INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS REVIEW

TWELFTH EDITION

Editor Nicolas Bourtin

ELAWREVIEWS

E INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS REVIEW

TWELFTH EDITION

Reproduced with permission from Law Business Research Ltd This article was first published in July 2022 For further information please contact Nick.Barette@thelawreviews.co.uk

Editor

Nicolas Bourtin

ELAWREVIEWS

PUBLISHER Clare Bolton

HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Nick Barette

TEAM LEADER Katie Hodgetts

SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Rebecca Mogridge

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS
Joey Kwok and Juan Hincapie

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE Archie McEwan

> RESEARCH LEAD Kieran Hansen

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR Isabelle Gray

PRODUCTION AND OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
Adam Myers

PRODUCTION EDITOR
Caroline Herbert

SUBEDITOR Jane Vardy

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Nick Brailey

Published in the United Kingdom by Law Business Research Ltd, London Meridian House, 34–35 Farringdon Street, London, EC4A 4HL, UK © 2022 Law Business Research Ltd www.TheLawReviews.co.uk

No photocopying: copyright licences do not apply.

The information provided in this publication is general and may not apply in a specific situation, nor does it necessarily represent the views of authors' firms or their clients. Legal advice should always be sought before taking any legal action based on the information provided. The publishers accept no responsibility for any acts or omissions contained herein. Although the information provided was accurate as at July 2022, be advised that this is a developing area.

Enquiries concerning reproduction should be sent to Law Business Research, at the address above.

Enquiries concerning editorial content should be directed to the Publisher – clare.bolton@lbresearch.com

ISBN 978-1-80449-091-4

Printed in Great Britain by Encompass Print Solutions, Derbyshire Tel: 0844 2480 112

C

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publisher acknowledges and thanks the following for their assistance throughout the preparation of this book:

ANAGNOSTOPOULOS

BAKER MCKENZIE

BDO LLP

CEREBRA CPAS & ADVISORS

DAVIES WARD PHILLIPS & VINEBERG LLP

DEBEVOISE & PLIMPTON LLP

GLOBAL LAW OFFICE

KOLCUOĞLU DEMİRKAN KOÇAKLI

LATHAM & WATKINS

MORAIS LEITÃO, GALVÃO TELES, SOARES DA SILVA & ASSOCIADOS

MORI HAMADA & MATSUMOTO

NYMAN GIBSON MIRALIS

PERUN CONSULTANTS

SCHELLENBERG WITTMER LTD

SHIN & KIM

STUDIO LEGALE PULITANÒ-ZANCHETTI

SULLIVAN & CROMWELL LLP

WONGPARTNERSHIP LLP

CONTENTS

PREFACE	
Nicolas Bourtin	
Chapter 1	THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF THE FORENSIC ACCOUNTANT IN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS
Chapter 2	BIG DATA, TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHANGING FACE OF FORENSIC ACCOUNTING
Chapter 3	AUSTRALIA
Chapter 4	CANADA
Chapter 5	CHINA
Chapter 6	COLOMBIA5 Carolina Pardo, Angelica Navarro and Luis Castell
Chapter 7	ENGLAND AND WALES6 Stuart Alford QC, Mair Williams and Harriet Slater
Chapter 8	FRANCE8 Alexandre Bisch
Chapter 9	GREECE9 Ilias G Anagnostopoulos and Ierina Zapanti

Contents

Chapter 10	ITALY Mario Zanchetti	101
Chapter 11	JAPAN Yasuhiko Fujitsu and Chihiro Tsukada	121
Chapter 12	PORTUGAL João Matos Viana, João Lima Cluny and Tiago Coelho Magalhães	131
Chapter 13	SINGAPORE Joy Tan, Jenny Tsin and Ong Pei Chin	146
Chapter 14	SOUTH KOREA Seong-Jin Choi, Tak-Kyun Hong and Kyle J Choi	161
Chapter 15	SWITZERLAND Peter Burckhardt, George Ayoub, Nina L Paka and Mariam Oueslati	170
Chapter 16	TURKEY Fikret Sebilcioğlu, Okan Demirkan and Begüm Biçer İlikay	181
Chapter 17	UNITED STATES Nicolas Bourtin and Steve A Hsieh	190
Appendix 1	ABOUT THE AUTHORS	
Appendix 2	CONTRIBUTORS' CONTACT DETAILS	223

PREFACE

In its second year, the Biden administration has made clear its prioritisation of white-collar prosecutions. This includes changes in policy and guidance, such as a renewed focus on individual accountability, an increased concern with corporate recidivism, and greater scrutiny of the use, and repeated use, of deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) and non-prosecution agreements (NPAs). The administration has announced plans not only to redistribute existing resources to prosecutions of corporate crime but to increase resources, particularly through the hiring of more white-collar prosecutors and investigative agents. Although recovery from the covid-19 pandemic and more recently the consequences of the Russia–Ukraine war have slowed the administration's implementation of these corporate enforcement priorities, US and non-US corporations alike will continue to face increasing scrutiny by US authorities.

The trend towards more enforcement and harsher penalties has by no means been limited to the United States; while the US government continues to lead the movement to globalise the prosecution of corporations, a number of non-US authorities appear determined to adopt the US model. Parallel corporate investigations in several countries increasingly compound the problems for companies, as conflicting statutes, regulations, and rules of procedure and evidence make the path to compliance a treacherous one. What is more, government authorities forge their own prosecutorial alliances and share evidence or, conversely, have their own rivalries and block the export of evidence, further complicating a company's defence. These trends show no sign of abating.

As a result, corporate counsel around the world are increasingly called upon to advise their clients on the implications of criminal and regulatory investigations outside their own jurisdictions. This can be a daunting task, as the practice of criminal law – particularly corporate criminal law – is notorious for following unwritten rules and practices that cannot be gleaned from a simple review of a country's criminal code. Of course, nothing can replace the considered advice of an expert local practitioner, but a comprehensive review of corporate investigative practices around the world will find a wide and grateful readership.

The authors who have contributed to this volume are acknowledged experts in the field of corporate investigations and leaders of the Bars of their respective countries. We have attempted to distil their wisdom, experience and insight around the most common questions and concerns that corporate counsel face in guiding their clients through criminal or regulatory investigations. Under what circumstances can the corporate entity itself be charged with a crime? What are the possible penalties? Under what circumstances should a corporation voluntarily self-report potential misconduct on the part of its employees? Is it a realistic option for a corporation to defend itself at trial against a government agency? And how does a corporation manage the delicate interactions with employees whose conduct is

at issue? *The International Investigations Review* answers these questions and many more, and will serve as an indispensable guide when your clients face criminal or regulatory scrutiny in a country other than your own. And while it will not qualify you to practise criminal law in a foreign country, it will highlight the major issues and critical characteristics of a given country's legal system and will serve as an invaluable aid in engaging, advising and directing local counsel in that jurisdiction. We are proud that, in its 12th edition, this publication features two overviews and covers 15 jurisdictions.

This volume is the product of exceptional collaboration. I wish to commend and thank our publisher and all the contributors for their extraordinary gifts of time and thought. The subject matter is broad and the issues raised are deep, and a concise synthesis of a country's legal framework and practice was challenging in each case.

Nicolas Bourtin

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP New York July 2022

SINGAPORE

Joy Tan, Jenny Tsin and Ong Pei Chin¹

I INTRODUCTION

Regulatory authorities empowered to investigate and prosecute corporates include the following:

- Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA), which regulates business registration, financial reporting, public accountants and corporate service providers.² ACRA officers have the power to examine any persons reasonably believed to be acquainted with the facts or circumstances of a case and to require any person to furnish information or documents.³ Errant corporates and directors may be offered composition fines in lieu of prosecution and if this offer is not accepted, may be prosecuted in court.⁴
- b Singapore Police Force, which has broad investigative powers under the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC),⁵ including to enter premises without a warrant, require the attendance of a witness, record statements and conduct searches to retrieve evidence. Within the police force, the specialised Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) investigates commercial and financial crimes.⁶
- Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the central bank of Singapore. MAS regulates and supervises financial institutions (FIs) through, among others, the Securities and Futures Act (SFA), the Financial Advisers Act (FAA) and the Singapore Code on Take-overs and Mergers, and enforces the civil penalty regime for market misconduct. MAS officers may require a person to render reasonable assistance in or appear for investigation,⁷ or require any person to provide information or produce books relating to any matter under investigation.⁸ They may also enter premises without a warrant.⁹ Errant corporates and directors may face civil penalties, prohibition orders or licence revocations.¹⁰ Through the Joint Investigations Arrangement, CAD and MAS cooperate

¹ Joy Tan, Jenny Tsin and Ong Pei Chin are partners at WongPartnership LLP. The authors thank Simran Toor and Michelle Thio for their assistance in this work.

² https://www.acra.gov.sg/who-we-are.

³ See Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority Act.

⁴ https://www.acra.gov.sg/compliance/enforcement-policy-statement/compliance-and-enforcement-measures.

⁵ See Part IV of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC).

⁶ https://www.police.gov.sg/Who-We-Are/Organisation-Structure/Specialist-Staff-Departments.

⁷ Section 154 of the Securities and Futures Act (SFA).

⁸ Section 163 of the SFA.

⁹ Section 163A of the SFA.

MAS Enforcement Report January 2019 to June 2020 (published November 2020); the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) had meted out S\$11.7 million in Civil Penalties, 25 Prohibition Orders and had revoked three licences.

to co-investigate offences under the SFA and FAA.¹¹ On 2 July 2021, MAS issued the Consultation Paper on Proposed Amendments to MAS' Investigative and Other Powers under the Various Acts.¹² The proposed amendments seek to enhance MAS's investigative powers, including, for instance, recording statements from persons at the examination and obtaining a court warrant if a person fails to appear for examination with no reasonable cause.

- d Singapore Exchange Ltd (SGX), which is both a commercial entity and the market regulator. SGX carries out its regulatory functions via an independent subsidiary, Singapore Exchange Regulation Pte Ltd (SGX RegCo). SGX RegCo is empowered to investigate infractions of the Listing Rules and to take appropriate disciplinary actions for violations.¹³ SGX RegCo's powers of enforcement were expanded in August 2021 to enable swifter enforcement outcomes.¹⁴
- Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCCS), which administers and enforces the Competition Act, investigates practices that are anticompetitive, and protects consumers. CCCS may require any person to produce documents or information it considers relevant to investigations, and may enter premises without a warrant. It may also issue directions to require a business to stop or modify errant activity or conduct, and can impose financial penalties on non-compliant corporates.
- f Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), which investigates corruption offences across both public and private sectors. ¹⁹ CPIB officers are empowered ²⁰ to arrest, conduct a premise search or seize evidence without warrant if there is credible information or reasonable suspicion that a corruption offence has been committed.

https://www.mas.gov.sg/news/media-releases/2018/mas-and-cad-to-jointly-investigate-all-capital-markets-and-financial-advisory-offences. On 27 April 2022, MAS released an updated Enforcement Monograph, outlining the approach it takes towards enforcement, including the roles of the CAD and details of the Joint Investigation Arrangement. See https://www.mas.gov.sg/-/media/MAS/News-and-Publications/Monographs-and-Information-Papers/Enforcement-Monograph-Final-Revised-Apr-20221.pdf.

¹² https://www.mas.gov.sg/publications/consultations/2021/consultation-paper-on-proposed-amendments-to-mas-investigative-and-other-powers-under-the-various-acts.

For example, Singapore Exchange Regulation Pte Ltd may issue reprimands to non-compliant corporates; https://www.sgx.com/regulation/about-sgx-regco#Regulatory%20Functions.

https://www.sgx.com/media-centre/20210624-sgx-regco-expands-range-enforcement-powers. See also amendments to the Mainboard Rules and Catalist Rules at http://rulebook.sgx.com/sites/default/files/net_file_store/AMENDMENTS_TO_ENFORCEMENT_(MAINBOARD)_1_August_2021.pdf and http://rulebook.sgx.com/sites/default/files/net_file_store/AMENDMENTS_TO_ENFORCEMENT_ (MAINBOARD)_1_August_2021.pdf respectively.

¹⁵ See Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act; https://www.cccs.gov.sg/about-cccs.

¹⁶ Sections 62 and 63 of the Competition Act.

¹⁷ Section 64 of the Competition Act.

¹⁸ https://www.cccs.gov.sg/faq/complaints-investigations-and-enforcement.

¹⁹ https://www.cpib.gov.sg/about-cpib/roles-and-functions.

²⁰ Under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA).

Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC), which administers and enforces the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 (No. 26 of 2012) (PDPA). The PDPC implements policies and develops advisory guidelines to promote the protection of personal data. The PDPC may require any person to produce a specified document or information it considers relevant to investigations,²¹ and may enter premises without a warrant.²² It also reviews corporations' data protection policies and may issue directives or decisions to ensure compliance.²³ The PDPC may issue decisions, warnings, financial penalties or further directions to errant organisations.²⁴

Following investigations, the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC), which has oversight of all prosecutions, may prosecute potential offenders in court.

Corporates under investigation should always cooperate with the authorities. Various statutes contain provisions penalising a lack of cooperation. For instance, Chapters X and XI of the Penal Code (PC) penalise the giving of false evidence 25 and the destruction of documents. 26

II CONDUCT

i Self-reporting

Singapore's legislative and regulatory framework adopts a disclosure-based regime.

Rule 703 of the Listing Manual (LM) obliges companies listed on the Singapore Exchange to make timely disclosure of any information a listed entity has concerning itself, its subsidiaries or associated companies that is either 'necessary to avoid the establishment of a false market in [its] securities' or that 'would be likely to materially affect the price or value of its securities'. Non-compliance is an offence if intentional or reckless.²⁷ Directors can be prosecuted in their personal capacity if it is proven that the non-compliance was committed with their 'consent or connivance' or is attributable to their neglect.²⁸

Complementing the LM is the revised Code of Corporate Governance (the Code), issued by MAS and applicable to listed companies. Central to the Code is the 'comply or explain' concept.²⁹ Thus, while variations to the Code are permitted, companies must 'explicitly state and explain'³⁰ how their varied practices are 'consistent with the aim and philosophy' of the principles set out in the Code.³¹

Separately, FIs and payment service providers under mandatory notices issued by MAS must also self-report. FIs are required to report to MAS misconduct committed

²¹ Paragraph 1 of the Ninth Schedule of the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 (No. 26 of 2012) (PDPA).

²² Paragraph 2 of the Ninth Schedule of the PDPA.

²³ https://www.pdpc.gov.sg/who-we-are/about-us.

²⁴ https://www.pdpc.gov.sg/Commissions-Decisions.

²⁵ Section 191 of the Penal Code (PC).

²⁶ Section 204 of the PC.

²⁷ Sections 203 and 204 of the SFA.

²⁸ Section 331 of the SFA.

²⁹ Code of Corporate Governance (the Code) at [2] of the Introduction.

³⁰ These explanations must be comprehensive and meaningful.

³¹ Code at [8] of the Introduction.

by their representatives.³² FIs are also required to undertake internal investigations into their representatives' conduct and to submit an annual nil return where there has been no instance of reportable misconduct during the financial year. Failure to comply attracts criminal penalties.³³

More broadly, self-reporting is also generally required to counter money laundering and terrorist financing. 34

In respect of competition law matters, CCCS has a leniency programme that offers different levels of benefits to businesses, depending on whether they are the first to come forward with information about cartel activity or whether investigations have already commenced when they come forward.³⁵

Where a business is the first to provide evidence of cartel activity and does so before CCCS has commenced an investigation, it can be entitled to immunity from financial penalties, provided the business satisfies certain stipulated conditions.³⁶

If a business is the first to come forward seeking leniency and satisfies all the conditions but does so only after CCCS has started an investigation, it would not qualify for immunity. However, it may still qualify for a reduction of up to 100 per cent of the financial penalties.³⁷

Where a person knows or has reasonable grounds to suspect that any property -

- (a) in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, represents the proceeds of;
- (b) was used in connection with; or
- (c) is intended to be used in connection with,

MAS Notice SFA04-N11, Reporting of Misconduct of Representatives by Holders of Capital Markets Service Licence and Exempt Financial Institutions; MAS Notice FAA-N14, Reporting of Misconduct of Representatives by Financial Advisers (Notice FAA-N14). On 19 April 2022, MAS issued a Consultation Paper on Revised Notices on Misconduct Reporting Requirements under the Financial Advisers Act, Insurance Act and Securities and Futures Act, with proposed amendments to these notices. This follows on from its Response to Feedback from Public Consultation on Revisions to Misconduct Reporting Requirements and Proposals to Mandate Reference Checks for Representatives that was issued in May 2021.

³³ Notice FAA-N14.

³⁴ See Section 39(1) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act) (CDSA):

any act which may constitute drug dealing or criminal conduct, as the case may be, and the information or matter on which the knowledge or suspicion is based came to his attention in the course of his trade, profession, business or employment, he shall disclose the knowledge or suspicion or the information or other matter on which that knowledge or suspicion is based to a Suspicious Transaction Reporting Officer as soon as is reasonably practicable after it comes to his attention.

Under Section 39(2) of the CDSA, failure to comply with the CDSA attracts criminal penalties.
 CCCS Guidelines on Lenient Treatment for Undertakings Coming Forward with Information on Cartel Activity 2016 (effective 1 December 2016) (CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016).

CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016 at [2.2]; the conditions are: (1) the business must provide CCCS with all the information, documents and evidence available to it regarding the cartel activity; (2) the business must maintain continuous and complete cooperation throughout the investigation and until the conclusion of any action by CCCS arising as a result of the investigation; (3) the business must refrain from further participation in the cartel activity from the time it discloses the cartel to CCCS, unless CCCS directs otherwise; (4) the business must unconditionally admit to the conduct for which leniency is sought; and (5) the business must grant an appropriate waiver of confidentiality to CCCS in respect of any foreign country where the business may have also applied for leniency or in respect of any regulatory authority the business may have informed of the cartel activity.

³⁷ CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016 at [2.3].

If a business is not the first to come forward, or if it initiated the cartel activity or coerced another party to join the cartel's activity, that business may still be granted a reduction of up to 50 per cent of the financial penalties if it comes forward before CCCS issues a notice of a proposed infringement decision under the Competition Act. However, the business will still need to comply with the other stipulated conditions.³⁸

CCCS also operates a 'leniency plus' programme. This incentivises businesses that cooperate with CCCS in a cartel investigation in one market to inform it of their participation in a separate cartel in another market. Businesses that qualify for this may be granted leniency in respect of the second market and also receive a reduction in the financial penalties in the first market.³⁹

For offences where a deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) is available, ⁴⁰ self-reporting may be a factor considered in the prosecution's decisions on whether to enter into a DPA and on the conditions or any penalty imposed therein.

ii Internal investigations

A business can conduct its own internal investigations.

Internal investigations typically involve conducting interviews with relevant persons and the review of evidence.⁴¹ External third parties such as lawyers, accountants, forensic investigators and computer experts often assist in the investigations.

Depending on the seriousness and nature of the matter, individuals being interviewed or whose conduct is being investigated may choose to engage their own lawyers.

From the company's perspective, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an internal investigation may lead to legal proceedings, it would be prudent to retain lawyers at the earliest stage. This allows the investigation to be conducted with the benefit of legal advice and assists the company in asserting privilege over matters relating to the investigation.

A key issue that often arises is the extent to which legal professional privilege can be maintained during internal investigations. This was considered in the case of *Skandinaviksa Enskilda Banken AB (Publ)*, *Singapore Branch v. Asia Pacific Breweries (Singapore) Pte Ltd and other appeals*⁴² (*Skandinaviska*).

In *Skandinaviska*, a company, Asia Pacific Breweries (Singapore) (APBS), constituted a special committee comprising external auditors and lawyers to investigate and review its internal controls after a fraud perpetrated by its finance manager. Although draft reports were prepared by the external auditors, a final report was never issued. The Court of Appeal considered whether the draft reports submitted by the auditors to APBS were protected by legal professional privilege.

Legal advice privilege

The Court of Appeal accepted that communications to and from a third party were not protected by legal advice privilege and the auditors would not be regarded as agents of communication for the purposes of legal advice privilege.

³⁸ CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016 at [2.4].

³⁹ CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016 at [6.1]–[6.3].

⁴⁰ See Sixth Schedule of the CPC; these offences include corruption, money laundering and certain types of market misconduct under the SFA.

⁴¹ Such as hard copy documents or forensic analysis of information stored in computers.

^{42 [2007] 2} SLR(R) 367.

That said, the Court of Appeal endorsed the broader approach laid down by the Australian Federal Court in *Pratt Holdings Pty Ltd v. Commissioner of Taxation*⁴³ (*Pratt Holdings*), which focused on the nature of the function the third party performed, rather than the nature of the third party's legal relationship with the party that engaged it.

The Court of Appeal did not have to decide whether the draft auditors' report was subject to legal advice privilege as the issue was not argued by APBS's counsel.

In the recent English Court of Appeal decision of *Regina (Jet2.com Ltd) v. Civil Aviation Authority (Law Society Intervening) (Jet2*),⁴⁴ the English Court of Appeal confirmed that the 'dominant purpose' test applied to legal advice privilege, which is in line with the broad view as advanced in *Pratt Holdings*. While the position appears to be settled in the United Kingdom following *Jet2*, it remains to be seen whether the Singapore courts would choose to adopt a similar approach in subsequent cases. That said, bearing in mind that the Court of Appeal in *Skandinaviska* in fact strongly endorsed the broad approach in *Pratt Holdings*,⁴⁵ it is likely that our courts will focus on the nature of the function the third party performed, rather than the nature of the legal relationship between the parties.⁴⁶

Litigation privilege

In *Skandinaviska*, the Court of Appeal found that the dominant purpose of the draft reports at the time they were created was in aid of litigation. This was influenced by the fact that external auditors and a legal adviser had been appointed to discover and quantify the financial impact of the fraud and to determine APBS's potential liability. As litigation was imminent and 'foremost in the mind' of APBS, these communications were protected by litigation privilege.⁴⁷

In-house counsel

Under the Evidence Act, legal advice privilege extends to communications with in-house counsel made for the dominant purpose of seeking legal advice.⁴⁸

Waiver and limited waivers

Various statutes recognise that the powers to compel disclosure of documents and information to an investigating body do not extend to communications protected by legal professional privilege. The Singapore High Court has also held that statutes will not be regarded as revoking legal advice privilege unless that is expressly provided for or abrogated by necessary implication.⁴⁹

^{43 [2004] 136} FCR 357.

^{44 [2020] 2} WLR 1215.

⁴⁵ Skandinaviksa Enskilda Banken AB (Publ), Singapore Branch v. Asia Pacific Breweries (Singapore) Pte Ltd and other appeals [2007] 2 SLR(R) 367 (Skandinaviska) at [63]–[65].

⁴⁶ Pratt Holdings Pty Ltd v. Commissioner of Taxation [2004] 136 FCR 357 at [41]–[43].

⁴⁷ Skandinaviska at [88].

⁴⁸ See Section 128A of the Evidence Act.

⁴⁹ Yap Sing Lee v. Management Corporation Strata Title Plan No. 1267 [2011] 2 SLR 998.

Where internal investigation reports are submitted to regulators, it is important to take steps to maintain and not inadvertently waive privilege at any stage⁵⁰ and to consider whether the report can be submitted to regulators on a 'limited waiver of privilege' basis and, if so, what the scope of this waiver should be.

iii Whistle-blowers

At present, there is no overarching legislation in Singapore protecting whistle-blowers.

However, different pieces of legislation contain provisions affording some protection. For instance, the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA)⁵¹ and the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act (CDSA)⁵² afford anonymity to whistle-blowers. Similarly, the identity of whistle-blowers on workplace safety hazards is also protected by statute.⁵³ In the implementation of CCCS's leniency programme, CCCS will keep the identity of whistle-blowers confidential.⁵⁴ Under the Companies Act, auditors are protected from defamation suits and liability when reporting fraud in good faith.⁵⁵ The Terrorism (Suppression of Financing) Act (TSOFA) also protects the identity of whistle-blowers.⁵⁶

It is rare for whistle-blowers to be rewarded by means of legislative provision. Two examples are found in competition matters,⁵⁷ and on information relating to tax evasion.⁵⁸

The Code requires listed companies to publicly disclose and clearly communicate to employees the existence of any whistle-blowing policy and the procedures for raising concerns of this nature.⁵⁹

SGX RegCo mandates that issuers establish and maintain a whistle-blowing policy, which must keep the identity of the whistle-blower confidential and ensure that the whistle-blower is protected from reprisals. ⁶⁰ Since 1 January 2022, issuers have been required to state in their annual reports that they have such a whistle-blowing policy in place, and provide an explanation of how they have complied with certain key requirements, such as having independent oversight of the policy and commitment to protecting the identity of whistle-blowers. ⁶¹

⁵⁰ Steps to avoid this include ensuring that strict communication protocols are implemented at the commencement of any investigation, and to clearly spell out the purpose of the investigation in the mandate letters executed in favour of all those engaged in the investigation.

⁵¹ Section 36 of the PCA, which states that 'no witness shall be obliged or permitted to disclose the name or address of any informer, or state any matter which might lead to his discovery'.

⁵² Sections 39, 40 and 40A of the CDSA, which states 'no witness in any civil or criminal proceedings shall be obliged . . . to disclose the name and address of any informer'.

⁵³ Section 18 of the Workplace Safety and Health Act.

⁵⁴ CCCS Guidelines on Cartel Activity 2016 at [8.1].

⁵⁵ Section 208 of the Companies Act.

⁵⁶ Section 10A of the Terrorism (Suppression of Financing) Act (TSOFA).

Where monetary rewards may also be given to informants for information that leads to infringement decisions against cartel members in appropriate situations; https://www.cccs.gov.sg/approach-cccs/making-complaints/reward-scheme.

⁵⁸ If such information leads to recovery of tax, the informant may be able to receive a reward of 15 per cent of the tax recovered, capped at S\$100,000; https://www.iras.gov.sg/IRASHome/Contact-Us/Report-Tax-Evasion/#Rewards.

⁵⁹ Code at Provision [10.1(f)].

⁶⁰ https://www.sgx.com/media-centre/20210624-sgx-regco-expands-range-enforcement-powers.

⁶¹ ibid.

Generally, all companies should have a proper whistle-blowing policy in place that provides an independent avenue for whistle-blowing and assurance that there will be no reprisal actions taken against genuine whistle-blowers. However, in respect of frivolous or false complaints, the policy should provide for the potential ramifications.

Other than internal whistle-blowing, affected persons can also report directly to the relevant authorities. This is not uncommon, particularly for employment-related issues. While making a false report to the authorities is an offence, whistle-blowing done in good faith is unlikely to be regarded as a false report. 62

III ENFORCEMENT

i Corporate liability

Criminal liability and civil penalties

Most offence-creating statutory provisions provide for criminal liability for a 'person' or 'party', which are defined in the Interpretation Act (IA) as including 'any company or association or body of persons, corporate or unincorporate'. Thus, companies in Singapore can commit offences and attract civil penalties. They can also be prosecuted as an accessory (e.g., abetment or conspiracy) to a primary offence.

Where market misconduct offences are concerned, companies can face both criminal liability and civil penalties. The SFA expressly details the circumstances under which liability may accrue to a company. Section 236B of the SFA sets out the criteria required for a corporation to be liable for the acts of an employee or officer. Sections 226 and 227 of the SFA also set out the circumstances under which liability for the acts of an employee relating to insider trading can be attributed to a company. In addition, Section 236C of the SFA allows a civil penalty to be imposed on a company where failure to prevent or detect market misconduct by an employee or officer is attributable to the company's negligence.

Civil liability

A company can attract civil liability for the conduct of its employees and agents, based on the doctrines of vicarious liability and agency, or if the acts of its employees and agents can be attributed to it.

⁶² Public Prosecutor v. Mohd Ghalib s/o Sadruddin [2010] SGDC 316, in which a deterrent sentence of six months' imprisonment was imposed on an accused person who had provided false information in a complaint to the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.

⁶³ Section 2 of the Interpretation Act.

Namely that the offence must have been committed with the 'consent and connivance' of and 'for the benefit of the corporation'; Section 236B of the SFA.

For example, a company can be taken to possess any information that an officer of the company came into possession of in the course of the performance of their duties as that officer, and if that officer knows or ought reasonably to know of any matter or thing because of their position, it is presumed (until the contrary is proved) that the company knows or ought reasonably to know that matter or thing; see Section 226(1) of the SFA, and the possible defence available under Section 226(2) of the SFA.

Legal representation

A company and its employees may be represented by the same counsel, so long as their interests are aligned and the requirements on conflicts within the Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules 2015 (PCR) are complied with. Where there is a risk of a conflict arising between the company and the individuals concerned, separate legal representation is recommended from the outset.

ii Penalties

Overview

Other than imprisonment, companies can be subject to most other forms of sanction, including fines, civil penalties or even disqualification from the right to carry out certain actions in the future. 66 Typically, financial penalties imposed on companies are higher than those imposed on individuals and some offence-creating provisions specifically provide for this.

DPAs

Under the DPA framework, companies can seek to avoid criminal prosecution in exchange for compliance with certain conditions.⁶⁷ DPAs are presently restricted to the offences in the new Sixth Schedule to the CPC.⁶⁸

To become effective, a DPA must be sanctioned by the High Court, which must decide that the DPA is in the interests of justice and that its terms are fair, reasonable and proportionate. Once the DPA has been completed and complied with, the Public Prosecutor can apply to the High Court to have a 'discharge amounting to an acquittal' granted in favour of the subject company.

Regulatory sanctions

Where the company or offence concerned falls under the purview of a specific regulator, additional sanctions may flow from the offence.⁶⁹

As alluded to above, SGX RegCo's powers of enforcement were recently expanded. From 1 August 2021, it has the powers to: (1) issue a public reprimand and require issuers to comply with specified conditions; (2) prohibit issuers from accessing the facilities of the market for a specified period or until any specified conditions are fulfilled; (3) prohibit issuers from appointing or reappointing a director or an executive officer for up to three years; and

⁶⁶ For example, where a company has engaged in discriminatory hiring practices, it may be barred by the Ministry of Manpower from applying for new immigration work passes for its employees for a specified period.

These conditions include: providing an admission of wrongdoing, paying a financial penalty disgorging profits, implementing programmes for corporate reform, and assisting in the investigation and prosecution of other wrongdoers. During the second reading of the Criminal Justice Reform Act 2018 (No. 19 of 2018) in Parliament, the then Senior Minister of State for Finance and Law Ms Indranee Rajah noted that the financial penalties under the deferred prosecution agreement regime would not be subject to a statutory maximum.

Namely those relating to corruption, money laundering, dealing with stolen property or the proceeds of crime, and falsification of records.

⁶⁹ Such sanctions may include the revocation of or conditions placed upon any required licence.

(4) require a director or an executive officer to resign. While SGX RegCo's powers under point (1) are non-appealable, its powers under points (2) to (4) are appealable before the Listing Appeals Committee.⁷⁰

iii Compliance programmes

Generally, the existence of a compliance programme does not itself amount to a legal defence to a criminal charge. It is nevertheless advisable for companies to implement such programmes, as they allow companies to uncover and address non-compliant aspects within the company. From a practical standpoint, it also allows the company to identify and address any potential loss-causing or liability risks.

In the event that the authorities decide to conduct a criminal investigation into a matter, the existence of a compliance programme (if properly enforced) may be used to persuade the authorities not to take criminal action against the company or individuals involved, or as a basis to enter into discussions for a DPA. If charges are brought against the company in relation to matters relating to the compliance programme, the fact that there is a compliance programme can also be relied upon in mitigation to seek a lower sentence.⁷¹

iv Prosecution of individuals

Assessment of liability

When an employee faces or has been charged with a criminal offence, the company should first ascertain whether the offending acts were committed in the course of employment. If so, the company should ascertain whether there is a risk of legal liability to it as a result of these acts.

To this end, the company should consider whether an internal (confidential or privileged) investigation should be undertaken. The ramifications for the company could be both legal (resulting in civil or criminal claims) and reputational.

Action against employees concerned

Separately, the company should consider whether any action⁷² can or should be taken against the employee at any of the following stages: (1) while the employee is being investigated by the authorities and prior to any criminal charges being brought; (2) during the pendency of the company's internal review; (3) after the internal review is completed and findings have been reached; (4) after the employee is charged in court, but not yet convicted; and (5) after the employee is convicted or – as the case may be – acquitted of the charge in court. A number of factors will have to be considered before reaching a decision at each stage.⁷³ It is not mandatory for a company to terminate or discipline the employee concerned for it to be considered as having cooperated with the state's investigations.

⁷⁰ https://www.sgx.com/media-centre/20210624-sgx-regco-expands-range-enforcement-powers.

⁷¹ See, for example, [2.15] and [2.16] of the CCCS Guidelines on the Appropriate Amount of Penalty in Competition Cases 2016. The existence of a compliance programme is a mitigating factor that may be taken into account in the adjustment of a financial penalty.

⁷² For example, dismissal, suspension or other disciplinary actions.

⁷³ These factors include the terms and content of the company's internal disciplinary policies, the employee's contract, the extent of any reputational impact, the seriousness of the alleged conduct, the likelihood of

Coordination between counsel

If both the company and the employee have engaged legal counsel in the course of a government investigation, it is possible for coordination to take place between both sets of counsel. However, before doing so, it is important for the parties to consider whether any conflict of interest exists that would prevent them from doing so.

It is also important for parties to consider whether common interest privilege should be asserted over any ensuing communications. It is prudent for parties to document the extent of the common interest at the outset, and before sharing any privileged material.

Moreover, all such communications must be conducted with care, so as not to breach the provisions in the PCR on the interviewing of witnesses,⁷⁴ or the laws pertaining to interfering with or obstructing justice.

Payment of employees' legal fees

Companies may pay the legal fees of its employees. Indeed, many companies obtain directors' and officers' liability insurance policies, which serve to indemnify the company's directors or officers to the extent expressly provided within the policy.

IV INTERNATIONAL

i Extraterritorial jurisdiction

In Singapore, unless expressly provided for by legislation, laws do not have extraterritorial application. The following are notable exceptions to this general position.

TSOFA

Section 34 of the TSOFA states that every person who, outside Singapore, commits an act or omission that, if committed in Singapore, would amount to certain key offences under the TSOFA⁷⁵ is deemed to have committed those acts or omissions within Singapore and can be charged, tried and punished accordingly. Section 34 also provides that where certain offences⁷⁶ are committed outside Singapore by a Singapore citizen, that person may be dealt with as though the offence was committed in Singapore.

ongoing loss or damage to the company, the seniority of the employees concerned, the level of cooperation extended to the company by the employees concerned and the presumption that one is innocent until proven guilty.

⁷⁴ See Rule 12 of the Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules 2015 on communications and dealings with witnesses.

⁷⁵ Section 3 of the TSOFA (prohibition against providing or collecting property for terrorist acts); Section 4 of the TSOFA (prohibition against provision of property and services for terrorist purposes); Section 5 of the TSOFA (prohibition against use or possession of property for terrorist purposes).

⁷⁶ Section 6 of the TSOFA (prohibition against dealing with property of terrorists); Section 8 of the TSOFA (duty to disclose property or information).

PCA

Section 37(1) of the PCA states that the PCA applies to Singapore citizens located outside Singapore.⁷⁷

CDSA

The CDSA deals with money laundering-related offences and the confiscation of benefits from drug dealing or criminal conduct and expressly defines 'criminal conduct' and 'drug dealing' to include the doing of such acts in Singapore 'or elsewhere'. The scope of the CDSA extends to any 'foreign drug dealing offence', 'foreign serious offence' and any property 'whether . . . situated in Singapore or elsewhere'. The scope of the CDSA extends to any 'foreign drug dealing offence', 'foreign serious offence' and any property 'whether . . . situated in Singapore or elsewhere'.

SFA.

The market conduct provisions under Part 12 of the SFA apply to acts occurring outside Singapore in relation to, among others, (1) securities or securities-based derivatives contracts of (a) corporations formed or doing business in Singapore or (b) business trusts whose trustees are formed or carry on business on behalf of the business trust in Singapore; (2) securities or securities-based derivatives contracts listed or traded in Singapore; and (3) financial benchmarks that are administered in Singapore.⁸⁰

ii International cooperation

Singapore has adopted various international conventions into its domestic law that facilitate the provision and obtaining of international assistance in criminal matters, including the provision and obtaining of evidence, the making of arrangements for parties to give evidence or assist in criminal investigations, forfeiture or confiscation of property, securing the custody of a person in transit and locating or identifying persons.⁸¹

Singapore is also party to the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, which provides a process through which countries in the region can request and provide assistance in the collection of evidence for criminal investigations.

The investigating authorities in Singapore also work with foreign regulatory bodies to promote international cooperation. For example, the Singapore Police Force is a member of Interpol. Similarly, MAS is a signatory to the IOSCO Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Consultation and Cooperation and the Exchange of Information. Pursuant to the SFA, MAS can assist its overseas counterparts in foreign investigative actions.⁸²

⁷⁷ The effect of this is that if a Singapore citizen commits an offence within the meaning of the PCA while outside Singapore, they can be dealt with as though their acts were committed within Singapore's boundaries.

⁷⁸ Section 2(1) of the CDSA.

⁷⁹ Section 3 of the CDSA.

⁸⁰ Sections 196, 205 and 213 of the SFA.

The key domestic legislation in this regard include the CDSA, the TSOFA, the Extradition Act and the Extradition (Commonwealth Countries) Declaration, the United Nations Act, and the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act (MACMA).

For example, under Section 172(1) of the SFA, MAS may, upon request, transmit information in its possession or order any party to furnish it with information. MAS may also order any person to furnish information directly to the foreign regulatory authority where there is an ongoing investigation or enforcement by the foreign authority; Section 172(1)(b) read with Section 172(2) of the SFA.

Extradition (both to and from) Singapore is possible, under the Extradition Act (EXA), which provides for the extradition of fugitives to and from foreign states with which Singapore has entered into an extradition treaty, and also a number of declared Commonwealth countries. Only individuals who have (or are alleged to have) committed offences within the definition of an 'extradition crime' under Section 2 of the EXA will qualify for extradition out of Singapore. The extradition processes provided for by the EXA are commonly used.

iii Local law considerations

In multi-jurisdictional investigations, a number of local law considerations are relevant, particularly where the disclosure or sharing of information is concerned.

Where a party is served an order to produce information under Section 22 of the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act and in good faith complies, that party is immune from civil or criminal action that would otherwise lie against him or her for breach of restrictions concerning the disclosure of information imposed.⁸³ However, where the request for information emanates from another type of foreign request, considerations of confidentiality, banking secrecy and data protection arise.

The PDPA mandates that data that an organisation has collected, and that can be used to identify an individual, cannot be used or disclosed unless that individual gives or is deemed to have given consent.⁸⁴ While the PDPA allows for disclosure of personal data without consent where, among other situations, the disclosure is necessary in the public interest or for any investigation or proceeding or where disclosure is made to a 'prescribed law enforcement agency' upon production of written authorisation,⁸⁵ it does not specifically provide for disclosure without consent where the request for disclosure emanates from a foreign court or investigatory body.

The Banking Act prohibits banks licensed in Singapore from disclosing 'customer information', ⁸⁶ except where provided for in the Act. ⁸⁷ A breach of these provisions will result in criminal liability for the bank or any bank officer involved. ⁸⁸ One exception where a bank may make disclosure of customer information without the customer's consent is where it is compelled to do so by law. ⁸⁹

⁸³ Section 24(1) of the MACMA.

⁸⁴ Section 13 of the PDPA.

⁸⁵ Which under the Schedule of the Personal Data Protection (Prescribed Law Enforcement Agencies) Notification 2014 and 2020 are currently limited to eight local enforcement agencies.

Which is defined as including any information relating to an account of a customer of the bank or any deposits of a customer of the bank; Section 40A of the Banking Act (BA).

⁸⁷ Section 47 of the BA.

⁸⁸ Section 47(6) of the BA.

⁸⁹ See the Third Schedule Part 1 of the BA.

V YEAR IN REVIEW

i Notable cases

On 5 May 2022, after a trial that lasted nearly 200 days, the two masterminds of Singapore's most serious case of market manipulation to date that wiped out more than US\$8 billion in the stock market were convicted by the Singapore High Court of 349 charges of market manipulation, deception and cheating financial institutions.⁹⁰

On matters of procedure, in a 2020 decision, the Court of Appeal expanded the scope of the prosecution's duty to disclose, noting the additional obligation to disclose a statement of a material witness regardless of whether the statement is favourable, neutral or adverse (in this case, an exculpatory witness).⁹¹ It left open the question whether this included the statement of a material witness called as a prosecution witness. In a recent decision, the High Court held that it does, and the prosecution ought to disclose the prior statements of its witnesses.⁹²

ii Impact of covid-19

Regulatory enforcement has remained robust in Singapore in spite of the pandemic. MAS released its Enforcement Report for July 2020 to December 2021. 93 The average time taken by MAS to complete reviews and investigations has decreased from 24 to nine months in criminal cases, and from 26 to 19 months in civil penalty cases. The latest Report also introduced a new section providing updates on the status of selected major cases, to provide greater transparency regarding its efforts to pursue these cases. 94

As for other investigating bodies, the CPIB noted a high clearance rate, completing investigations into 87 per cent of subjects investigated in 2021, despite the continued disruptions and challenges caused by the covid-19 pandemic – maintaining the highest clearance rate in the past five years that was achieved in 2020. Fast stated in its Annual Report for fiscal year 2020–2021 released in October 2021, CCCS also completed 51 cases in its fiscal year ending 31 March 2021, consistent with the annual figures since fiscal year 2017.

⁹⁰ The Straits Times, 'John Soh, Quah Su-Ling found guilty of 349 charges in Singapore's \$8b penny stock crash' (6 May 2022) at https://www.straitstimes.com/business/companies-markets/john-soh-quah-su-ling-found-guilty-in-singapores-8b-penny-stock-crash; https://www.mas.gov.sg/regulation/enforcement/enforcement-actions/2022/masterminds-behind-the-2013-penny-stocks-crash-convicted-on-multiple-charges-of-market-manipulation-and-cheating-of-financial-institutions.

⁹¹ Muhammad Nabill bin Mohd Fuad v. Public Prosecutor [2020] 1 SLR 984 at [39]-[42].

⁹² Pigg, Derek Gordon v. Public Prosecutor [2022] SHGC 5.

⁹³ https://www.mas.gov.sg/-/media/MAS/News-and-Publications/Monographs-and-Information-Papers/ENF-Report-20202021-PDF.pdf.

⁹⁴ These cases are the investigations into (1) Noble Group Limited; (2) Hyflux Ltd; (3) Eagle Hospitality Trust and (4) Hui Xun Asset Management Pte Ltd (formerly known as Envysion Wealth Management Pte Ltd).

⁹⁵ https://www.cpib.gov.sg/press-room/press-releases/050522-corruption.

⁹⁶ Available for download at https://www.cccs.gov.sg/resources/publications/annual-reports.

VI CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Singapore has not rested on its laurels despite its consistent high rankings as a leading financial centre in the Global Financial Centres Index and for its anti-corruption efforts in the Corruption Perceptions Index. Investigation work did not slow down despite challenges posed by the covid-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the consistent high completion rate. The various regulatory authorities also continue to work on enhancing the regulatory framework and enforcement regime. The proposed amendments to MAS's investigative and other powers is one clear example. It is also anticipated that the CAD, ACRA and MAS joint investigation into Noble Group Limited will be completed in the third quarter of 2022. Proposed amendments are completed in the complete of the power of 2022.

⁹⁷ See footnote 12.

⁹⁸ See footnote 93.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JOY TAN

WongPartnership LLP

Joy Tan is the joint head of the commercial and corporate disputes practice, the corporate governance and compliance practice, and the financial services regulatory practice.

Her main practice areas are banking, corporate and commercial dispute resolution, and contentious investigations. She also regularly advises on corporate governance and financial services regulatory matters under the Companies Act, Securities and Futures Act and other regulatory statutes, including in relation to corporate fraud, anti-money laundering issues and market misconduct. She has represented corporations and shareholders in disputes relating to fraud, minority oppression, corporate transactions and share valuations.

Joy graduated with first-class honours from Cambridge University. In 1992, she was awarded the UK Council of Legal Education prize at the non-vocational Bar exam. Joy is admitted to both the English Bar and the Singapore Bar. She joined the Singapore Legal Service as a justices' law clerk with the Singapore Supreme Court before entering private practice.

Joy is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, sits on the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) Panel of Arbitrators and is also a panel member of the Law Society disciplinary tribunals appointed by the Honourable Chief Justice under the Legal Profession Act.

JENNY TSIN

WongPartnership LLP

Jenny Tsin is the joint head of the employment practice and a partner in both the commercial and corporate disputes practice and the corporate governance and compliance practice.

Jenny is experienced in all aspects of employment laws, with particular focus on preventing and resolving disputes between employers and employees. In addition to employment-related disputes, Jenny's dispute resolution experience extends to shareholder disputes, commercial and contractual disputes, and claims relating to directors' duties, auditors' duties and other corporate governance matters, and she has experience in both litigation and arbitration.

On the investigations front, Jenny frequently handles sensitive and complex investigations relating to employee misconduct and workplace safety issues. Jenny has led

investigations relating to sexual harassment, conduct that potentially amounts to breaches of sanctions and other financial regulations, privacy breaches, and in landmark cases where workplace safety breaches led to loss of lives.

As a partner in the corporate governance and compliance practice, Jenny advises and speaks on provisions of the Securities and Futures Act, the Companies Act and other regulatory statutes. Jenny has an interest in issues relating to corporate fraud, anti-money laundering and insider trading. Jenny routinely advises and assists corporations in their investigations regarding such issues.

ONG PEI CHIN

WongPartnership LLP

Ong Pei Chin is a partner in the corporate and regulatory investigations and commercial and corporate disputes practices.

Pei Chin regularly advises clients on various governance and compliance issues under the Companies Act, Securities and Futures Act and SGX Listing Rules. She has practical experience reviewing compliance issues from a regulator's perspective from a stint at the Monetary Authority of Singapore. She has also obtained the International Compliance Academy's Advanced Certificate in Governance, Risk and Compliance, accredited under the Institute of Banking & Finance, scoring a distinction on the course.

Pei Chin advises and assists clients on regulatory investigations initiated by various bodies including Singapore Exchange Regulation, the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority, and the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore, as well as on internal investigations raising bribery and corruption concerns.

WONGPARTNERSHIP LLP

12 Marina Boulevard Level 28 Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 3 Singapore 018982 Tel: +65 6416 8000

Fax: +65 6532 5711/5722 joy.tan@wongpartnership.com jenny.tsin@wongpartnership.com peichin.ong@wongpartnership.com www.wongpartnership.com

ISBN 978-1-80449-091-4