

Sri Lanka

1 Project Summary

Project Title:

Creating a Public Affairs Division/ Communications Office in the CIABC

Priority Area for Reform:

Supporting Active Public Involvement

Implementing Institution:

Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABC)

Contact Person:

Piyasena Ranasinghe, Director General (CIABC)

Beginning and End of the Project:

Beginning: 01st March 2007

End: 1st December 2007

2 Project Context

Which deficiencies and/or problems that allow corruption to proliferate does the project address and aim to resolve? Please outline the related current legal or institutional framework and its weaknesses or the exact circumstances that require improvement:

Sri Lanka has an increasing level of corruption, as reflected in being jointly ranked in 78th place among 159 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. Stakeholders have reached a consensus that a rising level of indifference, acceptance and ignorance of society are contributory factors for this high corruption ranking. In the aftermath of the Tsunami, CIABC with the support of donor agencies has sought to raise awareness of anti-corruption issues. However, this could be improved by providing appropriate information in a concerted and meaningful manner to the public. The Commission is presently equipped with resources only to conduct investigations and prosecutions. No information is made available regarding the Commission's activities in a coordinated manner. This leaves room for irresponsible news reporting and speculative information not based on facts and figures. The CIABC has identified that the setting up of a Public Affairs Division / Communications Office will create an avenue within the Commission for dissemination and management of proper information. This would improve performance statistics such as cases under investigation, successful prosecutions etc. that could be distributed from a qualified source without breaching any rule of confidentiality or the releasing of any information that would in any way jeopardize the process of investigation.

3 Expected Outcome of the Project

In relation to the above mentioned deficiencies and/or problems, which concrete improvements are expected to be achieved through the project? In which way does the project help to curb corruption?

The creation of a professionally organized and fully trained office that is responsible for providing the relevant information will keep the public informed about the working of the Commission. This division would be in a position to; take effective measures to encourage public discussion through systematic awareness campaigns; prepare and implement education programs; encourage public participation; promote legislative and other measures for whistleblower protection; and to involve non-government organizations in monitoring public activities and procurement functions.

4 Components – Main Activities – Method

What are the project's components, implementation steps, main activities and/or methods to achieve the above mentioned outcome and objectives?

Act No. 19 of 1994 which established the CIABC will be reviewed in order to identify the amendments necessary for the creation of a separate publicity division within the Commission. (A study identifying the deficiencies of the existing system is envisaged under the ongoing UNDP Project). The CIABC will have to lobby the government for increased budget and increased cadre to set up and recruit staff for this division. New information kits and manuals would have to be designed and regular press releases and press conferences held regarding the activities of the Commission. Copies of the Annual Report will be made available to all key government institutions. Improvements have to be made to the CIABC website primarily by developing its content. In effect, the project could fully implement the objectives identified in the third pillar of the Action Plan.

5 Involvement of non-governmental actors and donors

In which way does the project involve civil society actors or other stakeholders and have they been consulted during the project development phase?

The Project envisages interaction with non-governmental organizations and private sector agencies in all its activities.

6 Related Projects under the 2nd Implementation Cycle

Is the project linked to reforms accomplished under the Action Plan's 2nd Implementation Cycle? In which way does this project follow up previous activities?

Despite the absence of a coordinated and planned strategy to involve the public, the awareness programs conducted presently target police officers, public servants and farmer organizations associated with divisional secretariats in the outlying provincial council agricultural areas.

7 Project Financing and Budget

Approved or estimated overall project budget:

Project Budgets have to be developed.

Is external funding required?

May be required. External funding requirements will be identified once the Project Budget has been developed.

If external funding is required, have donor organizations been approached yet, and have any commitments been made?

CIABC has already entered into an agreement with the UNDP as a part of a modernization process. A study will be conducted through this Project which will assess infrastructure, transport, communication and technical needs etc.

If external funding is required, what percentage of the total project costs requires external funding?

Based upon a 'needs study' to be conducted, it may be noted tentatively that cost requirements outside the present government allocation and staff would have to be covered by external funding.

8 Technical Assistance

Is external technical assistance required? Have relevant agencies been approached and have they made any commitments?

External Technical Assistance may be required at the time of setting up of the Publicity Division and for the designing and development of information kits and manuals.