

# UPNEC Quality Journey from PQC to PQA

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**Abstract:** The Philippine Quality Award (PQA) is the highest level of national recognition for exemplary performance. It aims to stimulate local companies and organizations to improve quality and productivity for the pride of recognition while obtaining a competitive edge and providing an example to others. The PQA establishes guidelines and criteria that can be used by local organizations regardless of size, sector and maturity. It measures an organization's performance in seven (7) categories, namely - Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer and Market Focus, Measurement Analysis and Knowledge Management, Human Resource Focus, Process Management and Business/Organizational Results.

After a review of the PQA by the Department of Industry – Center for Industrial Competitiveness, they realized the need to make the PQA criteria simple and easy to understand to attract and assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to vie for the award. Thus, the Philippine Quality Challenge (PQC) was piloted in 2012. It is a simplified PQA and serves as a preparatory phase for SMEs applying for PQA. Like PQA, PQC also measures an organization's performance in the same seven (7) categories but the requirements for business/organizational results are simplified for the sake of SMEs which may not have the complexities of big corporations.

The study discusses the National Engineering Center's (NEC) quality journey from its PQC application in 2012 to its PQA application in 2015 - the challenges met, systems and policies implemented, innovations done and the results achieved. It includes the recommended next steps to support not only the commitment to quality but also to continue it through to quality proficiency and mastery. The paper aims to provide a case study and benchmark for other organizations, particularly government institutions, that are on a similar journey to performance excellence as it also discusses insights and lessons learned for public and academic institutions aiming to apply for PQA.

**Keywords:** *National Engineering Center, Phil. Quality Award, Phil. Quality Challenge*