

Supporting the fight against Corruption in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative

Governments around the globe seek to curb corruption to counter its negative effects on political stability, welfare, economic development, and international trade and investment. Standards in the fight against corruption and bribery have been enshrined in international instruments such as the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption.

Anti-Corruption Initiative

In order to meet these international anti-corruption standards, governments in Asia-Pacific have resolved to cooperate in the fight against corruption as early as 1999, when they launched the [Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific](#) under the joint leadership of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Anti-Corruption Action Plan

The [Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific](#), developed in the framework of this Initiative, sets out the goals and standards for sustainable safeguards against corruption in the economic, political and social spheres of countries in the region. To date, 28 countries and jurisdictions from Asia and the Pacific have endorsed the Plan and have agreed on an implementation mechanism to achieve its standards.

The Anti-Corruption Action Plan [sets high anti-corruption standards](#) and [brings about concrete changes](#) in the region's anti-corruption landscape. The Plan addresses corruption under three Pillars: (1) developing effective and transparent systems for public service (2) strengthening anti-bribery actions and promoting integrity in business operations, and (3) supporting active public involvement. The Plan and its implementation have earned the Initiative recognition from governments, international organizations, civil society, donors, and the private sector.

Members of the Initiative

Countries and economies of the Asian and Pacific region that have endorsed the Anti-Corruption Action Plan and committed to its goals are: Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; People's Republic of China; Cook Islands; Fiji Islands; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Republic of Palau; Papua New Guinea; The Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Vanuatu; and Vietnam.

Membership of the Initiative is open to any economy in Asia and the Pacific that: recognizes the need for action against corruption and the benefits of sharing knowledge and experience across borders; is actively taking steps to implement anti-corruption measures; and commits to undertake reforms under the framework and standards of the Action Plan, and to participate in the Initiative's review mechanisms.

Organizational structure

The Initiative's [Steering Group](#) comprise representatives of the Initiative's member governments and defines the Initiative's priorities and activities to support the members' anti-corruption reforms. The [Advisory Group](#), which includes relevant international organizations, donors, civil society, business organizations, and other constituencies that support the Initiative, provide technical advice to the Steering Group and mobilize resources. A small [Secretariat](#), run jointly by ADB and OECD, supports the Steering Group.

Implementation mechanism

The Action Plan sets out an implementation mechanism with three main components: fostering policy dialogue and measuring progress; providing analysis to support the policy dialogue; and capacity building to enable members to thoroughly implement the reforms. Strong partnerships between member countries and with relevant regional and international organizations underpin this mechanism. Implementation of the Action Plan through this mechanism also helps members of the Initiative to achieve the standards embodied in other international anti-corruption instruments, such as the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption.

Fostering policy dialogue and measuring progress

Policy dialogue and measuring progress in anti-corruption reform are at the core of the Action Plan's implementation mechanism. They are key means to foster the establishment of strong and sustainable safeguards against corruption in Asian and Pacific countries.

Sharing experience inspires reform

Policy dialogue takes place during [Steering Group meetings](#), held on average once every eight months. Delegates at the meetings discuss their countries' efforts to implement the Action Plan, assess developments and progress, and exchange experience about successes, challenges, and failures in anti-corruption reforms.

Policy dialogue also takes place during the Initiative's [Regional Anti-Corruption Conferences](#), held every two to three years. The Conferences provide a forum for exchanging knowledge and experience among governments, civil society, business organizations, and the donor community. The conferences build networks among concerned stakeholders; foster innovative anti-corruption strategies tailored to Asian and Pacific countries' needs; and allow for evaluation of achievements, challenges and future priorities.

Providing analysis to support the policy dialogue

Policy reviews to identify priorities

The regular reviews of reforms undertaken by members help identify priorities at both country and regional levels. Members took stock of their legal and institutional frameworks to fight corruption in 2004 and in 2006. The report on the status of [Anti-Corruption Policies in Asia-Pacific](#) gives a comprehensive overview of these frameworks in the Initiative's members.

Areas of regional concern are the subject of in-depth thematic reviews. [Curbing Corruption in Public Procurement](#) was the first review published in September 2006. A second review concerned frameworks and practices for [Mutual Legal Assistance, Extradition and Recovery of Proceeds of Corruption](#) in 2007. A review on the

[Criminalisation of Bribery Offences under the UNCAC](#) will conclude in 2010.

The Initiative has also agreed to conduct [voluntary country reviews](#). The purpose of the reviews is to examine in depth a member's anti-corruption efforts in selected areas. The reviews will help identify not only a member's achievements but also its needs for capacity building. They will also facilitate the exchange of experience and dissemination of best practices among all members. A review methodology was adopted in June 2009. The Initiative's Secretariat is now seeking volunteer countries and financial support for the first two reviews as a pilot project. Thereafter, the Initiative will refine its methodology before further reviews are conducted.

Stocktaking and thematic reviews increase the understanding of corruption risks inherent in countries' institutional settings and practices. They also serve as [benchmarks for measuring progress](#) and help identify needs for reform.

Building capacity to fight corruption

The Initiative also provides support through capacity building and expert advice to meet the needs expressed by the Initiative's members.

Capacity building seminars

To support progress in priority areas for reform, the Initiative conducts [regional technical seminars](#). Seminar topics have ranged from criminal prosecutions, public procurement, international co-operation in criminal matters to corruption prevention and political economy of corruption. These technical seminars bring together experts and policy makers from the region and beyond to strengthen capacity, foster dialogue, and encourage policy reform. Proceedings of the seminars are published to disseminate the expert findings to a wider audience.

Technical advice

A vast network of partners contribute [technical advice and experience](#) to the Initiative's work. Experts from member countries of ADB and the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions participate in technical seminars and contribute their expertise to reports and studies. Their experience is thus shared with their counterparts from the Initiative's members. Specialists from international organizations, the private sector, civil society and donors also offer advice on policy design and implementation.

Partnerships and alliances in the fight against corruption

To underpin the support of Asian and Pacific governments in the fight against corruption, the Initiative has built strong partnerships with the private sector, civil society, donors, and regional and international organizations actively involved in combating corruption.

The [Advisory Group](#) serves as a forum for these partners to coordinate their efforts in support of the governments of the region. The Group brings together donors - currently the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Governance Network (GOVNET) of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and its Anti-Corruption Task Team - as well as international organizations and constituencies actively involved in the fight against corruption in the region: the American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative, the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), Transparency International (TI), the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.

The Initiative also works in close partnership with the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions and other OECD bodies, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and various other regional organizations.

More information and contacts

Website and newsletters

The Initiative's website www.oecd.org/corruption/asiapacific provides more information on the work of the Initiative, its members and its partners. The Initiative also publishes a newsletter highlighting upcoming events and developments in anti-corruption work of the Initiative's members. For more information and requests, please contact the Initiative's Secretariat.

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