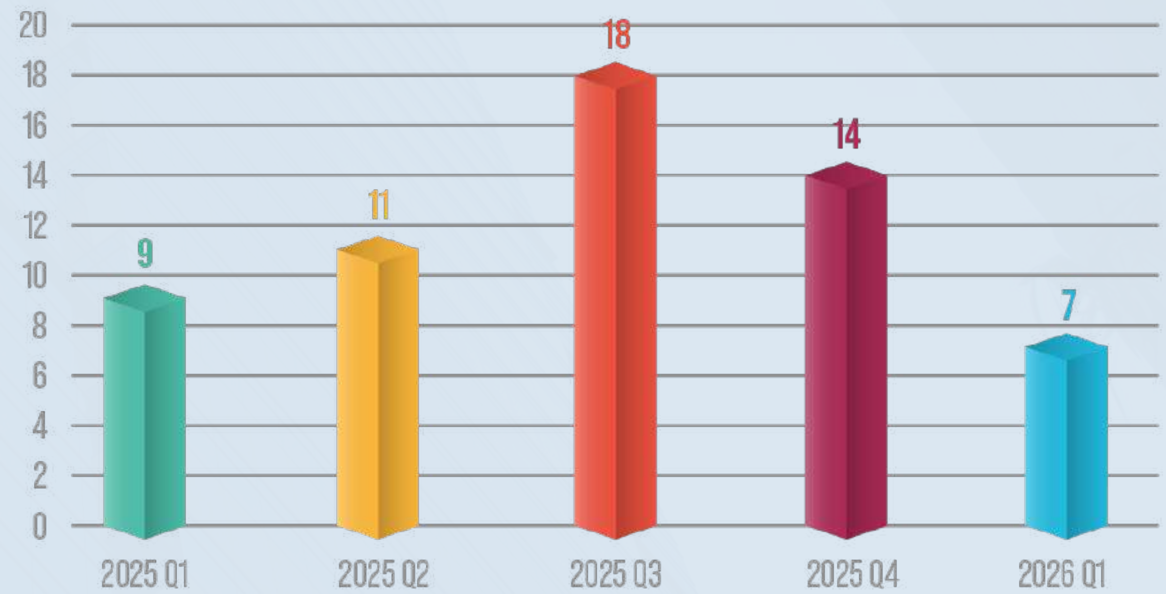

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