GCC Competition Law and Anti-Trust Compliance Training Course

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4100 € (Per Person)

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Course Introduction / Overview:

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets are undergoing significant economic transformation, leading to increased regulatory scrutiny and robust enforcement of competition laws. Navigating this complex legal landscape is no longer optional but a critical necessity for sustainable business operations. This intensive training course provides a comprehensive A-to-Z guide to the principles, regulations, and practical applications of competition law and anti-trust compliance across the GCC. Drawing on foundational concepts articulated by leading scholars like Richard Whish in his seminal work "Competition Law," the program demystifies complex topics such as anti-competitive agreements, abuse of a dominant market position, and merger control regulations. Participants will gain a deep understanding of the legal frameworks in key jurisdictions like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. BIG BEN Training Center has designed this course to move beyond theoretical knowledge, focusing on real-world scenarios, regional case studies, and the strategic development of effective compliance programs. This ensures that attendees are not only aware of the rules but are also equipped to proactively manage competition-related risks, protect their organizations from substantial fines and reputational damage, and foster a culture of fair competition that supports long-term growth and market integrity.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- In-House Legal Counsel and Corporate Lawyers.
- Compliance Officers and Managers.
- Commercial and Sales Directors.
- Procurement and Supply Chain Managers.
- Business Development and Strategy Executives.
- Regulatory Affairs Specialists.
- Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) Professionals.
- Senior Management and Board Members.
- External Legal Advisors seeking regional specialization.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Telecommunications and Technology.
- Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance.
- Oil, Gas, and Energy.
- Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare.
- Construction and Real Estate.
- Retail and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG).
- Logistics and Transportation.
- Hospitality and Tourism.
- Governmental and quasi-governmental bodies.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Legal Affairs Department.
- Compliance and Risk Management Department.
- Sales and Marketing Department.
- Procurement and Contracting Department.
- Strategic Planning and Business Development.
- Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) Team.
- Internal Audit Department.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Identify and analyze horizontal and vertical anti-competitive agreements.
- Assess business practices for potential abuse of a dominant market position.
- Understand the nuances of merger control regulations and notification thresholds across the GCC.
- Develop and implement a robust and practical antitrust compliance program.
- Manage legal risks associated with pricing strategies, distribution channels, and joint ventures.
- Prepare for and respond effectively to investigations and dawn raids by competition authorities.
- Interpret the key provisions of competition laws in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other GCC states.
- Advise internal stakeholders on competition law implications for commercial decisions.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, practical, and engaging, ensuring that participants can immediately apply their learning in a professional context. We move beyond traditional lecture-based formats to create a dynamic learning environment that fosters deep understanding and skill development. The course heavily relies on the analysis of real-world case studies drawn from recent enforcement actions by GCC competition authorities, allowing participants to dissect complex legal issues and understand their practical consequences. Interactive group discussions, workshops, and simulation exercises, such as responding to a mock dawn raid, are central to our approach. These activities encourage collaborative problem-solving and allow attendees to explore different perspectives on challenging compliance scenarios. Our expert instructors act as facilitators, guiding discussions, providing personalized feedback, and sharing invaluable insights from their extensive experience in the field. This blended learning approach, combining expert instruction with hands-on application, ensures that participants leave the course with not only the necessary knowledge but also the confidence to navigate the intricate landscape of GCC competition law.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of GCC Competition Law

- Introduction to the economic principles of competition policy.
- Overview of the global and regional evolution of antitrust law.
- Detailed analysis of the primary competition laws across the GCC states (UAE, KSA, Qatar, etc.).
- Understanding the roles and powers of national competition authorities.
- Defining key concepts like 'undertaking', 'relevant market', and 'economic concentration'.
- The intersection of competition law with other regulatory areas like intellectual property.
- Identifying the main types of anti-competitive conduct.

Unit Two: Horizontal and Vertical Anti-Competitive Agreements

- Distinguishing between horizontal and vertical agreements.
- In-depth analysis of hardcore cartels including price-fixing and bid-rigging.
- Understanding market allocation and output restriction agreements.
- Examining information exchange and its potential risks.
- Analyzing vertical restraints such as resale price maintenance and exclusive dealing.
- Assessing the legality of selective and exclusive distribution systems.
- Reviewing block exemptions and criteria for individual exemptions.

Unit Three: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of Dominant Position

- The two-stage test for establishing abuse of dominance.
- Methods for defining the relevant market and assessing market power.
- Identifying exploitative abuses like excessive pricing.
- Analyzing exclusionary abuses such as predatory pricing and refusal to deal.
- Understanding tying, bundling, and loyalty rebates as abusive practices.
- Assessing the risks associated with discriminatory pricing and conditions.
- Developing internal guidelines to prevent abusive conduct by dominant firms.

Unit Four: Merger Control and Joint Venture Regulations in the GCC

- Overview of merger control regimes and notification requirements in the GCC.
- Determining when a transaction qualifies as a notifiable concentration.
- Understanding jurisdictional thresholds and filing procedures.
- The substantive assessment of mergers by competition authorities.
- Analyzing the role of remedies and commitments in gaining merger clearance.
- Specific considerations for joint ventures under competition law.
- Managing cross-border merger filings involving GCC jurisdictions.

Unit Five: Enforcement, Investigations, and Building a Compliance Culture

- Powers of investigation of GCC competition authorities, including dawn raids.
- Understanding the process of a competition law investigation from start to finish.
- Navigating leniency programs and their strategic benefits.
- Calculating and mitigating risks of financial penalties and other sanctions.
- The fundamentals of building an effective antitrust compliance program.
- Conducting competition law audits and risk assessments.
- Training employees and fostering a company-wide culture of compliance.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

As digital platforms increasingly dominate GCC markets, how should traditional abuse of dominance principles be adapted to address novel anti-competitive conduct in the digital economy?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself through its unwavering focus on the specific legal and commercial context of the GCC region. While other programs may offer a general overview of competition law, our curriculum is meticulously tailored to address the unique regulations, enforcement priorities, and market dynamics of jurisdictions like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. We move beyond a simple recitation of legal statutes to provide deep, practical insights into how these laws are applied in reality, using recent regional case studies to illustrate critical compliance challenges. The course emphasizes a proactive, strategic approach to compliance, teaching participants not just how to react to legal issues but how to build a robust compliance culture that prevents them. It bridges the gap between legal theory and business practice, ensuring that legal and commercial professionals alike can understand the implications of competition law on their day-to-day decisions. The methodology prioritizes interactive problem-solving over passive learning, equipping attendees with the practical skills and critical thinking necessary to navigate complex antitrust scenarios with confidence and strategic foresight, making it an unparalleled professional development experience.