



The Anti-Bribery Advisory Service (ABAS) Center set up to provide guidelines to the private sector about giving bribes to government officials

NEWS RELEASE BY NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

BANGKOK THAILAND | March 31, 2023 09:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time

BANGKOK THAILAND - **Media OutReach** - 31 March 2023 - Thailand has set up an anti-bribery service centre to provide knowledge and guidelines to the private sector concerning the laws on offering bribes to government officials.

The establishment of Anti-Bribery Advisory Service (ABAS) Center, which falls under the supervision of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), is part of Thailand's attempts to level up its Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Niwatchai Kasemmongkol, NACC's secretary general said in a recent exclusive interview.

Thailand ranks 101 of 180 countries and scored 42 out of 100 on the CPI in 2022.

The ABAS Center was established to provide academic advice, knowledge, and guidelines to the private sector about offering bribes to government officials. Using the guidelines, the private sector could put appropriate and effective anti-bribery measures in place, he said.

Thailand has ratified and become a member of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and OECD's Convention on Combating Foreign Bribery in International Business Transactions.

NACC also has rules for prosecuting private sector firms involved in bribing government officials and those working in international agencies. The rules have been issued to make private sector firms aware that they could be prosecuted if they are involved in corruption.

Our rules and regulations as well as ABAS are set up in line with and as required by the UNCAC and OECD, he said.

Thailand will soon hold a general election and have a new government in the near future and Niwatchai said he hoped they would be serious about suppression corruption.

If the new government and policy makers are serious, the country's CPI will certainly go up. He cited as an example Vietnam, whose CPI was 77 in 2022, saying its CPI is higher than that of Thailand's as its leaders are serious about prosecuting those involved in corruption.

He added educational institutes should play an important role in instilling and teaching people about honesty.

The situation concerning corrupt practices by those in the political circle, government agencies, and the private sector are still worrisome, he adds.

With corruption rampant in the country, the NACC needs the participation of the public and government officials who witness corruption. We would not know about corruption if they do not inform us by filing complaints with us, he said.

In the past, junior government officials who acted as whistleblowers on malfeasance in their units might not feel safe and could be persecuted by their superiors.

Today we have an organic law on prevention and suppression on misconduct. The Act, B.E 2561 (2018), stipulates several measures to protect such whistleblowers.

In a case where a junior official is involved in the corruption but decides to report the wrongdoings, he or she would not face either criminal or disciplinary charges and would be treated as a witness. A whistleblower can also be rewarded, Niwatchai said.

If necessary, NACC's protection programme is ready to give protection to the official and his/her family. Such protection would include allowances, name change, and relocation.

The protection measures are aimed to create confidence and bravery in a whistleblower who reports graft. However, he/she could be prosecuted if he/she fails to meet the conditions or changes his/her testimony.

Niwatchai cited the manipulation of the district chief examinations in 2009 as an example of the NACC's investigation and provision of protection for whistleblowers.

In 2009, the investigation and collection of evidence showed that violations were happening in the selection process. At first, no official dared to testify against any senior government official but eventually ten examinees agreed to do so.

Their testimonies led to the jailing of the then director general of the Provincial Administration Department and senior officials.

However the bureaucratic system had frozen the careers of the ten examinees, their levels were not raised, their salaries were put on hold and they were not allowed to take the district chief exam again.

NACC then reported this to the prime minister which resulted in the Office of Civil Service Commission resolving to promote them to the position of district chief, Niwatchai said.

Responding to a statement that only small fish are arrested in corruption cases, Niwatchai pointed out that small fish are easily caught but catching the big fish needs time and good bait as well as participation from all sides.

He revealed there was a case where the NACC found two politicians committing ethical misconduct as political position holders and the cases went to court, which ruled against them. They were then removed from their positions.

He also talked about NACC's investigation into the alleged massive corruption in the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, saying the arrest of the most senior official was the result of cooperation between many agencies.

The laws today are severe and we have caught not only small but also big fish. However, NACC do not hold a press conference to announce the arrests and in the future, NACC is planning to reveal the progress of its investigation to the public.

This will allow the complainant, the public, and other parties to jointly examine the NACC's work.

He also mentioned the criticism that the National Parks department that is under the NACC's probe had obtained a high score of 85 marks and Grade A in NACC's Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA).

ITA is just a preliminary framework assessment of three aspects of work conducted by both insiders and outsiders who use the service and disclose information on issues such as procurement.

The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is a constitutional independent organization and supervised by nine commissioners selected from various professions. It is authorised to undertake work on the prevention and suppression of malfeasance, particularly in government agencies, on assets investigations, as well as on the monitoring of ethics and virtues of political position holders.

It has the authority to file charges in court as well as support and build up awareness of the penalties for committing corruption. The NACC is supervised by the NACC Board and has the Office of the NACC as its administrative agency.

Since 1997, Thai Courts have ruled against and punished politicians, former ministers, high-ranking government officials as well as executives of the private sector in the thousands of cases submitted by the NACC.

Website: <https://www.nacc.go.th/english>

Contact Details

Media Contact

Parith lamponpaiboon

integrityway.nacf@gmail.com

Tags

NACC

NACF

ANTICORRUPTION

THAILAND