

ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific



Capacity Development and
Governance Division
Asian Development Bank



Anti-Corruption Division
Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development

www.oecd.org/corruption/asiapacific

11th Steering Group Meeting
Manila, Philippines 27-28 May 2008

Minutes of the 11th Steering Group Meeting held on 27-28 May 2008 in Manila, Philippines

Participants

Member countries and jurisdictions: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; People's Republic of China; Cook Islands; Fiji Islands; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Vietnam.

Advisory Group: American Bar Association–Rule of Law Initiative (ABA); OECD Donor Assistance Committee (DAC) Governance Network (GOVNET) Anti-Corruption Task Team (ACTT); Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID); German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)/German Technical Cooperation (gtz); Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC); Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Transparency International (TI); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Observer countries: Afghanistan; Brunei Darussalam.

Secretariat: Asian Development Bank (ADB); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Summary of the discussions

1. Opening

The Secretariat of the ADB/OECD Initiative for Asia-Pacific opened the Steering Group meeting. The meeting agenda was adopted.

2. Reports on members' recent anti-corruption reforms, and reports by observer countries

Delegations from the Initiative's members delivered oral reports on selected anti-corruption reforms and their progress in implementing the Action Plan since the Group's 10th meeting in September 2007. The Group agreed that oral reports on reform progress would henceforth be delivered by thematic area and that more time would be devoted to discussions of the countries' experience.

Observer countries also reported on their recent anti-corruption reform efforts and outcomes.

3. Reports by the Advisory Group and by observer organizations

Members of the Advisory Group provided information on their activities in support of Asia-Pacific countries' anti-corruption efforts.

4. Activity report by the Secretariat

The Secretariat reported on the progress in the implementation of the Initiative's Strategy and Work Plan 2007-2008 since the 10th Steering Group meeting.

Policy dialogue and policy analysis:

As a follow up to the Initiative's thematic review on mutual legal assistance, extradition and recovery of proceeds of corruption, the Secretariat

- published and disseminated the final report including a database on treaties and legislation governing MLA and extradition in Asia-Pacific; informed the Group about efforts by China and Thailand to translate the document into Mandarin and Thai; and informed the Group that APEC ACT was endeavoring to develop a report that would complement the Initiative's thematic review and cover economies that are members of APEC but not members of the Initiative; and
- established an online database on treaties and legislation governing MLA and extradition in Asia-Pacific (www.oecd.org/corruption/asiapacific/mla).

To make the outcome of the policy dialogue accessible, the Secretariat

- prepared and published online (www.oecd.org/corruption/asiapacific/resources) country information sheets for all members of the Initiative that inform about priorities, institutions and analysis relevant for the fight against corruption; suggested that members provide suggestions for additional information to the Secretariat.

Capacity building:

As a follow up to the Initiative's regional technical seminars held in 2007 the Secretariat

- published the proceedings of the 5th regional technical seminar on Conflict of Interest;
- published the proceedings of the 7th regional technical seminar on Fighting Bribery in Procurement;
- prepared the publication of the proceedings of the 6th regional technical seminar on MLA and Asset Recovery.

Strengthening partnerships and disseminating information about the Initiative

The Secretariat prepared and disseminated

- newsletters in September 2007 and January 2008; and
- the Initiative's Annual Report 2007.

Funding of the work of the Initiative

The Secretariat informed the Group that

- the Governments of Australia, Japan, and Germany made financial contributions to support the work of the Initiative; and
- the Korean Government provided in-kind support by seconding a senior expert to the Initiative's Secretariat for six months (January to June 2008).

The Secretariat thanked the Advisory Group for their support to the Initiative.

5. Proposals for the Initiative's Strategy and Work Program 2009-2011

The Steering Group discussed priorities and strategic objectives for 2009-2011, based on a Secretariat paper. Member countries

- reaffirmed that the overall goal of the Initiative is to support members in implementing international anti-corruption standards as set forth in the UN Convention against Corruption;
- reiterated that exchange of experience and measuring progress are essential mechanisms of the Initiative; that member countries would deliver written and oral reports on progress at Steering Group meetings as a basis for the exchange of experience; suggested that oral country reports could put more emphasis on challenges encountered in designing or implementing anti-corruption reform and on the assessment of the reforms' effectiveness;
- agreed to take stock of anti-corruption policies and frameworks approximately once every two years; and suggested that the stocktaking reports cover explicitly standards set out in the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in light of the possible establishment of a review mechanism under UNCAC;

- confirmed their interest in carrying out country-specific reviews on a voluntary basis and requested the Secretariat to develop a detailed draft methodology for such reviews for discussion and adoption at the 12th Steering Group meeting;
- agreed that the biennial reports on design of reform projects and their implementation would be merged with the mechanism of oral reports on reform progress; and suggested that reports on specific reform projects would serve as examples of good practice;
- agreed to continue to conduct thematic reviews and technical seminars on priority areas; suggested that future reviews and seminars could also cover anti-corruption mechanisms in specific sectors; collected a non-exhaustive longlist of possible themes for both thematic reviews and technical seminars; and mandated the Secretariat to collect members' suggestions for priorities for future thematic reviews and technical seminars members in writing;
- endorsed the Initiative's policy to accept new members based on the consensus principle, and to maintain and enhance partnerships with other relevant constituencies;
- endorsed the Initiative's proactive communication policy, and agreed to provide input to the Initiative's newsletter on major reforms or upcoming events of regional interest;
- agreed that the Steering Group meetings should continue to be chaired by the Initiative's Secretariat;
- heard the Secretariat's report on the Initiative's funding mechanisms; and noted the suggestion that member countries of the Initiative evaluate the possibility to make financial contributions to the Initiative's work.

Based on this discussion, the Group requested the Secretariat to prepare a Draft Strategy and Work Program 2009-2011 for discussion and adoption at the 12th Steering Group meeting (November 2008).

6. Reforms of frameworks and practices for curbing corruption in public procurement

Delegations reported on measures taken to curb corruption in public procurement since the adoption of the final report on the Initiative's first thematic review on Curbing Corruption in Public Procurement in Asia and the Pacific in May 2006.

The Group agreed that further reports on reform in this area would be conducted in the framework of the Initiative's existing mechanisms for oral and written report on reform progress.

7. Upcoming events and meetings of the Steering Group

The Steering Group confirmed that the 12th Steering Group meeting will be held on 24-25 November 2008 and hosted by the Government of Singapore; it will be followed immediately by the 6th Regional Anti-Corruption Conference for Asia-Pacific that is scheduled for 26-28 November 2008. The Group agreed that the 6th Regional Anti-Corruption Conference for Asia-Pacific should focus on the supply side of bribery and endorsed the outline suggested by the Secretariat and Singapore as the host of the Conference. The Steering Group thanked Singapore for hosting the events.

The Steering Group welcomed the information that the Initiative's 13th Steering Group meeting will be hosted by Macao, China in the week of 6-10 April 2009.