

DOF plans online payments for gov't transactions

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In a move to further cut red tape and improve the ease of doing business in the country, the Department of Finance (DOF) said yesterday it is planning to set up an online payment system that would enable Filipinos to remit fees and taxes to state agencies.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, named as the DOF's anti-red tape czar, said the DOF is now in the process of establishing the gateway, which would be dubbed as the PHPay system.

Beltran said the DOF's new project would involve the development of the payment gateway, as well as a payment ledgering management system for the whole government.

He said the PHPay system is envisioned to be a "secure and reliable" collection system in which clients could transfer payments online for government services anytime and anywhere.

He said it aims to minimize the need for human contact, eliminating long queues in state offices.

"Taxpayers and other government clients, can however, still opt to use other payment methods even when PHPay is in place," Beltran said.

To complement the DOF's initiatives against red tape, Beltran said the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) is also shortening the processing time and procedures for paying taxes, registering proper-ties and starting business.

"In the BIR, they cut down the steps of registering a new business from six days to one day. So that's a big improvement," he said.

Beltran said the BIR has also reduced the number of procedures for tax payments from 20 to seven steps, while registration of properties now take six days from the previous 15 days.

Upon the start of his administration, President Duterte vowed to crack down on red tape and ordered the reduction of the processing time and removal of unnecessary or redundant requirements of government agencies.

In line with this, the DOF has initiated many measures to cut red tape and ease government transactions.

For one, the DOF launched last December the TradeNet platform, which allows relevant agencies, importers and exporters to process requirements online.

Beltran said the system automates the processing of licenses, permits, clearance and certification of traders.

The DOF also implemented other projects that utilize the power of digital technology to help the government realize its goal of improving the ease of doing business.

These include the Philippine Business Data Bank (PBDB); the modernization program at the DOF, BIR and BOC; and the continuing efforts to reduce the procedures and requirements in securing government documents or permits, Beltran said.