

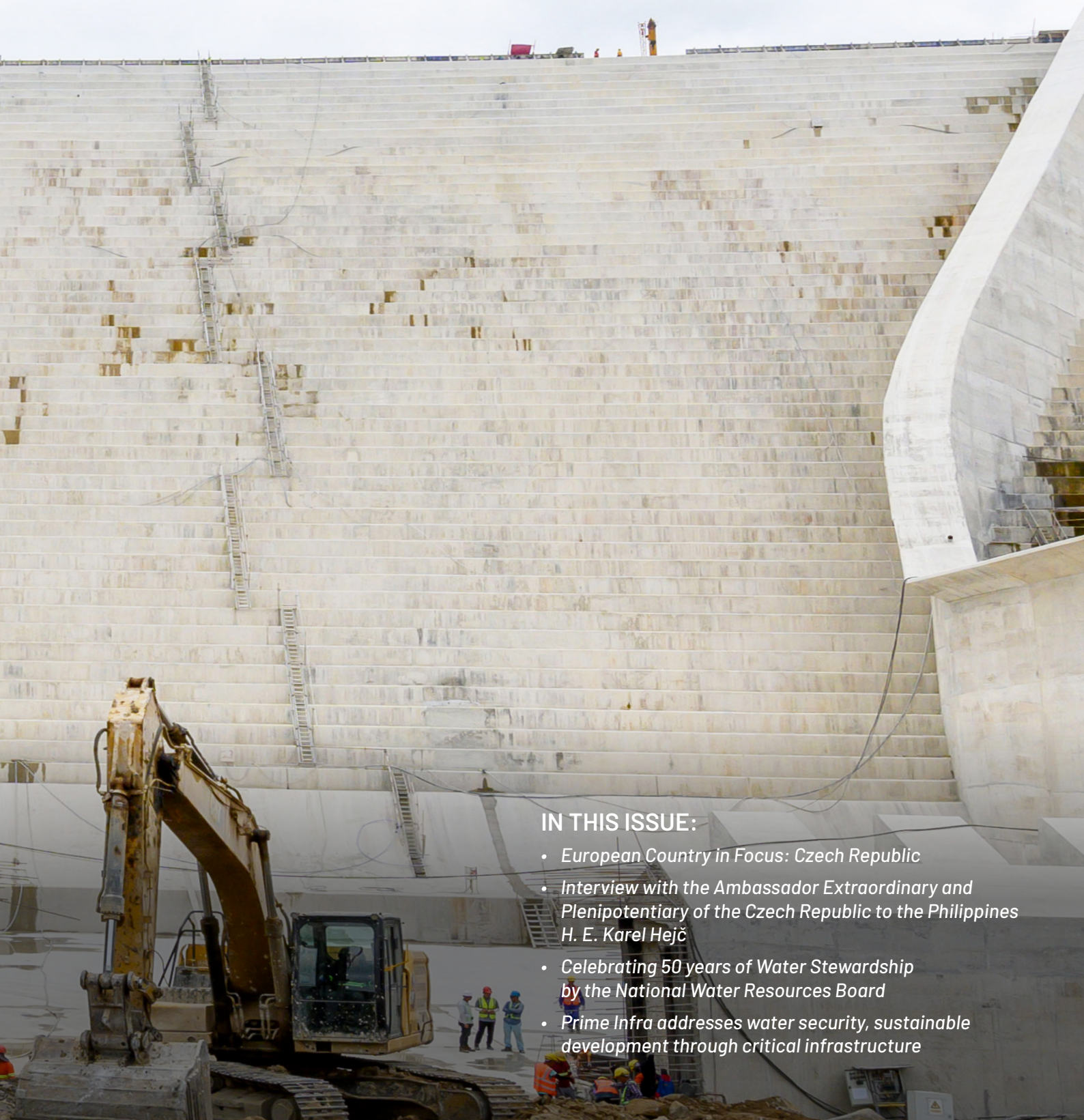
EuroPH CONNECT

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THE BUSINESS DIGEST
OF THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Issue on Water



IN THIS ISSUE:

- *European Country in Focus: Czech Republic*
- *Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to the Philippines
H. E. Karel Hejč*
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by the National Water Resources Board*
- *Prime Infra addresses water security, sustainable
development through critical infrastructure*

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Cover Photo by [Google DeepMind](#)

Published by

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Circulation

Digital copies of the EuroPH CONNECT are distributed free of charge on a bi-monthly basis to ECCP members, partners, and friends of ECCP, as well as to industry associations and government officials with whom the Chamber has dealings.

Subscription Service

Subscriptions from non-members are also accepted: in the Philippines: PHP 1,500 (6 issues); Individual copies may be purchased locally at PHP 220 (members) and PHP 250 (non-members); and for companies outside the Philippines at US\$25.00.

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Editorial

Dear reader,

In an era marked by global warming and the pressing consequences of climate change, the significance of water management and conservation has never been more pronounced. As people and livelihoods grapple with the multifaceted challenges of rising sea levels, floods, and food scarcity – it becomes increasingly clear that water and with it water management lie at the heart of these issues.

Against this backdrop, the government and organizations from the private sector are taking on the lead to explore innovative ideas and transformative approaches to address the multitude of urgent water-related concerns facing our planet and people.

In this edition of our EuroPH Connect, we focus on the intersection between water and sustainable development, the evolving landscape of water governance, and the necessity of embodying a "beyond business as usual" mindset. Further, this issue aims to shed light on the water-related programs and initiatives spearheaded by various stakeholders in the Philippines.

On page 8, read our feature on the Embassy of the Czech Republic and Ambassador Karel Hejč as he shares insights on business relations between the Czech Republic and the Philippines.

We feature the National Water Resource Board as it celebrated its 50th anniversary and World Water Day. Read about it on page 14.

At the heart of this issue lies our cover story on Prime Infrastructure, whose sustainable projects and initiatives showcase how water security and sustainability can be addressed through critical infrastructure. More about this story on page 18.

Moving onto the strides made by the Chamber, I am pleased to share that we started the year in great spirits with our events. To keep you up to date, we held numerous events such as the Sustainable Aviation Fuel: Powering #OnePHAviation Forum that gathered leaders and experts from the aviation industry on the topic of SAF production and distribution, the first Bacolod-Iloilo Business Mission organized by the ECCP to strengthen European ties with local businesses and industries in the Western Visayas region, and in celebration of Women's Month, we held the Empower Her: Investing in Women Through Leadership Opportunities Forum that gathered women leaders to share their experiences and insights as empowered women in the workplace.

These are just some of the many events and activities organized by the ECCP and there is more to come in the upcoming weeks and months. Stay updated by checking our events calendar for the month of April on page 78 or you may also keep track through our social media channels and our website.

Another major highlight was the recent announcement of the official resumption of negotiations for the EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement (FTA). It was a privilege to have the Chamber present in Brussels last 18 March, represented by ECCP President Paulo Duarte, for key engagements leading to this pivotal moment in EU-PH relations. The ECCP has fervently advocated for the timely and successful conclusion of the FTA,



Florian Gottein
ECCP Executive Director

and we are excited to see prominent progress in this regard. We likewise look forward to facilitating constructive dialogue and advocating for the interests of our members and the broader business community.

As for other highlights, take a look at our Advocacy Corner on page 53 and get the latest updates on our various engagements with key government offices as well as our committee meetings to discuss pressing industry concerns and issues.

We also feature the official launch of the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Program (BAEP) Creating Responsible Competitive Enterprises (CRESCENT) in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Agribusiness Sector. Representatives of our BAEP project team from Manila flew down to Davao in support of the BAEP project team on the ground in coming up with the successful launch. Read more about the project on page 22.

We warmly welcome our new members under the New Members Corner found on page 69. Stay up to date on the Chamber activities from our branches in Manila, Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Clark, and Iloilo. Read about this on page 28. Meanwhile, take a look at the available business opportunities on page 76. We also feature our line up of events and trainings as well as international trade fairs you might be interested to join.

As we embark further into Q2 there will be more to look forward to in the upcoming weeks and months with more activities and pillar events lined up for our members and partners.

As always, we are grateful for your continued trust and support. I hope you enjoy this issue and we are excited to see you in one of our activities.

Best regards,
Florian

European Country in Focus

Czech Republic

CZECH REPUBLIC



Geographical Location: Situated in Central Europe, the Czech Republic shares its borders with Germany to the north, Poland to the north, Slovakia to the east, and Austria to the south. The country is divided into three main regions: Bohemia in the west, Moravia in the southeast, and Silesia in the northeast.

Climate: The Czech Republic experiences a moderately continental climate characterized by cold winters, often dipping below freezing, and warm summers with cool nights.

Official Language: Czech

Government Type: The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy with the Constitution of the Czech Republic as its supreme law together with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The Constitution has been valid since 1 January 1993 in its current form. This has been since the date the independent Czech state was established, which was a result of the separation of Czechoslovakia. Power is divided into three branches: legislative (Czech Parliament), executive (Czech Government and the President of the Czech Republic), and judicial.

Standard of Living: Czechia's Human Development Index as of 2021 is 0.889, positioning it at 32 out of 191 countries and territories. Its position puts the country in the Very High human development category.

Organizations:

- World Health Organization (since 1993)
- United Nations (since 1993)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (since 1993)
- World Bank (since 1993)
- International Monetary Fund (since 1993)
- World Trade Organization (since 1995)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (since 1999)
- International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (since 2002)
- European Union (since 2004)
- International Criminal Court (since 2009)

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

Prague, the financial capital of the Czech Republic, boasts a rich history in its banking district. Over the years, major banks like Česká spořitelna, Československá obchodní banka (CSOB), and Komerční banka have played integral roles in shaping the financial landscape. The Czech Republic's banking system, which emerged from the economic transformations post-1989, witnessed the privatization of major banks and the establishment of new financial institutions. This period marked a transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one, with the banking sector adapting to new regulatory frameworks.

TOP 3 TOURISM DESTINATIONS



PRAGUE CASTLE

Founded around 880 by Prince Bořivoj of the Premyslides, Prague Castle evolved from a fortified medieval site to a significant political and religious center. The Church of the Virgin Mary was the initial walled building, followed by churches dedicated to St. George and St. Vitus in the 10th century. Prague Castle served as the seat for rulers and the Prague bishop, hosting the first Bohemian convent.



CHARLES BRIDGE

Constructed between 1357 and 1402 over the Vltava River in Prague, Charles Bridge replaced the Judith Bridge, which succumbed to a flood in 1342. Commissioned by King Charles IV, German mason Petr Parléř designed the bridge with 16 arches, guarded by two towers—Renaissance-style and late Gothic. Initially the sole crossing until 1841, the bridge transitioned from Gothic to Baroque statues in the mid-17th century.



ST. VITUS CATHEDRAL

St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague's largest and most pivotal temple, has hosted religious services and Czech coronations. Serving as the burial place for saints, monarchs, nobles, and archbishops, it's the third church consecrated to the same saint on this site. Established around 925 by Prince Wenceslas, it evolved from a Romanesque rotunda to a basilica post-1060.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Czech Republic has the highest density of castles in Europe

The Czech Republic, with over 2,000 castles and chateaux, boasts the highest density of historical structures in Europe. Notable examples like Hluboká Castle, Orlik Castle, Lednice Castle, and Karlštejn Castle showcase diverse architectural styles, providing a captivating journey through centuries of Czech history. From medieval fortifications to Renaissance residences, the abundance of castles makes the Czech Republic a captivating destination for history enthusiasts and travelers.

- Czech Republic is the birthplace of robots (source 1, 2)

The word "robot" made its debut in literature in the 1920 play "R.U.R." by Czech writer Karel Čapek, who is often credited. Yet, it was Josef Čapek, Karel's brother and a versatile Czech artist, painter, writer, and poet, who truly invented the term. Josef introduced "robot," and Karel popularized it in literature. The word "robota" in Czech means "forced labor".

- Prague is also known as "The City of 100 Spires" (source)

Prague, often dubbed "The Golden City of One Hundred Spires," is celebrated for its stunning cathedrals and unique spires. Alternatively known as "The Golden City of Five Hundred Spires" or even "The Golden City of One Thousand Spires," Prague's magical ambiance stems from a diverse architectural heritage spanning ten centuries. The city features various styles, from rotundas and gothic cathedrals to renaissance squares and baroque churches, including "art nouveau" structures. Initially labeled "The golden city of one hundred spires," the estimate now stands at around five hundred, justifying the alternative title as "The golden city of five hundred spires".



78,870
square kilometers



POPULATION
10.67 M
approximately



CAPITAL
Prague

CZECH REPUBLIC TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Czech economy is recognized for its consistent yet modest GDP growth and prudent fiscal policies. In 2020, facing challenges during the pandemic, it experienced supply chain disruptions and output declines but rebounded with a 2.5 percent growth in 2022. However, the European Commission projects a slowdown to 0.2 percent in 2023 due to increased price pressures and effects from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Boasting the EU's lowest unemployment rate, the Czech Republic grapples with labor shortages in technology and healthcare. Remaining outside the Eurozone, it maintains its currency, the Czech crown. In 2022, inflation surged due to pandemic and war disruptions, prompting the Czech National Bank to raise interest rates to seven percent by June. By mid-2023, inflation had decreased to around 9.7 percent, with an expected gradual decline to approximately 3.5 percent by 2024.

The economy is primarily service-oriented (62%), with manufacturing and construction at 36% and agriculture at 2%. The auto industry plays a pivotal role, constituting 10% of GDP. Services, especially machinery and transportation equipment, dominate trade. Dependent on foreign demand, notably from the Eurozone, 70% of Czech exports go to other EU states, with Germany as a key partner. The U.S. is a significant non-EU trade partner, reaching record levels in 2022. The Czech Republic's high living standards are attributed to EU access and subsidies, although regional variations in employment rates persist. The decision to remain outside the Eurozone has helped insulate the country from severe economic downturns.

*Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to the Republic of the
Philippines*

H. E. Karel Hejč



Since first arriving in the Philippines to take up your post as Czech Ambassador, what have been your observations on the relations between the Czech Republic and the Philippines?

Let me start on a more personal note: There is a general knowledge in the Czech Republic about the friendly nature of people in the Philippines. But seeing the everyday reality exceeded by far my expectations. I was, and actually still very much am, captivated by how much words fail here to describe what it actually means. And I am not talking about the hospitality sector here. I am talking about people I meet on the streets, looking just like another tourist. However, it is equally pleasant to see that even on a formal level, the dignitaries and officials I meet every day, carry this nature with them. It is encouraging to be in a country where a smile on the face of a VIP is not a sign of a weakness. I would love to see this more in Europe, too.

I am glad that these “people to people” relations translate also into official relations between our two countries and that the Philippines and the Czech Republic are today friends, partners and also allies. Last year marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two countries. However, Filipinos and Czechs walk side by side much longer, ever since the first encounter between Czech ethnographer, Professor Ferdinand Blumentritt and his best friend, then young student and writer José Rizal. Their friendship that conquered all odds of geographic distance, has great symbolic value and commits us to continue to carry their legacy.

All the above impressions translate in my head and in my heart in two major sensations. One: feeling of happiness, how lucky I am to represent my homeland exponentially multiplied by the fact that I am to represent it particularly here, in the beautiful Philippines, and even more so now, when the country is much more open to partners from Europe, where the Czech Republic belongs. Two: a feeling of responsibility, when I realize that my job is to make sure that, at the end of my tenure, I leave these already excellent relations in the same shape or better.

What do you find is the Philippines’ greatest strength that would serve it best when doing business with Europe?

Throughout the history of the Philippines, western lifestyle, habits and social norms in general found their way into the daily life of Philippine society. I will happily leave the general assessment of pros and cons of the phenomenon of westernization to political scientists but I think it is undeniable that it has helped to shape the Philippines’ business practices and economic principles and thus chiseling economic development based on free market economy, private ownership of businesses, and commerce. So it does not come as a surprise that it makes it easier for European businesses to navigate the local landscape.

The Philippines is a country of patriotic people as it is a country of young people. This proud generation, eager to learn and grow for their own benefit just like for their homeland, provides a solid dynamic and skilled workforce ready to adapt to the demands of the European market. This then presents opportunities for fresher ideas and bigger rates of productivity.

Cultural similarities between the Philippines and Europe are another strength. These similarities facilitate smoother

social integration as well as business interactions, minimizing potential misunderstandings and enhancing cooperation. Shared values, traditions, and an appreciation for diverse perspectives and mutual respect help create a favorable environment for meaningful relationships and establishing trust.

And we must never diminish the importance of communication: The widespread use of the English language is in fact one of the Philippines’ superpowers, a major strength given that it is extensively used in education, more so in business, and also in everyday life. Not to mention, Filipinos’ fluency in English could easily stand the test across Asia. This advantage prevents communication barriers and enhances communication effectiveness, especially in dealing with foreign counterparts.

What do Czech businesses find most attractive about doing business with the Philippines? What are their main considerations in entering the Philippine market?

Czech businesses are increasingly drawn to the Philippines for many reasons. For one, the rapidly growing middle class presents a lucrative market for Czech products and services. As more Filipinos enter the middle-class bracket, their purchasing power increases, creating a higher demand for higher-quality goods and services, which Czech businesses can provide a very generous spectrum. This demographic shift that we are witnessing, in combination with stable growth of population, indicates long-term potential for profitable ventures and market expansion.

At the same time, the Philippines has shown consistent economic growth, particularly in terms of cash flow and remittances from overseas Filipino workers. The country’s GDP is steadily rising, driven by domestic consumption, increased investment inflows, and a thriving business process outsourcing industry. This upward stability makes the Philippines an attractive destination for Czech investors seeking opportunities for growth and diversification.

The Philippines offers relative safety and predictability in terms of rules and regulations governing business operations. While challenges like bureaucracy and corruption still occur, the government is actively implementing reforms to improve the Ease of Doing Business and to strengthen governance. Clearer and easier regulations and enforcement mechanisms will contribute to a more stable and transparent business environment, reducing risks for Czech businesses looking to enter or expand in the Philippine market. However, there are other reasons why Czech businesses will carefully consider the challenges and complexities of operating in the Philippines. The physical distance between the Czech Republic and the Philippines posing logistical hurdles will never go away.

Let me be clear on two things: Firstly, Czechs are black-belt masters in bureaucracy. In fact, sometimes, I think that we invented it. But when it comes to doing business, the only hurdles we should be overcoming are the once protecting rule of law, environment and other higher values. Secondly, let us not mistake bureaucracy with lack of transparency, hence fairness. If rules are clear from the start, a certain level of bureaucracy is always anticipated. Lack of transparency leads to corruption that inevitably affects business operations and decision-making, very often even before they start.



Charles Bridge



Prague Castle

To add, the conditions for entry into the Philippine market, including participation in public tenders and compliance with local regulations, may pose additional barriers for Czech investors as they are regarded as discriminatory against foreigners. I do understand the need to protect the local market and provide incentives for local investors to grow and expand. What I would not understand is if local and foreign investors would be seen as competitors. I believe that in the Philippines, there is a space for everybody, either side by side or together, in cooperation.

Despite the challenges and considerations, the Philippines remains a promising destination for Czech businesses seeking growth and expansion opportunities and successfully capitalizing on the vast potential of the Philippine market. With its growing middle class, steady economic growth, and ongoing reforms, the Philippines offers a ground for investment and business development. Czech businesses can thrive in the dynamic and vibrant market of the Philippines by adopting a proactive approach, building strong networks, and leveraging local expertise.

What efforts have been put in place to expand Czech companies across the Philippines? Which sectors are Czech businesses most active in?

Efforts to expand Czech companies across the Philippines have primarily focused on leveraging economic diplomacy and fostering sectoral promotion. As a free market economy, the role of the state, represented by the Embassy, is essentially to provide political support and assistance upon request, especially when national interests are at stake. Let me give you one example of such support: In October 2021, the Czech Republic's Ministry of Defense and the Philippines' Department of National Defense signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at establishing a framework for future partnerships in defense. This MoU signifies an important milestone in bilateral cooperation, opening doors for collaborative initiatives, technology transfers, and joint ventures between the defense industries.

The said support and assistance does not only bear the form of written agreements, there are also practical steps in place: A significant step forwards in enhancing economic ties between the Czech Republic and the Philippines is the recent establishment of a CzechTrade office in Manila, attached to the Embassy. This office serves as a valuable resource for Filipino partners seeking to explore opportunities in the Czech market, and vice versa, by providing market intelligence, matchmaking services, and assistance with market entry strategies. In other words, where the Embassy is here to cover primarily G2G contacts and functions, CzechTrade's responsibility is to promote B2B contacts.

Official bilateral visits, as expressions of the highest political interest, have an undeniable value in promoting business ties between countries. So it's no coincidence that the Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, when visiting the Philippines in April last year, was accompanied by a large business delegation and that during that visit, a MoU between the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and the Czech Chamber of Commerce was signed.

Without wishing to sound like bragging, it is really hard to say in which manufacturing sectors the Czechs have fallen behind the world. Maybe building ships, as a landlocked country? This is due not only to the tradition of manufactory

production, which has been perfected over centuries, but also to historical circumstances that have, in fact, forced us to constantly improve. And since we do not have the capacity of others to produce quantity, we naturally focused on quality.

When it comes to the Philippines, I would probably highlight sectors of defense and security, agriculture and transportation, where these sectors were generated by overlap of mutual interest. Take defense and security, for instance: this industry is very advanced in the Czech Republic, including offering tailor-made solutions, where the Philippines expressed interest in modernization of its Armed Forces, with very specific interests and demands. And so, it's only natural that we engaged in bilateral talks practically immediately.

It is a pleasure to know that Czech businesses are actively engaging with the Philippine market through strategic partnerships as well as ongoing support from the Embassy.

What do you envision as the future of business and trade between the Czech Republic and the Philippines? How do you think both partners can work better together to achieve this vision?

You know, I don't like evasive answers, but I don't think there is an easy one to this question. I do have one vision that I try to apply in my daily work as well: "Today better than yesterday, tomorrow better than today". And it underscores my commitment to advancing bilateral relations between our two countries. I wish for Czech and Philippine companies to feel confident about themselves, comfortable with and believing in each other and working together for the better future of both nations. It may sound exaggerated, but that's how I see it.

The future shape of bilateral business and trade holds promise that is driven by the collective vision and efforts of companies and local partners, not by the Embassy, or by me. While the actual vision is shaped by the companies themselves, the overlapping interests of both nations are the guiding force in shaping this shared future. As a free market economy, the Embassy's role is merely to provide assistance and support upon request, since very often, entrepreneurs do not seek or need the Embassy's assistance. And my role as Ambassador is to offer personal support at every step of the process, facilitating connections and fostering collaboration.

Could you provide insights into any upcoming trade missions or events geared towards enhancing business collaborations between Czech and Filipino entities?

I have already mentioned last year's high-level visit of Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, accompanied by a business delegation aiming at further strengthening bilateral relations and exploring avenues for increased trade and investment. However this milestone, it was not the end of the road but merely one peak on a ridge road.

This year will not be different and we are getting off to a good start in it: in March, we will receive the highly anticipated visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to the Czech Republic, coming upon an invitation of his counterpart, the Czech President Petr Pavel. Both presidents are expected to launch a bilateral business forum showcasing over 250 companies and enterprises from both countries, thus creating a platform for high-level discussions on economic

collaboration, both G2G as well as B2B. Soon after, the Czech Minister of Agriculture, again accompanied by a business delegation comprising of agricultural companies interested in trading with or investing in the Philippines, is coming to meet his new counterpart. Business and trade promotion is not exclusive to the government: Sometime during the first semester, Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the Czech Republic plans to come.

Besides these visits and contacts, there are a number of meetings on a more expert level yet equally important. Here, let me mention, as an example, the regular meetings of the Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation and of the Joint Defense Committee, both scheduled to meet this year here, in Manila. These will provide for another opportunity for much deeper and concrete dialogue and partnership-building in key sectors. And there is also the level of businesses and companies themselves. We have already received one such mission in February. As this level tends to be the most flexible, I am confident that this calendar will be amended many times but one event is set already: the Asian Defense and Security Exhibition (ADAS) in September 2024 will provide yet another stage to showcase Czech expertise and forge connections with Filipino counterparts. Through these upcoming initiatives, both Czech and Filipino entities can look forward to wider networks and mutual prosperity.

What industries or emerging trends do you foresee becoming key focal points for increased collaboration between the Czech Republic and the Philippines?

While the specific industries or emerging trends for collaboration cannot be definitely outlined by the Embassy, it is clear that support and services are provided to facilitate such partnerships. Collaboration between two nations is likely to be driven by demand and mutual interests. Currently, there is a notable overlap in key sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and defense and security. In agriculture, there is a growing emphasis on dairy production and processing that presents opportunities for knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and investment. The transportation sector, particularly the rehabilitation of the Manila Metro Rail Transit System (MRT3), offers avenues for Czech expertise in infrastructure development and transportation solutions. And, the modernization efforts of the AFP highlight the potential for supplying defense equipment, technology, and training. You may know that the entire fleet of the MRT3 is composed of 72 trains supplied in full by the ČKD Tatra Company in the Czech Republic.

Here, I cannot but mention another significant field of cooperation that recently received a considerable boost: the increased quota of migrant workers under the Economic Migration Program of the Czech Government, which has risen our quota for work permits for Filipino workers to the Czech Republic from 2.500/pa in 2023 to 10.500/pa in 2024, so more than four times(!). This expansion reflects a growing recognition of the valuable contributions that Filipino workers can make to the Czech economy and underscores the potential for collaboration in labor mobility and human capital development. And I am proud to share that the Embassy has much bigger importance and contribution to the Philippine economy in the foreseeable future, as it is envisaged that, after obtaining training and gaining know-how and enhancing their skills, these migrant workers, upon their return home, will help advance the country's domestic economy.

In nurturing strong business ties, what specific initiatives or strategies has the embassy implemented to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate a more profound understanding between Czech and Filipino entrepreneurs?

While I personally do not necessarily see any major cultural gaps, we recognize the importance of enhancing cross-cultural awareness and cooperation. We've implemented specific initiatives and strategies aimed at bridging the remaining cultural and traditional gaps and fostering a deeper understanding between our communities. One initiative involves maintaining an informative online platform at www.businessinfo.cz, where we regularly provide updates and insights for Czech entrepreneurs regarding the business landscape and cultural nuances in doing business in the Philippines.

And, of course, we acknowledge the irreplaceable role of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) in facilitating effective services and fostering mutual understanding between European and Philippine businesses. Through its advocacy, networks, and initiatives, ECCP provides a great platform for Czech entrepreneurs to get knowledge into the business sphere of the country, connect with local stakeholders, and establish meaningful relationships. The Embassy is a proud member of the ECCP and I encourage businesses and missions alike to invest in a membership where you will get your time's worth. Your role is particularly important for the Czech Republic since there is no bilateral Czech-Philippine Chamber of Commerce present here.

Given the importance of innovation in business, are there existing programs or platforms actively promoting joint research, development, or technology transfer between Czech and Filipino enterprises?

We are actively facilitating a good number of programs and platforms that support these initiatives, such as the Aid for Trade Program under auspices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic. One standout initiative is our Aid for Trade Project with the National Dairy Authority, focusing on development of the dairy sector in the Philippines. This aims to boost agricultural productivity and facilitate technology transfer in the dairy sector, benefitting both nations.

As a Member State of the European Union, we also encourage participation in the Horizon Europe Program funding climate change research and innovation, thus providing opportunities for projects addressing global challenges. Our engagement extends to the Project Copernicus space program of the European Union, supporting joint efforts in space research and technology development. We have also facilitated cooperation between the Philippine Space Agency and Czech entities, institutions, and companies involved in the space exploration industry, magnifying our commitment to exploring new and non-traditional areas for collaboration.

Finally, our Small-Scale Development Project Program plays a complementary role in supporting innovation and technology transfer at the grassroots level, which empowers small economies and capacity building in local communities. Through these diverse initiatives, we aim to encourage Czech and Filipino enterprises to collaborate, innovate, and drive mutual growth and prosperity.



Photo courtesy of Rey Baniquet, Philippine News Agency



Photo courtesy of Jay Morales, DA-OSEC

Celebrating 50 years of Water Stewardship

National Water Resources Board



The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) celebrated its 50th founding anniversary on March 22, 2024 with the theme Limang Dekada: Paglilingon sa Alon ng Nakaraan, Pagsabay sa Agos ng Kinabukasan at the Park Inn by Radisson, North EDSA, Quezon City.

NWRB, then National Water Resources Council (NWRC), was established on March 28, 1974 by former President Ferdinand E. Marcos by virtue of Presidential Decree (PD) 424 to coordinate and integrate all activities related to water resources development and management. It is the lead implementing agency of the PD 1067 otherwise known as the Water Code of the Philippines, also issued by then President Marcos in 1976.

Since its creation, the NWRB has been under the supervision of several offices including the Department of Public Works and Highways (1974-2002), Office of the President (2002-2010), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as an attached agency since 2010 up to present. Upon the issuance of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., under Executive Order (EO) No. 22 or the creation of the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO), NWRB works hand-in-hand with the WRMO as key implementers of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the country.

The whole-day event started with the IWRM Forum for Local Chief Executives, the World Water Day Awards, culminated by the anniversary celebration. This activity was also scheduled on March 22 in celebration of World Water Day.

The IWRM forum is an assembly of local government officials from different provinces in the country to discuss Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) implementation at the local level. Likewise, the participants were briefed on best practices from Japan and Korea which they can implement in their respective localities.

As a culmination, the NWRB celebrated its 50th anniversary through a gathering of its employees who worked relentlessly to perform the agency's mandated functions and uphold the core values of government service. The theme was modern Filipiniana.

These events were attended by the employees of the NWRB and different government agency partners led by the members of the NWRB Board from DENR, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Justice (DOJ), and University of the Philippines-National Hydraulic Research Center (UP-NHRC). Key players in the local and national government units attended the event including local chief executives across the country, representatives of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Audit (COA), and private and development partners in the water sector.

26 water and environment champions proclaimed in World Water Day PH Awards 2024

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad), in partnership with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), honored 26 water and environment champions at the World Water Day Philippines Awards 2024 (WWD.PH Awards) held last March 22 in Quezon City. The WWD.PH Awards serves as the culminating event of the country's weeks-long celebration of World Water Day.

Among this year's partners are the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), the National Irrigation Administration

(NIA), the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), the Philippine Water Works Association (PWWA), the Philippine Water Partnerships (PWP), and Metro Pacific Water (MPW).

Recipients of Maynilad's "Water Warrior Award for Advocacy Leadership" were Quezon City Councilor Mikey Belmonte, GMA Water District General Manager Juliet M. Nacita, the Mt. Balagbag Farmers Association, and Telus Philippines, Inc, for actively raising awareness on water sustainability and environmental responsibility in their respective professions and initiatives.

NWRB's "Water Wise Award" went to Makati City LGU, Universal Robina Corp.- Pampanga Plant, and URC-Misamis Oriental, for their exemplary water management practices consistent with the agency's regulatory mandate and advocacy.

LWUA's "Huwarang Lingkod Tubig Award" recipients were Hagonoy Water District, Baliwag Water District, Metro Kalibo Water District, and Metro Kidapawan Water District, for being model water districts in water conservation and environmental initiatives.

The Bayaning Magsasaka Irrigators Association, Inc., Bingon Farmers Irrigators Association, Inc., and Triple L Irrigators Association, Inc. were named the "Most Outstanding Irrigators' Associations" by NIA.

Efforts in Laguna de Bay rehabilitation were also recognized through LLDA's "Kampeon ng Lawa Awards", which was given to SanGuilmo Bamboo Advocates, Inc. The DENR- Environmental Management Bureau "Innovation in Marine Litter Education Award" went to Save Philippine Seas, while the SCPW "Bayani ng Katubigan Award" was conferred to Bayawan City LGU (Negros Oriental) and Pangil LGU (Laguna).

The Metro Iloilo Water District was also recognized through the MPW "Mainuswagong Ilig Award," while the PWWA "Kampeon ng Katubigan" was given to the project, Water Access for the Dumagats of Ipo, a joint effort by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, One Meralco Foundation, Manila Water Foundation, and Power 4 All. Engr. Francisco A. Arellano was also honored posthumously for his significant contributions to the sector through the PWP Legacy Award.

Meanwhile, outstanding women leaders in the sector were recognized through the Woman Leader in Water Award. The special award was conferred to DENR Secretary Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga, MWSS Administrator Leonor "Bobby" Cleofas, Department of Finance Undersecretary Catherine L. Fong, Quezon City Mayor Maria Josefina Tanya "Joy" Go Belmonte-Alimurung, and Manila Mayor Maria Sheilah Honrado "Honey" Lacuna-Pangan.

Underscoring this year's World Water Day theme "Water for Peace: Pagkakaisa Tungo sa Seguridad Pantubig," Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito S. Fernandez said, "Attaining water security is a challenge that requires partnerships and cooperation across all sectors. It is important that we all do our share in conserving our most precious resource to ensure water access and sanitation for all. We thank our honorees for their commitment to this cause, and salute them for providing an example for everyone else to follow."

Since 2015, the WWD.PH Awards has recognized a total of 141 individuals, institutions, and programs that have contributed to achieving water and water-environment sustainability in the country. Each WWD.PH-participating government agency and private company submits their nominees, which are then screened and vetted by a multi- organization committee before being included in the list of awardees.





The Upper Wawa Dam, Phase 2 of Prime Infra's Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project, is progressing at an unprecedented scale and pace, unmatched by any project of similar magnitude.

Prime Infra addresses water security, sustainable development through critical infrastructure

Prime Infrastructure Capital Inc. takes the lead in addressing the Philippines' water scarcity challenge with a laser focus on sustainable development.

Central to Prime Infra's mission is the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project, progressing at an unprecedented scale and pace, unmatched by any project of similar magnitude. The project has two phases: the Tayabasan Weir, already operational since 2022, and the Upper Wawa Dam, which will have nearly nine times the capacity of the weir.

The completion of the Tayabasan Weir marked a significant milestone for Prime Infra and its subsidiary, WawaJVCo Inc., demonstrating its ability to deliver critical infrastructure in challenging situations. The first phase was finished in the middle of a pandemic, ahead of schedule.

"Prime Infra fulfilled its promise to the government to deliver on time a vital water infrastructure, which will help ensure the reliability of raw water supply to customers of Manila Water at a cost-effective manner," says Enrique K. Razon, Jr., chairman of Prime Infra.

Looking ahead, Phase 2 of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project—the Upper Wawa Dam—holds the promise of further enhancing water security and increasing resilience to climate-related crises.

Upper Wawa Dam, now at 93-percent completion, will have a yearlong capacity of 710 million liters per day, translating to water supply for 700,000 households or about 3.5 million Filipinos.

"It's an incredible piece of infrastructure. Nothing like this has been built in the past 50 years. It is fair to say we have overachieved in the Wawa infrastructure, and we'll be able to deliver the water committed to the regulator and the

consumers well ahead of time," says Guillaume Lucci, Prime Infra President and CEO.

The Upper Wawa Dam features an over 400-hectare reservoir, capable of storing about 120 million cubic meters of raw water. It is designed based on the latest local and international standards and state-of-the-art methods, ensuring long-term efficiency and reliability.

Construction of the dam will be substantially completed by March 2024, with commercial operations expected to commence by the end of 2025.

Innovation and sustainability

Prime Infra embarks on groundbreaking projects that redefine the landscape of water security, setting new benchmarks not just for innovation, but also sustainability.

"Sustainability is embedded in each and every one of our projects—sustainability in terms of our actions within the scope of our projects, and across the periphery of our projects," Lucci said. "We have a reforestation program, which would eventually include some biodiversity objectives. It will be carbon neutral, if not carbon negative."

Collaborating closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the provincial government of Rizal, Prime Infra is spearheading strategies for watershed protection, reforestation, and biodiversity management within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

In addition, Lucci said: "Everywhere we go, we try to make an imprint on the environment we operate in, and that imprint goes through livelihood, educational and health programs, and we try to build all of those to be very sustainable long term."

Largest bulk water supplier

Melvin John Tan, Prime Infra's Market Sector Lead for Water and President of WawaJVCo, says Prime Infra's goal is to develop bulk water projects in key areas of the country.

"Our aspiration in Prime Infra is to become the country's largest bulk water supplier providing sustainable water supply in top metros and targeted markets," he said.

In the case of Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWC), Tan said the goal is to replicate what has been achieved in Metro Manila and top metros across the Philippines. Tan is also the Chief Operating Officer for the Non-East Zone of MWC.

Prime Infra acquired controlling stake in East Zone concessionaire MWC in 2021.

"Manila Water continues to do well tremendously. To date, it continues to outperform every water company in the market. We're investing heavily into infrastructure and we're very excited about the future of the business," says Lucci.

MWC not only significantly improves water security but also leads initiatives to ensure equitable access to clean and safe water, particularly for marginalized communities.

MWC now has a customer base of 7.6 million from the East Zone of Metro Manila and Rizal province being supplied with 24/7 clean and potable water. It is also present in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Driving sustainable solutions

In its steadfast commitment to pursue a sustainability pathway consistent with its core capability to deliver socially relevant infrastructure at scale and with speed, Prime Infra also embarks on groundbreaking projects in the energy and waste management sectors.

A standout example of this commitment is its capex-heavy investments in gas exploration and the development of renewable energy projects, such as solar and pumped storage hydropower.



Prime Infra, through its subsidiary Prime Energy, is now in the process of Malampaya Phase 4 drilling with the aim to deliver new gas by 2026.



Prime Infra's solar power plants in Batangas and Cavite, to be commissioned in April 2024, have a combined supply capacity of 140 megawatts.

Prime Infra's subsidiary, Prime Energy, is the operator of the Malamapaya deep water gas-to-power project, supplying about 20 percent of Luzon's electricity requirements. It secured a 15-year extension for the service contract governing the project and is now in the process of Malampaya Phase 4 drilling with the aim to deliver new gas by 2026.

To address the need for dependable energy supply and accelerate the transition to sustainable energy, Prime Infra is implementing two pumped storage projects with a combined 2,000-megawatt capacity.

Prime Infra will also be completing in March its first solar project to be commissioned in April 2024. It will supply up to 140 megawatts of clean and renewable energy from its power plants in Tanauan, Batangas and Maragondon, Cavite.

In its pursuit of a cleaner and more sustainable future, Prime Infra also revolutionizes waste management practices through its subsidiary, Prime Integrated Waste Solutions Inc. (PWS). By utilizing state-of-the-art equipment for waste segregation and storage, PWS focuses on resource recovery to reduce waste deposited to landfills, resulting in decrease in methane gas production.

Through projects across the water, energy, and waste management sectors, Prime Infra continues to drive progress towards a more resilient and sustainable future for generations today and tomorrow.

“
Lucci: Prime Infra's expertise is in getting things done at large scale infra projects and establishing it into sectors where there was a significant need for critical infrastructure
”

Building today's critical infrastructure for a sustainable future.





EU, ECCP launch Agri-Enterprise program in BARMM

Davao City, Philippines – The Delegation of the European Union in the Philippines, with the support of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), has officially launched the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Program (BAEP) Creating Responsible Competitive Enterprises (CRESCENT) in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Agribusiness Sector.

Funded by the EU, the BAEP CRESCENT Project is a 4-year project that aims to contribute to a peaceful, cohesive, secure, and inclusively developed Bangsamoro by promoting rural and value chain development towards increasing agriculture and rural enterprise.

The project's objectives are to not only design and implement a private sector-led agribusiness development and promotion strategy but also to increase the pool of BARMM agribusiness Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprise (MSMEs) that are ready for investment and export promotion, as well as drive investments and exports in the BARMM agribusiness sector.

In his opening remarks, ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein further emphasized the significance of the BAEP CRESCENT Project in fostering long-term and sustainable development in the BARMM region, especially through investment and export promotion support.

"Our goal is to increase the number of BARMM agri-MSMEs that are ready for investments, trade promotion, and business partnerships," said Gottein. "Through this project, we hope to boost investments in and exports of the BARMM agribusiness sector, reaching markets outside of BARMM, especially in other parts of Mindanao, as well as the entire Philippines, perhaps even the BIMP-EAGA region, covering Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia."

With ECCP as the implementing body of the program, Gottein emphasized that the Chamber will be working closely with relevant players to ensure that all stakeholders, especially the key agri-sectors in the region, are fully engaged and can reap the project's success.

"In the course of this project, we will map out agribusiness opportunities and challenges within BARMM, focusing on making BARMM and its MSMEs competitive. Additionally, we will provide technical assistance to MSMEs on enterprise and export development as well as launch an Investment and Exports Promotion Campaign, alongside business matching activities, to boost investments and trade," he added.

The BAEP CRESCENT project was launched by the EU, in collaboration with the Bangsamoro and the ECCP, on Thursday, February 15, in Davao City. The launch was attended by project proponents from the EU and BARMM, BAEP fellows, as well as invited investors and partners.

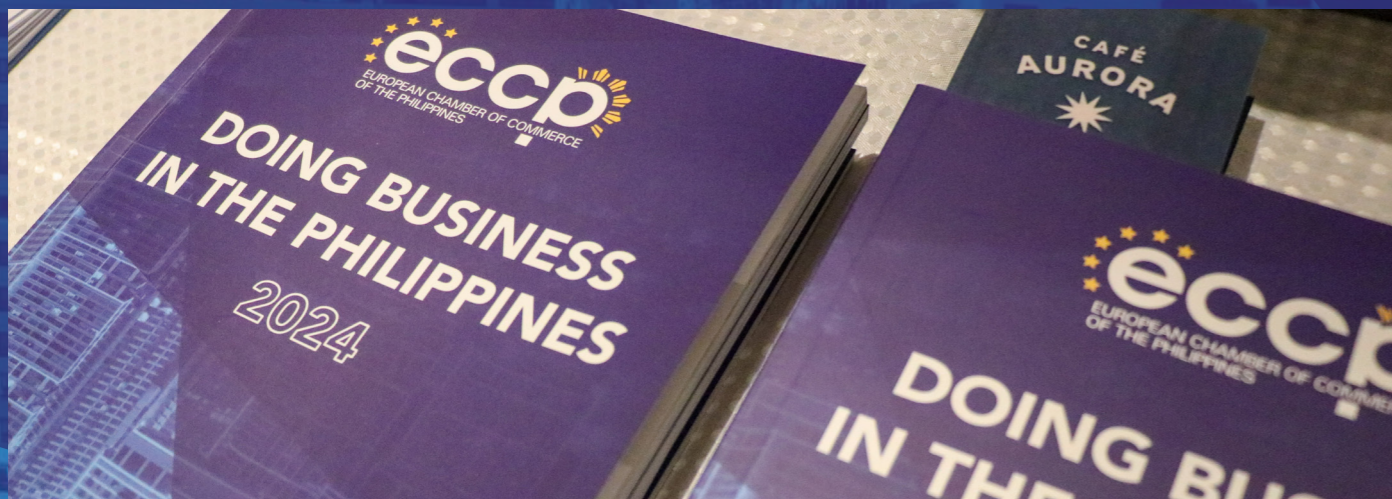
In attendance at the launch were Datu Hamsur J. Zaid, Project Director of the BAEP Steering Committee and Chief of the Agriculture Modernization and Agricultural Development (AMAD) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR); Ms. Rosslaini J. Alonto-Sinarimbo, Director General of the Ministry of Trade, Investments, and Tourism (MTIT); Mr. Gerry D. Constantino, Project Coordinator of BAEP CRESCENT; and Mr. Tony Peralta, BARMM Program Coordinator of the BAEP CRESCENT Project.

The project started on Nov. 8, 2022, and will end on Nov. 7, 2026.

For more information about the BAEP CRESCENT Project, contact info@baepcrecident.ph.



European Chamber calls for greater ease of doing business



According to the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), the Philippines is said to attract billions in foreign direct investments (FDIs) given the country's estimated gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.3% and coupled by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, as well as strong cash flows from overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

"We believe that the time to do business in the Philippines is now," said ECCP President Paulo Duarte at the launch of the Doing Business in the Philippines (DBIP) 2024 Publication on Wednesday in Makati City. "In recent months and years, we have seen the Philippines emerge as a beacon of growth in Asia, drawing confidence from the projections and reports of multilateral and international organizations, banks, and rating agencies alike. Our optimism is, of course, not unfounded."

The ECCP cited many notable prospects aiding towards the increased attractiveness of the Philippines as a preferred destination for foreign direct investments, such as the potential resumption of EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks, and the administration's efforts in infrastructure development and digital transformation.

The ECCP has been a strong advocate for the EU GSP+ scheme renewal as well as the resumption of the EU-PH FTA negotiations. Last year, the Chamber announced the relaunch of its FTA committee to take part as private sector in consultations on the FTA negotiations and ensure strong collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors.

Duarte further enumerated key economic reforms such as the amendments to the Public Service Act, the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, and the Foreign Investment Act, plus the liberalization of renewable energy investment activities for foreign investors.

In order to leverage such developments, Duarte called for the promotion of a business-enabling environment characterized by streamlined business registration and licensing rules, ease of paying taxes, and the enforcement of contracts, among others.

"This is a prerequisite for building confidence among prospective and existing investors," he stressed.

On the side of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila, Ambassador Christian Halaas Lyster noted that trade volumes have been growing every year under the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) - Philippines Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

"However, there is room for both EFTA-countries and the Philippines to utilize the opportunities that lie in the FTA even more," said Ambassador Lyster. "We encourage the Philippines to use existing knowledge to identify areas with high potential for more exports from the Philippines. This would benefit both the economy and the people of the Philippines."

During the press conference, the ECCP and DivinaLaw unveiled the latest edition of its Doing Business in the Philippines Publication together with key officials of European diplomatic missions. The annual guidebook aims to serve as a valuable resource, helping potential and existing investors make informed decisions and seize opportunities in the Philippines.

"Throughout the years, ECCP has actively championed advocacies for reforms aimed at making the Philippines a more attractive destination for trade and investments," said ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein. "With the recent implementation of economic reforms and a surge in investor interest, it is now the opportune time to intensify our efforts and share positive narratives about the Philippines."

During the conference, the ECCP also announced that they are entering a Memorandum of Understanding with the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) to further promote ease of doing business in the country. The agreement is set to finalize at a luncheon meeting with the said government agency this 6 February 2024.

Present at the Doing Business in the Philippines Press Launch were Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, H.E. Ambassador Luc Vèron, Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, H.E. Christian Halaas Lyster, Embassy of Norway; and DivinaLaw Managing Director Atty. Nilo T. Divina.

The Doing Business in the Philippines 2024 is an ECCP annual publication which aims to provide potential investors with a complete guidebook on the country, its laws, policies, procedures, and regulations. Co authored by DivinaLaw, the guide aims to increase investor confidence and equip them to make well-informed business and investment decisions. Topics include setting up your business in the Philippines, taxation, labor & employment, immigration, and Intellectual property (IP) among others. This year's edition features 3 Philippine Focus Industries and specific regulations in Renewable Energy (RE), Financial Technology, and Telecommunications.



2024 European Ambassadors' Meeting

On Wednesday, the ECCP together with ING Philippines hosted the 2024 European Ambassadors' Meeting together with Excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished speakers, and partners.

During the high-level meeting, guest speaker ING Bank Philippines Senior Economist Mr. Nicholas Mapa gave his presentation on the 2024 economic outlook of the Philippines. Meanwhile, ECCP President Mr. Paulo Duarte provided his overview on the European-Philippine business outlook and an overview of the Chamber in 2024.

Mr. Chris Humphrey, EU-ASEAN Business Council Executive Director, also shared a presentation on EU-ASEAN Business Sentiment; Business Outlook for 2024. Asian Development Bank Country Director for the Philippines Mr. Pavit Ramachandran also presented on Philippine Country Partnership Strategies for 2024-2029.

The session also included speeches from Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary H.E. Luc Véron, Delegation of the European Union in the Philippines; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary H.E. Christian Halaas Lyster of the The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila; and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary H.E. Laure Beaufils of the British Embassy Manila.

Topics highlighted included the Global Gateway Program, the prospect of the EU-PH Free Trade Agreement, EFTA-Philippines FTA and economic partnership, and on UK-Philippine economic ties.

Welcoming remarks were presented by ECCP Vice President Francisco Milan and with ECCP Executive Director Mr. Florian Gottein hosting and moderating the discussion.



Inside ECCP: Manila

The European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) team was represented at the official launch of the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Programme (BAEP) in Cotabato City

15 January 2024

The European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) team was represented at the official launch of the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Programme (BAEP) in Cotabato City on 15 January 2024. The Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Programme (BAEP) is a five-year initiative funded by the European Union through an Agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, with a value of EUR 20 million or over PHP 1.2 billion.

ECCP is one of BAEP's implementing partners for the BAEP Creating Responsible Sustainable Competitive Enterprises (CRESCENT) project. The BAEP CRESCENT is a 4-year project that commenced on November 8, 2022, and will conclude on November 7, 2026. Its three main objectives are to design and implement a private sector-led agribusiness development and promotion strategy, increase the pool of BARMM agribusiness MSMEs that are ready for investment and export promotion; and grow investments and exports in the BARMM agribusiness sector.

The 5s + 2s Process (with Files and Records Management)

16 January 2024

Starting the year on a good note as we close our first e-Learning session for 2024!

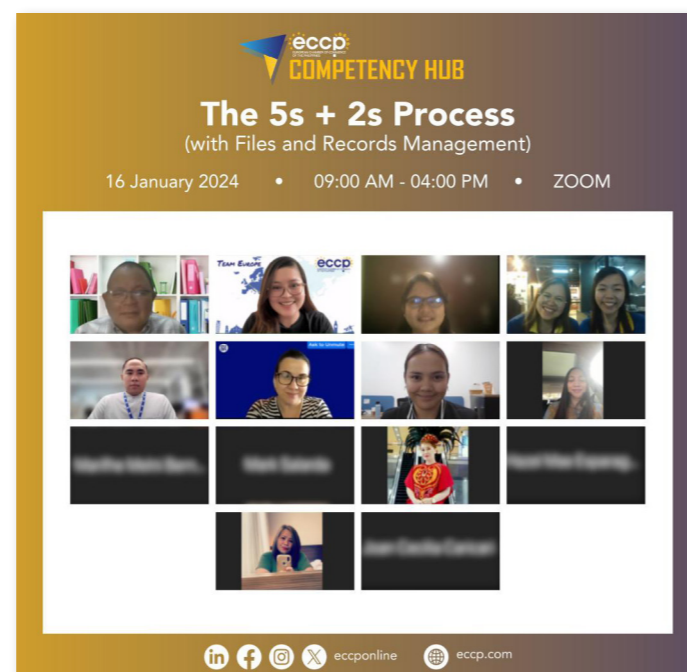
Last January 16, the ECCP Competency Hub held the "5s + 2s Process workshop led by Mr. Stephen Bañares, Consultant at HR Solutions & Business Management, Inc. The class gave a refresher course on the basics and best practices on #customerservice standards, including good housekeeping and files and records management.



The BAEP CRESCENT will pave the way for BARMM agribusiness enterprises to enhance their organization and performance, as well as their competitiveness. These programs will bolster their readiness for investment and business partnerships, preparing them to access new markets outside BARMM.

Attending the official launch (from left to right) are BAEP CRESCENT's Project Director Mr. Florian Gottein, Output 1 Coordinator (Advocacy/Research) Ms. Sophia Ordoña, Communications Coordinator Ms. Gen Anaquita, and Project Manager Mr. Gerry Constantino.

To learn more about the BAEP CRESCENT project, please send us an email via info@baepcrescent.ph.



8th Joint Economic Briefing on Fostering Economic Resilience through Sustainability and Infrastructure

17 January 2024

Held last 17 January 2024, the briefing presented insights into the Philippine economic situation and how to push the Philippines as an investment destination – highlighting energy, infrastructure, circular economy, and sustainability.

The event was organized by the British Chamber of Commerce Philippines, Dutch Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines Inc. - DCCP, European Chamber of ECCP - European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Philippines, German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc., Spanish Chamber of Commerce in The Philippines - La Cámara, and Nordic Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.



Understanding the Cyber Threat Landscape: An Information Session on ISO/IEC 27001 Securing Your Data

22 January 2024

How protected are you from cyber threats?

This was the question companies and businesses aimed to answer at the recently concluded, "Understanding the Cyber Threat Landscape" webinar. Organized together with TÜV SÜD and led by TÜV SÜD - ASEAN Head of Cybersecurity Services for ASEAN Mr. Kamal Kamari, the informative session served as an introduction to ISO/IEC 27001 and #DataPrivacy and #CloudSecurity.

The webinar also provided an overview of the cyber threat landscape and how to implement an effective information security framework that aligns with business objectives and operations.



Beyond Gravity: Accelerating the Philippine Space Economy Through Partnership

25 January 2024

Taking a giant leap towards space to further scientific discovery, technological innovation, and socioeconomic development!

Last January 25 at the Makati Commerce Tower, the ECCP organized the “Beyond Gravity: Accelerating the Philippine Space Economy Through Partnership” dialogue to delve into the exciting prospects of the Philippine space industry.

The event featured key discussions by industry experts as well as key figures from the EU. Mr. Giovanni Serritella, Programme Manager at the Delegation of the European Union in the Philippines, provided a message on space cooperation between the PH and the EU. Meanwhile, Philippine Space Agency Director General Dr. Joel Joseph Marciano Jr. presented an overview of the Philippine space industry and its investment opportunities.



Moreover, the panel discussion moderated by Dr. Maria Cecilia D. Galvez of De La Salle University also included panelists Airbus Chief Representative in the Philippines Mr. Jussi Hoikka and Aerospace Industries Association of the Philippines Chairman Mr. John Lee. The session further tackled how to position the PH as a regional hub for space data mobilization excellence, and the strategic use and application of space data.

A huge thank you as well to our Venue Partner Colliers and host Mr. Juan Diego Bautista of Bosch Philippines!

Together, we are propelling the Philippine space industry to new heights!

Press Launch of the 2024 Doing Business in the Philippines Guidebook

31 January 2024

We are thrilled to present the 2024 Doing Business in the Philippines Guidebook publication!

Co-authored by content partner DivinaLaw, the DBIP is an ECCP annual publication that aims to provide potential investors with a complete guidebook on the country, its laws, policies, procedures, and regulations. The guide further aims to increase investor confidence and equip them to make well-informed business and investment decisions.

The book was unveiled at a press launch on Wednesday attended by key officials of European diplomatic missions, trusted advertising and content partners, as well as friends and colleagues from the media.

Notable speakers in attendance were Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, H.E. Ambassador Luc Vèron, Delegation of the European Union in the Philippines; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, H.E. Christian Halaas Lyster, The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila; and DivinaLaw Managing Director Atty. Nilo T. Divina.

We would like to thank our esteemed guests for their valuable insights, and to our publication partners Pueblo de Panay Township, Manila Bookkeepers,



Electro Premier Venture Intl. Inc., Authority of The Freeport Area of Bataan, Mövenpick Resort & Spa Boracay, HCM Nexus, Prime Infra, Jupiter Systems, Inc., The Ascott Limited, and In.Corp Corporate Services Philippines, Inc. for their contributions.

We likewise recognize our publication supporters: Isla Lipana & Co./PwC Philippines, Shroff Travel, Crown Asia Chemicals Corporation, and Kerry Logistikus!

As stated by ECCP President Paulo Duarte in his speech, “The time to do business in the Philippines is now.”

We hope this book serves as an instrumental guide for the greater European-Philippine Business Community!

Here’s to fostering greater investor interest, empowering European enterprises with indispensable insights, and collectively steering the Philippines to becoming a top investment destination!

2024 New Year’s Reception

31 January 2024

It’s always a joy to celebrate with our European-Philippine Business Community!

As we collectively raise our glasses in anticipation of the year ahead, the ECCP team extends heartfelt gratitude to our community for embracing this journey with us. Together, we’re setting the stage for a year brimming with profound success!

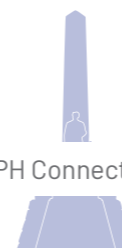
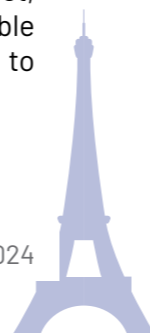
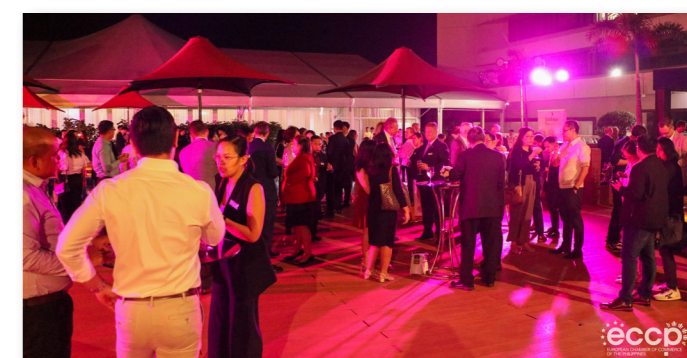
To our esteemed members, friends, guests, and partners across industries – we hope you enjoyed the opportunities to network, the delicious food and wine, and even the raffle prizes!

Our gratitude as well to Anti-Red Tape Authority Director General Ernesto Perez, ARTA Undersecretary Gerald Divinagracia, ADB Philippines Country Director Pavit Ramachandran, DTI Undersecretary Kim Lokin, BOI Director Lanie Dormiendo, National Anti-Poverty Commission Secretary Lope Santos III, as well as to the Excellencies and members of the diplomatic corps for gracing our event!

And a huge thank you to our partners: Venue Partner Dusit Thani Manila; Silver Partner Ayala Corporation; Bronze Partner Meralco; Media Partner BusinessWorld, The Manila Times, and The Philippine Business and News; Table Top Partners Bank of Commerce, Cagayan Electric Power & Light Co., Inc. (CEPALCO), Exceller Corporate Support Inc, Ocampo & Manalo Law Firm, Payoneer and Quasha Ancheta Peña & Nolasco Law Offices; Beverage Partners Radeberger, Le Cellier French Wine Selection (Le Cellier Quality Store Corp.) and VIDA; Gift Bag Partner Gardenia Philippines; and Raffle Partner Manila House, Atlantis Philippines Dive Resorts and Liveboards, Sheraton Manila Hotel, Dusit Thani Manila, ECO Dive, Citadines, The Ascott Makati, Somerset, LYF, and Le Cellier.

For official photos, please visit: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBcDx8>.

We look forward to seeing you all again at future ECCP events!



ECCP Courtesy Meeting with SGV & Co. 5 February 2024

On February 5, the ECCP engaged in productive discussions with SGV & Co. during a courtesy visit to their office. The meeting served as an avenue to explore potential collaborations and synergies, discuss priority areas, and align strategies, especially in light of the recent appointment of Atty. Alden Labaguis as Vice Chair of the ECCP Tax & Financial Services Committee.

Exciting times ahead for fostering stronger ties and driving mutual growth!

In photo (from L-R): Senior Associate at SGV & Co. Natividad Busa, Tax Partner at SGV & Co. Cheryl Edeline Ong, Chairman & Managing Partner at SGV & Co. Wilson Tan, ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein, Tax/Customs Partner/Principal at SGV & Co. Alden C. Labaguis, and ECCP Associate Director for Strategic Partnerships and Communications Gen Anaquita.



The ECCP held its first Luncheon Meeting for 2024 6 February 2024

The ECCP held its first Luncheon Meeting for 2024 last, February 7, with keynote speakers – Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) Director General Ernesto Perez, and Ambassador Marciano Paynor Jr. of the Office of the Executive Secretary, who delivered a keynote message on behalf of Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin.

The Luncheon Meeting covered pertinent discussions on the Philippine government's efforts and direction towards ease of doing business, as well as the private sector's initiatives in support of the said objective. Correspondingly, the event likewise provided a platform for public and private stakeholders to explore areas for strengthened collaboration.

At the said gathering, ARTA and ECCP also signed a Memorandum of Understanding, with which the ECCP and its members have been designated as "ARTA Champions" and among the agency's partners in promoting ease of doing business and to deliver efficient government services.



This event was hosted by Atty. Con Simundac-Delos Santos, ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Chairperson, and ING Bank Philippines' Lead Legal Counsel, and the panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Bill Luz, Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation's Chief Resilience Officer.

The Luncheon Meeting was also supported by Cloudstaff, represented by its Chief Recruitment Officer, Ms. Michelle Carbonel, who delivered the event's closing remarks.

Legal Essentials: Applying the Labor Code in Employee Discipline 7 & 8 February 2024

On February 7 & 8, the ECCP Competency Hub held its newest program, "Legal Essentials: Applying the Labor Code in Employee Discipline".

Led by HURIS Inc. Consultants Edgardo "Jun" Mendoza, Jr. and Albert Entao, the class gained a deeper understanding of the legal framework that governs employer-employee relationships, helping them to confidently handle HR responsibilities, foster employee satisfaction, and mitigate legal risks.

By the end of the session, the participants became more familiar with the Philippine Labor Code and were equipped with the tools to foster a harmonious work environment.



ECCP officially launched the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Program (BAEP) 15 February 2024

The ECCP officially launched the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Program (BAEP) Creating Responsible Competitive Enterprises (CRESCENT) in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Agribusiness Sector as one of the implementing partners of the EU-funded BAEP Project on February 15, 2024, in Davao City.

The BAEP CRESCENT Project is a 4-year initiative aimed at contributing to a peaceful, cohesive, secure, and inclusively developed Bangsamoro by promoting rural and value chain development to enhance agriculture and rural enterprise.

Among those in attendance at the launch were Mr. Florian Gottein, ECCP Executive Director; Ms. Myrto Christofidou, Programme Officer for Peacebuilding/Rural Development at the EU Delegation; Datu Hamsur J. Zaid, Project Director of the BAEP Steering Committee and Chief of Agriculture Modernization and Agricultural Development (AMAD) in MAFAR -Maguindanao, Ms. Roslaini J. Alonto-Sinarimbo, Director General of the Ministry of Trade, Investments and Tourism - BARMM; Mr. Gerry D. Constantino, Project Coordinator of BAEP CRESCENT; Mr. Tony Peralta, BARMM Program Coordinator of the BAEP CRESCENT Project; and Dr. Adrian Tamayo, Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Chief of Public Relations.



Additionally, the launch was also attended by the eleven (11) BAEP CRESCENT business and institutional partners committed to supporting BARMM's agri-fisheries sector, as introduced by Mr. Peralta. These companies include: Development Bank of the Philippines, Al Amanah Islamic Investment Bank, Harbor Star Shipping, Marine Algae Products, Powertech Asia, WCTI, Nestle Philippines, Leading Edge Air Services Corporation, Bukidnon Giant Bamboo Resources Corporation, Smartpay Asia, and Small Business Corporation.

For more information about the BAEP CRESCENT Project, contact info@baepcrescent.ph or visit our website www.baepcrescent.ph.

ECCP Membership Visit with Generali Philippines

15 February 2024

The ECCP had the privilege of having a productive courtesy meeting with Generali Philippines. The engagement provided an opportunity to explore potential collaborations and align on mutual advocacies and other areas for growth.

Thank you for having us, Generali Philippines! Here's to the continued success of our partnership and the positive impact we can create in the months ahead!

In photo (from L-R): Generali Philippines Business Relationship Manager Cristopher Fajardo, ECCP Associate Director for Strategic Partnerships and Communications Gen Anaquita, ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein, Generali Philippines President and CEO Dr. Hakhong Soo, Generali Philippines Vice President for Partnership Ms. Grace Gelle, and Senior Assistant Vice President Direct Distribution Channel Douglas Sanchez, MBA.



MS Excel Advanced Skills for Business

16 February 2024

Enhancing business skills through targeted Microsoft Excel courses!

Last February 16, the ECCP Competency Hub held its "MS Excel Advanced Skills for Business" e-Learning course led by Microsoft Lecturer and Consultant Ralph Mapute of Whole Brain Training Consultancy Co.

At the end of the course, participants were able to appreciate the Excel environment and its tools by delving into advanced Excel functions, creating business systems for time management, sales tracking, and pivot table analysis.



Philippine Aviation Industry unveils first National Pavilion at 2024 Singapore Airshow

20 February 2024

On February 20 at the Changi Exhibition Center in Singapore, key players in the Philippine aviation industry made history as they debuted the Philippine Pavilion at the prestigious 2024 Singapore Airshow, known as Asia's most influential exhibit in the international aerospace and defence market.

Carrying the theme #OnePHAviation: Together We Fly, the landmark event also marks the country's aviation industry's first appearance at the show.

Present at the Ceremonial Signing and Reception were Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Jaime J. Bautista, DOTr Undersecretary for Aviation and Airports Roberto C.O. Lim, ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein, CIAC - Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) President and CEO Arrey Perez, Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) Vice President for Business Erwin Kenneth R. Peralta, Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) Vice Chairman



Maximilian Motschmann, Berthaphil Inc. Chairman Michael Herman, and AeroStrategies, Inc. Chairman Janos Ambros Reyes.

The reception also had special guests Deputy Head of Mission and Consul General of the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines to Singapore (Philippine Embassy in Singapore) Dr. Emmanuel R Fernandez, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of Austria to Singapore H.E. Peter Guschelbauer, Experia Events Pte Ltd Aerospace and Defence Group Director Ms. Lee Yang; and Experia Events Pte Ltd Managing Director Mr. Leck Chet Lam.

The Philippine Aviation Industry made its official debut at the 2024 Singapore Airshow

20-25 February 2024

Fostering international partnerships, building national alliances, and showcasing local innovations across the Aviation Industry!

From February 20 to 25, the Philippine Aviation Industry made its official debut at the 2024 Singapore Airshow.

Following the ceremonial signing, the Philippine Pavilion featured a delegation of Filipino exhibitors namely, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), AeroStrategies, Inc., Philippine Airlines (PAL), the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), Aviation Concepts Technical Services, Inc. (ACTSI), Alpha Aviation Group, Navfix Flight Services Inc., Wingbox Aviation Inc., OMNI Aviation Corporation., and Metrojet Ltd.

The exhibit provided an avenue to showcase the Philippines on a global stage, pave the way for new collaborations for the local aviation sector, and bring



in new investments to the country. A notable highlight during the second day of the show was the contract signing done by exhibitors Alpha Aviation Group with Blue Ray Aviation!

The Philippine Pavilion is the collaborative effort of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), the CIAC - Clark International Airport Corporation, Clark Development Corporation (CDC), Berthaphil Inc., Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA), and the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA).

Sustainable Finance: Spurring Inclusive Infrastructure Development Forum

21 February 2024

On February 21, the ECCP and Event Partner ING Philippines hosted the Sustainable Finance: Spurring Inclusive Infrastructure Development forum at Ascott BGC.

During the first part of the event, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Assistant Governor Lyn Javier led the discussion on the Philippine Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines, alongside panelists Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) Chief Sustainability Officer Armi Lamberte, and Du-Baladad and Associates (BDB Law) Founding Partner, Chair and CEO Atty. Benedicta Du-Baladad.

Moderated by ING Director for Sustainability Andrew Chew, the session delved into the taxonomy guidelines, particularly its role in financing resilient and inclusive infrastructure, and how it can steer the decarbonization of the economy.

The second part of the program featured a Fireside chat with Mr. Rafael Jose "Joel" Consing, President and CEO of the Maharlika Investment Corporation. Interviewed by ING Bank Manila Managing Director and Head of Client Sector Coverage and Financial Institutions Lenin Dueñas, the talk provided an overview on the investment priorities and plans of the MIC, especially towards funding sustainable infrastructure and development projects.

It was followed by a second panel discussion on the impacts of sustainable financing on infrastructure and what it can entail for the Philippine economy. Joining were Mr. Joel Consing of MIC, Asian Development Bank Senior Director for Climate Change, Resilience, and Environment Toru Kobu, Ayala Corporation Chief Sustainability and Risk Officer Jaime Z Urquijo, ING Bank Manila Director and Sustainability Lead Rowena Bayoneta and ING Bank Manila Director for Client Sector Coverage Nic Chua who moderated the session.

Setting the tone of the program was Mr. Jun Palanca, Country Head of ING Bank Manila. Meanwhile serving as host for the event was ING Wholesale Banking Senior Consultant for Financial Markets Ms. Lisha Planas-Felipe.



Philippines 2024 Hiring Trends and Salary Outlook

27 February 2024

On February 27, the ECCP had the honor of co-organizing the Philippines 2024 Hiring Trends and Salary Outlook forum together with recruitment agency Michael Page Philippines and PageGroup's executive search division Page Executive.

Intending to provide a comprehensive benchmarking tool for employers and job seekers, the event also featured the launch of the 2024 Philippine Salary Guide. The report provided insights into salary expectations per industry, as well as hiring trends in the local job market landscape.

Introducing key insights from the report were Michael Page Philippines Regional Director & Country Head Albert Pérez and Page Executive Partner Carla Lastimosa.

During the panel discussion moderated by Michael Page Philippines Senior Consultant Abby Garcia, key takeaways on attracting top tier talent and candidacy retention were also highlighted.

A huge thank you to all the participants and colleagues who joined this enlightening discussion, and our sincerest appreciation as well to HSBC for hosting our event!

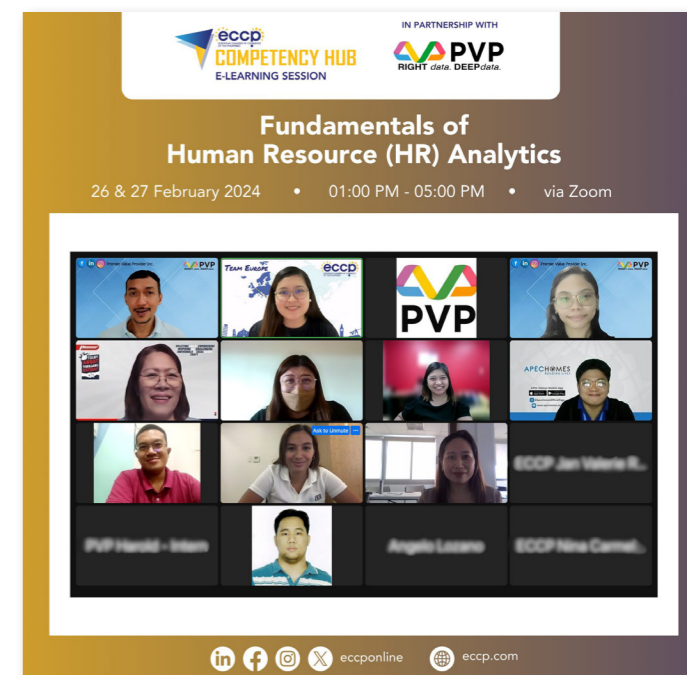


Fundamentals of Human Resource (HR) Analytics

26-27 February 2024

Last February 26 and 27, the ECCP Competency Hub and Premier Value Provider Inc. concluded a "Fundamentals of Human Resource (HR) Analytics" e-Learning course. It aimed to guide professionals in the HR industry on how to optimize data for decision-making and drive organizational success.

The session covered topics such as the 8-Step Model for Purposeful Analytics, Descriptive Analytics, and Using PowerBi as an HR Analytics Tool.



The Growth of E-Commerce: Strengthening IP Protection Systems and Protecting Consumers

5 March 2024

To forge a stronger IP system and ensure consumer protection, the ECCP and the South-East Asia IP SME Helpdesk organized the “The growth of E-Commerce: Strengthening IP protection systems and Protecting Consumers” forum on March 5, 2024.

Speakers included Hon. Ann Claire C. Cabochan, Deputy Director General at the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP/PHL), whose keynote speech provided updates and legal developments on online counterfeiting and piracy in the Philippines. We were also joined by Atty. Divina Ilas-Panganiban, Member of the Advisory Council for Intellectual Property (ACIP) IPOP/PHL and Partner at Quisumbing Torres Law Firm, who highlighted solutions to E-Commerce issues in her presentation.

From the Department of Trade and Industry, we were joined by Ms. Berlin Mabuna, Division Chief of the eCommerce Bureau, who discussed strategies in protecting IP and trade secrets in the digital world. Also present to provide more solutions to pressing E-Commerce issues was Atty. Edmund Baranda, External IP expert of the SEA IP SME Helpdesk and managing partner of Baranda & Associates.

Hosting and moderating the event was Atty. Reena Mitra-Ventanilla, Partner in Quisumbing Torres’ Intellectual Property, Data and Technology Practice Group and ECCP Chairperson of the Intellectual Property Rights Committee.



Led by our esteemed panel of experts, the session was truly an enlightening discussion on the legal developments in online counterfeiting and piracy, and strategies for IP protection and other intangible assets like trade secrets.

We likewise extend our deepest appreciation to our Venue Partner Colliers for hosting us at the Makati Commerce Tower!

ECCP Courtesy Meeting with Cruz, Marcelo & Tenebrancia

7 March 2024

On March 7, the ECCP membership team met with Manila-based law firm Cruz, Marcelo & Tenebrancia at their office to discuss upcoming initiatives of the Chamber, and to look into potential areas of partnership in the months ahead.

Our gratitude to Senior Partner Atty Patricia Bunye for the warm reception. We look forward to even stronger ties and to fruitful collaborations in the coming months!

Cruz Marcelo & Tenebrancia is a top tier full-service firm with proven expertise in, among others, Litigation; Corporate Law; Intellectual Property; Mining & Natural Resources; Energy; and Arbitration & Alternative Dispute Resolution.



ECCP Courtesy Meeting with ECCP Corporate Partner and Insurance Partner Pru Life UK

7 March 2024

The ECCP team had a courtesy meeting with ECCP Corporate Partner and Insurance Partner Pru Life UK and their newly appointed President & CEO Sanjay Chakrabarty.

From introducing ECCP’s upcoming initiatives within the year to identifying possible areas of collaboration, the discussions were nothing short of fruitful and promising.

Thank you for having us, Pru Life UK! We look forward to being part of your journey of growth and innovation within the local and global life insurance space!



ECCP Membership team courtesy visit with leading international audit, tax and advisory firm Mazars in the Philippines

7 March 2024

Thank you for having us, Mazars in the Philippines!

On March 7, the ECCP Membership team had a courtesy visit with leading international audit, tax and advisory firm Mazars in the Philippines to discuss potential partnerships and upcoming initiatives. It was a productive time exploring opportunities to further strengthen relations and drive mutual growth.

We look forward to exciting endeavors ahead!



ECCP Team Courtesy Meeting with the Mata-Perez, Tamayo and Francisco (MTF Counsel) Law Firm

7 March 2024

Wrapping up another busy Membership week with a visit to MTF Counsel!

On March 7, the ECCP team had a courtesy meeting with the Mata-Perez, Tamayo and Francisco (MTF Counsel) law firm to kick off discussions on collaborations for future events and programs for the European-Business Community.

Thank you MTF Counsel for the warm welcome and the very productive conversations!



Asia Sustainability Week

11-13 March 2024

On March 11 to 13, the ECCP, represented by Executive Director Florian Gottein, and ECCP subsidiary Fairs and More Inc. General Manager Dawn Marie Francisco Cabigon, recently attended the 3rd annual Sustainability Week Asia in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Sustainability Week Asia brought together sustainability changemakers, purpose-driven consumers, and business leaders to equip participants with the tools needed to transition faster to net-zero. The event featured in-depth panels and private roundtable discussions on topics such as the net-zero agenda, carbon markets, supply chains and circularity, the energy transition, and sustainable transportation and mobility.



ECCP Courtesy Meeting with Fortun Narvasa & Salazar

12 March 2024

Last March 12, the ECCP Membership team met with Atty. Maricar Lazaro, Partner at Fortun Narvasa & Salazar, as part of the Chamber's courtesy visits to its members.

Discussions revolved around upcoming ECCP events, opportunities for potential partnerships, and ways to further maximize their membership with the Chamber.

Established in 1993, the firm provides legal services in areas such as arbitration, corporate and commercial practice, and corporate rehabilitation, energy, environment, family, immigration, intellectual property, labor, litigation and dispute resolution, health, mining, natural resources, real estate, taxation, and appeals.



ECCP Membership and Events Team Meeting with the Premium Member Eastern Communications

13 March 2024

Thank you for the warm reception, Eastern Communications!

Today, the ECCP Membership and Events team had the pleasure of meeting with Premium Member Eastern Communications to discuss potential collaborations and initiatives.

As Eastern celebrates 145 years this 2024, we look forward to fostering an even fruitful partnership to further enhance the business landscape and telecommunications space here in the Philippines!



Finance Demystified

14 March 2024

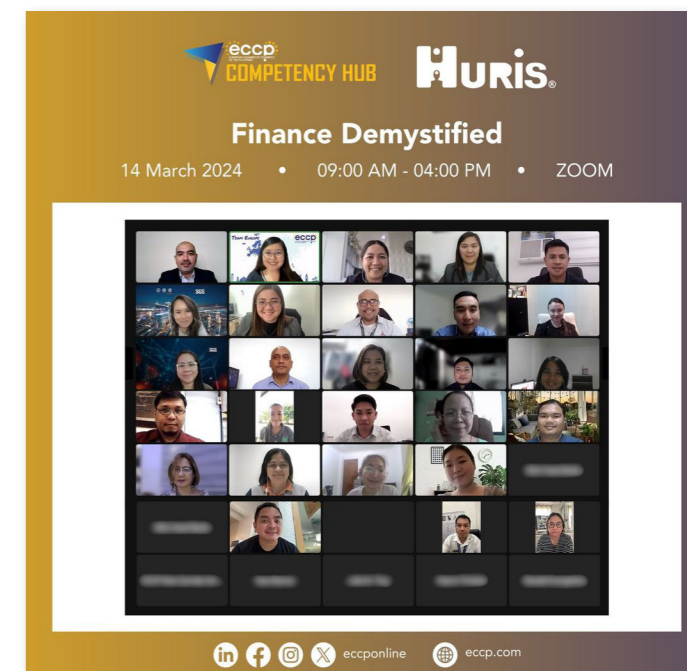
Enriching financial management skills for employee growth and organizational success!

Last March 14, the ECCP Competency Hub organized a one-day training workshop to tackle basic financial statements and learn how to analyze financial information to make strategic business decisions.

The session was facilitated by Juan Carlos "JC" Medina, President at Human Resource Innovations and Solutions Inc. (HURIS Inc.).

We also offer this training for in-house or exclusive runs! To request a formal proposal, or to learn more about our trainings, please email trainings@eccp.com.

You can also check out our upcoming sessions at <https://www.eccp.com/upcoming-trainings>.



2024 ECCP Climate Change Forum

14 March 2024

With the aim to promote collaborative effort and meaningful discussion to address pressing climate change-related issues, the ECCP and its Environment and Water Committee organized the 2024 ECCP Climate Change Forum on March 14 at Raffles and Fairmont Makati.

With more than a hundred participants and a roster of experts and authorities in the climate change space, the event saw thematic discussions on stakeholders' perspectives on mitigating the impacts of climate change and on cross-sectoral collaborations for climate action/resilience.

Speakers and panelists of the first session included Climate Change Commission PH Deputy Executive Director Hon. Romell Antonio Cuenca; Asian Development Bank Senior Infrastructure Specialist (Innovation and Green Finance) Ms. Naeeda Morgado; Nestlé Philippines, Inc. Head of Corporate Affairs Mr. Jose Uy III; and Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities Senior Policy Advisor Atty. Pedro H. Maniego Jr., with Global Reporting Initiative Country Manager Ms. Katreena Pillejera moderating the session.

Meanwhile, the second roster of speakers featured National Economic and Development Authority Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning Group (PPG) Hon. Reynaldo R. Cancio, CESE; De La Salle University-Manila Assistant Dean for Program Development, School of Innovation and Sustainability Dr. Neil Stephen A. Lopez; Manila Water Company Head for Regulatory Affairs Group for the East Zone Atty. Jo Kristine "Kaye" Celera and Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation Chairman and Director For



Technical Service Mr. Holger Holst.

Joining the panel discussion were Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems, and Climate Change Atty. Analiza Rebueta-Teh; and National Economic and Development Authority-Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environment Staff (NEDA-ANRES) Director IV Hon. Nieva T. Natural. Moderating the session was Atty. Joseph Fabul, Head of Communications and Corporate Affairs for the Philippines and Southeast Asia at Unilever.

The event was organized in partnership with Advocacy Leads Nestle Philippines and Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation and Advocacy Supporters First Gen Corporation and Crown Worldwide Group.

Our gratitude as well to Mr. Rondell Torres, Sustainability Lead at Unilever Philippines, for hosting the event, and to Mr. Christoph Wagner, Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines, and Atty. Denya Gracia Uy-Anastacio, Environment and Water Committee Chairperson for their welcoming and closing remarks.

ECCP Membership Team Courtesy Visit to Gardenia

15 March 2024

Last March 15, the ECCP Membership team paid a courtesy visit to Gardenia at their office in Laguna.

There, the Chamber discussed upcoming membership events and advocacy efforts throughout the year. Meanwhile, the well-beloved family brand also shared its most recent milestones, such as the expansion of its product portfolio to include milk, coffee, and noodles.

Gardenia also mentioned that the majority of their baking equipment is of European brands!

Present at the meeting were Gardenia Philippines President Simplicio P. Umali Jr., SVP for Operations Christina P. Domondon, and Research and Development Asst. Manager Romina S. Pulido.



Gardenia Bakeries (Philippines) Inc., the leading and fastest-growing bread brand in the Philippines, has been a trusted and valued member of the Chamber since 2014. Here's to cementing 10 years of mutual growth and collaboration, and cheers to even more fruitful years ahead!

Landmark announcement of the official resumption of negotiations for the EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

18 March 2024

Last 18 March 2024 in Brussels, the ECCP was honored to witness and participate in engagements leading to the landmark announcement of the official resumption of negotiations for the EU-Philippines Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The resumption of talks presents a crucial opportunity to enhance economic growth, deepen partnerships, promote sustainability, prosperity, and progress.

The ECCP, through various initiatives, has actively pursued the advancement of the EU- Philippines FTA. Efforts include the publication of position papers, establishment of an FTA committee, and engagement in high-level dialogues with policymakers and business representatives from both regions, including the high-level business event on the occasion of the visit of Her Excellency Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.



As negotiations progress, the ECCP remains committed to facilitating constructive dialogue and advocating for the interests of its members and the broader business community. The Chamber will continue to champion increased, sustainable trade and highlight the Philippines in the investment map.

Read more via <https://www.eccp.com/articles/3037>.

EU and the Philippines announce resumption of negotiations for a free trade agreement: <https://bit.ly/491qgk7>.

The Sustainable Aviation Fuel: Powering #OnePHAviation Forum

19 March 2024

Unlocking the potential of SAF in fueling a green and resilient Philippine aviation sector!

On 19 March, the ECCP organized the Sustainable Aviation Fuel: Powering #OnePHAviation Forum, gathering leaders and experts in the aviation space to discuss sustainable aviation fuel in the Philippines.

The first session centered on strategies and actions to expedite the adoption and usage of sustainable aviation fuel within the Philippines. Presentations dived into investment opportunities and addressed ways to scale SAF production and distribution.

Speakers include Department of Transportation - Philippines Undersecretary for Aviation and Airports Hon. Roberto Lim; Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) Director General Capt. Manuel Antonio L. Tamayo; International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) Director General Mr. Kurt Edwards; Department of Energy Philippines Undersecretary for Energy Resource Development and Oil Management Hon. Alessandro O. Sales; DTI Philippines-Philippine Board of Investments (DTI-BOI) Industry Development Group Executive Director Hon. Ma. Corazon H. Dichosa and Division Chief for Agri-Based Industries Division, Resource-Based Industries Service Mr. Francis M. Peñaflor and Ms. Hélène Burger, Head of International Cooperation and Sustainability APAC, Airbus.

Meanwhile, the second session provided insights into the state of the SAF market and identified areas for future innovation and expansion. Speakers delved into recent developments, market dynamics, and emerging technologies related to SAF use, as well as regulatory frameworks, investment trends, and collaboration opportunities that could drive the growth of SAF within the aviation industry.

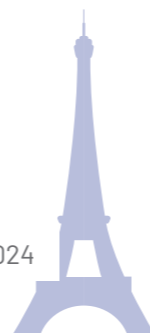
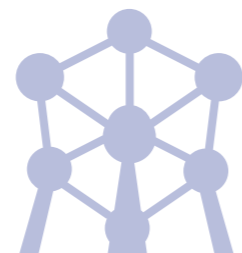
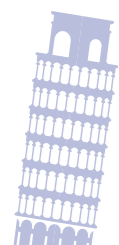
Speakers in the session were Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research & Development (DOST-PCIEERD) Science and Technology Fellow Dr. Ian Dominic Tabañag, RChE; European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Technical Cooperation Regional



Manager Mr. Santiago Haya-Leiva; Capital A (formerly AirAsia Group) Chief Sustainability Officer Ms. Yap Mun Ching; Cebu Pacific Air Chief Strategy Officer Mr. Alex Reyes; Philippine Airlines AVP for Fuel Spend Optimization Ms. Marjorie Sia; and Philippine Coconut Authority Deputy Administrator - Operations Branch Hon. Roel Rosales.

The event was hosted by International Air Transport Association (IATA) in the Philippines Country Manager Samuel David.

We would also like to thank Event Partners Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) and the Finnish Embassy in Manila, Advocacy Leads Fly AirAsia, Cebu Pacific Air, and Philippine Airlines, Advocacy Partners Airbus, Turkish Airlines, Wingbox Aviation Inc., and Media Partner AvGeek Philippines.



2024 Bacolod-Iloilo Business Mission 20 March 2024

Organized by the ECCP, the Bacolod-Iloilo Business Mission aims to facilitate meaningful engagements, share industry insights, and strengthen partnerships for mutual growth between European and local businesses in the Bacolod and Iloilo regions.

Here are some of the highlights of Day 1 and Day 2 of the Business Mission!

On March 20, the delegates arrived in the City of Bacolod where they met with Local Government Unit (LGU) representatives over lunch to learn more about the City's rich history and budding business landscape. The guests also experienced a tour of the city, with the day ending with a vibrant networking event at Park Inn Bacolod.

The following day on March 21, the delegates met with the Association of Negros Producers, an organization promoting and lobbying the interests of micro-small to medium-scale producers in Negros, before traveling

Empower Her: Investing in Women Through Leadership Opportunities Forum 21 March 2024

In the spirit of Women's Month, the ECCP and the ECCP Women in Business Committee recently organized the Empower Her: Investing in Women Through Leadership Opportunities Forum on March 21 at Spaces, BGC.

Attended by women leaders and professionals, as well as male allies, the event showcased diverse stories, inspiring testimonials, and heartfelt experiences on the importance of empowering women in the workplace, and how society can continue to create and promote equal, equitable, and gender-inclusive practices.

Throughout the afternoon, we had the honor of hearing from esteemed speakers, namely Atty. Maria Theresa Veloso, on behalf of Taguig City Mayor Hon. Lani Cayetano; Hon. Kim Lokin, DTI Philippines Undersecretary for Communications & Legislative Affairs; Ms. Agnes Gervacio, CEO of Connected Women; and Ms. Toni Tompar, EVP for Client Operations of Teleperformance Philippines and CEO of TP Women.

We also heard inspirational messages of support from Senator Risa Hontivero, and from their excellencies Amb. Marielle Geraedts of the Embassy of the Netherlands in the Philippines, Amb. Raduta Matache of the Ambasada României în Filipine / Embassy of Romania in the Philippines, and Amb. Annika Thunborg of the Embassy of Sweden in Manila.

We likewise extend our deepest gratitude to the remarkable women who also shared their wisdom and journeys during the event, Ms. Sheila Lobien,



to the City of Iloilo. The group then had a socials night to discover the investment areas of Iloilo.

This Business Mission brings together delegates from the trade council of European Embassies, executives from the Chamber's Corporate and Premium Membership roster, and ECCP Board Directors.

We hope our delegates are having a great and productive time as they visit the City of Smiles and the City of Love!



Chairperson of the ECCP's Women in Business Committee, Ms. Tanya Famador, EVP for Client Operations at Teleperformance, and to our host Ms. Charisse Gail Bantiling, Chief of Workplace Strategy and Principal Designer at Studio-id8.

The gathering was nothing short of shared laughter, felt camaraderie, and amplified voices as women from all spheres came together to celebrate, uplift, and reaffirm commitments toward creating a world where every woman and girl can thrive and reach her full potential.

A heartfelt thank you to Event Partners Teleperformance, Event Supporters SPD Jobs, Inc. and Aseana City, Beverage Partner Le Cellier French Wine Selection (Le Cellier Quality Store Corp.), and Venue Partner Regus Spaces by IWG, for their invaluable support in making this event possible.

As we reflect on the success of 'Empower Her,' we are reminded of the power of collective action and continuous commitment to gender parity in leadership and the still on-going fight for gender equality. Here's to more milestones and progress in our journey toward women's empowerment!

Inside ECCP: Cebu

How to Develop an Impactful and Sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy for Business Success (Session 1)

22 January 2024

ECCP Cebu, together with IAM Consulting, hosted the first session of the e-learning entitled "How to Develop an Impactful And Sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy For Business Success". Such training equips organizations with the tools to navigate the complex landscape of sustainability reporting. Through interactive sessions and case studies, participants gain insights into best practices for transparently communicating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. By fostering a culture of accountability and transparency, this training empowers businesses to meet the growing demand for sustainability disclosure. From stakeholder engagement to data collection and analysis, attendees learn practical strategies to integrate sustainability into corporate decision-making. Ultimately, this training cultivates a new generation of responsible leaders committed to driving positive change and creating a more sustainable future for all.



Visayas Honorary Consuls' Meeting 1 February 2024

The recent gathering of honorary consuls epitomized the essence of modern diplomacy. Serving as vital conduits between nations, these unsung diplomats convened to address pressing global challenges. From fostering mutual understanding to harnessing technology for outreach, discussions centered on enhancing cooperation and cultural exchange. Insights shared and best practices exchanged underscored their commitment to diplomacy's enduring relevance. With a shared vision of peace and prosperity, honorary consuls pledged to strengthen diplomatic ties and build bridges across borders. In a world marked by complexity and uncertainty, their dedication offers hope for a future where dialogue and collaboration triumph over discord.



ECCP Cebu 2024 Kick-Off Reception 1 February 2024

Last February 1, 2024, the ECCP Cebu held the 2024 Kick-Off Reception at the Capitol & Jones Function Room in Citadines Cebu City. This exclusive event brought together professionals and esteemed guests from various industries, across private and public sectors, as well as representatives from other chambers and honorary consulate offices, the event served as a venue for fostering relationships among members, partners, and friends.

The evening was filled with enriching conversations, networking prospects, and a delightful selection of wine and culinary delights amidst a vibrant ambiance. Through this event, ECCP Cebu was able to foster a community that establishes a stronger connection and further expands its business network.

This event wouldn't be possible without our Silver Partner, Eastern Communications, as well as our Bronze Partners, RISE, and UHY M.L. Aguirre CPAs and Co. With the generosity of Cebu Landmasters, Inc., and Citadines Cebu, the events whisk. The night is filled with festivities and surprises thanks to the raffle partners, Belmont Hotel Mactan, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, and Tambuli Mactan Resort. The night was powered by Charles & James Light Whisky. Special thanks also to Budots Media for capturing the precious moments during the event.



ECCP Cebu Business Council Chairs Alignment Meeting 12 February 2024

In a recently held meeting, the newly appointed leadership of the ECCP Cebu Business Council met to chart their course for the year ahead. Present were Mr. Jochen Bitzer, CEO & President of Mercedes Benz Group Services Philippine, Inc., and Co-Chairperson, Mr. Marc Cools, Chairman of Hitech Lighting World Corporation, who assumed their roles alongside ECCP Cebu Branch Officer, Ms. Jillian Sitchon.

The meeting's agenda included streamlining membership acquisition and retention, amplifying the chamber's impact through targeted advocacy events and training sessions, and fostering meaningful projects and programs. These initiatives aim to not only exceed annual targets but also deliver exceptional value to all members.



In photo (from L-R): ECCP Cebu Business Council Co-Chairperson Marc Cools, ECCP Cebu Business Council Chairperson Jochen Bitzer, and ECCP Cebu Branch Officer Jillian Sitchon.

Iso27001:2022 Information Security Management System Awareness Course (2nd Run) 19-20 February 2024

The ISO 27001:2022 Information Security Management System Awareness Training was tailored for personnel across all levels of the organization, ensuring everyone comprehends their role in establishing and upholding an information security management system aligned with ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standards. This inclusive training catered to individuals in diverse sectors, irrespective of organizational size, structure, or sector, fostering a shared understanding of information security protocols. This training was a vital initiative designed to empower every member of our organization with the knowledge and skills necessary to safeguard our information effectively. From senior leadership to frontline staff, this training program ensured that all individuals understand their crucial roles in implementing and maintaining robust security measures following ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standards.



POWEREDGE

Growing water demand requires better energy efficiency.

On average, energy accounts for 45% of the cost of water production.

Using ABB's ACQ580 Variable Speed Drives can help lower energy use by up to 40%



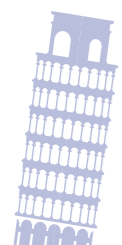
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Inside ECCP: CDO

ECCP Northern Mindanao Welcomes the Year with the Mindanao Economic Landscape Webinar 24 January 2024

Last January 24, 2024, the ECCP Northern Mindanao successfully held a webinar which explored Mindanao's economic situation titled "Mindanao Economic Landscape: A Forecast for 2024".

The webinar began with Ms. Mylah Faye Cariño, NEDA-X Regional Director, where she gave an extensive discussion about the AmBisyon Natin 2040. She also highlighted the Strategic Development Areas, Northern Mindanao Regional Development Plan, and its progress. Director Cariño left a remark to the participants to "make it happen in Northern Mindanao for the Philippines." Moreover, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Area Vice President Mr. Arturo Milan highlighted five factors that are affecting Mindanao's business landscape, namely: (1) Ease of Doing Business; (2) Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); (3) Infrastructure Projects; (4) Threats of El Niño; and (5) Threat of Negative Travel Advisories. On a positive note, he identified three bright spots prevailing in Mindanao this year: new investments from the private sector; the expansion of the ICT-BPO industry could potentially lower the cost of ease of doing business, and lastly, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Remittances that are expected to increase further. Lastly, Mr. Romeo Montenegro, Mindanao Development Authority Assistant Secretary emphasized how Mindanao's involvement in nation-building aligns with the national agenda and is all anchored in the AmBisyon Natin 2040. Asec. Montenegro also discussed the relevance of Mindanao's development roadmaps and emphasized the Mindanao Peace and Development 10-Point Agenda. It also highlighted how important digitalization and innovation are for connecting geographically isolated areas. Furthermore, he asserted that "Mindanao must be seen in the policy context for the region to have bigger representation in policymaking."

The online event was attended by 106 participants which allowed them to have a better grasp of Mindanao's business climate for this year. In general, the webinar was a success thanks to the esteemed speakers who shared their expertise of Mindanao and provided insights into the region's contribution, relevance, and challenges ahead this 2024.



ECCP Northern Mindanao Business Council Meeting & Appointment of New Vice-Chairman 20 February 2024

February 20, 2024 - The ECCP Northern Mindanao successfully conducted its 1st Business Council Meeting for the year. With 30 attendees, 15 member companies were represented, namely A&L Marketing Solutions, Capilli Trading, CEPALCO, Comfac Corporation, First Community Cooperative, HSI Technologies, Iligan City LGU, Namalata Tamala Law & Partners, Northern Mindanao Federation of Dairy Cooperatives, Office of the Vice Mayor of CDO, PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority, Seda Centrio, Upbuild Construction, USTP and 2Go.

The meeting served as a platform for ECCP members to be informed of the Chamber's most recent activities, advocacy initiatives and movements, and upcoming events. The newest members of ECCP Northern Mindanao also had the opportunity to introduce their products and services to the current members. A highlight of the meeting was USTP System President and ECCP NM Business Council Vice-Chairman for Projects & Events Dr. Ambrosio Cultura's presentation, where he elaborated on the University-Industry Roadmap and its importance to both sectors. He emphasized that the industries should not just compete but should complement each other for the greater good and reiterated how important it is to expose the students to the real-world setting for them to be fully equipped once they go out of the university walls.

On another note, the appointment of the new Vice-Chairman for Membership & Development was announced in the meeting. Taking the role is PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority Administrator, Atty. Joseph Donato J. Bernedo whose advocacy and aim is to push for more European investments in the 3,000-hectare estate.

Amidst the diversity of the group, each member company narrowed down to one single goal which is for the betterment and progress of Mindanao; paving the way to eradicating the stigma which sometimes closes the doors for more business and investments to come through.

The meeting was hosted by the University of Science and Technology of the Southern Philippines.



L-R: Phividec-IA Administrator and Newly Appointed ECCP NM Business Council Vice-Chairman for Membership & Development Atty. Joseph Donato J. Bernedo, CEPALCO Executive Vice President and ECCP NM Business Council Chairman Mr. Jaime Rafael Paguio and USTP System President and ECCP NM Business Council Vice-Chairman for Projects & Events Dr. Ambrosio B. Cultura, II

Inside ECCP: Davao

Webinar on Product Certification

25 January 2024

In a bid to further empower MSMEs to excel and compete, the ECCP Davao organized the "Quality Quotient: Guiding MSMEs on Product Certification & Approval" webinar last January 25 via ZOOM.

With almost a hundred participants, this session was attended by business owners, entrepreneurs, and cooperatives from Davao and BARMM to learn about the certification process and its importance, as well as the best practices for becoming export-ready.

Moderated by ECCP SMBC Chairman Antonio Peralta, the panel included FDA Food Drug Regulation Officer Ms. Loucene Marie Caraoa; DTI - Bureau of Philippine Standards Trade and Industry Development Specialist Ms. Jaclyn Vanessa Macapagal; Bureau Veritas Training Manager Ms. Glaiza Mae Guevarra; and See's International Food Mfg. Corp. President Mr. Ruben See.

The ECCP extends its appreciation to Bronze Partner Bureau Veritas Philippines and BAEP CRESCENT Project, implemented by ECCP and funded by the European Union, for their support in making this webinar possible.



Membership Visits with Existing and Prospect Members

14-15 February 2024

Last February 14 to 15, 2024, ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein engaged in a series of insightful discussions with esteemed members and prospects of the Southern Mindanao Business Council at Davao City.

As part of ECCP's efforts to touch base with its partners and members, Mr. Gottein reinstated ECCP's commitment to fostering strategic business growth in the region. He emphasized the Chamber's role in providing avenues to facilitate connections with its extensive network, as well as highlighted ECCP initiatives and services to further enhance the business landscape of Mindanao. The ECCP team had a meeting with the following organizations: Alsons Development and Investment Corporation, La Toscana, and LimaDOL, Kennemer Foods International, Davao City Investment Promotion Center, and San Pedro College.

Also discussed among these conversations were relevant topics, such as strengthening partnerships among local stakeholders and the impression of Mindanao in light of the recent travel advisories affecting ease of doing business.



Kennemer Foods International

From L-R: Antonio Peralta, Sam Gura, Florian Reimer, Arnelo Astilero, Florian Gottein, Portia Sugsi



LimaDOL & La Toscana (prospects)

From L-R: Peter Damary, Antonio Peralta, Pierro Lucarini, Sam Gura, Florian Gottein



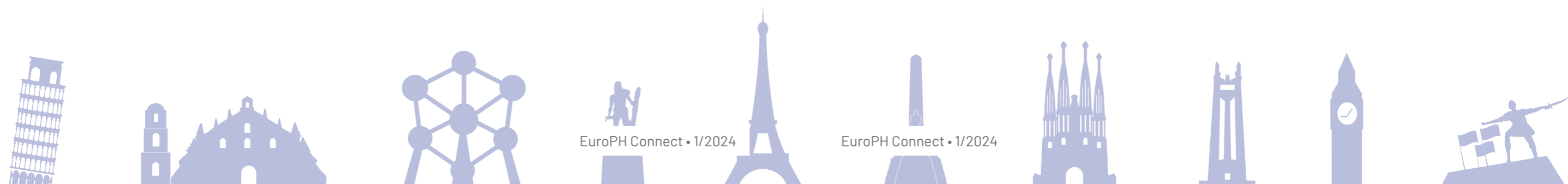
Davao City Investment Promotion Center

From L-R: Irene Martelino, Rizalina Cordenillo, Christian Cambaya, Florian Gottein, Antonio Peralta, Sam Gura



LimaDOL & La Toscana (prospects)

From L-R: Peter Damary, Antonio Peralta, Pierro Lucarini, Sam Gura, Florian Gottein



Inside ECCP: Iloilo

Navigating tax laws and strategies for Iloilo MSMEs to maximize savings, profits, and compliance

21 February 2024

On February 21, 2024, the event, "Tax Savvy: Unveiling Tax Updates and BIR Audit Strategies" conducted by the ECCP Western Visayas in collaboration with Reyes Tacandong & Co which took place at Regus Office in Iloilo City.. The event set forth the strategies in handling BIR audits and compliance.

Presenting as a physical event, Tax Savvy had the purpose of conveying invaluable insights into the latest tax updates, BIR audit strategies, and new approaches to promoting financial health. The event set forth a benchmark among MSMEs towards maximizing profits through tax compliance.

In order to have a deeper understanding, the ECCP Western Visayas invited an expert in the field. Atty. Sheryl Ann D. Tizon-Lalulis, principal for Tax Services at Reyes Tacandong & Co. The event was attended by different industries but a majority of which were from the food industry. The productive and insightful afternoon was capped off with a photo op and socials among the speaker and the attendees.



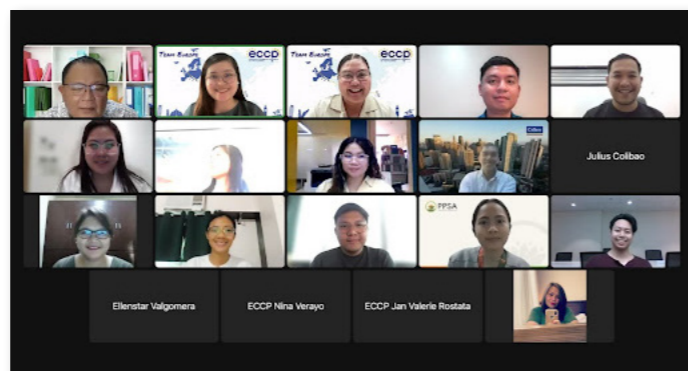
Business delegates attended the Time Management Webinar

20 February 2024

On February 20, 2024, the event, "Time Management: Managing time to increase effectiveness at work" was conducted by the ECCP as a webinar.

Held in a zoom meeting, Time Management had the purpose of sharing practical tips on how to prioritize tasks, set goals, and avoid common time-wasting pitfalls such as procrastination and the like. Having one goal in mind, making the best out of their time-productivity-wise.

Gaining a deeper understanding and insight of time management, the ECCP invited a keynote expert to present their strategies and tactics on the topic.



Advocacy Corner

Economic and Ease of Doing Business Forum (ARTA)

24 January 2024

The ECCP participated in the Anti-Red Tape Authority's Economic and Ease of Doing Business Forum. ARTA presented updates on its efforts to streamline processes as well as digital platforms which they have established to accomplish the same.

During the event, Secretary Frederick Go also enumerated his priority sectors which include mining, particularly nickel and copper, semiconductors, agriculture, steel, and the pharmaceutical industry. On reforms, Secretary Go shared his office's effort to work with Congress in addressing bureaucratic challenges within investment promotion agencies on the processing of incentive applications and VAT-related rules, among others.



JFC Meeting with DENR Sec. Yulo-Loyzaga

24 January 2024

The ECCP, together with the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines, had the opportunity to meet with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to discuss relevant sector issues and developments as well as possible areas of collaboration between the two organizations. The meeting featured discussions and updates on the Extended Producers' Responsibility Act, creation of the Department of Water, Green Economy Program, and regulatory issues and concerns relating to the mining industry.

The Secretary was also joined by Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change; Atty. Jonas Leones, Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs; Atty. Juan Miguel Cuna, Undersecretary for Field Operations - Luzon, Visayas and Environment; Mr. Joselin Marcus Fragada, Undersecretary for Field Operations-Mindanao; Atty. Ignatius Loyola Rodriguez, Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Legislative Affairs; and Dr. Carlos Primo David, Undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science.



ECCP Courtesy Meeting with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Dr. Eli Remolona Jr.

24 January 2024

The ECCP had a courtesy meeting with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Dr. Eli Remolona Jr. on 24 January, where the group talked about key sector developments as well as the priority areas of the ECCP and BSP.

At the said meeting, the ECCP raised and expressed its support to the Philippine government's efforts on strengthen security in the financial services sector, including the passage of the amendments to the Bank Secrecy Law and the Anti Financial Account Scamming Act, promoting digital transformation, as well as further strengthening sustainable finance initiatives.

The BSP likewise shared its strategies on the said topics, as well as other BSP priorities including the ASEAN regional payment connectivity and working with other government agencies in addressing the deficiencies identified by the Financial Action Task Force, in line with the country's inclusion in its 'grey list'.



BSP attendees:

Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr.; Deputy Governor Francis Dakila, Jr.; Deputy Governor Chuchi Fonacier; Deputy Governor Bernadette Romulo Puyat; Assistant Governor Pia Roman Tayag; Deputy Director Justin Fernandez (International Surveillance Group)

ECCP attendees:

Paulo Duarte, ECCP President; Atty. Con Simundac, ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Chair; Atty. Alden Labaguig, ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Vice Chair; John Januszcak, ECCP Special Committee on Open Finance and Financial Inclusion Chair; Michael Chua, Deutsche Bank Chief Country Officer; Luis Vistan, HSBC SVP and Head of Global Markets Corporate Sales; Mary Jane Japor, ING Bank Philippines Head of Compliance; Maricel Estavillo, Pru Life UK Vice President for Government Relations and ESG; Katt Baligod, ECCP Government and Industry Affairs Manager

Aviation Committee Meeting

30 January 2024

On 30 January, the ECCP Aviation Committee had its first meeting of the year at the ECCP Office in Makati City. At the session, the group discussed recent industry developments as well as the priority areas for 2024. The participants, led by committee co-chairpersons Atty. Marvin Masangkay, Atty. Mannix Manalo, and Ms. Lourdes Cariño-Angeles, also tackled sector concerns including excise tax on jet fuel and existing issues on the provision of incentives for aviation industry investors. Upcoming committee activities have also been presented during the meeting.



Aviation Committee Courtesy Meeting with DOTr Undersecretary Bobby Lim

2 February 2024

The ECCP Aviation Committee had a courtesy meeting with DOTr Undersecretary for Aviation and Airports Roberto "Bobby" Lim on 2 February at Scott's in Ascott Bonifacio Global City. The group had preliminary discussions on the 2024 Aviation Summit slated for October. DOTr and ECCP also tackled the debut of the first Philippine Pavilion at the forthcoming Singapore Airshow in February.

Present at the lunch meeting were DOTr Usec. Bobby Lim; DOTr Director Joel Laguerta; Consultant to the Undersecretary for Aviation and Airports Junard Cruz; and ECCP Aviation Committee Co-Chairpersons Atty. Marvin Masangkay and Lourdes Cariño-Angeles.

AsBAA Vice Chairman Max Motschmann; Berthaphil President and CFO Mr. Andrew Schwartz; Berthaphil representatives Atty. Jose Bernas, Arlene Aniciete, and Franchezkka Aniciete; ECCP Associate Director for Government and International Affairs Sophia Ordoña; ECCP Senior International Trade Fairs Officer Dawn Cabigon; and ECCP Advocacy Officer Chin Nethercott also joined the meeting.



ECCP Infrastructure Committee Meeting with the Climate Change Commission

7 February 2024

On 07 February, the ECCP Infrastructure Committee had its first meeting of the year at the ECCP Office in Makati City. At the session, Climate Change Commission (CCC) Policy Research and Development Division Chief Mr. Jerome Ilagan presented the plans and priorities of the CCC to advance green and climate-resilient infrastructure in the Philippines. The participants, led by committee co-chairperson Mr. Ramakrishna "Ram" Maganti, also discussed recent industry developments and committee priorities for 2024.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Infrastructure Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Automotive Committee Meeting

8 February 2024

The ECCP Automotive Committee, led by co-chairpersons ECCP President Mr. Paulo Duarte and Mr. Willy Tee Ten, conducted its last 8 February 2024 at the ECCP Office. The discussions covered updates on committee advocacies and engagements on electric vehicles as well as updates on the Philippine Transport Vehicles Fuel Economy Labeling Program (VFELP) and the Fuel Economy Performance Rating (FEPR). The group also shared industry concerns on market access issues on automotive products, particularly on the obtention of Philippine Standard (PS) Quality and/or Safety Mark and Import Commodity Clearance (ICC) Sticker.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Automotive Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.

Senate Hearing on Resolution of Both Houses (RBH) No. 6

12 February 2024

The ECCP and the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC) was represented at the Senate hearing/meeting on Resolution of Both Houses No. 6, Proposing Amendments to Certain Economic Provisions of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, particularly on Articles XII, XIV and XVI.

Chaired by Sen. Sonny Angara, the Committee Hearing discussed the various stakeholders' comments surrounding the proposal to amend/revise the 1987 Constitution to liberalise its restrictive economic provisions.

Bureau of Customs' 122nd Founding Anniversary

13 February 2024

The ECCP attended the Bureau of Customs' 122nd Founding Anniversary last 13 February 2024. On this occasion, the BOC launched the Customs Industry Consultative and Advisory Council (CICAC) to facilitate regular consultations between the government and its stakeholders. The Agency also shared its digitalization and streamlining efforts through enterprise ticketing solutions, paperless accounts management office, Balikbayan box system, among others.



Joint Position Paper on Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 5-2024

13 February 2024

The Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines, along with other members of the BIR-Partnership with Multi-Sectoral Group - Private Sector Committee, submitted a joint position paper on the Bureau of Internal Revenue Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 5-2024 ([Digest](#) | [Full Text](#)). RMC No. 5-2024 further clarifies the proper tax treatment of cross-border services.

Should you wish to submit your comments on RMC No. 5-2024, please reach out to advocacy@eccp.com.

ECCP Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Committee Meeting

14 February 2024

The ECCP Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Committee gathered for its first committee meeting last 14 February 2024, at the DivinaLaw Office. At the said meeting, the group had an active discussion on sector update, including issuances on renewable energy and energy efficiency from the Department of Energy, on sustainable finance from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and incentives from the Board of Investments. The committee members likewise shared their insights on the committee's priorities and stakeholder engagements for 2024.

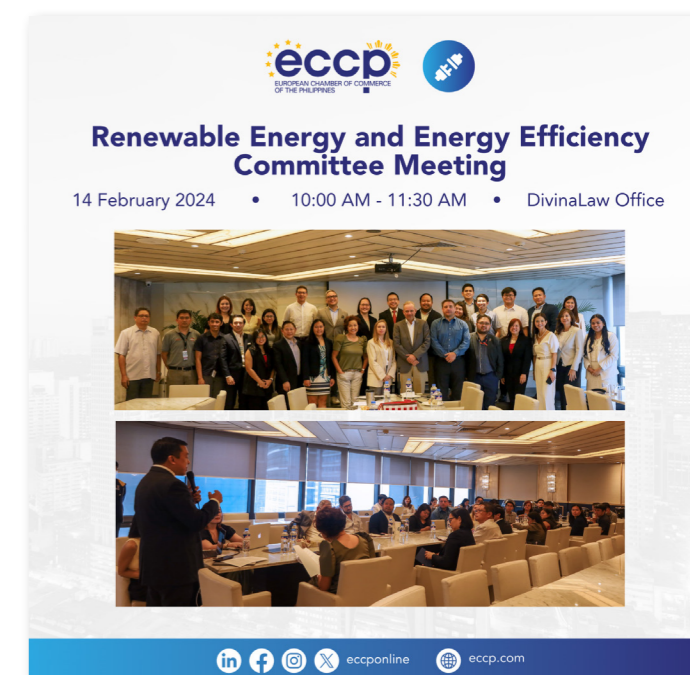
To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Committee, please contact Katt Baligod at advocacy@eccp.com.

ECCP Customs and Logistics Committee Meeting

15 February 2024

The ECCP Customs and Logistics Committee convened for its first committee meeting on 15 February at the ECCP Office. The said meeting tackled developments and challenges in the industry, including updates from the Bureau of Customs, promotion of blue economy, and concern on the rise in logistics costs. The group also shared their insights on the committee's focus areas and stakeholder engagements for the year ahead.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Customs and Logistics Committee, please contact Mazel Salazar at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Clarificatory Meeting with ARTA and DTI-BPS on market access issues in the Automotive Industry 19 February 2024

The ECCP Automotive Committee took part in a clarificatory meeting with the Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Philippine Standards (DTI-BPS) headed by Director Neil Catajay. The session was organized by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) and presided by Deputy Director General Undersecretary Gerald Divinagracia and Director Marbida L. Marbida.

The Committee, co-chaired by ECCP President Mr. Paulo Duarte and Mr. Willy Tee Ten, presented industry concerns, including issues on the obtention of Philippine Standard (PS) Quality and/or Safety Mark and the Import Commodity Clearance (ICC), as well as the alignment of international and local certification standards, among others.



ECCP Food and Beverage Committee Meeting 20 February 2024

The ECCP Food and Beverage had its first committee meeting of the year this 20 February. Joined by over 20 members, the meeting featured a review of the Committee's activities and priority advocacies for 2023 as well as discussions on the priority advocacy areas and stakeholder engagements for 2024. The committee also shared industry updates and upcoming committee activities for the first half of the year. To join the upcoming meetings and learn more about the ECCP Food and Beverage Committee, please contact advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP ICT-BPM-KPM Committee Meeting 20 February 2024

The ECCP ICT-BPM-KPM Committee gathered for its first Committee Meeting this 20 February at the ECCP Office. With guest speaker Mr. Rudy Abrahams, SAP Philippines President and Managing Director, the meeting tackled the rise of artificial intelligence, as well as its impacts in business operations. The Committee also discussed its advocacies and priorities, while the members shared developments and challenges in their respective industries, including flexible work schedule, upskilling and reskilling of the workforce, and cybersecurity.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP ICT-BPM-KPM Committee, please contact Mazel Salazar at advocacy@eccp.com.

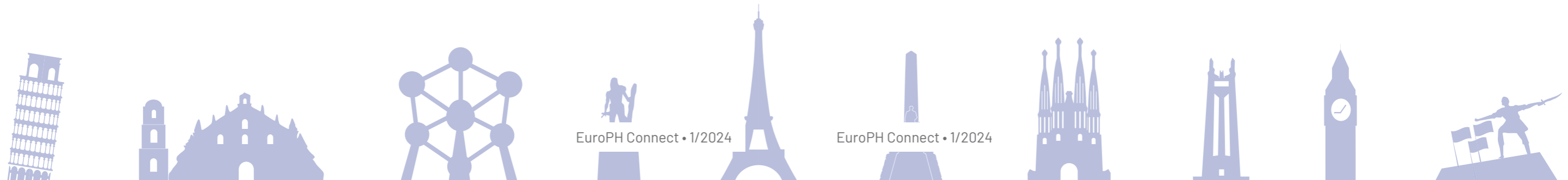


ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Meeting 21 February 2024

The ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee had its first meeting this 2024 last 21 February, at the ECCP Office. At the said meeting, the members had a discussion on recent sector developments and committee updates, including the ECCP Courtesy Meeting with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, initiatives on members' tax concerns, as well as led and co-signed position papers.

The group also discussed pertinent sector updates including the BIR Revenue Memorandum Circular 05-2024 and the Ease of Paying Taxes Act Implementing Rules and Regulations. Finally, the members had an exchange on proposed priority topics and engagements of the committee this 2024.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee, please contact Katt Baligod at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Healthcare Committee Meeting 21 February 2024

Last 21 February, the ECCP Healthcare Committee gathered for its first meeting at the ECCP Office. The committee members then discussed sector updates and committee recommendations including those on in-vitro diagnostics registration, promotion of innovative medicines, and health technology assessment. The committee members likewise noted recent policy updates, including the proposed amendments to the Universal Health Care Act, as well as the Food and Drug Administration Advisory on the endorsement of VAT-exempt medicines. The members also tackled other sector concerns and suggestions, and had an exchange on the committee's 2024 priorities.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Healthcare Committee, please contact Katt Baligod at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Human Capital Committee Meeting 22 February 2024

On 22 February, the ECCP Human Capital committee gathered for its first 2024 Committee Meeting. At the said meeting, the group had an exchange on recent sector developments including the legislative proposals on wage hike, as well as artificial intelligence's impact on labour productivity. The members also shared their insights on the committee's priorities this 2024, including proposed topics, activities, and stakeholders.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Human Capital Committee, please contact Mazel Salazar at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Tourism Committee Focus Group Discussion 22 February 2024

The ECCP Tourism Committee, co-chaired by Gwen Dela Cruz and Atty. Cenelyn Manguilimotan, had a focus group discussion via Zoom last 22 February 2024. The participants had an in-depth discussion on the lack of air transport connectivity and health facilities in Boracay. Potential strategies and initiatives to address the concerns have also been identified in the session.

Joining the meeting were Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)-Boracay President Michael Sweeney; PCCI-Boracay Vice President Djila Winebrenner; International Air Transport Association (IATA) Country Manager for the Philippines Samuel David; Philippine Airlines (PAL) Head for Sales/Board of Airline Representatives (BAR) Chairman Bryan Sansolis; PAL Kalibo Airport Branch Manager Huge Descallar; and Mövenpick Boracay General Manager Franck Merot.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Tourism Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.



DOE Business-to-Business Matching to Support Energy Transition 22 February 2024

The ECCP was represented at the Department of Energy Business-to-Business Matching to Support Energy Transition held on 22 February, at Grand Hyatt Manila and via Zoom. The said event served as a platform to facilitate and assist investors and developers in pursuing renewable energy (RE) projects in the Philippines, offer insights into the local market dynamics and opportunities, and establish potential partnerships between and among RE stakeholders in pursuing RE projects. Among the speakers at the said event are DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla and Undersecretary Rowena Guevarra, DENR Secretary Ma. Antonio Yulo-Loyzaga, and ERC Chairperson Monalisa Dimalanta.



JFC Meeting with DOLE Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma 26 February 2024

Last 26 February, the JFC had a courtesy meeting with the Department of Labor and Employment – DOLE Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma at the DOLE Office in Intramuros, Manila. The Secretary was also joined by Undersecretaries Carmela I. Torres and Atty. Felipe N. Egargo, Assistant Secretary Paul Vincent Añover, and Directors Patrick P. Patriwirawan, Jr. and Adeline T. De Castro.

The DOLE presented its plans and priorities as guided by the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2023-2028, key policies and updates on improving the ease of employment for foreign nationals in the country, as well as areas of cooperation with the private sector.

Some of the discussions tackled by the group include the recently issued DOLE Department Order No. 242, Series of 2024, work visa processing timelines for foreigners, the proposed minimum wage hike bill, green jobs, and cybersecurity measures.



Present at the meeting were ECCP President Paulo Duarte, ECCP Director Albert Perez, ECCP Associate Director Sophia Ordoña, ECCP Advocacy Officer Mazel Salazar, AMCHAM Executive Director Ebb Hinchliffe, AMCHAM-RESPOND Project Director Randall Garcia, ANZCHAM Executive Director Kimmi Siu Dewar, ANZCHAM Director Nancy Castillogne, JCCIPI President Shigeru Shimoda, JCCIPI Vice President Nobio Fuji, PAMURI Director Atty. Mimi Malvar, and KCCP Director Sunah Kim.

(Photo credits: Department of Labor and Employment)

BIR Public Consultation on the draft Revenue Regulations on the Ease of Paying Taxes Act 26 February 2024

The Joint Foreign Chambers, through the ECCP, was represented by Atty. Alden Labaguis, ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Vice Chair, at the first day of the Bureau of Internal Revenue Public Consultation on the Proposed Revenue Regulations to Implement the Ease of Paying Taxes Act (EOPT), held at Eton Centris, Quezon City. Several ECCP members have also participated in virtually in this public consultation.

The 2-day public consultation covered a total of 7 draft Revenue Regulations on provisions specific to classification of taxpayers, income tax and withholding tax, registration and invoicing, and VAT and percentage tax, among others.



ECCP Environment and Water Committee Meeting 27 February 2024

The Environment and Water Committee held its first committee meeting of the year this 27 February at the ECCP Office in Makati City. Led by the newly appointed Chairperson, Atty. Degee Uy-Anastacio of Nestle Philippines, and Vice-Chairperson, Atty. Kaye Celera of Manila Water Company, the committee shared relevant updates in the industry and highlighted specific areas of concern that need attention. With this, the members identified key government agencies to engage with, such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) attached agencies and the House of Representatives Committee on Ecology and the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

The members also had a productive discussion on the initiatives and recommendations of the committee for 2024, which include the creation of the Department of Water and the implementation of the Extended Producers Responsibility Act, among others.

To join or inquire about the Environment and Water Committee, please contact advocacy@eccp.com.



2024 International Tax and Investment Center 27 February 2024

The ECCP participated at the 2024 International Tax and Investment Conference (ITIC) held at Sheraton Manila Hotel on 27 February. ITIC, organised by the Asian Consulting Group, served as a platform to promote investing and doing business in the Philippines. With its theme “Breaking Barriers in the Digital Economy,” the Conference has sought to address issues on ease of doing business, tax policy and administration reforms through digital transformation, and taxation in the Digital Economy.

Atty. Alden Labaguis, ECCP Tax and Financial Services Committee Vice Chair, participated as a panellist at the said event. Other speakers include BIR Commissioner Atty. Romeo Lumagui Jr. and Deputy Commissioner Atty. Marissa Cabreros, PEZA Director General Tereso Panga, ARTA Director General Ernesto Perez, and DTI Undersecretary Mary Jean Pacheco.



ECCP Agriculture Committee Meeting

29 February 2024

The ECCP Agriculture Committee had its first meeting this 2024 last 29 February, at the ECCP Office and via Zoom. At the said meeting, the members had a discussion on recent sector developments and committee updates, including the proposed restructuring of the committee, initiatives on members' concerns, as well as led and co-signed position papers.

The group also discussed pertinent sector updates relevant to the committee's advocacy priority areas and legislations including the proposed amendments to the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act, liberalisation of the rice and corn sectors, and delineation of jurisdiction on veterinary drugs, among others. Finally, the members had an exchange on proposed priority topics and engagements of the committee this 2024.



BIR Multi-Sectoral Group Meeting re: Position Paper on RMC No. 05-2024

29 February 2024

Last 29 February, the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines participated in the BIR-Partnership with Multi-Sectoral Group (PMSG) - Private Sector Committee Members, to discuss the group's position paper on the BIR Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 05-2024. As a member of the JFC, the ECCP was represented by its Tax and Financial Services Committee Vice Chairperson, Atty. Alden Labagu.



Young Professionals Committee Strategy Meeting

6 March 2024

ECCP Executive Director Florian Gottein and Events Officer Aila Torres had a strategy meeting on March 6 with the ECCP Young Professionals Committee Chairs, Weremote CEO Tricia Reposo and Trends and Concepts Director for Customer Relations Kenneth Kung, to explore future collaborative efforts as well as committee-organized events for the year. Following that, they were joined by members of the NEO team for a tour of the Weremote Makati Central Square coworking space.



Real Estate Committee Alignment Meeting

7 March 2024

Last 7 March, the ECCP Real Estate Committee had an alignment meeting to discuss its plans and priorities for the year. The meeting was joined by ECCP Real Estate Committee Chairs—Leechiu Property Consultants (LPC) Executive Director for Commercial Leasing Lylah Ledonio and Director for Commercial Leasing Mikko Barrand, and the LPC Marketing team; as well as former ECCP Advocacy Officer Elena Tabbu, Advocacy Research Associate Alyssa Marcos, Events Officer Aila Torres.



Launch of the Green Economy Programme of the Philippines

11 March 2024

The European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) participated in the launch of the Green Economy Programme in the Philippines (GEPP) last Monday, organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the European Union (EU). With a budget of P3.67 billion, the GEPP aims to address waste management issues and combat climate change. Specifically, the program focuses on promoting a circular economy model, which emphasizes minimizing waste and extending the life cycle of products. ECCP has long been a staunch advocate for environmental sustainability, particularly in championing the principles of the circular economy and advancing renewable energy solutions. Through its strong advocacy efforts, ECCP continues to contribute to initiatives that promote green practices and support the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient economy.



Photo credits: European Union in the Philippines Facebook Page

ECCP Infrastructure Committee Meeting with the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines

13 March 2024

On 13 March, the Infrastructure Committee conducted a meeting at the ECCP Office in Makati City. This month's session featured Atty. Ronald Recidoro, the Executive Director of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), who gave an overview of the mining landscape in the Philippines and presented recent developments on House Bill No. 8937, or the Mining Fiscal Regime Bill. Led by committee Chairpersons Reinier Dizon and Ram Maganti, the members shared their comments and insights on the topic at hand, discussing the potential of the bill to prop the Philippines up to foreign investors as an attractive site for resource extraction.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Infrastructure Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.

ECCP Aviation Committee Meeting with CAAP Strategic Planning Division

15 March 2024

On 15 March, the ECCP Aviation Committee, represented by Co-Chairpersons Atty. Mannix Manalo and Ms. Lourdes Cariño-Angeles, had a meeting with the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) Strategic Planning Division at the Ocampo and Manalo Law Firm office in Makati City. The discussion focused on sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) adoption and production in the Philippines.

Joining the meeting were CAAP Strategic Planning Division OIC EnP. Sofia Paula R. Fulmaran; Shell Energy Transition Lead Stan Siahetiong; Cathay Pacific Country Manager - Philippines Vishnu Rajendran; and Engie Key Account Executive Quenelen Aquino. ECCP International and Government Affairs Sophia Ordoña and Advocacy Officer Chienie Nethercott also took part in the meeting.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Aviation Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.



Food and Drug Administration Public Consultation

20 March 2024

The ECCP attended the FDA public consultation on the Guidelines for the Classification of Vitamins and Minerals for Food/Dietary Supplements under Processed Food Product Repealing the Provisions for Food in the Office Order No. 22 s. 1991 entitled "Guidelines for the Classification of Vitamins and Minerals as Drug or as Food".

The ECCP expressed its full support for FDA's decision to revise the guidelines determining the limit for vitamins and minerals to be classified as food supplements and called for the immediate implementation of the said circular.

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) meeting with the ECCP Aviation Committee

20 March 2024

Building upon the momentum generated by the recent event, 'Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF): Powering #OnePHAviation,' held on 19 March 2024, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) International Cooperation Officer - Sustainability Santiago Haya-Leiva convened with the ECCP Aviation Committee last 20 March at the ECCP Office in Makati City. During the meeting, EASA shared the initiatives of the Agency in pushing for the EU-ASEAN partnership on sustainable connectivity. With a specific focus on SAF, the group explored strategies, challenges, and opportunities in advancing sustainable air transport connectivity within the context of regional collaboration.

Present at the meeting were Committee Co-Chairpersons Atty. Manolito Manalo, Atty. Marvin Masangkay, and Lourdes Cariño-Angeles; Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines Trade Officer Therese Yosucio; Airbus Head of International Cooperation and Sustainability APAC Hélène Burger and Chief Representative for the Philippines Jussi Hoikka; Consultant to the DOTr Undersecretary for Aviation and Airports Junard Cruz; and Ampersand CEO Barbara Kitane. ECCP Manager for Industry and Government Affairs Katt Baligod as well as Advocacy Officers Chin Nethercott and Mazel Salazar also participated in the session.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Aviation Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.



ECCP Tourism Committee Meeting with the Department of Tourism

21 March 2024

With guest speaker Department of Tourism (DOT) Tourism Development Planning Division Chief Mr. Ramil Basuel, the ECCP Tourism Committee met on 21 March via Zoom to understand the plans and priorities of the Agency in 2024. Mr. Basuel also presented national industry updates, particularly on the aspect of sustainable tourism. Chaired by Atty. Cenelyn Manguilimotan-Dalnay, the group likewise had an exchange on the service charges in the hospitality industry.

To join or inquire regarding the ECCP Tourism Committee, please contact Chin Nethercott at advocacy@eccp.com.



Czech Business Delegation Courtesy Meeting with ECCP

21 March 2024

On 21 March 2024, a Czech Business Delegation had a Courtesy Meeting with the ECCP at the Makati Commerce Tower, for a discussion on the Philippine business landscape as well as economic prospects, among others. The said delegation is composed of representatives from various industries including agriculture, food and beverage, aviation, and water.

At the said meeting, ECCP President Paulo Duarte introduced ECCP and provided an overview of the business environment, while ING Bank Philippines Senior Economist Nicholas Mapa shared his views on the Philippine Economic Outlook, and BDB Law Founding Partner and CEO Atty. Benedicta Du-Baladad delivered a presentation on the Philippine Business/Legal Landscape.



New Members Corner

Corporate Partner



Berthaphil, Inc.

The leader in commercial, industrial, residential, and real estate development in the Clark Freeport. Berthaphil provides the location, facility, infrastructure and incentives which gives our locators a competitive edge.

Premium Members

Dusit Thani

MANILA

Dusit Thani

Dusit Thani Manila is located in Makati City's premier business district. It has 500 guest rooms and suites, and an exclusive lounge for club guests - The Dusit Club. Facilities include two of Asia's best recreational hubs - DFIT Fitness Center and Devarana Spa. There are two gracious ballrooms, Sarika and Mayuree, and 10 well-appointed function rooms. Three specialty restaurants - Benjarong, Umu and The Pantry serve the guests with unparalleled service and excellent gastronomic fare

BDB Law

DU-BALADAD AND ASSOCIATES

BDB Law

Du-Baladad and Associates (BDB Law) is a law firm specializing in taxation and corporate services. It is an exclusive member firm of the WTS Global in the Philippines. WTS Global is a leading global tax practice offering the full range of tax services and is represented in over 100 countries.

AIRBUS

Airbus

Airbus is the market leader in the Philippine civil and parapublic segment. It is the only full-fledged set up of an OEM, providing spares, MRO and technical assistance to its operators in the country.

Regular Members



TÜV SÜD PSB Philippines Inc.

TÜV SÜD started operations in the Philippines in 1997. Through the years, TÜV SÜD PSB Philippines Inc. has certified more than 600 companies in various industries nationwide for different Management System standards. The company has likewise conducted Third Party Inspections such as tanks/pipelines inspection, lifting equipment inspection, conventional NDT, advanced NDT, ASME inspection or certification, and failure analysis for several power plants, oil and gas companies, and manufacturing facilities in the country.



Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric is the global specialist in energy management and automation. With revenues of ~€27 billion in FY2015, our 160,000+ employees serve customers in over 100 countries, helping them to manage their energy and process in ways that are safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable.



EDSA Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts

Nestled at the heart of the Ortigas business and shopping hub is the iconic urban resort and convention hotel, Edsa Shangri-La. A haven for discerning business and leisure travelers, this iconic landmark destination steeped in rich and colorful history boasts of 631 guest rooms and suites overlooking facilities of relaxing resort vibes and lush manicured greens. Amid its sprawling tropical gardens is a wellness sanctuary stage by Manila's only CHI, The Spa. Wellness enthusiasts and athletes can embark in specialized training set in the dynamic, tailored, and modern facilities of our exclusive Health Club.



Henley & Partners

Henley & Partners has been the global leader in residence and citizenship by investment for more than 20 years. We specialize in advising and assisting wealthy individuals and their families with gaining residence and/or citizenship by investment. Each year, hundreds of wealthy individuals and their advisors rely on our expertise and experience in this area. The firm's highly qualified professionals work together as one team in over 40 offices worldwide.



Viventis Search Asia

Viventis Search Asia started as a humble seedling and has grown into a magnificent tree with sturdy roots that have been able to withstand the wind for 21 years by consistently striving for excellence and humility; fruits that represent our accomplishments that have proven our credibility as one of the leading human capital solutions companies in the Philippines as well as the knowledge we have gained over the years; and mighty branches that are always ready and happy to assist clients that require our expertise. We endeavor to advance human capital through technology-driven solutions and compassionate guidance provided by our team of human resource experts.



Payoneer

Payoneer (NASDAQ: PAYO) is the world's go-to partner for digital commerce, everywhere. From borderless payments to boundless growth, Payoneer promises any business, in any market, the technology, connections and confidence to participate and flourish in the new global economy. A universe of opportunities, open to you. www.payoneer.com



Wingbox Aviation Inc.

Wingbox Aviation, our company though lean but mean with sense of pride, have a strong conviction and great commitment for high quality services. Founded in 2014, our team possess principle and virtue toward good values and attitude that can provide services on Technical Consultancy/ Advisory which have balanced expertise in Aircraft delivery and return inspection and documentation, Fleet Technical Management (FTM), and Quality Assurance.



TecSurge

Revolutionizing the digital infrastructure of the process industry is TecSurge!

Esteemed ECCP Cebu member TecSurge brings a new dimension to the innovation landscape. Renowned for its origins with CAXperts GmbH and commitment to quality, TecSurge has evolved into a leading provider of engineering data and software for the process industry.

With an in-depth understanding of the process power and marine industries, as well as detailed knowledge of the engineering systems and work processes, TecSurge redefines industry standards with its remote service delivery. TecSurge further delivers comprehensive services tailored to customer needs, ensuring seamless integration and optimal performance.



Mata Technologies

Here to redefine the visual landscape of commerce in the Philippines is Mata Technologies!

As our esteemed new member, Mata Technologies brings a unique and immersive perspective to the forefront, having carved a niche as the go-to provider for virtual reality maps of tourist destinations in the country.

With an unwavering commitment to enhancing customer experience, Mata Technologies stands poised to transform the way businesses engage with their clients. Specializing in 360° virtual tours for real estate, Mata Technologies opens up new avenues for businesses to showcase their properties, providing potential customers with an immersive preview like never before.



Sollesta-Nielsen Corporation

Driving Environmental Excellence Through Innovative Waste Management Solutions: Sollesta-Nielsen Corporation leads the way in responsible hazardous waste transportation and treatment in the Philippines. With a proven track record of sustainability and expertise since our establishment in 2017, we continue to redefine industry standards for a cleaner, greener future.

Associate Members



Phil Ecology Systems Corp.

Phil. Ecology Systems Corp. (PhilEco) is a major player in the design, construction and operation of integrated sanitary solid waste management and disposal facilities in the Philippines. An "AAA" general engineering and building Contractor licensed by the Philippine Contractor Accreditation Board (PCAB), PhilEco is also engaged in other allied businesses such as construction of buildings, roads and other land developments. An ISO- certified company, PhilEco is the only waste management firm in the country that operates an offshore sanitary landfill.



U-TRAVEL

A one stop-shop IATA Accredited agency established with a solid reputation and equipped with 14 years of extensive experience in the travel and events business. A Destination Management Company that provides a wide range of services specializing in leisure & holiday tours, corporate travel, company outings, incentive trips, cruise vacation and MICE.



DHL Global Forwarding (Philippines), Inc.

DHL Global Forwarding, formerly known as DHL Danzas Air & Ocean, is a division of the DHL Group providing air and ocean freight forwarding services.



Spiderhook

Spiderhook is a B2B market-based corporate services company. We work with intelligent enterprises to protect, create, and innovate their enterprise value and enable them to get smarter, better, faster, and stronger.



ASAP AUTOMAN SERVICE AND PARTS INC

Our company is the biggest dealer of HELI forklift which is the Top 5 in the world and for the lithium battery section, is No.1 in the world!



Travellers International Group

Travellers International Hotel Group, Inc. (the "Company") is a developer of integrated resorts in the Philippines. The Company was awarded one of the first licenses issued by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation ("PAGCOR") in June 2008 to construct and operate integrated leisure and gaming facilities to an international standard with the goal of enhancing tourism in the Philippines.



Remotify Inc

Remotify is an Employer of Record plus (+) solution that enables freedom and security for international small to medium businesses and employees, because we want to make remote outsourcing simple, secure and sustainable for all.



The Farm at San Benito

The Farm at San Benito—a proud member of CG Hospitality, is an eco-luxury, holistic, medical wellness resort located in Lipa City, Batangas. It rests on 52 hectares of lush green environment with a stunning view of the majestic Malarayat mountains, pure fresh air and refreshing life-giving energy radiating around the property.



Offshore Seven Business Outsourcing Inc.

A domestic company that offers BPO Services to foreign businesses



Peak off Grid Solutions

Peak Off Grid is a renewable energy developer and a solar water desalination company focused on the island grids in the Philippines. Peak's Principals collectively have had decades of experience working with multinationals from Europe, Asia, and America. Peak's membership in the ECCP is an effort to connect with those European connections.



AGlobal Care, Inc.

AGLOBAL CARE, INC. is a registered company under the Food and Drug Administration as an importer and distributor of pharmaceutical products, medical supplies, and food supplements in the Philippines. We have been in the industry for over 20 years and specialize in importing from countries such as India, China, Korea, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand, and Turkey.



More Electric Power Corporation

MORE Electric and Power Corporation is the leading electric distribution utility in Iloilo City, Philippines, committed to delivering reliable and efficient energy solutions. With a vision to be the preferred choice, MORE Power prioritizes innovation and customer satisfaction, illuminating homes and businesses while contributing to the city's development. Through responsive service and sustainable practices, MORE Power aims to drive positive change and empower communities.



Impextic Inc.

For Impextic, Inc., logistics is more than just goods transport. As ECCP Cebu's newest member, Impextic Inc. brings a distinctive blend of world-class service and a comprehensive, end-to-end perspective to the table. With a rich history in freight forwarding, Impextic Inc. stands out with its competitive rates that ensure cargo reaches its destination punctually and economically, whether by air, sea, or land.

Associate Members



TechSupport.Ph Inc.

Founded in 2002 as a Local Area Network consulting company, TechSupport has evolved into a premier Information Technology Outsourcing powerhouse. Headquartered in Metro Manila, the company boasts an extensive clientele across various industries including manufacturing, education, construction, forwarding, IT, real estate, and non-profit organizations.

As businesses continue to grow and evolve, so do their information technology requirements. TechSupport recognizes this need and positions itself as a strategic partner, ensuring that investments in information technology translate into tangible returns for organizations. In a landscape where the cost of streamlining operations can sometimes outweigh the benefits, TechSupport takes on the pivotal role of guiding businesses to channel their IT investments effectively, unveiling the true return on investment.



Quest Environmental Services/ Ricerca Inc.

Pests are known to wreak havoc, cause structural damage, and even pose health risks in homes, businesses, and agricultural settings. In this battle against unwelcome visitors, pest control companies like Quest Environmental Services by Ricerca Inc. have emerged as crucial guardians.

With more than 34 years in the industry, Quest Environmental Services employs a diverse range of strategies to effectively combat and manage pest populations. Dedicated to safeguarding properties and promoting healthier environments through integrated, eco-conscious pest management solutions, the company's approach combines cutting-edge technologies, expert knowledge, and a focus on collaboration and education.



CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative

CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative, established at Cagayan De Oro in 1971, is a leading LIFE & NON-LIFE micro-insurance provider in the Philippines licensed by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) & the Insurance Commission (IC). Through the years, CLIMBS leads and strengthens its advocacy in providing insurance protection especially for the grassroots of the country while upholding the cooperative principles as its way of doing business.



Local Government Unit - Iligan City

Iligan City is located in the northern coast of Mindanao facing Iligan Bay, bounded in the north by the province of Misamis Oriental, in the east by the provinces of Bukidnon and Lanao del Sur and in the south by the province of Lanao Del Norte. It is approximately 795 kilometers southeast from Metro Manila. It is the site of Mindanao's electric power source. The city has been classified as a lone district since October 20, 2009, which is now separated from the first district of the province of Lanao del Norte. It is 90 kms. away from Tubod, the capital of the province.

Individual Member



First Community Cooperative

The First Community Cooperative (FICCO) was originally named as Ateneo Credit Union (ACU) and was later on changed to what is now known as First Community Cooperative (FICCO) for (2) reasons: (1) The Ateneo Credit Union was the First Credit Union organized in the Province of Misamis Oriental and the entire Mindanao; and (2) the cooperative has grown from a school credit union, confined within the Ateneo Campus, to a Community Cooperative, open to serve the people of Cagayan de Oro City. It was organized on July 8, 1954 through the inspiration of Rev. Fr. William F. Masterson, SJ. It was organized by fifteen (15) pioneers, most of whom belong to the faculty and personnel of the then Ateneo de Cagayan, now Xavier University. They gave a total share capital of P26.30. Now, FICCO has a total membership of more than 408,000, and has opened 104 offices all over the country.



Sprach Institut Cebu

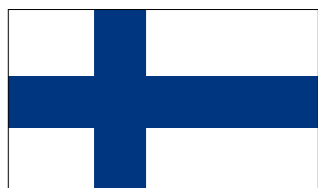
Through language education - namely, its accredited German language courses ranging from A1 to B2 levels - the Sprach Institut-Cebu aims to provide world-class teaching. However, their commitment extends beyond language proficiency by also aiming to cultivate cross-cultural competence and instill an appreciation for German culture, society, and politics. The organization also actively contributes to the community by sponsoring education, providing welfare assistance, and offering guidance through charitable initiatives.



Mr. Aaron Domingo
Senior Adviser at Rothschild & Co



Business Opportunities



A Finnish software solutions company is seeking to establish partnerships and have dialogues with Philippine enterprises to exploring supply chain solutions

A Finnish software solutions company specializing in unified supply chain and retail planning services is seeking to establish partnerships and have dialogues with Philippine enterprises to exploring supply chain solutions.



Portuguese global consulting firm with expertise in Advanced Data Analytics is seeking for partners or clients

A Portugal headquartered global consulting firm with expertise in Advanced Data Analytics and AI is looking for partners and clients for operations improvement and success by using their tailorfit business solutions. They cater to various industries such as but not limited to Energy & Utilities, Telecommunications, Retail & Ecommerce, Transport & Logistics, Consumer Goods, Process Industries & Manufacturing.

If interested in becoming a partner, we would love to talk to you. Please send us an email to catherine.lee@eccp.com or visit www.eccp.com for more information. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

2024 International Trade Fairs

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|--------------|--|--------------|---|-------------|---|
| JAN | <p>IMM COLOGNE Interior Design 14-18 Cologne, Germany</p> <p>ISM COLOGNE Sweet & Snacks 28-31 Cologne, Germany</p> <p>SOURCE HOME & GIFT AT SPRING FAIR Gift & Home NEC, Birmingham 4-7 NEC, Birmingham</p> <p>F.R.EE Travel & Leisure 14-18 Munich, Germany</p> <p>SOURCE FASHION Fashion 18-20 Olympia, London</p> <p>SINGAPORE AIRSHOW Aviation 20-25 Olympia, London</p> | APRIL | <p>ANUGA SELECT JAPAN AND ISM JAPAN Food and Beverages 10-12 Tokyo, Japan</p> <p>ANUGA SELECT CHINA AND SIGEP CHINA Food and Beverages 17-19 Shenzhen, China</p> <p>IFAT BRASIL Environmental Technologies 24-26 Sao Paulo, Brazil</p> <p>FOOD & DRINK EXPO Food & Beverages 29- May 1 NEC, Birmingham</p> <p>IFAT MUNICH Environmental Technologies 13-17 Munich, Germany</p> <p>AGRITECHNICA & HORTI ASIA Agriculture & Horticulture 22-24 Bangkok, Thailand</p> <p>VITAFOODS EUROPE Nutraceuticals 22-24 Geneva, Switzerland</p> <p>THAIFEX Food & Beverage 28-Jun 1 Bangkok, Thailand</p> | JULY | <p>SOURCE FASHION Fashion 14-16 Olympia, London</p> |
| FEB | <p>THAIFEX HOREC ASIA Hotels, restaurants and cafes 6-8 Bangkok, Thailand</p> <p>ANUGA FOODTEC Food and Beverages 19-22 Cologne Germany</p> <p>H+H COLOGNE Handicraft 22-24 Cologne Germany</p> | MAY | <p>ALIMENTEC Hotels, restaurants and cafes 18-21 Bogota, Columbia</p> <p>INTERZUM FORUM ITALY Furniture & Interior Design 6-7 Bergamo, Italy</p> | AUG | <p>GAMESCOM Games & Entertainment 21-25 Cologne, Germany</p> <p>SOURCE HOME & GIFT AT AUTUMN FAIR Gift & Home 1-4 NEC, Birmingham</p> <p>ANUGA HORIZON Food & Beverages 3-5 Cologne, Germany</p> <p>ISM MIDDLE EAST Sweets & Snacks 24-26 Dubai, UAE</p> <p>ANUFOOD INDIA Food & Beverages 28-30 Mumbai, India</p> |
| MARCH | <p>ANUGA SELECT BRAZIL Food and Beverages 9-11 Sao Paulo, Brazil</p> <p>CERAMITEC Food and Beverages 9-12 Munich, Germany</p> | JUNE | <p>HOME & BUILDING EXPO Furniture & Construction 7-9 Muscat, Oman</p> <p>GAMESCOM ASIA Games & Entertainment 17-20 Singapore</p> <p>ELECTRONICA Technologies 12-15 Munich, Germany</p> <p>BAUMA CHINA Construction & Machinery 26-29 Shanghai, China</p> | SEPT | |
| APRIL | | NOV | | | |

For more information, contact us at (632),8845 1324 or events.fmi@eccp.com



Official Representative of



APRIL

E-LEARNING SESSION

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

4 April | 09:00 AM - 04:00 PM | ZOOM

E-LEARNING SESSION

ADVANCED SKILLS TRAINING FOR SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS: BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCES

10 April | 08:30 AM - 12:00 NN | ZOOM

E-LEARNING SESSION

VIRAL TO VICTORIOUS: A MODERN GUIDE TO DIGITAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

12 April | 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

NETWORKING EVENT

CONNECTIONS AND CANAPÉS: LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES IN ECCP

15 April | 06:00 PM - 09:00 M | Don Pacifico Events Place, Cagayan de Oro City

E-LEARNING SESSION

AGILE EXCELLENCE: MASTERING SCRUM FOR DYNAMIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT

15 & 22 April | 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

E-LEARNING SESSION

BOOTCAMP GENAI: BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY USING CHATGPT AND GOOGLE'S GEMINI

16 & 17 April | 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

FREE WEBINAR

IDENTIFY YOUR HIGH POTENTIALS: SUCCESSION PLANNING WITH THE 9-BOX MATRIX

16 April | 02:00 PM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

ECCP LUNCHEON MEETING WITH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MA. CYNTHIA HERNANDEZ

18 April | 11:00 AM - 02:00 PM | Dusit Thani Manila

MELT AND FREEZE: THE SECRETS TO SUSTAINABLE MINDSET CHANGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

18 April | 02:00 PM - 04:00 PM | Makati Commerce Tower

ECCP MINDANAO BUSINESS DIALOGUE

19 April | 01:00 PM - 04:00 PM | ZOOM

E-LEARNING SESSION

BUSINESS AND BYTES: WHEN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MEETS LEADERSHIP

22 April | 09:00 AM - 12:00 NN | ZOOM

E-LEARNING SESSION

FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR BUSINESS: A BLUEPRINT TO CONTINUITY SUCCESS

23 April | 09:00 AM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

2024 JFC CLARK INTERNATIONAL MIXER

23 April | 06:00 PM - 09:00 PM | Clark Marriott Hotel

UNDERSTANDING THE PHILIPPINE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: A BRIEFING ON CUSTOMS CHALLENGES, THE EASE OF PAYING TAXES ACT AND CREATE MORE

24 April | 02:00 PM - 05:00 PM | STI Holdings Center, Makati City

NETWORKING EVENT

ECCP YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING NIGHT

25 April | 06:00 PM - 09:00 PM | Makati/BGC (TBA)

E-LEARNING SESSION

EMPOWERING MSMEs THROUGH DESIGN THINKING

29 April | 09:00 AM - 12:00 NN | ZOOM

FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING SESSION

APPLIED NEUROSCIENCE FOR THE WORKPLACE

30 April | 09:00 AM - 04:00 PM | Makati City (TBA)

NETWORKING EVENT

SUNSET JAZZ: A NETWORKING SOCIALS

30 April | 04:00 PM - 07:00 PM | Malagos Homegrown Cafe, Davao City

FREE WEBINAR

EMPOWERING YOUR FINANCIAL WELLBEING: A DEEP DIVE INTO EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

30 April | 02:00 PM - 05:00 PM | ZOOM

