

## **Access to Justice in EIA Matters: Recent Development in the Philippines**

Rose-Liza Eisma-Osorio  
University of Cebu Collage of Law

### ABSTRACT

Access to justice facilitates the public rights to participate, to be informed, and to ensure accountability. The 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (commonly known as the “Aarhus Convention”) established rules especially on access to justice measures. The Philippines have created environmental courts with specialized functions and the rules of procedure for litigating environmental cases. Likewise, rules for legal standing have been liberalized allowing for citizens suits, and various remedies are available to hold government and violators responsible for causing environmental harm. However, there are many challenges that abound the implementation of laws and regulations on the environmental impact statement system. Inconsistent rules and institutional difficulties affect the full implementation of the laws. Government should review and come up with policies to ensure full public disclosure, and strict adherence to the rules of procedure to ensure access to justice in EIA matters.