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COA Opens Audit to Citizens

The Commission on Audit embarks on a more transparent and open audit process—with the help of citizens.

Quezon City, 21 November 2012 – Who says you can't teach old dogs new tricks?

This year, the 113-year-old Commission on Audit of the Philippines (COA) takes on the novel challenge of more transparency and accountability in the public audit process through its key reform initiative—the Citizen Participatory Audit or CPA.

The CPA Project is a major undertaking of the independent auditing body under the leadership of Chairperson Ma. Gracia M. Pulido Tan. “As the state’s supreme audit institution, we have a duty to the public... But we also recognize that citizens are a key stakeholder in what the government does, and in what COA does,” Chairperson Pulido Tan explains. “To increase awareness that a vigilant and involved citizenry promotes greater accountability, special audit teams with both COA auditors and average citizens will conduct value-for-money or performance audits of selected government programs.”

This joint initiative of the COA and non-profit intermediary group Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP) is a two-year project implemented with fund support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Chairperson

Pulido Tan says that over the next year and a half, five to six participatory audit pilots will be conducted in an effort to learn what it entails to install it as a permanent program within the Commission.

Under the CPA, ordinary citizens are also encouraged to get to know the public audit process and to converse with COA on audit-related matters that concern them. COA is currently revising its system for receiving, consolidating and responding to feedback from citizens through a revamped information system and a citizens' website, which will be launched in November 2012 along with the CPA Project.

Pursuant to this initiative, COA will sign a terms of engagement with citizen groups that are committed to upholding transparency in the public audit process, and a memorandum of agreement with civil society and government agency partners for the first participatory performance audit.

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