Report on Business Integrity Meeting

The inaugural Business Integrity Meeting was held on 3 December 2019 as part of the 10th Regional Conference on Preventing and Combating Corruption in Infrastructure Projects in Asia-Pacific. Participants discussed the existing initiatives to promote business integrity in the region, as well as challenges and best practices. The main findings and messages were as follows: business integrity should rely on strong, harmonised legislation, supported by enforcement; companies can play an active role in promoting business integrity; market incentives are essential to change behaviours; solutions should involve and ensure dialogue between all stakeholders, public institutions, the private sector and civil society; and linkages between business integrity and responsible business conduct are essential.

A number of key findings and recommendations emerged from these discussions:

1) Strong, harmonised and effectively enforced national laws are a pre-condition for attaining the highest international standards of business integrity and responsible business practices, such as those embodied in the UN Convention against Corruption, and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.

2) Companies can change behaviour in markets. There is a strong economic case for business integrity. Companies that adhere to international standards of business integrity constitute less risk to investors and are more cost-effective, hence more competitive on international markets, and more likely to access global value chains. By the same token, economies that effectively combat corruption are more attractive to foreign investment.

3) This message needs active promotion by and within the business integrity community. Businesses can be effective agents of change by setting high integrity standards for themselves and their partners, for example within supply chains.

4) Effective business integrity solutions require that all stakeholders – the public sector, business and the civil society – engage in a constructive dialogue and join forces. Participants discussed various promising solutions, including community monitoring and oversight, the use of new technologies, advanced data analytics, certification programmes, training at companies and educational programmes in schools and higher education, and the definition of tools to strengthen transparency in procurement processes, as the main interface between public and private sector

5) Integrity measures should not be considered in isolation from the broader company risk management system, particularly when it comes to managing environmental and social impacts of company operations (including in the supply chain). Corrupt practices often facilitate negative environmental and

social impacts that have a direct impact on company performance and reputation.

Noting the active discussions and the positive feedback from participants, a formal business integrity network under the Initiative was established to collect and share information, connect stakeholders and facilitate collective actions. A permanent Business Integrity Network under the Initiative was adopted by the Steering Group.

With the support of: