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**PCC strengthens partnership with DOJ, Ombudsman  
in push to crack down on cartels, white collar crimes**

The Philippine Competition Commission signed memoranda of agreement on Friday with the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice, respectively, towards a more harmonized approach to enforcement against anti-competitive conduct and white collar crimes punishable by the Philippine Competition Act.

“The partnerships between PCC and OMB, as well as with DOJ, are part of the Commission’s enforcement of the antitrust law through cooperation, parallel efforts, joint task forces, and coordinated actions with partner agencies,” said PCC Chairman Arsenio M. Balisacan.

PCC’s collaboration with the Ombudsman and DOJ can boost the detection, investigation, and prosecution of anti-competitive practices, monopolization, corruption in the private sector, and combinations in restraint of trade in the country. The MOAs also extend to different avenues of cooperation, such as setting up joint task forces, capacity building programs, and access to relevant information.

In engaging the Office of the Ombudsman, PCC’s antitrust enforcement may converge with anti-corruption efforts in cases punishable under Section 14 of the Philippine Competition Act.

On the other hand, PCC’s MOA-signing with DOJ formalizes the longstanding cooperation between the two agencies. Before the Philippine Competition Act was passed in 2015, the Office of Competition stood as the interim office under DOJ (DOJ-OFC) to investigate and prosecute cases involving violations on market competition and helped in forging the foundation of PCC as competition authority.

With the landmark competition law in place, PCC files and metes out penalties for administrative cases on anti-competitive agreements and mergers, while the prosecution of the criminal component of cases such as cartels, price-fixing, and bid rigging are carried out by DOJ-OFC.



The PCC-DOJ partnership paves the way for the harmonized referral system of complaints and the preliminary investigation of offenses of the PCA. It also provides a framework for coordination between both agencies in the implementation of their respective programs on leniency and witness protection in the enforcement of competition cases.

“With the partnerships with the DOJ and the Office of the Ombudsman, this is a stronger push towards the conviction of cartelists who jack up prices to unreasonably high levels, price-fixers who agree not to compete, and bid riggers who game the system to take turns in bagging projects, that are punishable by the competition law,” Balisacan said.

Cartels and bid rigging as anti-competitive conduct have penalties ranging from Php100 million to Php250 million, as well as criminal penalties of imprisonment from two (2) to seven (7) years.

More partnerships with other agencies are underway for PCC, while standing to gain from collaborations set earlier with Securities and Exchange Commission, Commission on Audit, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Office of the Solicitor General, Philippine Statistics Authority, and Insurance Commission.

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