
PRESS RELEASE
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PCC, Ombudsman set united front against bid-riggers, auction-fixers

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) forges a partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), building a solid campaign against bid-rigging, price fixing, and cartels in government procurements and projects.

“A unified front in levelling the playing field, both in government and commercial transactions, will ultimately benefit consumers and the general public,” Chairman Arsenio M. Balisacan said.

While the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over corruption cases involving high-level government officials, PCC is mandated to prohibit anticompetitive conduct and impose administrative penalties on violators.

“The PCC is like an ‘Ombudsman of the market.’ We go after cartels, bid manipulators, price fixers, etc.–cases that may also potentially involve criminal offenses such as bribery, graft and corruption, over which the OMB has jurisdiction,” Commissioner El Cid R. Butuyan said.

In its meeting on Thursday, Butuyan said that the PCC and the Ombudsman partnership can boost the detection, investigation, and prosecution of the anti-competitive conducts.

“There are significant synergies and complementarity of the two (2) agencies in pursuing a shared mandate to detect and penalize misconduct. We expect this partnership between the OMB and the PCC to provide a big boost in promoting integrity both in the public and corporate sectors,” he added.

Some channels where anticorruption efforts converge with antitrust enforcement include bid rigging cases punishable under Section 14 of the Philippine Competition Act. The PCC may look into cases where market leaders bag large scale transactions while government officials receive payoffs by providing cover for anticompetitive conduct.

Bid-rigging as an anti-competitive conduct has penalties ranging from Php100 million to Php250 million, as well as criminal penalties of imprisonment from two (2) to seven (7) years and a fine ranging from Php50 Million to Php250 Million.

“On a personal level, I am very pleased that Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales has demonstrated strong commitment for this mutual initiative. She brought on board senior members of the OMB leadership to ensure the effective investigation and resolution of cases,” Butuyan added.

The collaboration between PCC and OMB is part of the Commission’s vigorous enforcement of the landmark Philippine Competition Act through partnerships, parallel efforts, joint task forces and coordinated actions with partner agencies, both locally and abroad.

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