

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Apr. 2023)

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Introducing the Excellence of the “People’s Idea Box,” an Online Policy Participation Platform, to Europe

- *On April 25, ACRC introduced outstanding Korean systems of participatory democracy to policy experts from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands*

(April 24th 2023, ACRC)

The online policy participation platform, “People’s Idea Box,” operated by the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, was introduced to policy experts from the Netherlands.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) held a meeting on April 25 to share the operating experiences of the “People’s Idea Box” with policy experts from the Netherlands in charge of participatory democracy and digital communication at the request of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands.

The “People’s Idea Box” serves as a policy incubator that enables the establishment of citizen-oriented policies by allowing anyone, including individuals, groups, corporations, public institutions, and experts, to contribute their policy opinions and participate in discussions.

Since 2016, the ACRC has been providing the service through the e-People system (www.epeople.go.kr), and over 500,000 people annually participate in “People’s Idea Box.”

The meeting was arranged during the visit of policy experts from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands, who are responsible for public administration and digitization, specifically with an aim to learn about the best practices of Korea's participatory democracy.

ACRC Assistant Chairperson of Planning and Coordination Office Lim Yoon-Ju said, "Citizen's policy participation is crucial in a democracy. We will proactively share our experiences of operating People's Idea Box with the international community."

Promoting Transparency in Public Service Examination Interview Assessment

- *Promoting measures for publicly disclosing scores of the interview, which are subjective assessments*
ACRC “recommended institutional improvements to prevent hiring irregularities and promote the right to know”

(April 14th 2023, ACRC)

Measures are being considered to publicly disclose the interview scores of the public service examination, which has been originally closed, while ensuring that such disclosure does not impact the examination process.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) has implemented “measures to unveil interview scores of the public service examination” and recommended them to central administrative agencies, metropolitan and local governments in order to “establish a fair employment process,” which is a national policy task, and promote the right to know.

Public service examinations can be categorized into the following types: open competitive recruitment examinations and competitive recruitment examinations for career service, and the latter has limited application requirements. Applicants are required to pass a written assessment, a performance assessment, and an interview.

While the scores of written and performance assessments are objective indicators, the interview is a subjective assessment

conducted by experts to evaluate the mental attitude and sincerity of applicants from their own perspectives.

For these reasons, providing applicants with only a pass or fail outcome for the interview raised concerns about fairness and has infringed upon the applicants' right to know about the results of public service examinations.

Hiring irregularities occurred in public service examination interviews, leading to a public proposal about "revealing results of interview assessment transparently to prevent hiring irregularities." The proposal was filed with the Office of the President, and a range of civil complaints was also submitted through e-People.

In addition, according to a survey conducted by the ACRC through "People's Idea Box." 37.3% of the respondents (950 out of 2,546) agreed with the idea of transparently disclosing interview scores to eliminate unfairness in interview.

According to a fact-finding research conducted by ACRC, agencies at all levels have employed interview methods for public service examinations, assessing 5 categories, including the mental attitude of public officials. These methods mostly relied on the ranking system, the good/fair/poor marking system, or grading system.

Regarding the ranking system, there are three ranks defined: "excellent" is assigned when a majority of interviewers assess every category as "good"; "inadequate" is given in the case of "bad" ratings for one or two categories; and the rest of the cases are

labeled as “average.”

“Inadequate” is considered a failing grade, while “excellent” and “average” are regarded as passing grades. In cases where applicants receive the same rating, the pass will be determined based on the order of higher scores in the written assessment.

In the good/fair/poor marking system, applicants who received “inadequate” marks and failed the examinations are excluded, and the remaining applicants are considered for receiving a pass in the order of the number of “good” marks. If there is a tie in the number of “good” marks, priority is given to those with a higher number of “fair” marks in order to determine who passes. The grading system determines a pass based on the order of higher grades.

The ACRC recommended public disclosure of interview scores, while ensuring that it does not disrupt the examination process. This aims to promote applicants’ right to know and prevent hiring irregularities, while giving an opportunity to make a comeback to applicants who failed to pass the examinations by providing useful information.

First, regarding the rating system, ACRC recommended categories rated as “bad” should be unveiled to applicants who received “inadequate” rating, helping them to make a comeback. Moreover, with regard to the rating system and the good/fair/poor marking system, the Commission recommended disclosing applicants’ ratings as well as the number of good/fair/poor marks they received.

In relation to the grading system, the ACRC recommended standards

for disclosure by revealing the average score of the applicant as well as the average score for each assessment category to allow applicants to identify available information of his or her weak points.

The Director General of the Institutional Improvement Bureau of the ACRC Yang Jong-Sam said, “Publicly disclosing the results of the interview would contribute to eliminating improper solicitation, enhancing the fairness of public service examinations and promoting the applicants’ right to know about their own information.”

ACRC Sets Out to Eradicate Corruption and Public Interest Infringement in Collaboration with the National Police Agency

ACRC Vice-chairperson Chung Seung-yun and National Police Chief Yoon Hee-keun discussed measures to improve the national integrity, including mutual cooperation in investigation of corruption crimes and joint response to such major corruption crimes and public interest infringement as those involving drugs, etc.

(April 14th 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-hui) and the National Police Agency (NPA, Commissioner General Yoon Hee-keun) discussed measures to reinforce inter-agency cooperation in creating corruption-free society, such as swift handling and thorough investigation of cases of corruption and public interest infringement involving drugs, etc.

The meeting between the ACRC Vice-chairperson Chung Seung-yun who was newly appointed to the post last March and the National Police Chief Yoon Hee-keun was convened with an aim to establish more cooperative interagency relationship between the two and expand their joint anti-corruption responses for prevention of corruption and improvement in the national integrity.

In the meeting, the ACRC Vice-chairperson and the National Police Chief discussed measures to expedite processing of cases of corruption and public interest infringement related to drugs, to boost cooperation in the course of inspection and investigation of

corruption crimes, and to improve the national integrity.

In addition, Chung requested the NPA increase its support for the ACRC by providing more professional investigation forces to process cases of corruption and public interest infringement.

Furthermore, he called for the NPA to provide stronger protection of whistleblowers and his/her collaborators, etc. and to comply with the conflict of interest prevention rules, including allowing a person who has personal interests related to duties to recuse himself/herself in the course of police investigation.



Chung also visited the National Office of Investigation (NOI) on the same day to have a meeting with the recently-appointed head of the NOI Woo Jong-soo, calling for thorough investigation into crimes of corruption and public interest violations.

They also agreed to exert their utmost efforts to prevent and

eradicate corruption through closer cooperation between the two national anti-corruption agencies that have revamped lineups.

The ACRC Vice-chairperson Chung Seung-yun said, “In society where corruption is prevalent, the safety and peaceful life of the general public cannot be secured. As corruption prevention and eradication requires the government-wide cooperation, the ACRC will strive to create corruption-free society by further boosting interagency collaboration with the NPA.”

Institutional Blind Spots in the Management of Public Financial Leakage to Be Removed by Preventing False Claims for Public Funds

*ACRC held workshops for local government officers in charge of
audit and subsidy project affairs*

*Three years on from the Implementation of the Public Fund
Recovery Act ... ACRC shared achievements and discussed ways to
prevent public fund leakage*

(April 13th 2023, ACRC)

Local governments across the nation were provided with a venue for communication to share the achievements made in the course of the implementation of the Act on the Prohibition of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of Illicit Profits (herein after referred to as the “Public Fund Recovery Act”) for the last three years and to address the institutional blind spots of the public fund management.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-hui) held last month the workshop for improvement in transparency in public fund management and reinforcement of management capacity for officers from 203 local governments*, who are in charge of affairs related to audit and subsidy administration, at the Korea Press Center.

*local governments that received ACRC recommendations for implementation of illicit profit recovery rules in accordance with the fact-finding inspection result of Feb. 2023

During the workshop, the ACRC explained major provisions of the Public Fund Recovery Act, sharing the experience of the implementation of the Act over the last three years and discussing in depth measures to prevent subsidy frauds, including oil subsidies and public direct payments for agriculture and rural communities.

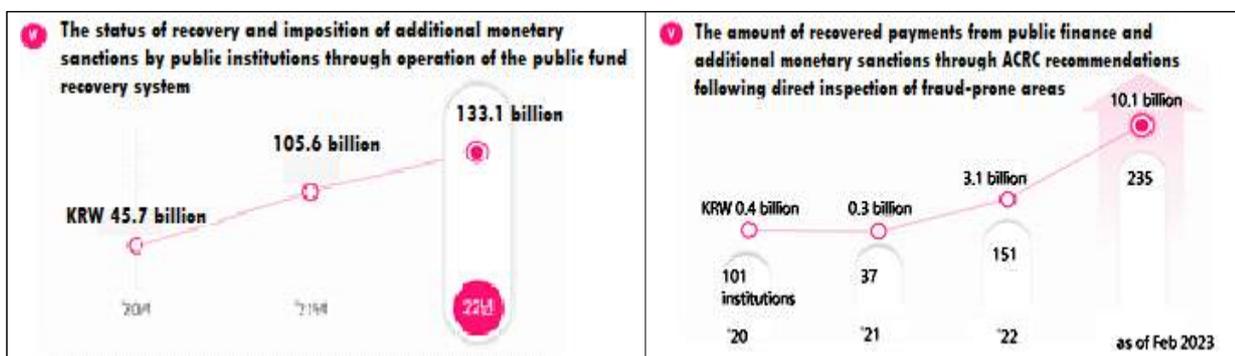
As the eradication of false claims for public funds is a matter that requires the government-wide cooperation, the ACRC invited officials of the Korea Fiscal Information Service, an affiliated organization under the Ministry of Finance and Economy, and the Ministry of Interior and Safety that are in charge of the administration of central and local government subsidies to the workshop for training regarding cases of subsidy frauds and responses.

With its 1st workshop held in Seoul, the Commission plans to organize workshops by region, making necessary adjustments to the scope of participants and the contents of training in accordance with needs of each institution.

The Public Fund Recovery Act was legislated in April 2019 to improve soundness and transparency in public finance and became effective in January 2020.

The Commission has distributed authoritative interpretation casebooks to public institutions for stable establishment of the public fund recovery system and improvement in the awareness of the general public and public servants and provided tailored education for officials in charge of the matter.

In addition, the Commission has been putting various efforts into eradicating subsidy frauds through stable implementation of the public fund recovery system, including distribution of promotional video and brochure to inform the general public of the system, fact-finding inspection of the status of recovery of payments from public finance by public institutions of various levels, and offering recommendations to public institutions found to have failed in administering appropriate disposition of recovery and additional monetary sanctions.



* the data for the status of imposition in 2022 is tentative and the finalized one is slated to be made public in the first half of 2023.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-hui said, “Since the implementation of the Public Fund Recovery Act, we made some fruitful outcomes, such as increases in the amount of recovered payments from public finance and additional monetary sanctions and spread of the awareness of importance of eradication of subsidy frauds, thanks to the efforts put in by officials in charge at public institutions of various levels. The Commission will continue to faithfully manage the public fund recovery system, contributing to achieving the pan-governmental goal of sound fiscal management in cooperation with relevant agencies.”

Public Opinions Translated into Policies

- ACRC hosts People's Idea Box Policy Idea Contest (April 15 – June 15)
- Participation of generations, including teenagers, youth, and seniors, in sharing ideas about “social issues such as inconveniences in living”

(April 17th 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) is hosting a policy idea contest through the People's Idea Box* from April 15 to June 15, which invites teenagers, young people, and seniors to explore inconveniences in daily living and social issues, seeking solutions together.

* A pan-governmental policy communication platform run by the ACRC with an annual participation of 530,000 people (<https://www.epeople.go.kr/idea>)

The ACRC organized the contest to offer an opportunity for students from primary and secondary schools, undergraduates, other teenagers and young individuals outside the school system, as well as the senior generation to participate in the policymaking process and contribute to administrative improvements.

ACRC will determine the final winners of the contest through the following process: an internal evaluation (until August), public voting through the People's Idea Box (September), and evaluation by experts (October).

At the award ceremony in November, 15 award certificates bearing the name of the ACRC Chairperson and a total of 8.4 million won worth of gift certificates will be granted to contest winners.

The ACRC has recommended institutional improvements to relevant agencies or provided ideas on proactive administration to ensure that the award-winning ideas are practically reflected in policies.

The vice Chairperson of ACRC Kim Tae-Gyu said, “We hope that the contest serves as a platform for us to contemplate issues within the public sector from the lens of a wide range of generations, including not only teenagers and youth but also seniors. We also look forward to seeing creative and original policy ideas regarding social issues translated into tangible administrative practices that citizens can directly experience.”