

Self Assessment Report on Project Implementation

Korea:

Whistleblower protection and reward

Pillar 1 – Developing effective and transparent systems for public service

Implementing agency/ contact: Protection & Reward Division, Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC), Director KANG Eunho

Project budget: 460 million won

Starting date: January 1, 2003

Closing date: December 31, 2003

Project objectives

The project aims at providing an environment where those who encountered corrupt acts can come forward with the truth without fear and encouraging whistleblowing actions by providing appropriate rewards.

Project inputs

Protection of identity and physical safety of whistleblowers

- To prohibit disclosing or implying identities of informants without consent and request disciplinary actions against violators of this prohibition
- To provide safety protection in cooperation with competent police offices when relatives and/or inmates of informants are in danger of being physically attacked

Prevention of reprisals against informants and punishment for avengers

- To take preventive measures for possible reprisals
- To request withdrawal of retaliatory actions, disadvantageous to or discriminative against informants, or transfer of informants to other positions
- To request disciplinary actions and levy 10 million won or less fines on those who commit reprisals
- Provision of financial rewards for informants
- To give a 2-10 percent share of direct increase of public agencies' revenues resulting from whistleblowing acts, not exceeding 200 million won

Project outputs

- Protection of Physical Safety (4 cases): Protective actions taken for those who requested safety measures in cooperation with competent police agencies
 - Prevention of Retaliatory Actions (29 cases): Request made to the authorities concerned to deter any attempt of reprisal
 - Withdrawal of retaliatory actions and transfer of informants to other positions (6 cases)
 - Provision of financial rewards paid to informants (2 cases, approximately 70 million won in total)
-

ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific

The Secretariat

Project overall assessment

Whistleblowing system was introduced for the first time in Korea as KICAC was established on January 25, 2002. The system is regarded as one of the most effective institutional tools to prevent corruption. The whistleblower protection and reward system has now entered into a stable phase in a relatively short period since introduced, which is attributable to establishment of detailed guidelines and active implementation.

Follow-up action

Project evaluations and informant surveys by a professional agency are planned to identify shortcomings of whistleblower protection under the system and required improvements, focused on strengthening the punishment degree, transferring responsibility of substantiation, and enhancing effectiveness of personnel circulation.

Efforts will be made to foster organizational culture and environment where whistleblowers are decently treated. Incentives like special promotion and preferential right to select job position are to be adopted. The ceiling of financial rewards for whistleblowers is planned to be raised or removed to make the system more effective.
