
PRESS RELEASE

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PCC boosts capacity on cartel investigation

The country's antitrust body sent a battery of lawyers and economists to Bali, Indonesia to speed up its capacity-building in fighting cartels and businesses engaged in anti-competitive conduct in the Philippines.

Ten delegates from the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) underwent intensive training last week on cartel detection and investigation through case studies, analyses, and scenario-based activities.

In conjunction with the Department of Justice's Office For Competition (DOJ-OFC), the PCC is now at the forefront of pro-competition, according to Ferdinand Redulla, PCC Assistant Director for Competition Enforcement.

"The Philippine Competition Commission is really intent on stopping and curtailing cartel conduct," he said. Redulla enumerated that PCC can order disgorgement, null contracts, and mete out fines and penalties for violations of the Philippine Competition Law, with administrative fines pegged at least P100 million for first offense.

"The fines are huge because they are really designed to deter anti-competitive acts, including abuse of dominant position conducts prescribed in the law," Redulla said. The processes and challenges of detecting and investigating cartels in the Philippines were discussed in synergy with international competition experts from host Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand.

"They shared their real-life experiences as an agency in terms of how they were able to do it from start to finish. They were able to give us working templates that we can adopt and exchange in market studies," Redulla said.

The said international competition authorities, for example, cited cement industry cartels in other jurisdictions that were successfully investigated and prosecuted for possible abuse of dominant position around the world.

With support from the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA), the Competition Law Implementation Program (CLIP) provides specialized training for ASEAN member-states focusing on practical skills and intel exchange.

The PCC delegation was composed of economists Philip Libre, Gian Camacho, Angelo Santos, Shanti Aubren Prado, and lawyers Jessica Co, Melbourne Pana, Christian de los Santos, Alyssa Carmelli Castillo and Graciela Base.

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