Briefing Workshop and Stakeholder Consultation on the DOE Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) and Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ)

9-10 December 2026 | Clark, Pampanga, Philippines

I. Context

The Philippines is at the forefront of the energy transition in the region, committing to increase the renewable energy share in its generation mix to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040[1] and more than 50% by 2050. Financing the energy transition at the pace and scale required demands more than policy commitments. Local Government Units (LGUs) play a central role in all RE projects, as facilitators and local drivers of change. RE projects offer a wide range of financial, social and environmental benefits to local environment such as increased local revenues, growth, job creation, as well as enhanced energy security and reliability and local infrastructure development.

These RE project financing require bankable projects, de-risked investment environments, and institutional frameworks that give private capital the confidence to deploy. The success of the country's ambitious national financing policy frameworks therefore rests with strengthened cooperation with provincial, city, and municipal governments.

It is for that reason that ESCAP, in conjunction with the DOE (Department of Energy) and in cooperation with LGUs, convened the CREZ workshop in December 2025. Participants stressed the need for stronger integration of local permitting processes into the EVOSS system, which would enable finance for RE projects at full capacity. These efforts built on earlier CREZ consultations with the provinces of Cavite and Batangas in September 2025, which provided critical ground-level insights into local constraints, financing opportunities, and stakeholder coordination needs for the initial stage of the project and its mapping.

A discovery from the 2025 engagements in the Philippines is that local government units still face permitting challenges due to limited manpower, technical capacity, and resources, which slow the development of renewable energy projects. This type of challenges in local permitting erodes investor confidence and directly impair the bankability of RE projects. And while permitting is happening, it is still slower than developer interest, which hinders the CREZ efforts.

Platforms like the **Energy Virtual One Stop Shop (EVOSS)** were built to speed this process up and solve coordination problems that still require human coordination to function. EVOSS is the operational digital permitting tool which can reduce transaction costs for RE developers and improve project bankability. Yet EVOSS' potential remains largely underutilized, as highlighted in the December 2025 workshop. The **Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ) initiative**,

[1] ESCAP, *Chapter 2: Financing the Energy Transition in Asia and the Pacific. "A Call to Action: Developing Sustainable Capital Markets, Financing Energy Transitions, and Building Project Pipelines." Financing for Development Series* No.6, 2025

grounded in the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (EPIRA), the Renewable Energy Act of 2008, and Department Circular No. 2018-09-0027, is one of the Philippines' most powerful tools to address this financing gap. It identifies high-potential renewable energy zones and integrates them into national transmission planning.[2] The initiative builds on existing CREZ mapping provided by USAID[3] in collaboration with NREL, within the "Ready for Renewables" report.

This upcoming briefing session in Pampanga co-hosted by the United Nations ESCAP and the DOE will gather local government units, development partners, and the private sector to brief the participants about the socioeconomic benefits of EVOSS and CREZ for their daily work and for their locality. The event will be hosting all LGUs in Pampanga and possibly other provinces in Northern Luzon as well as DHSUD, GIZ, Bureau of Fire Protection, and other interested parties.

Its main goal is to equip LGU participants with the tools to reduce permitting bottlenecks and reiterate the CREZ framework's efficiency as a planning and financing tool. Participants will hear first-hand from DOE and technical experts on EVOSS and CREZ, see how renewable energy zones were delivered elsewhere, and then test the draft CREZ Handbook in roundtable consultations organized by stakeholder group. The roundtables will gather the evidence the Handbook needs: the actual sequence and duration of permits for recent projects, the points where the process stalls, local ordinances and agreements already in use, and LGUs and developers willing to be written up as case studies. These inputs will shape the CREZ Handbook in 2026, to be disseminated to other regions in the country.

II. Objectives

1. **Brief LGUs on how to better align their permitting systems with EVOSS, and how LGU permitting and revenue decisions affect whether RE projects in CREZ are financed.**
   - Build awareness on the benefits of EVOSS in accelerating project timelines and improving investor confidence in RE projects
   - Inform on the potential of CREZ as a leading subnational policy and its potential for growth for the region

2. **Explain the roles and benefits of LGUs** as hosts of RE projects, covering land-use planning, host community benefit streams, and permitting obligations under national frameworks

3. **Generate concrete inputs** to inform the development of a practical **CREZ Handbook** for adoption through the Local Government Academy. Topics may include agreed processes, data, and coordination mechanisms with the participants, as well as case studies, actual permit timelines and examples of local ordinances and agreements already in use

[2] USAID, NRL, DOE, *Ready for Renewables: Grid Planning and Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ) in the Philippines*, 2020
[3] *ibid*

4. **DOE and the UN to better understand from LGUs** the persisting challenges that inhibit the integration to EVOSS and CREZ

III. Program

Master of Ceremonies (MC): DOE

Moderator: ESCAP

Time	Agenda
	Day 1 - December 9
09:00-09:30	**Welcome and Opening Remarks** Opening – LGU official (5 mins) Pampanga Provincial Government Representative Opening – DOE official (5 mins) Director Michael Sinocruz Opening – UN Resident Coordinator (5 mins) Mr. Arnaud Peral (tentative) **Scene Setting** **Regional overview of the energy transition financing gap and the role of Renewable Energy zones** · *15 mins* *Mr. Stephen Tan, ESCAP* ESCAP will set the regional context on the scale of investment needed in energy and grids across Asia and the Pacific and why so little of it reaches projects on the ground. The presentation will also take a look at demand from AI and digital investment.
9:30 – 10:15 (60 mins)	**Session 1: Briefing on EVOSS: Orientation, Implementation, and Practical Guidance(DOE) (60 mins)** • Recap of Outcomes of the DOE-ESCAP work in 2025 • Overview of the EVOSS framework, including its role in streamlining permitting processes, improving project timelines, and strengthening inter-agency coordination • Current energy project pipeline and investment potential in Pampanga and Northern Luzon, and the relevance of EVOSS in facilitating project developmentEVOSS implementation guidance, including the

	application process, requirements, and key considerations for project proponents • Presentation of the EVOSS How-to Guide, including practical guidance on navigating the system Open discussion and Q&A to address specific questions and implementation concerns of participants
10:15 – 10:45	**Coffee break – 30 mins** *Time allocated for photos*
10:45 – 12:00	**Session 2: From Global Context to the Draft CREZ Handbook (ESCAP)** *Prof. Penelope Crossley, ESCAP Consultant (online)* **A 5-year roadmap through international experience** · *20 mins* A story-based, "eye-witness" account of how large-scale renewable energy zones were delivered, drawing on Texas' CREZ (ERCOT), the New South Wales Renewable Energy Zones and one or two other cases, told through: • What local governments did • How financing was unlocked • How transmission planning was sequenced with permitting **The draft CREZ Handbook outline** · 20 *mins* Moving directly from the international cases, the speaker will present the draft outline of the Handbook, what it is meant to do, and the chapters participants will be asked to test in the roundtables. **Q&A** · *35 mins* moderated by ESCAP
12:00-13:00 (60 mins)	**Lunch Break**
13:00-15:30 (150 mins)	**Session 3: Roundtable consultations on the draft Handbook (ESCAP)** **After a detailed introduction of the session objectives, outcomes and format,** this interactive session is designed to encourage direct and honest feedback on the Handbook, peer learning on EVOSS use and CREZ. Participants will break into roundtables organized by stakeholder groups. Each group works on the three or four Handbook chapters most relevant to its work, using a one-page worksheet per chapter. **<u>Tentative roundtable groups (TBC)</u>**

	• *Group A1* – City and municipal LGUs (front-line permits: mayor's permit, locational clearance, building permit, BFP fire safety evaluation clearance, sanggunian endorsements and barangay clearances) • *Group A2* – Provincial governments and the Regional Development Councils • *Group B* – National and regional agencies, including DHSUD, BFP, the LGA, NGCP/TransCo and, DENR, NCIP and electric cooperatives • *Group C*- Private sector and project developers **<u>Tentative guiding questions</u>:** *Common to all groups:* • For a renewable project in your area, which approvals sit on EVOSS today, which still run on paper, and in what order do applicants actually obtain them? • At which step, in which office and at what stage does the process stall, and how long does each step take in practice? • Which of the draft tools in the Handbook would you use or not, and what is missing? *Groups A1 and A2 (LGUs):* • What does the LGU currently receive from a renewable project (ER 1-94 benefits, local business tax, real property tax, host community arrangements), how predictable is that revenue, and what would a model ordinance or memorandum of agreement need to contain? • How do the CLUP and the provincial development plan treat renewable projects, and would a zone designation change anything in them? • What staffing and technical capacity does the LGU actually have for these permits? *Group B (agencies):* • How does CREZ designation connect to the Transmission Development Plan and NGCP's connection process? • What does each agency regard as its own role in LGU permitting, and what does it believe belongs to others? • Which coordination failures recur between EVOSS and the local approvals? *Group C (developers):* • What were the actual sequence, duration and cost of permits for a recent project in Luzon, from service contract through EVOSS and the LGU clearances to connection? • What would make a zone bankable rather than merely designated (transmission commitment, dispatch and curtailment treatment, tenure security)? • What information would you want from an LGU before committing?

	Format: 1°) Briefing on the format of the breakout discussions by ESCAP (10 mins) 2°) Breakout discussions (90 mins) with a coffee break; the last 20 minutes are reserved for issues not covered by the assigned chapters, using the insight board as a parking lot 3°) Rapporteurs consolidate the main messages of each group on the common template and report back to plenary (20 mins) *Materials: one-page chapter worksheets and the rapporteur template, to be prepared by the ESCAP CREZ Consultant once the chapter outline is settled.*
15:30-15:45	**Coffee Break (15 mins)**
15:45-16:30 (45 mins)	**Closing session: From Learning to Action** 1. Moderated discussion by ESCAP (30 mins) • Synthesis of key insights and recommendations from the four roundtables, drawing on the rapporteur templates • Participatory discussion on how these insights can inform improvements to the future CREZ/LGU Handbook 2. Closing remarks by selected **DOE Representative** (10 mins) 3. Closing remarks by ESCAP Representative **Ms. Suba Sivakumaran**, Chief of Financing for Development Section, Macroecomonic Policy and Financing for Development Division, ESCAP 4. Survey (5 mins)
Day 2 - December 10 Private Work Session ESCAP-DOE	
09:00-09:15	**Recap of Day 1 by DOE or ESCAP (15 mins)**
09:15-11:45	**Main Session: Deep-Dive Working Session** A closed, technical working session between DOE and ESCAP aimed at translating Day 1 insights into concrete next steps. The ESCAP CREZ Consultant will join online from 08:45 for the chapter-by-chapter discussion. The rapporteur sheets will be scanned and sent to the consultant on the evening of Day 1. **To discuss:** • What should the CREZ LGU Handbook include to be most practical and useful for LGUs • Which changes to the Handbook outline are needed, chapter by chapter, based on the roundtable feedback

	• How can this workshop model be replicated effectively in other provinces: objectives, scope and expected outcomes of future workshops • Validation process for the full draft and its adoption and rollout through the Local Government Academy
	Coffee break will be served during the session.
11:45-12:00	**Closing of the working session and agreements on next steps (15 mins)**
12:00 onwards	**Lunch**

Annex.

List of potential participants:

- City governments
- Municipal governments
- Provincial governments,
- Neighbor LGUs to Pampanga
- Region I RDC
- Region II RDC
- Regional Development Council (RDC)
- Bureau of Fire Protection
- DHSUD
- Local Government Academy
- Private Sector
- NGCP/ Transco
- DENR regional office (to be invited)
- NCIP regional office (to be invited)
- Electric cooperatives (to be invited)