



## CFO Foreign Sponsors' Watch List

There are a number of modus operandi employed in marrying Filipinas by foreigners for reasons not related to getting married at all. Multiple sponsorship pertains to the practice of sponsoring multiple Filipinas for marriage, which means that a foreigner has been married or engaged to a Filipina more than once, some may have ended in divorce, amicable or otherwise, or death. Serial sponsorship, on the other hand, refers to the practice of marrying one or more Filipinas where a foreigner has a history of domestic violence, abuse, abandonment, undetermined death, involvement in human trafficking, and other derogatory record.

While inclusion in the Watchlist does not prevent the Filipina to travel overseas or marry her foreign fiancé, it forewarns fiancé(e)s, spouses and partners about the personality, marital history, record or past of the foreigner. The Filipina has the last say whether to accept the proposal or not. Through the database, the CFO wanted to prevent illegal acts hiding in the guise of intermarriage and perpetrated against Filipinas that result to trafficking, slavery or domestic violence.

Eleven years ago, the CFO conceptualized a software database wherein names of all foreigners marrying Filipinas or Filipinos can be checked to spot marital fraud, deception and those with undesirable records. It was 1999 then, and the practice before was to crosscheck the names manually, against a folder full of papers. The plan was to speed up the process by automating the manual system. A year later, in 2000, a customized software was developed by CFO that can verify names in seconds. It also contains profiles of erring foreigners, case histories and other pertinent personal information involving spouses and partners. If a name gets a positive hit, the system can pull up previous information regarding that individual, including past transgressions in the country.

The software can run on minimal system requirements and is enhanced every year by CFO programmers. Right now, the serial and multiple sponsorship database is an integral part of the Guidance and Counseling Information System (GCIS) of the CFO.

Information contained in the database is real time and names are added on a daily basis or as the need arises. The system is hosted both on a separate and redundant servers and has multiple firewalls to protect it from cyber attacks.

The database keeps track of the following: (1) Filipinos married to foreigners, (2) foreign and Filipino nationals included in the CFO watchlist, (3) Filipinos who attended the guidance and counseling more than once, and (4) foreign nationals who sponsored more than once, with or without derogatory records.

To date, the database had foiled attempts by 5,991 foreigners to marry Filipinas on a multiple basis; identified 2,582 Filipino fiancées/ spouses who attended the guidance and counseling more than once; included 58 Filipino fiancées/ spouses in the CFO watch list; and keeps track of 251 foreign nationals in its watch list.

From January to December 2017 there were 20,773 spouses/partners of foreign nationals who underwent guidance and counseling session.