
**Closure of investigation on alleged abuse of dominance in the
organization of Korean Pop (K-pop) live music events in the
Philippines**

Industry	:	Live music events
Case Reference	:	CEO-23-116-FAI
Case Closed	:	06 April 2026
Issue(s)	:	Possible abuse of dominance with respect to selling prices for the organization of Korean Pop (K-pop) live music events in the Philippines
Relevant Provision(s)	:	Section 15(h) of the Philippine Competition Act

1. The Enforcement Office of the Philippine Competition Commission (“PCC”) conducted an Initial Assessment (“IA”) on the complaints it received regarding the ticket prices of the two-day concert “2023 Treasure Tour: Hello in Manila” promoted by Live Nation Philippines (“LNPH”).
2. At IA, LNPH’s apparent (i) ability to adjust prices, (ii) ability to book the biggest K-pop artists and sell out shows, (iii) ties with Live Nation Entertainment, and (iv) more expensive ticket prices in the Philippines compared to other Asian countries indicate possible abuse of dominant position by imposing unfair prices on its consumers.
3. On 05 October 2023, the Enforcement Office recommended the opening of a *motu proprio* preliminary inquiry (“PI”) on the conduct of LNPH. On the same date, the Commission approved the recommendation and directed the Enforcement Office to conduct a PI on the alleged imposition of unfair prices by LNPH on consumers, which may constitute abuse of dominant position.
4. Based on the information gathered during the PI, the Team recommended that the Enforcement Office conduct a Full Administrative Investigation (“FAI”) on LNPH for violation of Section 15(h) of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) for imposing unfair prices to its consumers.
5. On 04 January 2024, the Enforcement Office proceeded to conduct an FAI.

6. During the FAI, the Team issued several subpoenas to LNPH, as well as other stakeholders in the industry.
7. The Team obtained information on the following:
 - 7.1. Transactions with event promoters, and matters related to the services offered by the suppliers, including service charges, breakdown of fees imposed to concert promoters or concert venues for live music events held in SM MOA Arena, Smart Araneta Coliseum, Philippine Arena, and other venues.
 - 7.2. The business of organizing concerts in the Philippines and information on how easy or difficult it is to enter and operate in the said market.
 - 7.3. Collective insights and feedback of the fan club members when attending live music events in the Philippines, which include the process of purchasing tickets to the day of the event itself.
8. Lastly, the Team coordinated with competition authorities in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore to gather information on live music events industry in their respective countries.
9. Based on the interviews with different promoters in the Philippines, majority of the interviewed promoters agreed that LNPH is the leading concert promoter in the Philippines. In addition, LNPH also held the largest market share from 2023 to 2025, based on the sum of capacity of events it held.
10. On 06 April 2026, the Enforcement Office terminated the investigation via closure without prejudice under Section 2.13 of the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the Philippine Competition Commission (2017 Rules), as there was no sufficient basis to file a Statement of Objections (SO).
11. The elements of a Section 15(h) violation are as follows:
 - 11.1. The entity holds a dominant position in the relevant market; and
 - 11.2. The entity abused its dominance by directly or indirectly imposing unfair purchase or selling price on their competitors, customers, suppliers, or consumers, which substantially prevent, restrict, or lessen competition.

Relevant Market

12. Relevant market refers to the market in which a particular good or service is sold and which is a combination of the relevant product market and the relevant geographic market.
13. The relevant product market comprises all those goods and/or services which are regarded as interchangeable or substitutable by the consumer or the customer, by reason of the goods and/or services' characteristics,

their prices and their intended use.¹ On the other hand, the relevant geographic market comprises the area in which the entity concerned is involved in the supply and demand of goods and services, in which the conditions of competition are sufficiently homogenous and which can be distinguished from neighboring areas because the conditions of competition are different in those areas.²

14. As to the relevant product market, the Enforcement Office identified that K-pop live music events are a distinct market from shows featuring artists of other musical genres, such as western music and OPM. K-pop live music events are usually attended by a distinct fan base and gives a unique concert-goer experience, especially on their opportunities for sound checking, “hi-touch”, and “fan zones”.
15. Moreover, K-pop concerts have higher ticket prices than western and OPM concerts for both the highest and lowest ticket tiers. The prices for K-pop concerts average between PhP3,200 to PhP12,400, while western concerts average between PhP2,500 to PhP8,400, and OPM concerts average between PhP800 to PhP6,300. Despite this, fans are willing to pay for tickets of K-pop concerts. Thus, the fan base of K-pop artists is unique and cannot be substituted with live music events of other music genres.
16. As to the relevant geographic market, the Enforcement Office identified that most K-pop live music events were held in various concert venues in Metro Manila and Bulacan. Audiences from around the country travel to Metro Manila or Bulacan to attend these concerts. Some even expressed willingness to travel, with 42% willing to travel to a different island group, and 39% willing to travel to a different country.
17. In view of this, the Enforcement Office identified a nationwide geographic market for the organization of K-pop live music events.
18. For the purpose of the investigation, the relevant market is the organization of K-pop live music events nationwide.

Dominant Position

19. In determining that LNPH was a dominant entity in the relevant market, the Enforcement Office assessed the market shares of LNPH vis-a-vis other concert promoters in the Philippines. Specifically, the Enforcement Office looked into the market shares based on capacity, and actual exercise of market power.
20. In assessing the dominance of LNPH based on capacity, the Enforcement Office found that LNPH held the largest market share for all live music events, whether headlined by a local, foreign, or K-pop artist, from 2023 to 2025.

¹ Section 4(k)(1) of the PCA

² Section 4(k)(2) of the PCA

21. Market dominance may also be demonstrated through direct evidence of market power. Market power is the ability of firms to price above marginal cost and for this to be profitable, or the ability to raise and maintain price above the level or reduce quantity supplied below the level that would prevail under competition.³ Market power also includes the ability of firms to reduce product quality below the competitive level.⁴
22. In finding that LNPH was dominant through its actual exercise of market power, the Enforcement Office assessed LNPH's ability to set prices and found that its ticket prices for the upper tiers in its K-pop concerts are higher than the pricing of other local concert promoters. Moreover, for K-pop concerts held in Philippine Arena and Philippine Stadium, LNPH's ticket prices are considerably higher than the prices set by other concert promoters for these venues. Furthermore, consumers also noticed the change in ticket prices of other concert promoters when LNPH entered the market.
23. Other indications of LNPH's exercise of market power are its ability to reduce the quality of its services, and its ties with Live Nation Entertainment, which allows LNPH access to extensive resources and the ability to engage with more popular artists.
24. Additional indicators assessed to determine the dominance of LNPH included the lack of bargaining power of customers, access by competitors to sources of inputs, economies of scale and scope, and the consensus among the market players.
25. As to the lack of bargaining power of customers, this refers to several consumer complaints which remained unaddressed by LNPH. For access by competitors to sources of inputs, this pertains to LNPH's ties with Live Nation Entertainment, which guarantees LNPH's access to artists handled by Live Nation Entertainment.
26. With respect to economies of scale and scope, this pertains to LNPH's access to extensive resources compared with other local promoters. Lastly, all concert promoters interviewed during the investigation identified LNPH as the leading concert promoter in the Philippines for concerts, including K-pop concerts.
27. All these factors, when taken together, demonstrated LNPH's dominance in the live music event industry.

Unfair pricing

³ Institution definition of market power, <https://www.concurrences.com/en/dictionary/market-power>, last accessed on 06 April 2026.

⁴The Evolving Concept of Market Power in the Digital Economy, <https://web.archive.oecd.org/pdfViewer?path=/2022-05-05/631331-the-evolving-concept-of-market-power-in-the-digital-economy-2022.pdf>, last accessed on 06 April 2026.

28. Notwithstanding the finding that LNPH occupies a dominant position, the evidence was insufficient to prove that LNPH directly or indirectly imposed unfair prices.
29. To determine unfair pricing, the Enforcement Office applied the two-limbed tests of excessiveness and unfairness. The excessiveness limb asks whether the difference between prices charged and the costs actually incurred is excessive and would not otherwise have been reaped under “normal and sufficiently effective competition.”
30. In analyzing the information based on the excessiveness limb, the price cost analysis was inconclusive absent data on artist’s fee. Moreover, even if the artist’s fee amounts to the remainder of all costs, the information obtained did not sufficiently establish that the prices were excessive. Lastly, an evaluation of profit data from select K-pop concerts and relevant literature on unfair pricing showed that the prices set by LNPH cannot be concluded to be excessive.⁵
31. On the other hand, for the unfairness limb, the Enforcement Office compared the prices of LNPH with the prices of local promoters, and in select Southeast Asian countries. While the prices of LNPH are higher than the prices of other local promoters, profit data showed that LNPH is within the local industry range. On the other hand, no definitive comparison can be made for other countries considering the differences in cost components for Singapore, which has subsidies, and insufficiency of available data.
32. As unfair pricing is an element of a violation of Section 15 (h) of the PCA, the Enforcement Office found no sufficient basis to charge LNPH for a violation thereof.
33. Finally, there appears to be efficiencies that may be considered and balanced, such as: 1) price discrimination that allows for lower priced tickets compared with other promoters and events abroad; 2) economic value and benefit to K-pop fans for bringing K-pop events to the Philippines; and 3) the pricing power of LNPH does not appear to be durable as it can be affected by clamor of fans, and there are also new entrants to the market.

Conclusion

34. In view of the findings above, the Enforcement Office formally closed its investigation on 06 April 2026.
35. Nonetheless, in accordance with Section 2.13 of the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the PCC, closure of the FAI shall be without prejudice to the conduct of another investigation if the circumstances so warrant.

⁵ See Aspen case (Case AT.40394 – ASPEN), Danish CD Pharma Case (Decision of Konkurrence- og Forbrugerstyrelsen of 31 January 2018), and Leadiant case (ACM/20/041239)

36. The foregoing findings are based solely on the facts and circumstances of this investigation and relevant only to the particular issues examined herein.