

American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative

Building sustainable institutions and societies that deliver justice, foster economic opportunity and ensure respect for human dignity

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May 26, 2015

Atty. Michael Ocampo, Court Attorney VI
Office of the Chief Justice
Supreme Court of the Philippines
Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila

Dear Atty. Ocampo

The American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (Philippine representative office) is happy to confirm that the court automation project known as eCourt has long moved past the pilot stage, and is currently operational in 73 trial court branches in the court stations of Quezon City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Angeles City. Last October 22, 2013 the Supreme Court *en banc* had issued a Resolution (docketed as A.M. No. 13-10-08-SC) authorizing the roll-out of eCourt in several other court stations. Over the next twelve months, eCourt is projected to be operational as well in Cebu City, Davao City, Tacloban City, Pasig City, and the City of Manila. It is also expected that in the coming months, formal approval will be secured for the expansion of the eCourt project to include the automation of the court management systems of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the Court of Tax Appeals, and the Sandiganbayan.

eCourt features several automation tools designed to increase productivity through the automation of manual processes, and promote transparency and increased confidence in the judicial process. These tools include:

- *Electronic docketing* – Newly-filed cases are now docketed by the courts through eCourt. The system is designed to accommodate electronic filing of cases once such filing is authorized under the Rules of Court.
- *Electronic raffle* – Newly-filed cases are assigned to their handling branch immediately upon filing, through an electronic raffle system based on an algorithm that prizes randomness.
- *Electronic computation of court fees* – eCourt automates the computation of filing fees to be paid by the parties.
- *Case classification* – eCourt categorizes cases according to case type (civil, criminal, etc.) and case nature, facilitating statistical collation and analysis. Cases handled by specialized trial courts such as Special Commercial Courts and Family Courts are duly tagged, allowing for the easier monitoring of the performance of these courts.
- *Case documents* – eCourt allows for the recording of incoming and outgoing case documents (including court orders) and for the uploading of electronic copies of said documents.
- *Case incidents* – eCourt generates an electronic timeline and calendar that records key incidents and hearings in the lifetime of a case.

- *Documents templates* – eCourt retains templates of commonly-issued court orders and forms, automatically generating case captions and parties in these templates based on the case database.
- *Automated hearings* – As part of the eCourt project, courtrooms have been outfitted with computers and printers that allow for the instantaneous printing and service of court orders issued in open court, dispensing with the need of mailing these orders.
- *Electronic back-up of database* – All case data recorded or uploaded onto the eCourt system is backed-up on a daily basis, allowing for immediate retrieval of case information in case of
- *Electronic copies of judgments* – eCourt records the promulgation of judgments by trial courts and allows for the uploading of electronic copies of these decisions onto the server.

We have also attached to this letter of confirmation the following documents that attest to the full operation of the eCourt project:

1. System Requirements Specifications for eCourt version 1.0
2. Release Notes for eCourt versions 1.1.4 and 1.1.6
3. Success Story on eCourt launch
4. Success Story on Automated Hearings
5. Supreme Court *en banc* Resolution dated October 22, 2013 (A.M. No. 13-10-08-SC)

Very truly yours,


Robert C. La Mont
Country Director