

# Final term for Bulacan airport proposal subject to further review

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The concession agreement for the P735 billion international gateway proposed by diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) will still be reviewed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board headed by President Duterte.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said the proposed Swiss challenge for the unsolicited proposal of SMC for the planned international airport in Bulacan would still be scrutinized by the NEDA Board.

“That was what was passed in the minutes and I suppose the Swiss challenge has to undergo another review. The NEDA Board said they want to review the final terms of the concession agreement,” Dominguez said.

Based on the recommendation of the NEDA – Investment Coordination Council (NEDA-ICC), the government added a “collatilla” that the final concession agreement has to be reviewed again.

Under a Swiss challenge, the government would invite other private groups to make competing offers for the unsolicited project. However, the original proponent has the right to match them.

Dominguez said the Department of Transportation (DOTr) is finalizing the timetable for the Swiss challenge.

SMC has proposed to build a 1,168-hectare airport featuring six parallel runways with a capacity of 100 million passengers to help decongest the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

The proposed international gateway would be constructed within a 2,500-hectare property in Marilao, Bulacan.

Dominguez said the review is aimed at making sure the proponents of major infrastructure project would have the financial and technical capability to complete the project.

“This project is a P735 billion project and we must make sure the proponent has the financial and technical capability to carry it out. And a partnership is obviously allowed for that,” he added.

The multibillion-peso project was one of the 20 new and revised projects worth over P1 trillion approved by the NEDA Board last April 25 as it ramps up the government’s Build Build Build program.

The Duterte administration has earmarked P8.4 trillion for the program to usher in a “golden age of infrastructure.”

Other new projects approved by the NEDA Board last week include the SubicClark Railway worth P50.03 billion, Clark International Airport Expansion Project Operations and Maintenance public private partnership (PPP) worth P5.61 billion, the Ambal-Simuay River and Rio Grande de Mindanao River Flood Control Projects worth P39.2 billion, the Pasig-Marikina River and Manggahan Floodway Bridges Construction Project worth P5.98 billion, Bridge Construction Acceleration Project for Socioeconomic Development worth P11.37 billion, Rural Agro-Enterprise Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth or RAPID Growth worth P4.78 billion, and the Davao Food Complex Project worth P1.09 billion.

“The President wants all infrastructure projects to be done quickly. He does not discriminate whether its this or that. He just wants all the infrastructure to be done quickly because he believes that that is one of the reasons he was elected to make life easier for people, and this requires precisely better infrastructure development,” Dominguez said.