

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Feb. 2026)

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ACRC Announces “2026 Comprehensive Integrity Assessment Plan for Public Institutions”

- *Focus on disseminating the culture of integrity among younger generations and improving corruption-prone areas in local communities through expanded assessments including national/public universities and local public corporations/agencies, to support national task “Reform Corruption Prevention Systems to Realize the Rights of Citizens”*
- *Conduct systematic assessments by establishing the K-CLEAN assessment model, and strengthening the virtuous cycle of “assessment-diagnosis-improvement”*

(Feb. 11, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) announced the basic plan for the 2026 Comprehensive Integrity Assessment for Public Institutions on Feb. 11th.

The Comprehensive Integrity Assessment for Public Institutions is one of the major anti-corruption institutions designed to diagnose the level of integrity and corruption-prone areas within the public sector from the people’s perspective, hence improve institutions and practices to realize fair and accountable administration that citizens can tangibly experience.

2026 Comprehensive Integrity Assessment will target 580 public institutions, including central administrative agencies, local governments, offices of education, public corporations, quasi-governmental organizations, public medical institutions, and local councils.

To ensure the sustainability of anti-corruption reforms, particularly, the

assessment will expand its target and include more national and public universities, supporting younger generations in internalizing the values of fairness and accountability.

Last year's assessment of national and public universities covered 16 universities which recruit more than 2,500 freshmen. The number of universities will increase this year, covering a total of 33 institutions of 29 four-year national and public universities and 4 science and technology institutes.

For basic councils, the assessment plan is to focus on institutions that received lower grades (grades 4 and 5) last year.

Furthermore, for local corporations and public institutions under metropolitan governments, the number of target institutions will increase from last year's 19 – directly handling real estate – to 33 this year by adding institutions which managing transportation, urban railways, and infrastructure, to improve corruption risk areas in local fields.

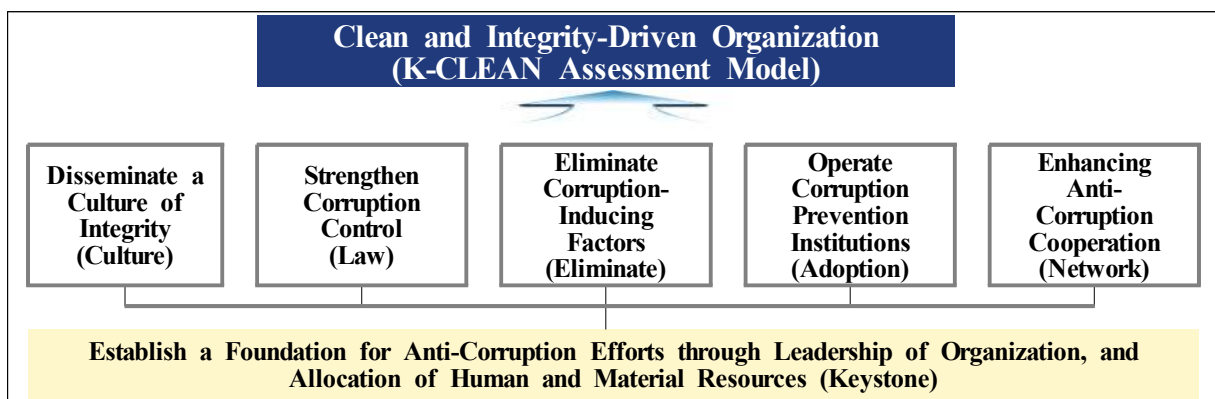
The Comprehensive Integrity Assessment for public institutions decides the rank of public institutions by combining the results of assessments in following areas: Integrity Perception, Integrity Effort, and Integrity Penalty Areas.

The Integrity Perception is measured through surveys of citizens who have directly experienced the institution's main services, as well as employees regarding their perceptions and experiences of corruption. The Integrity Effort evaluates the institution's anti-corruption initiatives, such as improvements on corruption-prone areas. Finally, the “Integrity Penalty” was previously assessed separately as corruption status evaluation of each areas until last year. This year, however, they have been integrated and reorganized to enhance the consistency of the assessment system.

- * Deduct points for incidents such as actual corruption cases, failure to perform anti-corruption duties, or actions undermining accountability

This year, in particular, would like to utilize the Integrity Effort indicator to go beyond the formal system operation and support anti-corruption reforms that works effectively in the field. It aims to strengthen integrity education for younger generations, enhance on-site implementation level of conflict of interest prevention institution, and encourage proactive inspections of blind spots in the fraudulent receipt of public funds.

At the same time, the commission establishes the “K-CLEAN” integrity effort assessment model to systematically assess everything from the foundation for anti-corruption initiatives to the implementation performance of integrity policies and institutions, and the outcomes of anti-corruption efforts. Moreover, by identifying corruption-prone areas and linking them to policy feedback loops, a virtuous cycle of evaluation, diagnosis, and improvement will be strengthened.



Based on the announced plan, the ACRC will collect opinions from target institutions at all levels. The implementation plan will finalize in April to May, begin the Integrity Perception survey in August, conduct assessment of Integrity Efforts and Integrity Penalty from October, and announce the final results in December.

The Vice Chairperson of the ACRC Anti-Corruption Bureau, Lee Myong Sun, stated: “The basic plan for the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment of public institutions is prepared to precisely diagnose and analyze the integrity levels of institutions at all levels and, based on the results, enable them to concentrate their capabilities on improving corruption-prone areas.”

He added, “The Commission will continue to encourage autonomous effort of the public institutions to pursue anti-corruption and integrity policies through the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment so that Korea to be placed in the solid 20s in terms of the Corruption Perception Index.”

Asked to 4,000 Citizens: What Should Be the Key Institutional Improvement This Year?

“Strengthening Welfare for the Vulnerable Groups”

- *The ACRC announces public survey results on 2026 institutional improvement priority*
- *The survey was conducted on the People’s Idea Box from Jan. 7 to 21 with a total of 3,947 participants*

(Feb. 4, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) announced the results of a public survey conducted to select institutional improvement priority for 2026 based on citizen participation. The survey showed that respondents identified “strengthening welfare for vulnerable groups” as the task that should be addressed with the highest priority.

The ACRC conducted a public survey on the “selection of the Key Institutional Improvement Tasks for 2026” through the People’s Idea Box* platform from January 7th to 21st and announced the results.

* A pan-governmental policy communication platform operated by the ACRC (<https://www.epeople.go.kr/idea>).

The survey was conducted by the ACRC on seven areas of institutional improvement for 2026, which were comprehensively identified by reviewing complaints received through various channels such as e-People and the government civil complaint hotline (Government Call 110), along with the National Policy Agenda. The purpose of the survey was to identify the key areas of public interest and to expand citizen participation in the policy-making process in the second year of the people sovereignty government.

A total of 3,947 people participated, including 2,132 general citizens and 1,815 Citizen Discussants*. The people selected prior areas for institutional improvement but also provided diverse opinions on additional necessary improvement tasks. In terms of respondent demographics, people in their 40s accounted for the largest share (30.1%), followed by those in their 30s (27.6%) and 50s (20.3%).

* Citizen Discussants are a pre-recruited panel of approximately 22,000 people who provide opinions on social issues and major policy agendas through the People's Idea Box.

When asked to select the areas of institutional improvement that should be prioritized (respondents could choose two areas among seven), 16.3% chose “Strengthen Welfare for the Vulnerable Groups,” followed by “Enhance Public Safety (Facilities)” at 15.6% and “Respond to Population Decline” at 15.5%.

For specific tasks of institutional improvement, respondents identified “Improve Eligibility Criteria for Public Rental Housing” as the most important under “Strengthen Welfare for the Vulnerable Groups,” “Expand Disclosure of Safety Inspection Results for Large Buildings” under “Enhance Public Safety (Facilities),” and “Improve Special Apartment Supply for Multi-Child Families” under “Respond to Population Decline.”

In addition, respondents suggested diverse improvement needs that are closely felt in daily life, such as strengthening social adaptation support for isolated youth, including reclusive young adults, and enhancing protection for companion animals.

Based on these results, the ACRC plans to actively reflect citizens’

policy directions and improvement needs in conducting prioritized institutional improvements, thereby promoting policy changes that could be directly felt by the public.

Director General Kim Ki Sun for Institutional Improvement of the ACRC stated, “We will implement swift and effective institutional improvements focusing on tasks confirmed by public demand. We will also continue to expand citizen participation in future policy implementation and institutional improvement processes.”

Equipped with Artificial Intelligence, e-People Becomes Faster and Smarter”

- *ACRC launches operation of the “Generative AI-Based Public Communication and Civil Complaint Analysis System”*
- *Pilot implementation for four institutions including the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport*

(Feb. 5, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) has completed the project titled “Establishment of a Generative AI-Based Public Communication and Civil Complaint Analysis System” utilizing civil complaint data submitted through e-People. After improving data quality, the Commission officially launches the related services starting on Feb. 5.

The ACRC has been pursuing the project with the goal of moving beyond the simple aggregation or keyword-based search of large-scale civil complaint data accumulated in e-People. The system aims to enable artificial intelligence to understand and analyze the context and meaning of civil complaints.

The project was selected as the “2025 Hyper-Scale AI Service Development Support Program” by the Ministry of Science and ICT (implementing agency: National Information Society Agency) and was carried out from July to December of last year. Key components of the project include: AI-based recommendation of civil complaint responses, Batch processing of frequent and duplicate complaints, and AI-based analysis of civil complaints.

Despite an unexpected obstacle—the fire at the National Information

Resources Service in September 2025—the ACRC successfully completed the project without delays through previously secured training data and close cooperation with related institutions. To enhance the reliability and usability of the AI services, the Commission conducted data consistency checks, supplemented training datasets, and improved response quality before launching the project as well.

The newly introduced AI services will first be provided to four pilot government institutions in order to verify their practical applicability. First, the “AI Recommendation for Civil Complaint Response” service will be provided to the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety. The AI analyzes relevant laws and regulations, past complaint cases, and work manuals to draft a response and present it to the public officers who are in charge of the civil petitions. This enables citizens to receive responses more quickly and accurately than before.

The “Batch Processing of Frequent and Duplicate Complaints” service will be provided to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Incheon Metropolitan City, and Siheung. The AI automatically identifies and clusters complaints with identical or similar content so that they can be processed collectively at once. This significantly reduces the time spent on repetitive administrative tasks and allows responsible officials to focus on reviewing the substance of responses, thereby improving the quality of civil complaint services.

In addition, the “AI-Based Civil Complaint Analysis” service will also be launched. By analyzing the meaning and context of complaints, the AI will rapidly detect issues closely related to people’s daily lives. Moving beyond the existing word-centered analytical approach, the system will better identify public inconveniences and support policy improvements.

The ACRC Vice Chairperson and Secretary General Han Sam Suk stated, “The launch of AI-based civil complaint services marks a significant turning point in enabling the government to understand the voices of the people more deeply and reflect them in public administration.” He added, “The Commission will continue to promote innovation in public communication through the use of artificial intelligence technologies and strive to realize an administration that people can truly experience and feel.”

Corruption Caused by Less Predictable Statutes to be Prevented from Its Drafting Stage

- The ACRC conducted Corruption Impact Assessment last year on 1,357 newly enacted or amended statutes from 46 central administrative agencies, identified 247 corruption-inducing factors in 122 statutes and recommended improvements

(Feb. 4, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) conducted Corruption Impact Assessment* on 1,357 statutes enacted or amended by central administrative agencies last year. After reviewing issues such as excessive administrative discretion, unreasonable sanctions, or unnecessary regulations, it identified 247 corruption-inducing factors in 122 statutes and recommended improvements to the relevant ministries.

* A preventive anti-corruption institution that systematically analyzes corruption-inducing factors (e.g. undefined concepts, loopholes in regulations, appropriateness of discretion) during the drafting stage of statutes and institutions and proactively addresses or eliminates them.

According to the assessment results, statutes that do not have enough predictability and difficult for citizens to foresee the consequence were the most numerous at 79 cases (32.0%) among the 247 recommendations for the improvement of corruption-inducing factors.

This was followed by 63 cases (25.5%) where the specificity and objectivity of discretionary provisions were insufficient, raising concerns about abuse of discretion, and 27 cases (10.9%) where the level of sanctions was inadequate.

By sector, the environment and health sector had the highest proportion of 27.9%* (69 recommendations for 34 statutes). This was followed by the industry and development sector at 21.3% (47 recommendations for 26 statutes) and the defense and veterans affairs sector at 16.4% (47 recommendations for 20 statutes). Recommendations on improvement were mostly made for statutes for new industry development and support.

* Calculated based on the number of statutes

Field	Key Improvement Recommendations
Social Welfare	Establish operational standards on regional support centers for disabled children to prevent waste of budget including subsidies for customized support for children with disabilities
Industrial Development	Specify details on the designation method the evaluation agencies for real estate development project to ensure appropriate administration
Sports	Clearly define the statute of temporal limitations on requesting re-discipline for sports organizations to establish a means of excessive discretion control
Social Welfare	Notify subjects of social service survey plans in advance and disclose survey results via websites to ensure administrative transparency
Disaster Management	Specify qualifications and deployment of disaster management specialists to ensure specificity in disaster control administration
Employment	Set detailed provisions for delegated/contracted matters in employment stability support projects to ensure accountability in delegation/contracting

Vice Chairperson of the ACRC, Lee Myong Sun, stated “We have continuously pursued efforts on corruption prevention in the public sector through the Corruption Impact Assessment and supported the fair and predictable implementation for the most of the government's laws and institutions throughout the year.”

He added, “This year, we will strive to diagnose statutes affecting citizens' rights, obligations, and daily lives in more agile and precise way to prevent any infringement of citizens' rights and interests due to unreasonable or unfair provisions.”

Analysis of 560,000 Civil Complaint Cases Proposes Policy Improvement Directions for Handling Low Birth Rate Issue

- *Results of collaborative project between the ACRC and The POSTECH Institute for Social Data Science released on Feb. 3rd*
- *Confirmed that the low birth rate is interconnected with various policy areas across overall daily lives of the people*
- *Proposed the need for integrated policy design encompassing life cycles and policy domains*

(Feb. 3, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) announced the results of the collaborative project with the POSTECH Institute for Social Data Science titled “Research on Policy Demand Analysis and Improvement Measures Based on Public Complaints on the Low Birth Rates” on Feb. 3.

The Commission has pursued collaborative projects with the Institute after signing an MOU in 2020, by focusing on addressing social issues through analysis and utilization of big data on public complaints, research on data analysis techniques, and information exchange.

- ※ Conducted studies on “Analysis on Public Complaints Big Data to Strengthen Consumer Protection Policies for Online Commerce”(2024) and “Identifying the Hardships of the Youth in Rural Areas of Korea through Complaint Analysis” (2023)

The study compared and analyzed approximately 560,000 “Public Complaints Data on low birth rate*” received from 2021 to 2024 with the key policies by life cycle** included in the “Fourth Basic Plan for Low Birthrate and Aging Society.” It aimed to diagnose the effectiveness

and public perception of the policies targeting low birthrate and propose directions for policy improvement.

* Took pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, and education as keywords to identify complaints that are relevant to low birth rates

** Stages of life cycle: Pregnancy/Childbirth, Infancy/Early Childhood, Childhood/Adolescence, and Entire Life Cycle

Analysis tells that relevant complaints were most concentrated during the childhood/adolescence stage. By policy area, complaints were from a wide range of fields from childcare/education, employment/labor, health/medical care, and culture, demonstrating that the diverse policy areas and all aspects of people's lives are closely connected to the low birthrate issue.

When considering both life cycle and policy areas, in particular, it turned out that following areas consistently require improvement: healthcare/medical fields linked with pregnancy and childbirth phase, such as infertility and sub-fertility support and delivery infrastructure; childcare field linked with infancy and early childhood phase such as human resource allocation and safety management of childcare centers; education field linked with childhood and adolescence phase such as school food service, after-school programs, and childcare classrooms. At the same time, continuous improvement demands were evident in the employment and labor environment throughout the entire life cycle, for instance working hours, organizational culture, and childcare leave systems.

Based on these findings, the team suggested that the integrated policy design that encompasses both the life cycle and policy areas is required to address the low birthrate issue as it is difficult to resolve it by caring for a single life stage or improving respective policy.

The ACRC plans to share the findings with relevant agencies to facilitate policy utilization, ensuring citizens' voices to be incorporated into low birthrate policies.

Director General Kim Ki Sun of the Institutional Improvement Bureau under the ACRC stated, “This study serves as an example of policy review based on citizens' voices. We expect it to be utilized as important reference material for enhancing the effectiveness of upcoming policies on addressing low birthrate.”