| **Individual Action Plan Update for the Philippines for 2018** |
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| ***Highlights of recent policy developments which indicate how Philippines is progressing towards the Bogor Goals and key challenges it faces in its efforts to meet the Goals.*** |
| Fully implemented the tariff commitments under the expanded WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA-II) through Executive Order 21 on 18 May 2017.  Launched the 10-year Maritime Industry Development Program (MIDP) on 01 June 2017 to further strengthen the country’s position as a major maritime nation and to develop our maritime industry.  Extension on the validity of the Seafarer’s Identification and Record Book from five (5) to ten (10) years.  Launched the Philippine Assessment and Certification for Tourism Professionals.  Launched the National Broadband Plan.  Signing into law of Republic Act No. 10929, also known as the Free WiFi Law.  Currently implementing the 2017 Investment Priorities Plan to bring more inclusive economic growth and business opportunities to micro and small enterprises by integrating them in the supply chains of medium and large enterprises.  Launched Project Repeal to eliminate laws that place a heavy regulatory burden on companies and reduces the overall competitiveness of businesses in a country.  Designated the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) as International Searching Authority and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)  Established designated Immigration counters for APEC Business Travel Card holders. |

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| IAP Chapter (and Sub-Chapter and Section Heading, if any) | **Improvements made since 2016 IAP** | **Further Improvements Planned** |
| Tariffs | Issued Executive Order No. 20 on 27 April 2017 to implement the MFN tariff schedule from 2017 to 2020.  In line with the periodic review of the WCO Harmonized System, the Philippines implemented the HS/AHTN 2017 nomenclature on 28 July 2017. This increased the number of tariff lines from 9,551 AHTN 2012 tariff lines to 10,796 AHTN 2017 tariff lines which affected the averages in 2017. This resulted in the increase in the MFN nominal average from 6.36% in 2016 to 7.19% in 2017.  Issued Executive Order No. 21 on 18 May 2017 to implement the Philippines’ tariff commitments under the WTO Information Technology Agreement (ITA-II).  The Philippines offers duty free access to more than 90% of the tariff lines in two out of seven FTAs in force.  Philippine Tariff Profile Under Various FTAs   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | FTA | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | | Simple Average Tariff | | | | | ASEAN | 0 | 0 | 0 | | ASEAN-China | 1.48 | 1.48 | 2.82 | | ASEAN-Korea | 1.12 | 0.48 | 0.66 | | ASEAN-Australia/New Zealand | 0.43 | 0.40 | 0.48 | | ASEAN-Japan | 1.52 | 1.24 | 1.47 | | Philippines-Japan | 1.13 | 0.88 | 0.27 | | ASEAN-India | 3.76 | 3.14 | 3.04 | | % Duty Free Tariff Lines to All Goods | | | | | ASEAN | 98.89 | 98.89 | 100.00 | | ASEAN-China | 89.96 | 88.36 | 83.41 | | ASEAN-Korea | 91.52 | 86.44 | 86.79 | | ASEAN-Australia/New Zealand | 93.85 | 95.04 | 94.37 | | ASEAN-Japan | 70.47 | 70.46 | 68.56 | | Philippines-Japan | 71.08 | 72.67 | 71.92 | | ASEAN-India | 4.10 | 4.10 | 4.02 | | Under the various FTAs, preferential tariffs are to be progressively reduced and/or eliminated with the end goal of zero tariffs levied on substantially all goods by the agreed end dates  End Dates of Various FTAs   |  |  | | --- | --- | | FTA | End Dates | | ASEAN | 2015 | | ASEAN-China | 2018 | | ASEAN-Korea | 2016 | | ASEAN-Australia/New Zealand | 2020 | | ASEAN-Japan | 2018 | | Philippines-Japan | 2018 | | ASEAN-India | 2022 | |
| Website for further information: | <http://tariffcommission.gov.ph/>  <http://tariffcommission.gov.ph/finder/> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Chairperson Marilou P. Mendoza  Tariff Commission  5th Floor Philippine Heart Center, Medical Arts Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City  info@tariffcommission.gov.ph |  |
| ***Non-Tariff Measures***  *Non-tariff measures include but are not restricted to quantitative import/export restrictions/prohibitions, import/export levies, minimum import prices, discretionary import/export licensing, voluntary export restraints and export subsidies* | The tariffication of the rice quantitative restriction is currently undergoing the legislative process at the Philippine Congress. |  |
| Website for further information: | http://www.da.gov.ph/ |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Atty. Vero Librojo  MAV Secretariat  Email: vero.librojo@yahoo.com  Director Noel A. Padre  Philippine National SPS Enquiry Point, Policy Research Service  Email: prs@da.gov.ph  Department of Agriculture  Quezon Memorial Cir Elliptical Rd Underpass, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila  Tel No.: (632) 273.2474, (632) 928.8756 to 65  Administrator Hermenegildo R. Serafica  Sugar Regulatory Administration  Philippine Sugar Center Building, North Ave, Diliman, Quezon City, 1100 Metro Manila  E-mail: srahead@sra.gov.ph |  |
| ***Services***  ***Financial*** | Issued R.A. No. 10641 or “An Act Allowing the Full Entry of Foreign Banks in the Philippines” in 2014 to fully liberalize the entry of foreign banks in the Philippine banking system. The Law increased to 100 percent (from 60 percent) the foreign bank ownership in the voting stock of an existing domestic bank or a new banking subsidiary. Through the issuance of Circular No. 858, the law is implemented which streamlines the chartering process for the entry of foreign banks into the Philippines and the processing of related documentary requirements. As of 10 November 2017, the BSP Monetary Board approved 11 foreign bank applications pursuant to R.A. No. 10641.  On foreign exchange (FX) policy, BSP issued the following circulars to further amend the Manual of Regulations on Foreign Exchange to further facilitate access by the general public to the banking system to cover legitimate transactions:   1. Circular No. 918 dated 2 August 2016 2. Circular No. 922 dated 23 August 2016 3. Circular No. 925 dated 13 September 2016 4. Circular No. 937 dated 27 December 2016   Relaxation of the following liquidity metrics, applicable to Expanded/Foreign Currency Deposit Unit (E/FCDU) operations of universal and commercial banks (U/KBs), effective 1 January 2018:   * Removal of the 30 percent liquid asset cover for E/FCDU liabilities; and * Removal of the 70 percent same currency cover for E/FCDU liabilities.   Issued regulations for non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), through Circular No. 942 dated 20 January 2017, to adopt a more comprehensive framework for money service businesses (MSBs) [i.e. Remittance and Transfer Companies (RTCs), Money Changers (MCs)/Foreign Exchange Dealers (FXDs)] as part of its efforts to strengthen its oversight of the parallel FX market. The framework also promotes effective compliance of MSBs with the regulations on anti-money laundering (AML), adoption of consumer protection standards, and internal central measures.  Adopting reforms to ensure that domestic regulations are aligned with the Basel III requirements such as those pertaining to minimum risk-based capital adequacy ratios, the leverage ratio framework, the Domestic Systemically Important Banks Framework, and the LCR which are intended to further strengthen the industry. The BSP also continues to align prudential regulations with international best practice taking into account domestic creditors. Areas that were enhanced include corporate governance standards, risk management guidelines on liquidity, IT, cyber security, related party transactions, operational risk, compliance and internal control as well as measures to combat anti-money laundering. | Continue to review the FX regulatory framework to keep this attuned with domestic and global conditions and responsive to the needs of the country’s expanding and dynamic economy. The current policy thrust remains geared towards liberalization of FX regulations, facilitation of access to the banking system’s FX resources for legitimate transactions, and further streamlining of procedures and documentary requirements. The thrust to liberalize is calibrated and adopted in phases considering prevailing conditions and ensuring that measures are in place to allow the BSP to strengthen its ability to capture relevant data for policy study and report generation.  Pursue reforms to deepen the FX market, increase its efficiency and reduce the cost of doing business. Capital reforms shall also be actively pursued in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to provide the investing public with a wider array of financial products/services as well as increased transparency and governance of financial markets.  Expand the Basel III Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) framework to include not only U/KBs but also their subsidiary banks/quasi-banks (QBs) in line with consolidated supervision of the BSP. The complementary Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) standard will be adopted by the BSP. All these are intended to strengthen banks’ capability to manage liquidity risk. |
| *Website for further information:* | www.bsp.gov.ph  *(Refer to BSP Circular Nos 858, 918, 922, 925, 937, 942, 742, 794, 815, 818, 781, 856, 881, 943, 905, 786, 826, 904, 981 and BSP Memorandum No M 2017-023)* |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | The Director  International Operations Department  Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas  pangeles@bsp.gov.ph  The Managing Director  Financial Supervision and Consumer Protection Sub-Sector  Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas  ljavier@bsp.gov.ph |  |
| ***Services***  ***Energy*** | Renewable Energy  Commenced the crafting of the draft Internal Guidelines for the operationalization of the Renewable Energy Trust Fund (RETF) through the conduct of an initial meeting with partner agencies, e.g. Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC), etc. |  |
|  | Power and Electrification  Wholesale Electricity Spot Market in Mindanao  Issued Department Circular No. DC2017-05-0009 “Declaring the Launch of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) in Mindanao and Providing for Transition Guidelines”. The WESM in Mindanao was launched 26 June 2017. Among others, it aims to enable the registration of WESM participantsand will terminate the Interim Mindanao Electricity Market (IMEM).  Philippine WESM  Conducted a study entitled as “Power Wrangler Study” to focus on the development of the Philippine WESM Mitigating Measures.WESM Mitigating Measures likewise follows Joint Resolution No. 3 s. 2016 where the Offer Price Cap level is set to remain at Php 32,000/MWh, using the supply-side approach as basis in setting the cap and an Offer Price Floor to be set at negative Php 10,000/MWh. The review of the cost assumptions is to be undertaken yearly while review of overall methodology is to be carried out every five (5) years.  Retail Competition and Open Access (RCOA)  Implementing voluntary participation of contestable customers with demand of at least 1MW with corresponding Certificate of Contestability already being issued by ERC. | Wholesale Electricity Spot Market in Mindanao  The target commercial operation date of WESM in Mindanao is in June 2018.  Renewable Energy Market (REM)  Promulgate a Department Circular to (a) provide framework for the establishment of REM and Renewable Energy Registrar (RER); and (b) Define the attributes of Renewable Energy certificate as complementary mechanism to the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).  The draftrules and framework for the implementation of the REM is scheduled for Public Consultation in November 2017.  The attributes of the Renewable Energy Certificate will serve as a complementary mechanism to the RER, DOE targets the first quarter of 2018 for its development. |
|  | Energy Efficiency and Conservation  Approved a substitute House Bill, on 14 August 2017, seeking to institutionalize energy efficiency and conservation, enhance the efficient use of energy, and grant incentives to energy efficiency and conservation (EEC) projects, as well as address cost competitiveness and energy security.  Senate Bill No. 1531 entitled “Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act of 2017” is pending for Second Reading following a Special Order issued on 01 August 2017.  Requires an ESCO company to apply for a Certificate of Accreditation when engaging in any energy efficiency related performance contracting projects, in line with the Department Circular No. DC2008-09-0004. | Pass and implement law to institutionalize energy efficiency and conservation  Implement energy standards and labelling program  Finalize the DOE Department Circular for the institutionalization of the Philippine Energy Standards and Labelling Program (PELSP) which is currently undergoing Public Consultation. The DOE targets the issuance of the Department Circular within 2017. |
| *Website for further information:* | https://www.doe.gov.ph/ |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Undersecretary Jesus Cristino P. Posadas  jesus.posadas@doe.gov.ph  Director Patrick T. Aquino  Energy Policy and Planning Bureau  patrick.aquino@doe.gov.ph  Director Mario C. Marasigan  Renewable Energy Management Bureau  [mcmarasigan@doe.gov.ph](mailto:mcmarasigan@doe.gov.ph)  Department of Energy  Energy Center, Rizal Drive,  Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City  Tel No.: (632) 479-2900 |  |
| ***Services***  ***Air Transportation*** | Negotiated more liberal air services agreements and increased capacity entitlements to the following economies/countries: Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Turkey, Qatar, Mexico, Australia, Oman, Singapore and Taiwan.  Reviewed, updated and rationalized the rules, procedures and requirements for petitions and/or applications to operate air transportation services.   1. Rationalization/Reduction of Requirements for Petitions/ Application for Certificate of Public Convenience and Foreign Carrier’s Permit (CAB Resolution No. 59) 2. Rationalization/Reduction of Requirements for Unopposed Applications of Airfreight Forwardders, General Sales Agent (CAB Memorandum Ciircular No. 5) 3. Less paper transaction program governing hearings and investigations | Enhance air services agreements to provide more and better connectivity through continued air consultation talks with other countries. For 2017, CAB will be conducting consultation talks with Papua New Guinea and India.  Continue the review/amendment of the Air Passenger Bill of Rights (APBR). |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://www.cab.gov.ph/> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | The Executive Director  Civil Aeronautics Board  CAB Building, Old MIA Road, Pasay City  Tel: (632) 853-6761  Fax: (632) 833-6911  E-mail: cab\_eprd@yahoo.com; info@cab.gov.ph |  |
| ***Services***  ***Maritime Transportation*** | Approved the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 10668 or the Foreign Ships Co-Loading Act through the Joint Administartive Order No. 001-006. On 24 May 2016. The Bureau of Customs disseminated the said IRR to all concerned government offices through Customs Memorandum Circular No. 77-2016.  Participating in the Train for Trade Port Management programme which links performance indicators to strategic objectives of port communities. Port surveys are conducted to provide valuable information about port types, historical context, legislative background, functionl model and insights in port service management.  Launched the 10-year Maritime Industry Development Program (MIDP) on 01 June 2017 to further strengthen the country’s position as a major maritime nation and to develop our maritime industry.  Issued Administrative Order No. 17-16 which mandates all service units of the MARINA in the Central and Regional Offices to implement the three (3) day policy as the maximum standard processing time. Documentary requirements were also streamlined to barest minimum and redundancy in processing and documentation were removed.  Issued MARINA Circular No. 2016-05 and MARINA Advisory No. 2016-18 which extends the validity of the Seafarer’s Identification and Record Book from five (5) to ten (10) years..  Issued MARINA Circular No. 2016-02, the Revised Rules on the Phase out of Wooden-hulled Ships Carrying Passengers in Domestic Shipping, and MARINA Advisory No. 2016-10, Registration of Wooden-hulled Passenger Ships/Motorbancas in the Domestic Shipping. | Continue to draft and implement policies related to the mandate of the MARINA as the single maritime administration for the enforcement of the Interntional Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) through Republic Act No. 10635.  Further enhance policies, plans and programs for the modernization of the Philippine merchant fleet through research, conduct of studies, trainings, seminars as spearheaded by the Shipyards Regulation Service in coordination with concerned MARINA service units, by virtue of Republic Act No. 9295.  Optimize the utilization of existing ports in the country. A more direct connection between Manila and Batangas Ports will be explored and co-loading will be implemented to encourage shipment between domestic ports. |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://www.marina.gov.ph/> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Administrator Marcial Quirico C. Amaro III, PhD  Maritime Industry Authority  984 Parkview Plaza, Taft Avenue cor. Kalaw St.,  Manila  oadm@marina.gov.ph |  |
| ***Services***  ***Tourism*** | Developed the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) 2016-2022 which seeks to build and upscale the implementation of tourism programs through a focused and prioritized approach which is designed to deliver a more competitive, sustainable and inclusive tourism sector.  Launched Transforming Tourism Value Chains in Developing Countries and Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS) to accelerate more resource efficient, low carbon development project. It closes the gaps related to the tourism sector’s contribution to GHG emission reduction and compliance with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.  Launched the Philippine Assessment and Certification for Tourism Professionals in January 2015 and September 2017 in Metro Manila and Iloilo City, respectively. | Continued implementation of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) by integrating Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) principles and parcatices in the development of the Philippines’ strategies anc action plan with the help of Green Choice Philippines. The goal of the mainstreaming of the SCP is to drive the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in the Philippine tourism sector. |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://web.tourism.gov.ph/> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Undersecretary Rolando Cañizal  Department of Tourism  DOT Bldg., 351 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue 1200,  Makati City  Tel.No: (632) 459-5200 to 459-5230 loc. (212 and 232) |  |
| ***Services***  ***ICT/Telecommunications*** | Developed and launched the National Broadband Plan (NBP) which aims to develop the broadband ecosystem through policies ensuring  fair competition for consumer welfare, innovation and investment and efficient allocation and management of assets. It also covers reform on existing laws, policies and standards to maximize the benefits of broadband in all sectors of the government. The NBP was launched on 23 June 2017.  Signed Republic Act (RA) No. 10929, or the Free WiFi Law, on 03 August 2017. The law’s implementing rules and regulations (IRR) was completed and will submitted to the Office of the President by early 2018. At present, the Free WiFi is being provided in several areas of the Metro.  Launched the National Government Portal on 23 June 2017. The portal serves as a single window for all public services. Aside  from providing ease of use and simplified browsing experience, the integration of websites into a single portal will effectively reduce costs (financial, human resources, and spatial) for the government. With the use of the portal’s Single Sign-On (SSO) feature, users can log in to NGP using just a single usernmae and password and have access to various data and avail of different services without the need for repeated inputs of personal information and credentials. At present, 120 online services may be accessed through the NGP. | Provide access to critical information and ICT Infostructure which will allow the country to achieve sustainable growth particularly in the ICT-enabled industries that will eventually lead to the transition towards a world-class digital economy and an information-rich Philippines |
| *Website for further information:* | http://www.dict.gov.ph/ |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Undersecretary Denis F. Villorente  Tel: (02) 920-0101 loc. 3000  Email: denis.villorente@dict.gov.ph  Director Maria Teresa M. Garcia  Tel: (02) 920-0101 local 3101  Email: international@dict.gov.ph  Department of Information and Communications Technology  C.P Garcia Ave., Diliman, Quezon City |  |
| ***Investment*** | Implemented the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP) 2017 which broadens the coverage of manufacturing activities in support of the government’s Manufacturing Resurgence Program and gives further emphasis on innovation-driven activities and MSME-oriented business models such as Inclusive Business Models for agriculture and tourism sectors that provide business opportunities to micro and small enterprises by integrating them to medium and large enterprises.  Signed Memorandum Circular No. 16 on 21 November 2017, which directs concerned agencies to take immediate steps to lift or ease existing restrictions on foreign participation in the following selected investment areas:   1. private recruitment for local and overseas employment; 2. practice of particular professions, where allowing foreign participation will redound to the public benefit; 3. contracts for the construction and repair of locally-funded public works; 4. public services except activities and systems recognized as public utilities such as transmission and distribution of electricity, water, pipeline distribution system, and sewerage pipeline system; 5. culture, production, milling, processing, and trading except retailing, of rice and corn and acquiring by barter, purchase or otherwise, rice, corn and other by-products; 6. teaching at higher education levels; 7. retail trade enterprises; and 8. domestic market enterprises. | Annual review of the three-year rolling IPP.  Issuance by NEDA of the 11th Foreign Investment Negative List (FINL) that will liberalize some activities in the current FINL. |
|  | Signed three (3) new Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs), in addition to four (4) previously signed MOAs, on joint facilitation of permits, licenses, endorsements and other issues & concerns on the processing and issuance of registration with the following agencies:   1. Department of Health (DOH); 2. Department of Agriculture (DA); and 3. Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) | Currently pursuing similar MOAs with the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and the Department of Finance (DOF)- Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF).  Planning to connect all Investment Promotion Unit Network (IPUNET) members to the system of the BOI- One Window Network (BOI-OWN). It is expected to help investors in tracking and monitoring online their business-related issues and concerns. |
| Website for further information: | <http://www.boi.gov.ph/> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Executive Director Ma. Corazon H. Dichosa  BOI - Industry Development Group  Email: mchdichosa@boi.gov.ph  Tel: +632.897-6682 local 326/325  Fax: +632.895-3983  Assistant Secretary Felicitas Agoncillo Reyes  BOI – Investment Promotion Group  Email: FAgoncilloReyes@boi.gov.ph  Tel: +632.897-6682 local 327/328  Fax: +632.897-2181  Executive Director Raul V. Angeles  BOI- Investments Assistance Service  Email: RVAngeles@boi.gov.ph  Tel: +632.897-6682 local 323/324  Fax: +632.897-3079  Board of Investments  Industry & Investments Building  385 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue Makati City |  |
| ***Standards and Conformance*** | Developed a total of 10,092 Philippine National Standards (PNS) as of August 2017 where 79.91% or 8,065 were aligned with relevant international standards (ISO/IEC).  Developed/adopted 653 new PNS between November 2015 and August 2017. Of this number, 80.55% or 526 standards were aligned to international standards (ISO/IEC).   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Month/Year** | **No. of new PNS developed/ adopted** | **No. of Harmonized PNS to ISO/IEC** | | Nov to Dec 2015 | 162 | 99 | | Jan to Dec 2016 | 415 | 358 | | Jan to Aug 2017 | 76 | 69 | | **Total** | **653** | **526** |   The standardization program is consistent with the country’s industrial priority sectors which includes, among others, electronics, automotive and parts, chemicals, shipbuilding, furniture and garments.  The Bureau of Philippine Standards (BPS) maintains its full membership to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). For ISO, it is a participating member to 41 Technical Committees (TC). For IEC, it is a participating member to 7 TCs.  The Philippine Accreditation Bureau (PAB) is a signatory member to the International Accreditation Forum (IAF)/Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)/Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on:  1. Testing and Calibration (ILAC/APLAC MRA)  2. QMS Certification Bodies (IAF/PAC MLA)  3. EMS Certification Bodies (IAF/PAC MLA)  It continues to implement 10 accreditation schemes as of November 2017.   1. Quality Management System (QMS) 2. Food Safety Management System (FSMS) 3. Environmental Management System (EMS) 4. Energy Management System (EnMS) 5. Information Security Management System (ISMS) 6. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) 7. Product Certification Bodies 8. Testing and Calibration laboratories 9. Medical Testing laboratories 10. Inspection bodies   PAB has accredited nine (9) Conformity Assessment Bodies and accredited 219 test and calibration laboratories, as of October 2017.  BPS maintains the Standards and Conformance Portal ([www.bps.dti.gov.ph](http://www.bps.dti.gov.ph)), a weekly notice and newsletter on TBT notifications, a quarterly newsletter on the developed/adopted PNS, and the weekly airing of a consumer advocacy radio program to promote transparency on Standards, Technical Regulation and Conformity Assessment Procedures (STRACAP),.  The BPS maintains its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) recognizing them as a standards development organization (SDO) which formulates/develops draft PNS.  The BAFS actively supports three (3) BPS Technical Committees that include:   1. TC/SC No. 16 – Rubber and Rubber Products 2. TC/SC No. 20 – Agricultural and Other Food Products 3. TC/SC No. 81 – Mirror to Consumer Policy Committee (COPOLCO)   It updates information on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) issuances, including the approved PNS on agriculture and fishery products through [www.spsissuances.da.gov.ph](http://www.spsissuances.da.gov.ph).  By 2017, a total of 215 draft PNS on agriculture and fishery products were developed by BAFS and were approved by BPS as PNS.From Nov. 2015 to Nov. 2017, the BAFS developed 69 draft PNS which were approved by BPS.  The BPS is the Philippines’ World Trade Organization – Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO-TBT) National Enquiry Point (NEP) and the National Notification Authority (NNA). Mirroring the ISO and IEC TCs, it maintains 89 TCs and 5 Sub-Committees.  As the NNA, the BPS has submitted a total of 268 TBT notifications to WTO since 1996.From Nov. 2015 to Nov. 2017, the BPS has notified the WTO on 10 TBT issuances.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Month/Year** | **No. of TBT submitted to WTO** | | Jan to Dec 2016 | 3 | | Jan to Nov 2017 | 7 | | **Total** | **10** |   From Nov. 2015 to Nov. 2017, the DA-Policy Research Service notified the WTO on 103 SPS issuances.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Month/Year** | **No. of SPS submitted to WTO** | **No. of drafts submitted to WTO** | | Nov to Dec 2015 | 7 | 7 | | Jan to Dec 2016 | 29 | 24 | | Jan to Nov 2017 | 52 | 7 | | **Total** | **88** | **38** | | Continue to develop and/or adopt PNS according to international best practices and standards.  Continue to strictly observe transparency aligned to its WTO commitments and regional agreements.  Enhance BPS’ participation in international standardization activities on high impact standards technical committees  Continue to maintain the signatory status to IAF/PAC MLA and ILAC/APLAC MRA |
| Website for further information: | http://www.bps.dti.gov.ph  <http://www.dti.gov.ph> - See Conformity Assessment Bodies under “Business”  http://pabaccreditation.dti.gov.ph/  http://www.fda.gov.ph  http://www.bafs.da.gov.ph  http://spsissuances.da.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: | The Director  Bureau of Philippine Standards  Department of Trade and Industry  3F Trade & Industry Building  361 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave., Makati City  Tel: +632.751.4729  Fax : +632.751.4706  E-mail: bps@dti.gov.ph  The Director  Philippine Accreditation Bureau  Department of Trade and Industry  3F Trade and Industry Bldg.,  #361 Sen Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City  Tel. Nos. (632) 791-3311 / 791-3312  Fax. No. (632) 751-3262  E-mail: [pab@dti.gov.ph](mailto:pab@dti.gov.ph)  The Director  Food and Drug Administration Philippines  Department of Health  Tel Nos: (632) 857-1900/809-4390  Fax No: (632) 807-0751  Email: [info@fda.gov.ph](mailto:info@fda.gov.ph)  The Executive Director  Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries and Product Standards  BPI Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City  Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6131, 467-9039, 455-2856  Fax. No. (632) 455-2858  E-mail: bafpsda@yahoo.com; [bafs@da.gov.ph](mailto:bafs@da.gov.ph) |  |
| ***Customs Procedures*** | Enacted the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) on 20 May 2016. Its implementing rules and regulations are currently being drafted.  Customs Administrative Orders (CAOs) were issued on the following:   1. Establishment of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program (CAO-5-2017); 2. Clearance of Postal Items (CAO-3-2017); 3. Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016 (CAO-2-2017); 4. Customs Clearance of Accompanied and Unaccompanied Baggage of Travelers and Crew (CAO-1-2017); 5. Imported Goods with De Minimis Value not subject to Duties and Taxes (CAO-2-2016); 6. Establishment of Advance Ruling and System of Valuation and Rules of Origin (CAO-3-2016); 7. Consolidated Shipment of Duty and Tax-Free Balikbayan Boxes (CAO-5-2016); 8. Conditionally Tax and/or Duty-exempt Importation of Returning Residents and Overseas Filipino Workers (CAO-6-2016); and 9. Advance Cargo Declaration, Inward Foreign Manifest & Consolidated Cargo Manifest Rule (CAO-1-2016)   Accreditation of stakeholders under the Accrediation Management Office (AMO) has been transferred from the Bureau of Customs (BOC) Legal Service to the Intelligence Group.  Implementation of the Online Submission System of Air Manifests for forwarders and airlines  Updating of all regulated import items including the necessary import requirements of all trade regulatory government agencies  Launch of the BOC CARES, a system that enables stakeholders to monitor the status of their shipments/packages  Implementation of the “super green lane” accreditation for faster processing imported cargoes. | Implement new procedures on processing of shipments for import, erxport, warehousing, transshipment, etc. |
| Website for further information: | <http://customs.gov.ph> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | The Commissioner  Office of the Commissioner  Bureau of Customs  G/F OCOM Building  Port Area, Manila  Tel. +632 5274537, 5271935  Fax. + 632 5266355  Email:[boc.commissioner@customs.gov.ph](mailto:boc.commissioner@customs.gov.ph); [boc.cares@customs.gov.ph](mailto:boc.cares@customs.gov.ph), edwardjames.dybuco@customs.gov.ph |  |
| ***Intellectual Property Rights*** | Enhanced capacities of MSMEs to strengthen their participation in global trade by conducting APEC workshops on:   * + - Best Practices on Brand Development and IP Protection for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)     - Promoting Innovation through a Mechanism for IP Valuation, Financing and Leveraging IP Assets   Launched IP online platforms to expedite IP application processes:   * Trademark (TM) Online filing system and TM e-doc system * Utility Model and Industrial Design Online Filing Systems   Ramped up effective utilization of the IP System by MSMEs and the academe through the following:   * Launching of “Juana Make a Mark” project, focusing on the registration of brands owned by members of the MSME sector. * Conduct of Patent Mentoring Sessions for the protection of local inventions, technologies and industrial designs developed by local State Colleges and Universities and local R & D institutions in the countryside.   Increased the number of Innovation and Technology Support Offices (ITSO) to boost technical support services on IP asset creation, protection and commercialization. As of 2017, there are 85 ITSOs established all over the country, with ten (10) applicants under evaluation by IPO Philippines.  Secured IPOPHL's designation as International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) thereby facilitating patent applications in PCT member countries and ensure their effective protection in the global market.  Sustained effective IPR enforcement activities resulting from the Philippines exclusion from the United States Trade Representative (USTR) Special 301 Report Watch List in 2015, 2016, and 2017. |  |
| Website for further information: | <http://www.ipophil.gov.ph> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Atty. Josephine R. Santiago, LLM  Director General  Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines  Intellectual Property Center, 28 Upper McKinley Road,  McKinley Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, 1634 Taguig City  Tel.: +632 238 6300  Fax: +632 890 4862  Email: josephinesantiago.dg@ipophil.gov.ph  Atty. Leny B. Raz  Director, Bureau of Trademarks (BOT)  Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines  Intellectual Property Center, 28 Upper McKinley Road,  McKinley Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, 1634 Taguig City  Tel.: +632 238 6300  Email. leny.raz@ipophil.gov.ph |  |
| ***Competition Policy*** | Passed Republic Act No. 10667, otherwise known as the Philippine Competition Act (PCA), which took effect on 8 August 2015. The PCA prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuses of dominant position, and mergers and acquisitions that substantially limit, prevent, and restrict competition in the relevant market and considers certain forms of anti-competitive conduct as criminal. The law authorizes the imposition of administrative fines and criminal penalties, as well as civil damages.  Pursuant to the PCA, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), a quasi-judicial body and primary competition authority, was established in February 2016, following the appointment of the Chairman and Commissioners.  PCC promulgated the transitory rules on the review of mergers and acquisitions in February 2016.  On 18 June 2016, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the PCA promulgated by the PCC became effective.  In December 2016, included separate chapter on Competition (Chapter 16) in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and launched a program for development partners.  In September 2017, the PCC promulgated the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the Philippine Competition Commission.MOA with the Commission on Audit executed in November 2017.In November 2017, the Rules on Merger Procedure was promulgated.  Continued and enhanced cooperation with other Competition Authorities and other international organizations. | Promulgate further procedural rules and guidelines, particularly on leniency and forbearance  Continue to increase and enhance awareness of the PCA, competition law and economics, among stakeholders and the public in general  Continue capacity-building across all fields such as merger and acquisitions review and investigation of anti-competitive conduct and abuse of dominance  Work towards enabling knowledge-sharing environment that advances responsible business and regulatory practices to advance consumer welfare  In the ASEAN level, actively participate in the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC) work program and activities.  Continue to participate in policy dialogues and information exchanges on competition policy within APEC and with other international organizations.  Carry out programs with development partners. |
| Website for further information: | http://www.phcc.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Executive Director Gwen Grecia-de Vera  Philippine Competition Commission  2nd Floor, Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City  Email: oed@phcc.gov.ph  Telephone: +632 631-2129 |  |
| ***Government Procurement*** | Approved in 2016 the second major revision of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184 and the Consolidated Guidelines for Alternative Methods of Procurement, which became effective on 28 October 2017.  Some of the salient features of the 2016 revised IRR include strengthening the provisions on procurement planning and budget linkage, and procurement short of award to fast track government acquisition. To reduce costs to government, the thresholds for newspaper advertisement have been increased and a sunset provision has been included. Several measures have also been included for easier eligibility check and reduction of disqualification of bidders or failure of biddings, which include mandatory registration under Platinum Membership with the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS).  To further provide for a streamlined process for the use of alternative methods of procurement, the Consolidated Guidelines for the Alternative Methods of Procurement have been crafted and approved as Annex H of the IRR. An additional instance for the use of negotiated procurement has been included for Scientific, Scholarly or Artistic Work, Exclusive Technology and Media Services. | Review and revise existing Guidelines on the Procurement of Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants, Guidelines on the Procurement of Water, Electricity, Telephone and Internet Service Provider, Guidelines on the Procurement of Janitorial and Security Services, Guidelines on the Extension of Contracts, etc. |
|  | Maintains a database (Please see: http://www.gppb.gov.ph/monitoring/blacklistedSup.php and http://www.gppb.gov.ph/monitoring/blacklistedCon.php) of blacklisted suppliers, consultants and contractors in accordance with the blacklisting order issued by procuring entities and submitted to the Board. .  Amended its Guidelines on Ordering Agreements/Framework Agreements providing for a Framework Agreement of up to three years. The Guidelines was approved for pilot testing of big procuring entities, namely: Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of National Defense and Department of Budget and Management-Procurement Service.  The IRR of the GPRA requires the participation of civil society, through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in all BAC meetings and in all stages of the procurement process.  The Issuance of Notice to invite prospective Observers was changed from 3 days to 5 days, to ensure that concerned observers will appear during conduct of biddings. | Amend the Blacklisting Guidelines and study the possibility of implementing a Cross-Debarment policy with International Financing Institutions.  Further strengthen the procurement monitoring and enforcement institutions and mechanisms of the government through an online monitoring and assessment platform, i.e. the Online Procurement Performance and Compliance Indicator System (OPPCIS) linked with the PhilGEPS Modernization Program. |
| Website for further information: | www.gppb.gov.ph  www.neda.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Ruben S. Reinoso, Jr.  Assistant Director General for Investment Programming  National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)  12 Saint Jose Maria Escriva Drive  Pasig City, Philippines  Tel.: (632) 631-0945 loc 607  Fax: (632) 631-2192  Email: RSReinoso@neda.gov.ph  Roderick M. Planta  Director IV, Infrastructure Staff  National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)  12 Saint Jose Maria Escriva Drive  Pasig City, Philippines  Tel.: (632) 631-3724  Fax: (632) 631-2188  Email: RMPlanta@neda.gov.ph  Dennis S. Santiago  Executive Director V  Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office  (GPPB-TSO)  Unit 2206, Raffles Corporate Center, F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas,  Pasig City  Tel: (632) 900-6741 to 44  E-mail: dssantiago@gppb.gov.ph; gppb@gppb.gov.ph |  |
| ***Deregulation/Regulatory Review*** | Issued Memorandum Circular No. 27 on October 6, 2017, providing for the promotion of the use of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and other related tools by regulatory agencies to improve the quality of new regulations in a way that will facilitate the free flow of goods and services in accordance with the PEDP.  Initiated various activities on regulatory impact analysis (RIA), with assistance from the Asian Development Bank, for a comprehensive training program, study on the institutionalization of RIA and drafting of a general manual on RIA.  Project Repeal  Launched Project Repeal in March 2016 which involves the review of executive issuances to reduce cost of regulatory compliance, and eventually review of legislations with Congress.  Eight (8) agencies participated in the Philippines’ First Repeal Day in June 2016 where 1,877 department issuances were delisted and 1,873 were repealed.Sixteen (16) agencies enrolled issuances and participated during Project Repeal’s Second Repeal Day in December 2016 where about 762 department issuances were delisted and two (2) department issuances were repealed. On December 2017, which marked the Third Repeal Day, saw 976 rules and issuances repealed by 13 participating agencies. |  |
|  | Water Sector  Endorsed the proposal of creating an Apex body for the water resources sector was endorsed for inclusion on the priority agenda of the Legislative-Executive Development Action Council in August 2016.The following bills related to the creation of an Apex Body are pending in Congress:   1. House Bill No. 2457 2. House Bill No. 4995 3. House Bill No. 221 4. Senate Bill No. 245   Finalizing the technical assistance with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the refinement of the draft bill which shall be presented to the respective Committee for endorsement/approval prior to submission to Congress.  Reconfirmed and endorsed the proposed Water Regulatory Commission (WRC) was as a priority legislation. The following are the proposed bills in Congress:   1. Senate Bill No. 933 2. Senate Bill No. 1217 3. House Bill No. 2057 4. House Bill No. 517 |  |
|  | Transportation Sector  The Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 identified several legislative agenda for the transport sector:   1. Enactment of a National Transport Policy (NTP). IRR currently under formulation. Seeks to guide all transport-related agencies in pursuing policy decisions and future investments by setting the parameters for planning at the agency level. 2. Enactment of a Law Creating Independent Regulatory Bodies for Railway and Maritime Transport Sectors. The law aims to address the weak and fragmented institutional set-up of concerned transport agencies by creating respective independent regulatory bodies for the railway sector and maritime transport sector, consistent with the National Transport Policy. The existing dual roles of some agencies acting as both operator and regulator of transport facilities will be effectively eliminated 3. Enactment of a Law Creating an Independent Body for Transport Safety and Security. This law aims to place all transport safety recommendations, thereby eliminating conflicting and overlapping fucntions of existing agencies or entities.   Formulated the National Logistics Masterplan to address the issues and concerns that affect the competitiveness of the Philippine logistics industry, including the lack of infrastructure and difficulties arising from regulatory bottlenecks.  Implementation of the “Build-Build-Build” program to support the government’s policy to increase infrastructure spending. The program specifies the implementation of high-impact infrastructure projects following the program’s three pronged objective of building: (a) more railways, urban mass transport, airports and seaports; (b) more bridges and roads; and (c) new and better cities. | Formulate a Philippine Transport System Master Plan (PTSMP) to ensure a holistic, peopleoriented and evidence-based program/project selection process. |
| Website for further information: | http://www.neda.gov.ph  http://www.build.gov.ph/ |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Jonathan L. Uy  OIC- Assistant Director General for Programs and Projects  Tel.: (632) 631-0945 loc. 400  Email: [JLUy@neda.gov.ph](mailto:JLUy@neda.gov.ph)  Carlos Bernardo O. Abad Santos  Assistant Director General for Policy and Planning  Tel. (632) 631-0945 loc. 501  Email: COAbadSantos@neda.gov.ph  Roderick M. Planta  Director IV, Infrastructure Staff  Tel. (632) 631-3724  Fax: (632) 631-2188  Email: [RMPlanta@neda.gov.ph](mailto:RMPlanta@neda.gov.ph)  Thelma C. Manuel  OIC-Director, Governance Staff  Tel: (632) 631-3733  Fax: (632) 631-3746  Email: tcmanuel@neda.gov.ph  National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)  12 Saint Josemaria Escriva Drive  Pasig City, Philippines |  |
| ***Implementation of WTO Obligations/ROOs*** | Submitted the annual notification e on Import Licensing Procedures (ILP) as required under Articles 1.4 (A) and 8.2(B); Article 7.3; and Article 5 of the WTO Agreement on ILP.  Submitted a full notification according to Article 25.1 od the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement.  Submitted the notification requirements mandated under the covered WTO Agreements, among others, on:   * Anti-Dumping; * Safeguards; * Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures; and * Technical Barriers to Trade   Preparations for the PH 5th Trade Policy Review (TPR) are ongoing.  Requested in July 2017 WTO dispute settlement consultations with Thailand to address Thailand’s compliance with the DS371 ruling on Thai measures imposed on imports of cigarettes from the Philippines. | Participate actively in the 11th Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC1) to be held on 10-13 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.  Submit notification requirements within the  prescribed period. |
| Website for further information: | https://www.wto.org/ |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Office of the Director  Bureau of International Trade Relations  Department of Trade and Industry  375 Senator Gil J. Puyat Avenue  Makati City 1200 Philippines  Tel: (632) 465-3300; 465-3356  Fax: (632) 890 5149 |  |
| ***Dispute Resolution*** | The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is currently drafting an amendment to the Rules of Procedure on IPO Mediation Proceedings. It has invited the public to submit comments on the draft amendment until October 30, 2017.  Finalization of the Revised Guidelines for Continuous Trial of Criminal Cases (A.M. No. 15-06-10-SC) which took effect on September 1, 2017. Under the Revised Guidelines, the civil aspect of certain criminal cases shall be referred to the Philippine Mediation Center (PMC) Unit for mediation after the conduct of arraignment and pre-trial/preliminary conference.  Announcement for the adoption of a two-step Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) on August 7, 2017. The process will include mediation, followed by arbitration, in resolving mining cases.  Publication of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Executive Order (E.O.) No. 78, series of 2012, on May 12, 2017. E.O. No. 78 mandates the inclusion of provisions on the use of ADR mechanisms in all contracts involving Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) projects, and Joint Venture Agreements (JVA) between the government and private entities and those entered into by local government units (LGUs).  Approval of Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) Procedure in the Investigation and Resolution of Land Claims and Conflicts Cases (DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-31) on December 29, 2016. The Administrative Order provides for a mandatory referral of land claims/conflicts cases for ADR (Sec. 12). Said issuance was subsequently published on February 3, 2017.  Approval of DENR’s Guidelines in the Conduct of ADR in Land Management and Disposition (DENR Administrative Order No. 2016-30) on December 22, 2016. Said issuance was subsequently published on March 1, 2017.  Approval of the National Privacy Commission’s (NPC) Rules of Procedure (NPC Circular No. 04-16) on December 15, 2016, which includes a provision that the NPC shall facilitate or enable settlement through the use of ADR processes (Sec. 25).  Approval of R.A. No. 10846 on May 23, 2016 which amends R.A. No. 3591– an act which established the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC). Under the amended law, actions pending for or against a closed bank, except those pending before the Supreme Court, shall be suspended for a period not exceeding 180 days and referred to mandatory mediation (Sec. 13(e)(9), R.A. No. 3591, as amended by R.A. No. 10846).  The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) invited the public to submit comments on the Draft SEC Mediation Policy, which covers all cases within the jurisdiction of the SEC, as well as intra-corporate controversies voluntarily brought to the SEC by the parties concerned for mediation on April 25, 2016.  Approval of the Department of Labor and Employment’s (DOLE) Single Entry Approach (SEnA) IRR (DOLE Department Order No. 151-16), pursuant to R.A. No. 10396 on February 22, 2016. The SEnA IRR mandates for all issues arising from labor and employment shall be subject to a thirty (30)-day mandatory conciliation-mediation service.  Publication of the Uniform Rules on Dispute Resolution under Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 242 on November 9, 2015. The Uniform Rules shall govern the resolution of all disputes, claims, and controversies between or among government departments, bureaus, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations.  The Supreme Court, through its decisions, continues its liberal stance towards ADR as a welcome alternative to burdensome litigation.  Adoption of the Philippines Dispute Resolution Center Inc. (PDRCI) 2015 Arbitration Rules which governs disputes by parties who have agreed to refer it to arbitration  Adoption of the 2017 Mediation Rules  Adoptedthe PDRCI Guidelines on Fees as Annex B of the 2015 Arbitration Rules. Under the Guidelines, Parties adopted the schedule of payment as indicated under it.  Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Dispute Resolution Board Foundation (DRBF) and the Philippine Institute of Arbitrators (PIArb) on mutual cooperation with the goal of promoting ADR as an effective instrument of dispute resolution.  Signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) and the Philippine Dispute Resolution Center Inc. (PDRCI) to design and implement an ADR framework for the entertainment industry.  In 2015, the Construction Industry Arbitration Commission (CIAC) initiated the review of its rules for purposes of aligning these with accepted international practices but always within the intent and spirit of the Philippine laws particularly Executive Order No. 1008 or the Construction Industry Arbitration Law. Since then, the Commission has approved amendments to the CIAC rules, including:   1. Reinstatement of the provision in Section 1, Article III of the original CIAC Arbitration Rules dated 13 August 1988 on the submission by the parties to the CIAC Rules; 2. Vesting the Commission with the authority to select and appoint the 3rd member and Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal, consistent with Section 14 of E.O. No. 1008; and 3. Deleting the rule on automatic appointment of “common nominees” to the Arbitral Tribunal to be more in accord with the party autonomy principle by applying the order of preference of the parties as signified in their lists of nominees. | Continue work for the publication of the second draft of the Revised Rules of Civil Procedure. The first draft of the Revised Rules provides that every case, with few exceptions, must undergo alternative dispute resolution (ADR) before it is filed in court.  Implementation of rules, regulations, guidelines, procedures, and other issuances promoting ADR mechanisms and processes should continue to be monitored and evaluated.  Continued discussions with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Board of Investments (BOI) on providing ADR mechanisms in current dispute resolution rules.  Continuing the upgrade of CIAC rules and systems to be comparable to world-renowned institutions providing ADR services. |
| Website for further information: | [www.pdrci.com](http://www.pdrci.com)  <https://www.ipophil.gov.ph/images/2017Uploads/Announcements/mandatory_mediation_proposed_amended_rules_of_procedure.pdf>  <http://www.mgb.gov.ph/2015-05-13-02-02-11/mgb-news/562-mgb-shifts-to-new-alternative-dispute-resolution-for-mining-cases>  <http://www.neda.gov.ph/wpcontent/uploads/2017/06/IRR_of_EO78.pdf>  <https://globalarbitrationnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Philippines.pdf>  <http://www.pdrci.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-05-Philippine-ADR-Review.pdf>  <http://server2.denr.gov.ph/uploads/rmdd/dao-2016-31.pdf>  <http://server2.denr.gov.ph/uploads/rmdd/dao-2016-30.pdf>  <https://privacy.gov.ph/memorandum-circulars/npc-circular-16-04-rules-of-procedure/>    <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2016/05/23/republic-act-no-10846/>    http://www.sec.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/DraftSECMediationPolicy1.pdf  <https://www.dole.gov.ph/files/Dept%20Order%20No_%20151-16.pdf>  http://sc.judiciary.gov.phwww.ciap.dti.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: | The Solicitor General  Office of the Solicitor General  134 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City  Tel: (632) 818-6381  Fax: (632) 817-6037  E-mail: docket@osg.gov.ph  Mr. Edmund L. Tan  Philippine Dispute Resolution Center, Inc. (PDRCI)  3rd Floor, Commerce & Industry Plaza (PCCI Building), 1030 Campus Ave. cor Park Ave., Mckinley Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City  Tel: (632) 822-4102  Fax: (632) 822-4102  E-mail: secretariat@pdrci.org  Executive Director Kathryn Josephine T. Dela Cruz  Construction Industry Arbitration Commission (CIAC)  DTI – Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines  2/F, Executive Building Center, 369 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue  corner Makati Avenue, Makati City  Telephone No.: (632) 897-0853  Telefax No.: (632) 897-9313  Email: ciac\_ciap@yahoo.com / ciac@dti.gov.ph |  |
| *Mobility of Business People* | Implementing the Foreign Service Circular 157-2016 which extends visa free entry to the Philippines of nationals from 157 countries, with an initial stay of 30 days.  Relaxed the six (6) months validity of passport requirements for nationals of countries whose respective embassies/consulates in the Philippines are renewing passports and/or extending passport validity  Designated Immigration counters for APEC Business Travel Card holders. |  |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://www.immigration.gov.ph/> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Commissioner Jaime H. Morente  Bureau of Immigration  2/F Bureau of Immigration Bldg.  Magallanes Drive, Port Area  Tel No: (632) 465-2400  Email: immigPH@gmail.com |  |
| *Official websites that gather economies’ information* | Official websites that gather economies’ information:   * [www.psa.gov.ph](http://www.psa.gov.ph) (provides import and export data of the Philippines with top trading partners) |  |
| Website for further information: | www.psa.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: |  |  |
| ***Transparency*** | Open Data (data.gov.ph), a Single Access Window for data to help create a transparent government by publishing collections of government data through one single portal.  Citizen Services Portal of the Philippines, the goal of which is to empower local government units (LGUs) to more efficiently and transparently serve their constituents.  The Open Government Partnership ([www.opengovpartnership.org](http://www.opengovpartnership.org)) is a multilateral initiatve that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.  Mapping of all Bottom-up-Budgeting (BUB) projects, tracking their implementation, allow citizen’s feedback (through the OpenLGU mapping platform), and monitor results |  |
| Website for further information: | data.gov.ph  www.csp.ph  [www.opengovpartnership.org](http://www.opengovpartnership.org)  openbub.gov.ph |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Undersecretary George A Apacible  Presidential Communications Operations Office  Undersecrtary for Good Governance and GOCCs  New Executive Building  Jose P. Laurel St., Malacanang, Manila  Tel No. (632) 735-6192; Fax No. (632) 735-6192 |  |

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| **RTAs/FTAs** | | | |
| ***-*** ***Description of current agreements*** | |  |
| ***Agreement #1*** | | **Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement**    The Agreement was ratified and entered into force in December 2008. The General Review of the Agreement, following from PJEPA Article 161, is currently being undertaken. The Philippines and Japan agreed to endeavor to complete the said review by end of 2018.  Copy of the agreement is available at <http://asean.org/asean-economic-community/asean-free-trade-area-afta-council/agreements-declarations/> |
| ***Agreement #2*** | | **ASEAN Free Trade Area**    The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) is a trade bloc among the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This was signed on 28 January 1992 and entered into force on 01 January 1993.  The ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) entered into force on 17 May 2010, to consolidate all commitments related to trade in goods. |
| ***Agreement #3*** | | **ASEAN – China FTA**  The ASEAN-China FTA was realized on 1 January 2010 and took full effect on 01 January 2015.  In line with the mandate given by the Leaders to upgrade the ACFTA, the “Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and the People’s Republic of China” (ACFTA Upgrade Protocol) was signed on 21 November 2015 and entered into force on 1 July 2016.  <http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-china-free-trade-area-2> |
| ***Agreement #4*** | | **ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Partnership Agreement**  The ASEAN – Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (AJCEPA) provides for the establishment of a Free Trade Area (FTA) between ASEAN and Japan. Philippines signing the Agreement on 02 April 2008. The Philippines began implementation of the Agreement on 01 July 2010.  <http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-japan-free-trade-area-2> |
| ***Agreement #5*** | | **ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement**    The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries and Korea was signed on 13 December 2005.  The ASEAN-Korea Trade in Goods (AKTIG) Agreement was signed on 24 August 2006 and took effect in 2007; meanwhile, the ASEAN-ROK Trade in Services Agreement was signed on 21 November and came into force on 1 May 2009; and the ASEAN-ROK Investment Agreement was signed on 2 June 2009 and entered into force on 1 September 2009. Subsequently, the ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Area (AKFTA) came into effect on 1 January 2010.  <http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-republic-of-korea-free-trade-area-2> |
| ***Agreement #6*** | | **ASEAN-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership**    The Agreement on Trade in Goods Under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Republic of India was signed on 13 August 2009 that entered into force on 1 January 2010.  <http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-india-free-trade-area-3> |
| ***Agreement #7*** | | **ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement**  The Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area was signed on 27 February 2009.  The first Protocol to Amend the AANZFTA, covering Chapters in Trade in Goods and Rules of Origins, was signed in August 2014 and entered into force for most Parties on 1 October 2015.  <http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-australia-new-zealand-free-trade-area> |
| ***Agreement #8*** | | **ASEAN – Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement**  The ASEAN – HKC Free Trade Agreement (AHKFTA) and the ASEAN – HKC Investment Agreement (AHKIA) was signed on 12 November 2017 at the sidelines of the 31st ASEAN Summit in Pasay City, the Philippines. The Agreements are expected to enter into force by 1 January 2019. |
| ***- Agreements under negotiation*** | |  |
|  | ***Agreement #1*** | **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**  Parties have adopted a set of Guiding Principles and Objectives in negotiating the RCEP that aims to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN’s FTA Partners. Since the inaugural meeting in May 2013, there have been ten rounds of negotiations led by the RCEP Trade Negotiating Committee (RCEP TNC) and supported by sixteen working groups and sub-working groups. The 20th round of negotiations took place in October 2017 and the target is to conclude RCEP negotiations by 2018. |
| ***Agreement #2*** | **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**  The FTA covers, among others, trade in goods, rules of origin and customs cooperation, trade facilitation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, trade remedies, trade in services, investments, intellectual property rights, competition, government procurement and trade and sustainable development.  After five (5) rounds of negotiations, the agreement was signed on 28 April 2016 in Bern, Switzerland. Currently, the agreement is undergoing the process of domestic ratification. |
| ***-*** ***Future plans*** | | The Philippines is firmly committed to fair and liberal trade and have upheld this position consistently in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora. The Philippines also remains committed to the multilateral trading system of the WTO even as the country seeks to further expand trade particularly with possible dialogue partners |
| Website for further information: | | www.dti.gov.ph |
| Contact point for further details: | | The Director  Bureau of International Trade Relations  Department of Trade and Industry  361 Senator Gil J. Puyat Avenue  Makati City 1200 Philippines  Tel: (632) 465-3300, 465-3356  Fax: (632) 890-5149 |

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| ***Other voluntary reporting areas:***  ***Women and the Economy*** | Implementation of the Phase-2 of Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation (GREAT) of Women Project (GWP-2) – a governance and capacity development project that aims to promote and support a gender responsive enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment. As of end 2017, a total of 2,148 women microentrepreneurs (WMEs) from 15 regions were enrolled in the GWP-2.  Implementation of PhilHealth’s Partial Subsidy Scheme is an enrollment mechanism in partnership with various Local Government Units (LGUs) nationwide for coverage of WMEs and other poor and/or low-income informal sectors under the Sponsored Program component of the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP). As of March 2017, a total of 180,949 members have been covered under the program. Around 57% of the said members are female, and 43% are male;  Pilot Implementation of the Healthy Women Healthy Economies (HWHE) Policy Toolkit is through a scorecard. The Scorecard is the mechanism for the Philippines to implement the HWHE Policy Toolkit. The Scorecard, was designed to take the various components of HWHE, and enable entities to evaluate their own level of compliance with set targets for women’s participation and workplace health and safety. The pilot test in 2016 involved 12 industries comprised of mixed large, medium and small companies in Region 3.  Implementation of the Harmonized Project on Gender Responsive Enterprise Development which aims to enhance and effectively implement gender responsive activities on enterprise development. Eight (8) pilot areas have been identified wherein Gender Responsive Value Chain Approach (GRVCA) was used. GRVCA secures participation and meaningful outcomes for women in the value chain and avoids unintended negative consequences as differentiated from a generic value chain.For 2016, the list of women targeted is around 1,900. Each year, additional women entrepreneurs will be enrolled for assistance to help reach the project target of 12,000 women micro/small entrepreneurs by 2020.  .  Development of the 6-year MSMED Plan in consultation with private sector and which forms part of the Phil. Development Plan, through the RA 9501 or the Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).  Implementation of DOLE’s Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) or *Kabuhayan Program* which provides its priority beneficiaries, including women, with access to productive resources such as working capital in the form of raw materials, equipment, tools and jigs which could help them either start, enhance, or restore their lost livelihood undertakings. Women beneficiaries are given equal footing with men under the DOLE Livelihood Program.  Implementation of DOLE’s Balik Pinay! Balik Hanapbuhay! (Returning Filipinas! Returning Employment!) which provides aid to returning women overseas workers, particularly those displaced by the hostilities and conflicts in their host country, are provided with livelihood starter kits based on the training that they attended. | Advance the Boracay Action Agenda to “strengthen focus on MSMEs led by women” by ensuring the following:   1. Fostering the use of gender-disaggregated data in measuring economic and social impacts of MSMEs. 2. Promote an understanding of the divergent constraints faced by male and female-led MSMEs. 3. Encourage exchange of best practices on women-friendly interfaces with customs and other border authorities.   Continue the implementation of the Healthy Women, Healthy Economies (HWHE) Policy Toolkit. The Technical Working Group has also identified gaps and areas for improvement in implementation, including engagement of government agencies, private sector, assessment of the Scorecard as well as possibility of expanding the HWHE implementation to other areas.  APEC Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business  Preparation of Completion Report for submission (along with supporting documents) to APEC Secretariat in Singaproe by end January 2018. Disseminate the e-publication on APEC Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business to all relevant working groups and fora. Advocate and encourage APEC to champion the inclusion of women in the Inclusive Business models and activities.  Under the Balik Pinay! Balik-Hanapbuhay! (BPBH) Project, among the next steps are:  Increase in the per capital value of grant from Php10,000 to Php20,000 to cover the longer trainings and to provide the equipment necessary to start up the enterprise  Develop standardized entrepreneurship module (currently being undertaken in the Women REACH Project with Coca Cola Philippines)  Strengthen convergence with other partners and government agencies |
| Website for further information: | http://www.dti.gov.ph/international-commitments/asean/women-related-events  http://pcw.gov.ph/international-commitments |  |
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