Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Sep. 2026)

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Korea's Integrity Model Draws Global Attention: The ACRC Hosted Anti-Corruption Training for Public Officials from Eight Countries

- The ACRC ran a five-day anti-corruption capacity building program from Sep. 7 for public officials from eight countries including India, Mongolia, and Senegal

- Participants learned about Korea's integrity systems, from the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment for public institutions, a UN Public Service Award winner, to the AI-powered civil rights protection platform

(Sep. 11, 2026, ACRC)

The Korea Integrity and Civil Rights Training Institute (KICTI) under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) announced that the institute hosted a five-day anti-corruption capacity building program for public officials from eight Asian and African countries, from September 7 to 11.

The program was jointly organized by the ACRC, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Korea International Development Cooperation Center (KIDC). It brought together 24 public officials from anti-corruption agencies in India, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan, Senegal, Benin, Guinea, and Togo.

Among the notable participants were Jacques Acheffon Migan, High Commissioner for the Prevention of Corruption in Benin; Azjargal Gavaasuren, Deputy Commissioner General of the Independent Authority Against Corruption of Mongolia; and Mohamed Konaté, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Anti-Corruption and Good Governance Promotion Agency in Guinea.

The program focused on introducing Korea's flagship anti-corruption policies and rights relief mechanisms.

The curriculum included: the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment for public

institutions, which won the 2012 UN Public Service Awards; the Corruption Impact Assessment; the protection system for whistleblowers reporting corruption and public interest violations; the Integrity and Ethics Compliance Program (K-CP) Guideline; the AI-powered civil rights protection platform; and the Clean Construction Administration system of the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

After learning Korea's best practices, participants developed detailed action plans for adapting them to their own countries.

The international community increasingly recognizes corruption as one of the major obstacles to sustainable development, and is expanding cooperation on corruption prevention under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan. At the APEC Joint Foreign and Trade Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Gyeongju in October 2025, ministers adopted a joint statement underscoring the importance of anti-corruption education and technical assistance among the members.

Against this backdrop, interest in Korea's integrity system continues to grow, as Korea has steadily climbed the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), from 52nd among 180 countries in 2016 to 31st among 182 in 2025*.

* 2016: 52nd (of 180 countries) → 2025: 31st (of 182 countries)

Korea's experience of achieving economic growth and stronger integrity in tandem, within a short period of time, starting from one of the world's poorest countries, is increasingly regarded by developing countries as the most realistic and effective model to follow.

As part of Korea's Official Development Assistance (ODA) program, the ACRC has offered anti-corruption training to public officials worldwide since 2013, sharing Korea's anti-corruption systems and experience with approximately 740 public officials from 74 countries to date.

A survey of countries that participated in the training program between 2022 and 2024 identified 31 institutional improvements. In 2024, Ethiopia adopted an Integrity Instructor Program modeled on Korea's, while Sri Lanka is pursuing

the introduction of an integrity assessment system through its National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2025-2029), having conducted pilot assessments of 51 institutions.

By helping partner countries strengthen public sector integrity and administrative transparency, the ACRC also seeks to improve the overseas investment environment for Korean businesses over the long term.

ACRC Chairperson Jung stated, “International cooperation is essential to tackling trans-border corruption.” He added, “By actively sharing Korea’s integrity policies with the international community, we will strengthen Korea’s standing as a global leader in anti-corruption and support the sustainable development of every nation.”

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“What Would I Choose in a Moment of Temptation?” The ACRC Developed Integrity Education Content for Middle and High School Students

- KICTI, ACRC’s training institute, produced educational content “Integrity: The Compass of My Life,” set in the worlds of four professions: content creator, athlete, doctor, and police officer

- The content is designed to help students arrive at their own answers to the ethical dilemmas people face at work, making integrity education a natural part of learning

(Sep. 21, 2026, ACRC)

The Korea Integrity and Civil Rights Training Institute (KICTI) under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) produced integrity education content “Integrity: The Compass of My Life” for middle and high school students to nurture the value of integrity.

Designed to be integrated into the regular school curriculum (e.g. Future Career & Occupation), the content consists of four video clips, teacher’s lesson plans, teaching guides, and student worksheets.

The videos feature professions that are popular among students, namely a content creator, an athlete, a doctor, and a police officer. Each depicts a fictional situation in which the protagonist is tempted by corruption in the workplace and must make a choice.

Students can naturally learn about integrity by reflecting on what they would do in the protagonist’s position and sharing their views with classmates.

KICTI distributed the content to Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education nationwide for use in middle and high schools. It was also made available on the official website of KICTI (edu.acrc.go.kr) for public use.

Deputy Director-General Jang Cha Cheol, Head of KICTI, said, “It is important

for the younger generations to think and make decisions for themselves, and to establish sound standards for living." He added, "We will continue to develop various educational content tailored to young people's perspectives to disseminate a culture of integrity."

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30 Percent of Public Institution Revenues Recovered Due to Reports To be Paid to Whistleblowers with Three Billion KRW Cap on Rewards Being Abolished

- Amendments to the Enforcement Decree of the Anti-Corruption Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, and the Public Finance Recovery Act formulated by the ACRC were approved at the Cabinet meeting on Sep. 22 to take effect from Sep. 29

- From now on, 30% of the amount of revenue recovery, increase, or cost savings for public institutions resulting from reports will be paid as a reward to whistleblowers without the previous cap (3 billion KRW)

(Sep. 22, 2026, ACRC)

From now on, rewards for whistleblowers who contribute to the financial recovery of public institutions by reporting corruption or public interest violations will be strengthened.

Whistleblowers are now able to receive rewards based on 30% of the eligible amount* with the previous reward cap of three billion won abolished.

* The eligible amount refers to the amount directly recovered or increased in public institution revenue, or cost savings, or the amount confirmed by legal relations as a result of the report.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) has announced that partial amendments to the Enforcement Decree of the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (the “Enforcement Decree of the Anti-Corruption Act”), the Enforcement Decree of the Whistleblower Protection Act, and the Enforcement Decree of the Public Finance Recovery Act containing these contents were approved at the Cabinet meeting today (Sep. 22).

In addition, rewards for whistleblowers under the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act (the “Graft Act”) and the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants (the Conflict of Prevention Act”) are based on the reward standards under the Anti-Corruption Act, and therefore, with this

amendment, the reward payment system under the five anti-corruption laws overseen by the ACRC has been improved together.

The major amendments are as follows:

First, reward calculation standard has been improved. Previously, whistleblower rewards were calculated on a sliding scale of 4% to 30% depending on the eligible amount, which meant that the larger the eligible amount, the lower the relative payment rate applied.

However, through this amendment, rewards are now calculated at a flat rate of 30% of the eligible amount, regardless of its size. But the current standards for reduction of the reward* — such as the accuracy of the report and the whistleblower's contribution — remain in place.

* The current standards include: ▲ the accuracy of the report and reliability of evidence; ▲ whether the reported corrupt act has already been disclosed by media such as newspapers or broadcasts; ▲ whether the whistleblower was involved in any illegal acts related to the report; ▲ the extent to which the whistleblower contributed to the elimination or prevention of corruption; and ▲ whether the whistleblower had a duty to report to relevant administrative agencies or made the report in connection with their official duties.

Secondly, the maximum cap of 3 billion KRW for whistleblower rewards has completely been abolished.

Under the previous whistleblower reward system, there was no cap on rewards for public interest reports, but for other types of reports such as corruption reports or violations of the Public Finance Recovery Act, the maximum reward that could be paid was limited to 3 billion KRW, regardless of the calculated amount.

However, with this amendment, the cap on whistleblower rewards has been removed, allowing whistleblowers who contribute to significant financial recovery to receive rewards commensurate with their contributions.

※ For reports of violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act and the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act, which also adopted the reward regulations under the Anti-Corruption Act, the maximum reward was previously set at 3 billion KRW, but this cap has also been abolished with the amendment.

The amended Enforcement Decree of the Anti-Corruption Act, the Enforcement Decree of the Whistleblower Protection Act, and the Enforcement Decree of the Public Finance Recovery Act took effect from September 29. The revised reward payment standards apply to cases where applications for rewards are submitted after the effective date.

Chairperson Jung Il Yeon of the ACRC stated, “Reporting acts of corruption and public interest violations plays an important role in uncovering corruption and protecting the public interest. I hope that this amendment to the enforcement decrees will lead to rewards that correspond to the contributions of whistleblowers and serve as an opportunity to encourage more active reporting.”

He added, “The Commission will continue to strengthen the whistleblower protection and reward system so that whistleblowers can report with confidence.

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ACRC Has Announced the Results of its Inspection of the Operation Status of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act at Various Public Institutions Over the Past Decade

- In 2025, the number of reported violations of the Graft Act reached an all-time low of 1,280 cases, and the number of sanctioned individuals was 340, a 23.8% decrease compared to 2024

- Among the types of violations of the Graft Act, receiving money or other valuables took the largest proportion in terms of the number of cases reported and the number of sanctioned individuals… ACRC plans to strengthen integrity training for public servants

(Sep. 28, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) announced on Sep. 28 the results of its inspection of the operation status of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act (the "Graft Act") at various public institutions over the past ten years, from the enforcement of the Act on September 28, 2016, until the end of last year.

In 2025, the number of reported violations of the Graft Act reached an all-time low of 1,280 cases, and the number of sanctioned individuals was 340, a 23.8% decrease compared to 2024.

This inspection covered approximately 24,000 public institutions subject to the Graft Act, including constitutional agencies, central administrative agencies, local governments, public service-related organizations, and schools and school corporations. The inspection checked: ▲ whether each institution had designated a Graft Prevention Officer*, ▲ annual education and counseling performance, and ▲ the status of reports received and processed, as well as details of dispositions.

* Pursuant to Article 20 of the Graft Act, a public official in each institution responsible for education and counseling on the Graft Act for affiliated public officials, as well as for receiving, investigating, and handling reports.

Meanwhile, the designation rate of Graft Prevention Officers across all public

institutions was 99.6%, indicating that, except for a few organizations undergoing dissolution procedures, most public institutions had designated and operated such officers.

Furthermore, 97.8% of public institutions conducted at least one training session per year, confirming that the Graft Act system is being stably operated across public institutions.

Since the enforcement of the Graft Act, a total of 17,455 reports have been filed with public institutions. By type of violation, there were 9,346 cases of improper solicitation (53.5%), 7,558 cases of receiving money or valuables (43.3%), and 551 cases of receiving excessive lecture fees (3.2%).

Looking at the annual trend, the number of reports peaked at 4,386 in 2018, then continuously declined until 2021, fluctuated from 2022, and reached a record low of 1,280 in 2025.

In addition, the cumulative number of individuals sanctioned for violations of the Graft Act totaled 2,983, with most sanctions imposed for receiving money or valuables (2,828 people, 94.8%), followed by improper solicitation (140 people, 4.7%) and excessive lecture fees (15 people, 0.5%).

In 2025, reports related to receiving money or valuables accounted for 75.1% of all reports that year, and sanctioned individuals for this type of violation made up 95.3% of all sanctioned individuals during the year, indicating the need for focused policy efforts to address this practice.

In response, the Commission plans to intensively share cases of violations and sanctions related to receiving money or valuables at annual regional briefings for Graft Prevention Officers at public institutions, in order to raise awareness among public officials.

Additionally, the latest inspection identified seven cases in 2025 where follow-up actions, such as notification of fines, were insufficient.

The Commission requested corrective actions from the institutions handling

these cases and plans to strictly monitor to ensure that all corrective measures are completed.

Meanwhile, in a public perception survey on the 10th anniversary of the enforcement of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act (with 2,819 respondents) conducted through the “People’s Idea Box” platform in June this year, 87.1% of respondents said the Act had a positive effect. Regarding whether the Act has led to fairer performance of duties, 75.4% answered affirmatively for the administrative sector, 72.9% for the education sector, and 56.8% for the media sector.

However, when asked about task areas for future improvement, the most common response (61.4%) was “strengthening detection and punishment of violations," indicating that, despite strong public support for the Act, there is a recognized need for stricter management of violations.

Chairperson Jung Il Yeon of the ACRC stated, "It is encouraging that, over the 10 years since the Act’s enforcement, the number of reports and sanctioned individuals has been decreasing and the system is being stably operated across public institutions.”

He added, “The Commission will continue to strive to see to it that the original purpose of the Act to guarantee fair performance of duties by public officials is fully realized.”

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The ACRC Signs an Anti-Corruption MOU with Mexico, Its First with a Latin American Country

- The ACRC and Mexico's Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance signed an MOU on anti-corruption cooperation, on the occasion of President Lee's state visit to Mexico

(Sep. 28, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on mutual cooperation in anti-corruption measures with Mexico's Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance (Secretaría Anticorrupción y Buen Gobierno)* on Aug. 24 local time (Aug. 25 KST). This is the first time Korea has signed an anti-corruption cooperation MOU with a Latin American country.

* Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance (Secretaría Anticorrupción y Buen Gobierno) is under the executive branch of the federal government of Mexico. It is responsible for preventing corruption and enhancing integrity across federal public administration, including internal control, auditing and oversight, and strengthening the integrity and professionalism of public officials.

With a population of approximately 130 million and the second-largest economy in Latin America, Mexico was the first Latin American country to join the OECD and holds an important position which links North and Latin America.

Recently, the country has made anti-corruption reform a national priority, restructuring the former Secretariat of the Comptroller General of the Federation into the Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance and actively pursuing government-wide institutional reforms to enhance integrity and restore public trust in government.

In June, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon met with Vice Minister Alejandro Encinas Nájera of the Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance at the Government Complex Sejong. The Mexican delegation expressed deep interest in Korea's preventive anti-corruption policies, including the Comprehensive

Integrity Assessment, and the two sides discussed further cooperation. The MOU was signed on the occasion of President Lee's state visit to Mexico.

Under the MOU, the two institutions will continuously identify areas of cooperation, including exchanging knowledge, information, best practices and experience, as well as strengthening consultation channels and pursuing joint research, and developing educational programs to promote integrity.

Chairperson Jung said, "With this summit and the signing of the MOU, we will support Mexico in strengthening its anti-corruption capacity and lay the foundation for substantive policy exchange."

He added, "Starting with Mexico, the ACRC will do our utmost to expand anti-corruption cooperation with Latin America, a region where cooperation has been relatively limited until now."