



Philippine Chamber of
Commerce and Industry
The Voice of Business

PRESS RELEASE

18 June 2025

Converge, PCCI, DTI move to 'tech-enable' MSMEs Launch nationwide hackathon for students, small biz owners

If there's one lesson that was learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that digitalization is not just the buoy to keep micro and small businesses afloat in times of calamities- it's the entire ship that will save businesses and keep them moving forward amid adversities.

Data from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) show that there are a total of 1,246,373 business enterprises operating in the country in 2023. Of these, 99.63% are MSMEs.

"Given their immense contribution to the economy, including local employment, small and micro businesses need to be at the forefront of digitalization," PCCI President Consul Enunina Mangio said.

And this is why PCCI, the Philippines' largest business group, is taking a leap to modernize MSMEs in small but tangible ways.

Leading fiber broadband and technology solutions provider Converge ICT Solutions Inc. has officially lent a hand to this cause, and, together with the PCCI and DTI, are moving as one to boost the country's digital competitiveness. The goal is for the country to ride the momentum of digitalization that has propelled the growth of advanced Southeast Asian economies like Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia.

["Digitalization is embedded in our long-term strategy in assisting MSMEs achieve their full potential, hence their inclusion in our Five-Point Agenda for MSMEs. By adopting e-commerce, online payment systems, and digital marketing strategies, MSMEs can extend cross-border trade opportunities and support customer engagement. This can lead to substantial efficiency gains, enhanced decision-making, and the development of innovative products and services," noted DTI Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque.

Converge will be mounting a 24-hour hackathon called Byte Forward, that will run alongside PCCI's regional business conferences, to be held in North Luzon, Visayas, National Capital Region, Mindanao, and South Luzon.

"We want to maximize the use of technology in every area where business owners stand to benefit. In the hackathon, we will not just concentrate on solving real-life problems of business owners but crucially, we will tap students that have the technological know-how to solve these problems and

put them in the same room,” said Converge CEO Dennis Anthony Uy, who was also elected as the PCCI’s Chairman for the Philippine Business Conference and Expo for 2025.

PCCI’s local chambers of commerce, majority of which are comprised of MSMEs, and Converge will come up with solutions addressing problem statements stemming from actual pain points experienced in the course of business, then ten teams of third and fourth year college students from the areas will be put to the test to come up with the best solution.

“The hackathon is certainly a welcome move for MSMEs particularly as it will come up with viable and practical technology solutions that meet their needs and can help them move up the value chain. We are happy that Converge, through the efforts of our PBC Chair Dennis Uy, is making this happen,” Mangio added.

Each leg of the hackathon will see the one winning team take home P 50,000. The winners of the Regional Hackathons will go head to head during a culminating hackathon that will happen at the PCCI’s 51st Philippine Business Conference and Expo in October 20-22 at the SMX Convention Center in Manila with prizes of up to 500,000.

“Linking up the private sector and the academe has always been an advocacy of PCCI but where we can bring value is injecting this focus on innovation, as a way of encouraging these businesses to look to emerging technologies to future-proof their business,” noted Uy.

The PCCI North Luzon Business conference is set to kick off in Bataan from June 19-20, 2025. The two-day event will also feature a trade fair exhibit, and the conference itself will gather the country’s most prominent voices in government, academe, and industry with the theme “Northern Philippines: Agile, Innovative. Soaring.”