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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

UPCOMING EVENT

Pioneer incentives eyes for waste-to-energy projects

October 19, 2025 | Sheldeen Joy Talavera | BusinessWorld

REUTERS

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy (DoE) is looking to grant incentives for pioneering waste-to-energy (WTE) projects, including exemptions from the competitive selection process (CSP) and priority dispatch on the spot market.

In a draft circular, the DoE is proposing that pioneer WTE projects be exempt from CSP regardless of capacity. The CSP policy requires distribution utilities to procure power through a transparent and competitive bidding process at a least-cost basis.

Pioneer WTE projects are also under consideration for priority dispatch in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), the trading floor where power distributors procure their supply when their long-term power supply deals are not sufficient to meet their requirements.

Under the proposal, a WTE developer may choose to incentives schemes under either the Renewable Energy Act, which provides sector-specific incentives, or under the CREATE MORE Act (Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy Act), which provides broader and more flexible incentives.

The government is also tasked with ensuring that the pioneer WTE project with off-take arrangements under the Green Energy Auction Program has sufficient feedstock through deals with highly urbanized cities (HUCs), local government units, or other government entities.

The Energy Regulatory Commission will be tasked with formulating the price-setting scheme that will establish the tariff range for electricity generated from WTE facilities.

Meanwhile, the transmission network provider and system operator will have to coordinate with the developer in the course of planning, construction, grid connection, and operational integration.

“The integration of WTE in the power generation mix represents a strategic approach to addressing the dual challenges of growing energy demand and increasing solid waste generation,” the DoE said.

WTE is the process of converting non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity, or fuel using various technologies.

To be qualified as pioneer WTE projects, the facility must be constructed and installed not later than 2027.

Earlier this month, the DoE announced that it will conduct a special auction round in January designed for WTE projects that will source their waste feedstock within Metro Manila and HUCs.

There will also be a succeeding auction round for biomass and WTE technologies by the second quarter of 2026.

The DoE views WTE project development as one of the strategies to address solid waste management while also mitigating floods and providing a supply of “clean energy.”

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2025/10/19/706546/pioneer-incentives-eyed-for-waste-to-energy-projects/

World is shrinking for Philippine exporters

October 19, 2025 | Andrea E. San Juan | BusinessMirror

THE number of Philippine businesses dealing with global trade has continuously dwindled through the years due to inadequate budgets, shifts to the domestic market, and, lately, the uncertainty stemming from protectionist policies such as the Washington-imposed reciprocal tariffs.

"I know that through the years, it's been going down. Because there was a time we were counting like 6,000. About two months ago, it was only about 4,000. So through the years, it's declining," Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport) Vice President Ma. Flordeliza C. Leong told the *BusinessMirror* on the sidelines of the recent United Portusers Confederation of the Philippines Inc.'s 3rd Partners' Forum.

"We know that during the pandemic, for example, a lot closed in Cebu. Many of them," she also told this newspaper.

Data obtained by the *BusinessMirror* from the Department of Trade and Industry-Export Marketing Bureau (DTI-EMB) Director Bianca Pearl R. Sykimte, as processed by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), showed that the country lost 2,261 exporters in just the span of five years.

To illustrate, the country's 6,386 goods exporter headcount in 2020 or during the start of the pandemic plunged to 5,784 exporters in 2021, down by 602 exporters.

Heading to 2022, the Philippines lost 1,214 exporters.

Albeit a smaller marginal decline, this downtrend continued as the country lost 263 exporters in 2023, ending the year with only 4,307 participating in global trade.

In 2024, the country lost 182 exporters as it was left with only 4,125 exporters.

As of August 2025, Leong told this paper that the country's exporters could be at around 4,000.

Hit by tariffs, wages

Leong pointed to tariffs and wages as some of the factors that led some exporters to stop shipping.

"Like what they're saying here in Central Luzon, they're directly hit by tariffs and wages. Those with very small margins, which all exporters I suppose have now *kasi nga* very competitive. *Talagang* cost *agad yung ano*, wages, tariffs, *'yun agad ang* hit," the Philexport official said.

Through the lens of the government, however, DTI-EMB Director Bianca Pearl R. Sykimte listed "a mix of factors" that could be the culprit behind the continuous decline in the number of Philippine exporters.

"Some would have prioritized our growing domestic market, some may have opted to use consolidators instead of directly exporting," the DTI-Export Marketing Bureau official said, further explaining that this move would save exporters the time and effort in terms of compliance and marketing.

On the tough competition being faced by Philippine exporters, Leong explained that the strategy of exporters boils down to how they establish "buyer relationships."

"Now it's very bilateral. You can't generalize it anymore. If they really want to help you in terms of cost, in terms of marketing and everything. That's one strategy that on their own exporters can use," added the Philexport official.

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World is shrinking for Philippine exporters

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She stressed anew the importance of pouring funds into the country's exports sector, which, she pointed out, has been the gap that needs to be filled in, to uplift the country's outbound shippers and help them participate on the global stage.

"But again, immediately, for the government to pour in resources to help exporters. That's still the key because other countries are subsidizing. Even if the term subsidy is prohibited, they are doing. So it's not an even playing field," added Leong.

Exporters per port of origin

Meanwhile, the DTI-Export Marketing Bureau captured an overview of the traffic of exporters per port of origin across the country.

Data obtained by the *BusinessMirror* from the government's export marketing arm showed that ports nationwide have lost 2,171 exporters across several ports in the country from 2021 to 2024.

In 2021, the country had 9,331 exporters. Of these, 3,476 shipped their goods through the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA); 2,371 through the Manila International Container Port; 713 through the Clark Air Base; 504 through Cebu City and 471 through Cebu International Airport. These are only the top five ports of origin.

The dataset provided by DTI-EMB showed that the country's ports saw a lower number of exporter traffic in 2022, losing 1,517 exporters, ending the year with only 7,814.

In 2023, trade thoroughfares continued to see less activity as 478 stopped exporting, ending the year with only 7,336 exporters.

Heading to 2024, data indicated that the country lost 176 exporters across ports, ending the year with only 7,160 outbound shippers.

Across the five ports which saw the most trade activity in the four-year timeframe, it is worth pointing out that NAIA lost 1,535 exporters and Cebu International Airport saw 386 less exporters.

Of the 7,160 exporters recorded last year, 2,372 are stationed at the Manila International Container Port; 1,941 at the NAIA; 701 at the Clark Air Base; 442 in Cebu City and 386 at the Cebu International Airport.

In a story published by the *BusinessMirror* in December 2023, Sykimte underscored that nearly 4,000 exporters have stopped shipping their products in the last five years or from 2019 to 2023.

The DTI-EMB official said the number of exporters in 2022 is just roughly half of the figure in 2018.

Philexport President Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. told this newspaper that most of these exporters are in the food sector and they stopped because "there is a lack of supply."

Among the old-time exporters, he said a lot of these exporters stopped due to geopolitical reasons, cost of doing business and the tough business environment.

"The transportation, shipping…and many stopped because of the LGU pass-through fees. Also, the costs at the pier were becoming too high," the Philexport chief said, partly in Filipino.

Sykimte also noted that the number of products that the country exported "more or less stagnated" while the Philippines' competitors continued to "diversify" both their products and their markets.

Diversification strategy not new

As Philippine exporters are currently exploring other markets amid their attempt to veer away from countries imposing steeper tariffs, Philexport Vice President Ma. Flordeliza C. Leong underscored that "Diversification has been the strategy for the longest time." *[Cont. page 4]*

World is shrinking for Philippine exporters

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"It's not new," Leong also pointed out.

"It's in the Philippine Export Development Plan. But it is not easy, especially for small exporters, because you need money for product development, for market intelligence, for marketing, for promotion. You need money, which they don't have," added the industry leader.

At a Senate hearing on October 13, Senator Imee Marcos pressed Trade officials, including Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina A. Roque, on what are the immediate solutions that the agency will roll out as Washington is becoming more protectionist, hence prompting Philippine exporters to increase their prices on goods bound for the United States.

"That market access takes time to develop, it's not gonna happen overnight. In the meantime, exporters are reeling. You can see that many are already losing their jobs. What's to be done about that?" the lawmaker said, partly in Filipino. She noted that there are no subsidies in place to assist affected exporters.

To which, Roque quickly replied: "We are strengthening also the local market; this is also what's attractive to foreign investments that are coming in, aside from strengthening the foreign trade service corps in the DTI offices all over the world."

Senator Marcos emphasized that market development is a "medium- to long-term process," further pressing the trade officials: "What is the immediate solution because the problem is really urgent as thousands are losing their jobs?"

Roque, however, pointed out that Philippine exporters already know what to do despite the headwinds.

"They're used to doing exports, so we just have to find other markets like Europe," Roque said.

She also noted that for long-time exporters, "It's actually easy for you to penetrate other markets."

The senator described the budget of the country's Trade department as "business as usual," lamenting the seeming nonchalance.

"*Konting-konti lang ang pinagkaiba nung* last year *at ngayon. Ano ang gagawin natin? Ang problema ngayon nasaan 'yung plano kapag nangyari ito* [There's hardly any difference between last year and this year. The problem is, where's the plan when the worst happens]?" Marcos said. *(See: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/10/13/no-ready-help-for-phl-exporters-to-america/)*

Image credits: Skypixel | Dreamstime.com, Ed Davad

Source: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/10/19/world-is-shrinking-for-philippine-exporters/

EU trade deal urgency: ECCP warns of 2027 export crisis

October 19, 2025 | Dexter Barro II | Manila Bulletin

The European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) is pushing the government to accelerate negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU) as it warns of "severe" impact on its key exports if no deal is reached by the end of 2027.

In its 2025 Advocacy Papers, the ECCP said there is a clear urgency to finalize the FTA with the scheduled expiration of the Philippines' utilization of the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in December 2027.

"Concluding the agreement on time would safeguard the benefits of GSP+ while amplifying them through expanded trade, new investments, and stronger integration into global supply chains," the report read.

"Delay, by contrast, would risk billions in exports and squander a unique opportunity," it added.

The Philippines is one of only eight countries that are benefitting from the GSP+ arrangement, which allows it to export 6,274 products to the EU without any tariffs. *[Cont. page 5]*

EU trade deal urgency: ECCP warns of 2027 export crisis

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In exchange, the country must uphold international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environmental protection and climate change, and good governance.

In 2024, the GSP+ allowed approximately $2.57 billion worth of Philippine exports to enter the EU, covering more than a quarter of the country's total exports.

The utilization rate last year reached 80 percent, the highest on record. The top beneficiaries of the scheme are coconut oil, tuna, and pineapples, according to the ECCP.

"Without a new trade framework, these benefits could vanish and exporters would face higher tariffs under WTO rules," the report read.

If there is no FTA in place, the ECCP said local exporters will lose preferential access to the EU's 450-million-strong consumer market.

It would likewise reduce competitiveness among key sectors such as agri-food, garments, and tuna with the advent of tariff increases.

"The case for an EU-PH FTA has never been clearer. It is not only a bridge from a temporary preference scheme to a permanent partnership but also a catalyst for growth, competitiveness, and sustainability," the ECCP said.

The chamber noted that, unlike the GSP+, which is temporary and dependent on compliance for continued eligibility, the FTA offers a more permanent and reciprocal framework that provides predictability for both businesses and governments.

Citing a study by the International Trade Center (ITC)., the ECCP expects the FTA to unlock $8.3 billion in untapped Philippine export potential to the EU.

The ECCP also expects the FTA to boost the EU's foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Philippines, which only stood at €14.2 billion in 2023 or just around four percent of the bloc's total investments in Southeast Asia.

"A strong FTA, with clearer rules and stronger investor protections, could help attract higher-quality European investment into Philippine manufacturing, infrastructure, energy, and services," it said.

As a bilateral foreign chamber that promotes European interests in the Philippines and vice versa, the ECCP said European businesses are also pushing for more urgent FTA negotiations.

In its 2024 Business Sentiment Survey of nearly 200 firms, 85 percent of respondents said that the entry into force of the FTA is of significant importance for their business strategies.

"This widespread support indicates that businesses see the FTA as the primary means to enhance market access, lower trade barriers, and significantly improve the overall business climate," the report read.

EU Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Santoro said last week that he is optimistic that the FTA could enter into force before the expiration of the GSP+ by the end of 2027, given the current pace of negotiations.

Since resuming talks in October last year, the EU and the Philippines have now completed three rounds of FTA negotiations.

The fourth round is set to begin this week in Cebu, held in solidarity with those affected by the recent earthquake.

For the part of the EU, the ECCP said securing an FTA with the Philippines would ensure its 27 member states another market to ensure the resiliency of their supply chains.

The chamber said the EU can also take advantage of the country's fast-growing economy, supported by a population of over 112 million.

Last year, Philippine exports to the EU amounted to $8.1 billion, while imports from the EU reached $7.5 billion. Total trade between both parties stood at $15.5 billion.

Philippine exports to the EU were led by electronics, followed by coconut oil, machinery, and preserved tuna. On the import side, the Philippines sourced aircraft, machinery, pharmaceuticals, pork, and dairy products from Europe.

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2025/10/20/eu-trade-deal-urgency-eccp-warns-of-2027-export-crisis

BoP surplus narrows to $82 million in Sept.

October 21, 2025 | Katherine K. Chan | BusinessWorld

An employee holds US dollar bank notes at a money changer in Jakarta, Indonesia, April 9, 2025. — REUTERS/WILLY KURNIAWAN

THE PHILIPPINES' balance of payments (BoP) surplus sharply narrowed year on year in September, the central bank reported on Monday.

The country's BoP position was at a $82-million surplus in September, shrinking from the $3.526-billion surfeit in the same month a year ago, preliminary Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) data showed.

This was also narrower than the $359-million surplus seen in August and marked the second straight month that the Philippine external position yielded a surfeit.

"The BoP surplus reflected the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' net income from its investments abroad and National Government's (NG) net foreign currency deposits with the BSP," the central bank said in a statement.

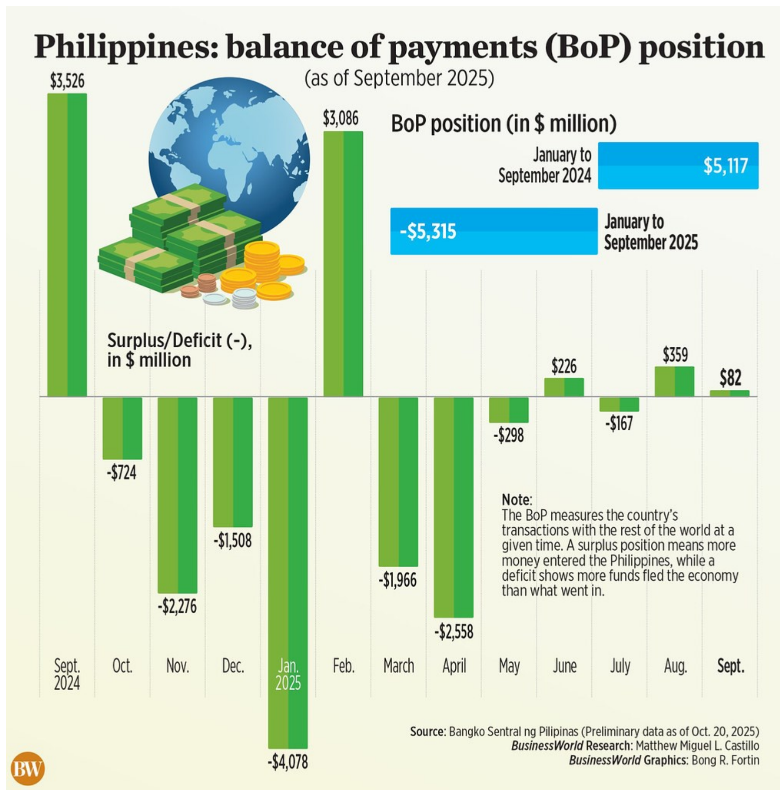
BoP refers to the country's economic transactions with other nations. A surplus indicates more funds entered the country, while a deficit shows that the country spent more than it received.

Last month's surplus helped narrow the country's end-September BoP deficit to $5.315 billion. However, this was a reversal from the $5.117-billion surplus posted in the same period last year.

"Preliminary data indicate that the year-to-date BoP deficit was largely due to the continued trade in goods deficit," the BSP said.

"This was partly offset by the sustained net inflows from personal remittances from overseas Filipinos, trade in services, foreign direct and portfolio investments, and foreign borrowings by the NG."

The country's trade gap, or the difference between its exports and imports, was at $32.38 billion in the first eight months of the year, the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed. This was narrower than the $34.33-billion deficit in the comparable year-ago period.



The Philippines' trade-in-goods balance has been in deficit for over a decade or since the $64.95-million surplus recorded in May 2015.

"September's BoP surplus was likely bolstered by net receipts in services trade, overseas Filipino remittance inflows, and net foreign equity investments that, combined, overshadowed trade-in-goods deficit and net foreign bond outflows. This led the third-quarter BoP to be in a surplus position," Angelo B. Taningco, research head and chief economist at Security Bank Corp., said in an e-mail.

BSP data showed that the country recorded a $274-million surplus in the July-September period. This was smaller than the $3.676-billion surfeit in the same quarter last year.

Mr. Taningco said they expect another surplus this quarter, which would help trim the end-2025 BoP deficit to $4.5 billion.

The BSP expects the overall BoP position to end at a $6.9-billion deficit this year or -1.4% of gross domestic product.

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BoP surplus narrows to $82 million in Sept.
[Cont. from page 6]

"The smaller BoP surplus reflects fewer one-off inflows and a still-wide trade gap, but the external position remains manageable with steady remittances, strong services exports, and solid reserves," Robert Dan J. Roces, economist at SM Investments Corp., said in a Viber message.

"As global rates ease and regional demand recovers, investment inflows may return and support liquidity and credit conditions, which should help firms with deep local roots and diverse sources of growth."

RESERVES

The BSP said the country's BoP position mirrored the increase in its gross international reserves (GIR) to $109.1 billion at end-September from $107.1 billion as of August.

"The level of GIR remains an adequate external liquidity buffer, equivalent to 7.3 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and primary income," it said. This is well above the three-month standard.

"Moreover, it covers about 3.8 times the country's short-term external debt based on residual maturity."

This ensures that the country has ample foreign exchange to meet its financing needs, such as import and debt payments, the central bank said.

The country's gross reserves are made up of foreign-denominated securities, foreign exchange, and other assets such as gold. Aside from financing its external obligations, these are used by the central bank to help stabilize the peso and also serve as a buffer against global economic disruptions.

The BSP expects dollar reserves to settle at $105 billion by end-2025.

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2025/10/21/706813/bop-surplus-narrows-to-82-million-in-sept/

DBM Tightens Rules vs Govt Bidding via Ownership Reveal
October 21, 2025 | Ruelle Castro | Malaya Business Insight


Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman

Dummy bidding schemes in government projects will not pass the features of the New Government Procurement Act (NGPA or RA12009) signed last year, the Department of Budget and Management said yesterday.

In a statement, Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman particularly cited the provision for mandatory disclosure of beneficial ownership information—a requirement for companies participating in public procurement to reveal the identities of those who actually own, control, or have significant influence over them.

"The disclosure of beneficial ownership information is provided under Sections 81 and 82 of Republic Act No. 12009, or the NGPA, signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in July 2024," she said.

"The disclosure of beneficial ownership is a powerful feature of the new law because it ensures that conflicts of interest in public procurement are avoided. We are closing the doors on corruption and collusion in bidding for government projects. Under the NGPA, the old tricks of palit-pangalan, palit-ulo, at dummy company owners will no longer work," Pangandaman added.

Pangandaman said the disclosure of beneficial ownership will strengthen integrity, fair competition, and complete transparency in the public procurement process.

The provision is crucial in addressing what study conducted by the Government Procurement Policy Board–Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) revealed about most bidders in public procurement sharing common owners.

"Based on a 2023 TSO survey, we found out that 65.8 percent of bidders have common owners, based on a random sampling of 180 procuring entities. Meanwhile, we found out that 71.6 percent of bidders were related to government officials. With the disclosure of beneficial ownership in place, we can deter unfair competition in public contracts and improve our services to benefit our citizens, GPPB-TSO Officer-in-Charge Maria Dionesia Rivera-Guillermo.
[Cont. page 8]

DBM Tightens Rules vs Govt Bidding via Ownership Reveal

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Pangandaman said that in line with this provision of the NGPA, the beneficial ownership information is now among the required eligibility documents that must be submitted to the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) of the Procurement Service–DBM (PS-DBM) to obtain a PhilGEPS Platinum registration, which is mandatory for all bidders participating in public procurement.

“This requirement is consistent with Section 20.2.9.1(b) of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the NGPA, which was approved by the GPPB, chaired by Secretary Pangandaman, on February 4, 2025,” she said.

“As of now, out of 12,769 PhilGEPS Platinum-registered corporations for this year, only 6,766 have submitted their beneficial ownership documents to PhilGEPS. The non-submission of this document automatically suspends their Platinum registration, which is the only eligibility document required from bidders. This ensures that only bidders with declared beneficial owners can participate in government bidding—and those beneficial owners must have no conflict of interest with the procuring entity or with other participating bidders,”PS-DBM Executive Director Genmaries Entredicho-Caong said.

The GPPB, through PS-DBM PhilGEPS, with partners such as the World Bank and Open Ownership, is establishing a public online beneficial ownership registry of bidders and an analytical tool prototype to help procuring entities identify red flags and prevent irregularities.

“Beyond preventing conflicts of interest and fraud, publishing information about bidders, merchants, and contractors will enhance oversight and accountability, empowering civil society and the public to take part in monitoring government procurement,” Pangandaman said.

“The NGPA upholds transparency, accountability, and strengthened public participation—principles actively championed by the DBM under the Philippine Open Government Partnership,” she added.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/business/corporate/dbm-tightens-rules-vs-govt-bidding-via-ownership-reveal/

Motorists can now use one RFID for all Luzon expressways

October 21, 2025 | Jean Mangaluz - Philstar.com

MANILA, Philippines — Motorists traveling across Luzon’s expressways will no longer need to maintain multiple radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, following the launch of the government’s “One RFID, All Tollways” system.

On Tuesday, October 21, the Department of Transportation and service providers Autosweep and Easytrip launched a system that allows the use of any of the two RFID tag on tollways.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. led the lauch ceremony in Laguna, together with San Miguel Corp. CEO Ramon Ang and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. CEO Manny Pangilinan. Ang’s firm owns and operates the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), while Pangilinan’s company owns the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

“Reduce unnecessary stress. Reduce unnecessary delays,” Marcos ordered during his speech.

(From left to right) Acting Transport Secretary Giovanni Lopez, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., d Metro Pacific Investments Corporation CEO Manny Pangilinan and San Miguel Corporation CEO Ramon Ang at the launch of the “One RFID, All Tollways” system in Laguna on October 21, 2025.

RTV Malacañang / Facebook

The president said the unified system was made possible by years of consultation among the the DOTr, Toll Regulatory Board and private concessionarires.

From two tags to one. Prior to the unified system, the Autosweep RFID is needed for the Skyway, SLEX, NAIAX, STAR Tollway, MCX and TPLEX.

EasyTrip, meanwhile, is used for NLEX, SCTEX, CAVITEX, and CALAX.

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Motorists can now use one RFID for all Luzon expressways

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How to avail of a unified RFID

Using the unified system is free and optional. Motorists can take just a few steps:

- Register online through the websites of Autosweep or Easytrip. QR codes leading to their registration pages will also be available on-site and on official social media pages.
- Choose your preferred provider. If you already have both tags, remove the one you will no longer use — preferably at a service center. If you have none, installation can be done at partner service centers.
- Start using your unified RFID. Once linked, your account will be valid across all Luzon expressways.

Physical registration will also be available at select RFID service centers and toll plazas.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/10/21/2481470/motorists-can-now-use-one-rfid-all-luzon-expressways

UPCOMING EVENT

The Korean Chamber of Commerce Philippines (KCCP) invites **interested sponsors (Table or Raffle Sponsors)** to join our **Christmas Party on November 24, 2025, at the Makati Sports Club**. This festive event will bring together Korean and Filipino business leaders to celebrate the yuletide season. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the following:

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