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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**17 August 2022**

**PCC strengthens enforcement capacity with NBI partnership, digital forensics lab**

The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) strengthens its enforcement capacity through a partnership with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and a project to develop its digital forensics capabilities.

In a ceremony today, the PCC and NBI inked a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) led by PCC Officer-in-Charge Johannes R. Bernabe and NBI Director Medardo G. De Lemos to institutionalize a partnership for enforcing the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) between the antitrust authority and the primary investigative body of the country.

“With PCC’s expertise in market investigation and processing of economic data, and NBI’s extensive network and experience in on-the-ground investigations, this partnership will mutually strengthen our enforcement capacity towards our shared goal of cracking down on cartels and other violations of the PCA,” PCC Officer-in-Charge Johannes R. Bernabe said.

The partnership broadens PCC’s long-time cooperation with the Department of Justice (DOJ). With the inclusion of the DOJ’s investigating arm in the cooperation framework, PCC may now enlist the aid of NBI in a more comprehensive investigation of anti-competitive conduct. As a first step, PCC and NBI will form a Competition Task Force to work together within their respective mandates. Both will also conduct joint case conferences, monitoring, specialized trainings, and capacity-building activities.

In a separate initiative, PCC is setting up a digital forensics laboratory to maximize the use of electronic evidence for the prosecution of cartels or abuses of dominance by big businesses. The laboratory is composed of specialized forensics equipment, software, and other tools useful for operatives. PCC investigators will undergo proficiency trainings and accreditation on the use of digital forensics equipment.

“The development of PCC’s digital forensics capacity is a major asset for our enforcement team. The use of digital forensics allows our investigators to uncover trails of electronic transactions or documents that point to cartels or collusions,” Bernabe said.

Under the PCA and Supreme Court A.M. No. 19-08-06-SC, the PCC is empowered to conduct unannounced inspections of premises as part of its investigative tools.

The agency’s primary mandate is to promote and to maintain market competition by regulating anti-competitive agreements like bid rigging, abuses of dominant position, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions.

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**REFERENCE:**

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