

## **ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Feb. 2023)**

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**[2023 Report on the Work Plan]**  
**“Protecting Rights and Interests of the People and Promoting  
Korea with Integrity”**

*Substantively protecting the rights and interests of the people,  
improving systems experienced by the people, and ranking in the top 20  
of the Corruption Perception Index*

(3 February 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) reported in writing on February 2 about the 2023 major work plan for ensuring “Korea with integrity, where the rights and interests of the people are protected.” Five major projects in 2023 by the ACRC are as follows:

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**① Proactively resolve people’s grievances and social conflicts,  
focusing on the field**

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- **Resolve difficulties in the livelihoods of ordinary people and small business owners through outreach civil complaints consultation.**

**Proactively resolve people’s grievances on the spot** by providing “**Onsite Outreach Service** (100 times)” for underrepresented areas and vulnerable social groups. Actively resolve **grievances of small-sized companies and small business owners** suffering from managerial difficulties through onsite consultation by holding “**Onsite meeting for business grievances** (once a month).”

② Swiftly resolve collective complaints (100 people or more) before growing into social conflicts.

Focus policy capacity on the resolution of long-standing collective complaints due to social conflicts by newly establishing a “**Collective Complaints Mediation and Resolution TF**” and enhancing onsite mediation among relevant agencies.

③ Essentially resolve frequent complaints through planned investigation.

In case of frequent complaints or issues that require a complete nationwide overhaul, identify recurring problems through “**Planned Investigation of Grievance Complaints**” and seek fundamental solutions, such as improving deficient legal and institutional factors.

【Planned Investigation of Grievance Complaints Initiatives (provisional)】	
✓ (Safety) overhaul road signs to prevent traffic accidents	✓ (Environment) designate limited areas for livestock farming concerning residents affected by the bad smell from livestock barns
✓ (Inconveniences of living) ease inconveniences induced by insufficient EV charging facilities	✓ (Vulnerable social groups) relieve tax burdens on workers who have been unfairly dismissed

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② **Actively reflect the voices of the people in policies**

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① Policy-making with speed focusing on public proposals based on the living empathy

Proactively support the “policy-making based on public proposals,” including by reviewing public proposals submitted to the “Public proposal channel of the Presidential office” to seek tasks in the review of policy-making, analyzing them in connection with and integrating with big data of civil complaints, and promoting public deliberation through public debates.

Raise first-hand awareness of the people through strict management of implementation regarding **tasks in policy-making**. Moreover, reorganize “Public Proposal System” into **Integrated Public Communication Portal** to allow easier and more convenient communication for the people.

② **Enhance the issuance of civil complaints warnings and the effectiveness of policies through scientific analysis of civil complaints.**

Systematically analyze **13 million** civil complaints and proposals accumulated on e-People **a year** (as of 2022) through the **civil complaints analysis system** to **enhance the effectiveness of policies** and proactively utilize them to **improve the lives of the people**.

While identifying and managing risks and **improving unreasonable systems** by analyzing civil complaints regarding major current state affairs (3 major reforms) through “**Planned Analysis**,” **detect factors compromising the safety of the people in the early stage and issue disaster and safety warnings** based on big data of civil complaints.

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③ **Improve corruption and unfair practices and promote the level of integrity**

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① **Eradicate the illicit use of public funds, such as subsidies.**

**Strengthen the management of unlawful receipt of subsidies** provided to private or social groups to **eradicate practices with regard to the illicit use of national finance**.

While receiving reportings at ordinary times through the “**Center for reporting unlawful receipt of welfare subsidy**”, plan to run an **intensive**

**reporting period** (scheduled from May to July) and take strong measures against the unlawful receipt.

**Enable data input unlawful receipt on the system at any time** (currently, twice a year) through **Clean Portal** and **expand public disclosure of information of unlawful receipt and recovery by each agency and project.**

In addition, plan to **carry out a joint inspection in cooperation with relevant agencies** concerning **vulnerable areas with frequent unlawful receipts** and **reflect the status of unlawful receipt by each agency in budget planning for the next year** in order to encourage efforts of each agency to actively eradicate the unlawful receipt.

② **Enhance the integrity capacity of the public sector and overhaul corruption-causing factors of laws and regulations.**

**Conduct more airtight assessment** by expanding institutions (from 569 (2022) to 670 (2023)) subject to the “**Comprehensive Integrity Assessment**” that evaluates the level of integrity and anti-corruption efforts of every level of institution.

**Expand integrity training programs focused on experiences and participation**, such as integrity education based on discussion, and implement measures to **facilitate institution-led integrity education** in order to **increase the completion rate of integrity training**, the mandatory education pursuant to the law.

Moreover, **identify and mitigate corruption-causing factors of laws**, such as availability of preferential treatment and conflict of interest with regard to the enactment and amendment of **laws, concerning ordinary**

**people and state affairs tasks, to prevent corruption risks in advance and carry out a complete evaluation of local statutes, such as by-laws of local governments (100,000 laws), in stages by 2024.**

③ **Enhance protection and support for corruption and public interests whistleblowers.**

**Standardize regulations regarding whistleblower protection and support, separately stipulated in five anti-corruption laws, including Public Interest Whistleblower Prevention Act, to prevent confusion among the people. In addition, standardize the provision rate of reward (4-30%) for whistleblowers at 30% and adjust or eliminate the upper limit of rewards (currently 3 billion won).**

Moreover, **swiftly handle protection cases by improving procedures of handling cases, such as regularizing a preliminary review meeting on whistleblower protection cases, and plan to enhance the effectiveness of protection measures by clarifying violation of protection regulations in standards of disciplinary measures in public institutions.**

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**④ Lay the foundation of a fair society of which the youth can have first-hand awareness**

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① **Root out hiring irregularities in public institutions.**

Enable reporting and reception of reporting of hiring irregularities at any time through the “**Integrated center for reporting hiring irregularities** (established in Jan. 2023),” dedicated to fair employment, and carry out a **complete investigation of employment status** within public institutions.

Moreover, **collectively overhaul employment regulations (1,300) in public**

**service-related organizations** and promote **comprehensive and systematic measures to eradicate hiring irregularities in the public sector** by setting standards for fair employment of **non-public officials, such as lifetime contract public workers**, which have been a blind spot.

② **Promote the fairness of systems and the operation process of national qualification examinations.**

**Improve the system recognizing public duty-related careers as special cases** regarding **professional examinations** (15 types), including tax accountants and patent agents, which has been **an entry barrier for the youth.**

**Implement disadvantageous measures concerning examination against public officials who faced disciplinary actions** and extend the valid period of official test scores, such as language tests, to lessen the burden of preparation for professional examinations in high demand among the youth.

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⑤ **Reorganize the administrative appeals system focused on the convenience of the people**

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① **Realize a one-stop service of administrative appeals.**

**Promote the integration of the Central Administrative Appeals Commission of ACRC and agencies selected by priority according to the needs of integration among 66 Specialized Administrative Appeals Agencies** operated under separate laws and **draw up the amendment of the Administrative Appeals Act by December 2023** and submit it to the National Assembly.

In addition, promote the integration of the “**online administrative appeals system**” where receiving, processing, and checking results of the administrative appeals take place in one place at once.

② Expand opportunities for relief of rights by promoting the accessibility to administrative appeals.

Improve the system to enable the people to **appoint public defendants even before filing administrative appeals** and use helps provided by legal professionals in preparing request forms. Moreover, **expand the institutions providing “Autofill request form service (EASY Administrative Appeals),”** where people can easily file administrative appeals without the help of professionals.

The ACRC, as **an agency overseeing the relief of rights and interests and prevention of corruption**, will make the utmost efforts to build **Korea with integrity that ensures the protection of the rights and interests of the people** and plans to have every capacity and proactively support to fulfill the national vision of the government, **“the Republic of Korea that is taking another leap forward and a nation of people prospering together.”**

## **ACRC, Gave a Presentation on the Implementation of the UNCAC at the APEC ACTWG Meeting**

*Sharing anti-corruption policies in Korea,  
including the Corruption Risk Assessment system and Public  
Institution Comprehensive Integrity Assessment*

(15 February 2023, ACRC)

On February 15, anti-corruption policy performance was shared at the 36<sup>th</sup> Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Working Group (ACTWG) meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) held for two days in the US.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) participated in the APEC ACTWG meeting and made a presentation on the Corruption Risk Assessment, Comprehensive Integrity Assessment of public institutions, and integrity and ethical management support for public institutions and companies.

Working-level officials from anti-corruption agencies of 21 APEC member economies, and anti-corruption experts from international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), participated in the APEC ACTWG meeting, a place where member economies share major anti-corruption trends and discuss international solidarity for anti-corruption.

The 2023 ACTWG meeting agenda included ▲ the APEC anti-corruption roadmap, ▲ policies regarding the business ethics of each member

economy, and ▲ implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). This meeting also held a workshop on anti-bribery.

ACRC, an anti-corruption agency in Korea, gave a presentation on the major implementation of UNCAC at the meeting. The presentation included ▲ the results of the Corruption Risk Assessment of regulations in public institutions which were conducted from 2020 to 2022 and ▲ the result of the 2022 Public Institution Comprehensive Integrity Assessment, integrating the existing assessment systems.

ACRC also shared the anti-corruption technical assistance sharing “Clean Portal,” a corruption and public interest reporting system, in cooperation with UNDP, provided to Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo. Last but not least, ACRC made a presentation on the current status of integrity and ethical management policy support for public institutions and companies.

ACRC Assistant Chairperson of Planning and Coordination Office Lim Yoon-Ju said, “In the multiple economic crises, awareness of the importance of anti-corruption among the international community has increased even more. In particular, as anti-corruption cooperation among member economies from geographically neighboring Asia-Pacific regions has become necessary, ACRC will proactively participate in discussions and make much effort for international cooperation.”

## **ACRC-UNDP, Sharing Korea's Clean Portal for the Enhancement of Reporting Systems Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo**

*- Policy training provided for three UNDP Country Offices -*

(14 February 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hold a policy training webinar on the Clean Portal sharing project on February 14 for UNDP Country Offices (CO) in Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo.

The training is organized to provide insight into developing action plans for the improvement of each reporting system of the three partner countries of the project based on the practices of operation of Korea's Clean Portal, a digital corruption and public interest violation reporting system.

\* Clean Portal: digital corruption and public interest violation reporting system that allows any citizens to conveniently file a report on corrupt behaviors and violations of public interest

Following the project inception meeting of the Clean Portal sharing in November 2022, partner countries compared and analyzed their reporting systems and established plans to improve them based on the detailed data of Clean Portal provided by the ACRC.

The policy training for UNDP COs will be disseminated in local languages for the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) of Mongolia, the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, and the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (APC) of Kosovo.

The focus of the improvement differs depending on each country's policy context. Mongolia has submitted the Law on the Legal Status of Whistleblowers to the National Assembly, focusing on the establishment of a whistleblower protection system.

Uzbekistan focuses on the “One-stop service” of Clean Portal and seeks to enhance the efficiency of its reporting system (eanticor.uz) established in July 2021, while Kosovo focuses on promoting the usability, such as “Report Guide” of Clean Portal.

\* Report Guide: the function that allows reporters to conveniently fill in the reporting format by selecting types of reporting, types of violation, etc.

ACRC Assistant Chairperson of Planning and Coordination Office Lim Yoon-Ju said, “ACRC will do its best to ensure Korea's experiences of operating Clean Portal provide practical help for improving each country's reporting system through the policy training.”

**ACRC Engaging in Direct Communication with  
Public Institutions' Auditors,  
Thereby Gaining Impetus for Anti-Corruption and  
Integrity Policy Implementation**

*From 7 to 9 February, ACRC convened a meeting to discuss  
anti-corruption policy initiatives with officials from central  
administrative agencies, local district authorities, and public  
service-related organizations*

(7th Feb. 2023, ACRC)

From 7 to 9 February, a meeting to discuss anti-corruption policy initiatives, including those for eradication of corruption and hiring irregularities in public institutions, with auditors from central administrative agencies, metropolitan and local district governments, and public service-related organizations was held.

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) has convened a meeting to discuss anti-corruption and integrity policy initiatives with auditors from public institutions of various levels to share the future direction of the nation's anti-corruption and integrity policies and to concentrate policy capacities on improving the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

Anti-corruption and integrity policy initiatives to be pushed for throughout 2023 would be broadly categorized as follows: the eradication of hiring irregularities in the public sector; the identification and removal of corruption-prone areas, including prevention of government subsidy frauds; the internalization of anti-corruption institutional norms by public

institutions, such as the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants and the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act; the reinforcement of anti-corruption capacities in the public sector through comprehensive integrity assessment of public institutions and customized provision of integrity consulting and training; and the mitigation of corruption and acts detrimental to the public interest by facilitating reports on corruption and public interest whistleblowing and bolstering protection and reward for whistleblowers.

The ACRC launched an Integrated Center for Reporting on Hiring Irregularities in January this year that supervises fair hiring of public institutions to guarantee the youth fair job opportunities. In line with this, the ACRC discussed in priority measures to root out corrupt acts and irregularities in the hiring process of public institutions, including the exhaustive investigation into the employment status of public service-related organizations, the measures to support integrity training and consulting, and the establishment of the standard for fair employment of non-public officials by administrative agencies, etc.

In addition, the ACRC called for cooperation in the inspection of the implementation status related to the Act on the Prevention of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of Illicit Profits and discussed how to carry out a joint inspection with relevant ministries of areas prone to public subsidy frauds.

The ACRC held the auditor meetings on four occasions by type of public institutions in order of central administrative agencies on 7th, metropolitan governments on 8th, local district governments in the morning of 9th, and public service-related organizations in the afternoon

of 9th February. The meeting on 9th February in which the largest number of people participated was held online via the ACRC's official YouTube channel "Kwonik Vision."

Furthermore, to facilitate smooth discussion among the participants, the ACRC has shared relevant documents prior to the opening of the meeting, collecting opinions and reviewing whether or not the Commission would reflect the opinions into its policies after considering the appropriateness and effectiveness thereof.

The Chairperson of the ACRC, Jeon Hyun-Heui, said, "Improving for six years in a row, Korea hit a record high in the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index published by the Transparency International on Jan. 31. I believe this outcome is the fruit of the efforts made by the public institutions that have pushed ahead with anti-corruption and integrity policies alongside the ACRC," calling for "concerted efforts among public institutions in the journey toward a bona fide advanced country in the field of anti-corruption."

## **ACRC Issuing the Most Recommendations for Improvements in Prevention of Abuse of Discretion Among Draft/Revised Laws and Regulations of Central Administrative Agencies**

*Last year, ACRC conducted the Corruption Risk Assessment on 1,409 draft/revised laws and regulations, identifying 324 corruption-causing factors and issuing recommendations for improvements*

(Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

According to the result of the Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA)\* conducted last year on draft/revised laws and regulations in jurisdiction of central administrative agencies, recommendations for institutional improvements related to prevention of abuse of discretion accounted for 43.2%.

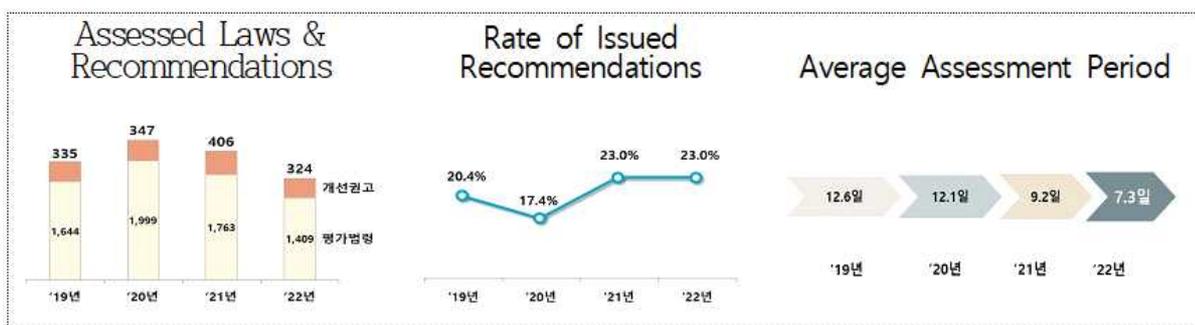
\* the Corruption Risk Assessment is a primary corruption control system aimed at preemptively eliminating corruption risks in the course of implementation of laws and regulations by analyzing, identifying, removing, and improving corruption-causing factors inherent in those laws and regulations from the very stage of drafting thereof

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) carried out the CRA on 1,409 draft/revised laws and regulations, and identified 324 corruption-causing factors out of 136 laws and regulations in relation to which it issued recommendations for institutional recommendations.

The CRA result has revealed that among the 324 factors identified, the number of regulations with a risk for the abuse of discretion by administrative agencies due to lack of concreteness and objectivity amounted to 140 cases (43.2%), followed by those with low predictability

of administration (63 cases, 19.5%) and likelihood of conflicts of interest (55 cases, 17%), etc.

The number of laws and regulations subject to the CRA has decreased by 14.3%p compared to 2019 (by 20.1%p year on year), however, the rate of recommendations issued this year has increased by 12.7%p (the same as that of previous year). Besides, it took the shortest time for the ACRC to complete the CRA since the introduction of the system in 2006, 7.3 days on average.



As for the major recommendations, the ACRC has recommended administrative agencies that they add more specificities to their ambiguous regulations which provide that the matters necessary for imposing administrative fines on violations of a duty to publicly announce the conditions for charging a subcontract price, etc. should be determined by the administrative agencies, thereby removing room for the abuse of discretion of the administrative agencies.

The ACRC has also strengthened protection of whistleblowers by recommending the agencies to include statements related to reports and filing of relevant documents in the scope of acts subject to prohibition of disadvantageous measures to protect corruption reporters and public interest whistleblowers.

In addition, the ACRC has had the agencies specify the scope of exclusion/recusal/avoidance for the members of their investigation committees to guarantee fairness in investigation of research irregularities in order to prevent conflicts of interest and increase the participation rate of external members.

On top of these, the recommendations for improvements included: stipulation of a qualification standard for compatriots with foreign nationality for working visit in the upper laws and regulations, rather than in the internal manual of the agencies (improving administrative transparency); public announcement of information on the caregiver qualification test on official websites of the agencies (securing administrative openness); and giving those presenting a specimen copy of library resources a prior notice of compensation claim (preventing passive administration and guaranteeing civil rights to claim).

The ACRC Vice-Chairperson Ahn Sung Wook said, “The ACRC has been striving to prevent corruption in the public sector through the CRA to date, and our assessment capacity for this year will be more focused on laws and regulations that substantially affect the public livelihood so that unfair or irrational laws and regulations do not infringe upon civil rights and interests