

## **DTI Backs Private Sector's Fight Against Corruption**

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In line with its commitment to empower consumers and enable business through promoting an environment conducive to the growth of businesses, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) supports the initiative of the private sector to promote business integrity and accountability.

This initiative is implemented by the Asian Institute of Management's (AIM) Hills Program on Governance through a one-year project grant from the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

This project have two objectives: to strengthen awareness and understanding of the social and economic costs of corruption among Philippine businesses and to generate their support for anti-corruption efforts, and to strengthen the ability of Philippine small and medium enterprises to prevent corrupt and other unethical behavior among their employees.

The Bureau of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Director Rhodora M. Leaño said that this initiative is seen to benefit small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and consumers by significantly reducing the cost of doing business. This way, money that would have been lost to corruption will be used to expand businesses. In the end, enterprises with ethical business practices will be able to provide good products and services to its consumers, and become more competitive.

This initiative to fight against corruption is focused on small and medium-sized businesses that constitute 99 percent of registered businesses, and employ approximately 70 percent of the country's workforce.

To gain momentum for this initiative, the AIM Hills Program on Governance project started securing the support of the business community through signed pledges to abide by ethical business practices, and to support a national fight against corruption.

This project includes a series of workshops and focus group discussions for small and medium-sized businesses on strategies to combat corruption. It also intends to prepare manual on operating a business without corruption for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and develop a website.

To further support this project, the DTI will also help in the promotion of the website “Business Fighting Corruption”, which can be accessed through <http://www.businessesfightingcorruption.org>.

“The website is a clearinghouse for all information relating to business ethics and the control of corruption in the private sector in the Philippines. It also provides a forum for business owners and managers to post comments and share their experiences in dealing with corruption. By facilitating the exchange of information, the website seeks to help businesses conduct their operations without giving in to corruption, as well as prevent unethical behavior by their employees,” Leaño said.

Thus, useful links, contacts, news and events for this initiative are available in this website. *DTI Public Relations Office*

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