Minutes of the Meeting

A.   Participants

About 69 participants from 25 out of the 33 members and jurisdictions of the ACI, development partners, Secretariat, and observer countries attended the meeting.

1. Member countries and jurisdictions

Present: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; Cook Islands; Georgia; Hongkong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macau, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; People's Republic of China; Philippines; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Absent: Afghanistan; Fiji; India; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Pakistan; Samoa; and Vanuatu.

2. Development Partners

American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI); Transparency International (TI); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and United Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

3. Secretariat

Asian Development Bank (ADB); and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

4. Observers

Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar.

B.   Summary of the Discussions

1.   Opening of the Meeting

Participants were welcomed by Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf, Deputy Secretary-General of OECD. Mr. Schlagenhauf outlined the objectives and items to be discussed, and told the 69 participants attending the meeting that at this critical moment, "our commitment, your government's commitment to act against corruption for better economic development which is at the heart of the Initiative for Asia-Pacific is more relevant than ever and must be pursued with a renewed vigour." He said that with the 3 workstreams: public integrity; law enforcement; and business integrity, the ACI is well placed to respond to the critical needs of its member countries and assured that ADB and OECD remain committed to further strengthen the impact of the ACI in the fight against corruption and deepen its engagement in the region.

2.   Welcoming of New Members

The ACI Secretariat announced that 2 countries have successfully completed the requirements for membership, following the approval and endorsement of the members.

Azerbaijan and Georgia were welcomed as the 32nd and 33rd members of the ACI. They were represented by their governments' designated focal points.

Mr. Sabuhi Aliyev, Head of Preventive Measures and Inquiry Department of the Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General outlined Azerbaijan's anticorruption efforts and reforms in the fight against corruption. In his brief remarks, he expressed that ACI will positively contribute to their anticorruption efforts to achieve the common goal of society free from corruption and that they will benefit from expertise accumulated in this platform, which will also provide new prospects of cooperation with colleagues from region countries and enhance synergies in tackling corruption.

Ms. Pelagia Makhauri, Deputy Head of the Analytical Department, Ministry of Justice and Deputy Secretary of the Anticorruption Council of Georgia, expressed gratitude to the member countries and Secretariat for opening a door to Georgia to become a part of the ACI. In her brief remarks, she expressed that ACI will serve as an excellent platform for strengthening anticorruption policy, promoting good governance tools, and sharing experience among member countries in the region.

3.   Report on Implementation of the Work Program 2018-2020

Ms. Cholpon Mambetova, Senior Integrity Specialist of the Office of Anticorruption and Integrity, ADB presented the results of the implementation of the ACI's work program 2018-2020. Ms. Mambetova outlined the 3-year achievement of the ACI under the 3 work streams: public integrity; law enforcement; and business integrity and summarized the implementation of the Work Program 2018-2020 in the ACI's key areas during the last three years.
The highlights of the report are below, and the full report can be found in https://events.development.asia/system/files/materials/2020/12/202012-report-implementation-work-program-2018-2020.pdf.

a. Governance of the ACI

The objectives and goals of the ACI's work program 2018-2020 as committed under the strategic principles were adequately delivered within the 3 works streams: public integrity; law enforcement; and business integrity.

1. Membership expanded from 31 member countries and jurisdictions since 2013 to 33 by the end of 2020.
• Merging of the Advisory Group with Steering Group to further strengthen the ACI.
• Regular Steering Group Meetings were conducted back-to-back with regional seminars.
• Secretariat continued to support the ACI and a directory of members and contact persons was maintained to improve communication and information sharing with members.

b. Capacity development

Capacity development activities were conducted during the last 3 years:

• 10th Regional Conference and High-Level Meeting
• Two Public Integrity Meetings
• Inaugural Business Integrity Meeting
• Training, workshop and webinars
• Integrity Review of Thailand Publication
• Conference and meetings reports

c. Strengthening the ACI

The Secretariat embarked on a number of activities to further strengthen the ACI and gather outputs to develop the next work program 2021-2023, and expand communication and information sharing among members:

Activities and studies
• External evaluation (2018)
• Stock taking report on anticorruption reforms in Asia-Pacific (2020)
• Capacity development needs report (2020)
• Surveys and questionnaires (2018 and 2020)
• Partnership with regional networks, private sector and civil society

Communication and information sharing
• Newsletter
• ACI website (OECD platform)
• Development Asia website (ADB Platform)
• List of online publications and trainings

4. Country Reports from Members

Members were invited to share their anti-corruption developments in the priority areas including public integrity, anti-corruption law enforcement, and promotion of business integrity in 2019-2020 that would be useful for other members of the ACI.

Six member countries and jurisdictions volunteered to report at the meeting: Australia; Cook Islands; Kazakhstan; Nepal; People's Republic of China; and Thailand. The reports of the 6 volunteer countries, together with the country report of Macau, China can be accessed at https://events.development.asia/learning-events/24th-steering-group-meeting.

5. Updates from Development Partners

The ACI's four development partners shared their updates at the meeting: American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative; Transparency International; United Nations Development Programme; and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The development partners shared their capacity development activities in prevention, law enforcement, and promotion of business integrity in 2019-2020. The reports can be found at https://events.development.asia/learning-events/24th-steering-group-meeting.

6. Update on the Work Program 2021-2023

The Secretariat presented a draft proposal to set the framework of activities of the ACI in the next 3 years 2020-2023. The draft proposal which was circulated to members before the meeting will be further updated following the findings and recommendations from the stocktaking and capacity development needs report prepared by the Secretariat. The report as well as the updated draft proposal of the new Work Program for 2021 – 2023 will be shared with the ACI members for comments, inputs and endorsement in early 2021.

The new Work Programme for 2021-2023 was presented at the meeting in the following outline: Stocktaking project, Action plan, and calendar of events.

a. Stocktaking Project

Ms. Cholpon Mambetova, Senior Integrity Specialist of the Office of Anticorruption and Integrity, ADB presented an update on the stocktaking project being undertaken by the Secretariat. The project, which aims to take of stock of anticorruption reforms, networks, and programs in Asia-Pacific; and capacity development needs under the ACI's 3 work streams on public integrity, law enforcement, and business integrity, is set to be completed in December 2020 and will serve as a basis to update the ACI's new work program 2021-2023. Ms. Mambetova outlined the scope, methodology, and preliminary findings of the study.

In summary, the preliminary findings are:

1. Stocktaking of anticorruption reforms and networks:
- Data-base of the reforms and networks
- 35 regional networks, programs and organizations (7 public integrity, 5 law enforcement, 6 business integrity)
- Different instruments, type and level of engagement, knowledge products and services
- Extend existing and initiate new partnership with relevant regional networks
- Promote exchange of information and good practices

2. Capacity development needs:
- Data-base of the capacity development needs and expertise in public integrity, law enforcement and business integrity

- More active intra-regional exchange of best practices (twinning, ad-hoc advisory support, civil servants exchange program)
- Open-up for anticorruption best practices from outside of the Initiative and Asia-Pacific
- National anticorruption strategies with the regional context
- Regional anticorruption strategy

b. Action Plan for the Work Program

Ms. Diane Pallez-Guillevic, Anti-Corruption Analyst of OECD presented the Action Plan for the next work program that will guide the ACI activities and strategic direction for the next 3 years. The aim is to further support member countries in their efforts to fight corruption under the strategic principles of the ACI.

The Action Plan is summarized into 3 pillars:

1. Governance of the Initiative
    - Steering group
    - Membership
    - Strategic Principles
    - Communication, Secretariat
2. Planned activities by workstream
    - Public Integrity Network
    - Law Enforcement Network
    - Business Integrity Network
3. Financing of the Initiative
    - Voluntary contributions by development partners
    - Contributions by member countries
    - Fundraising activities

A draft work program proposal was circulated to members before the start of the meeting, and will be updated and finalized based on the findings of the stocktaking project, the evaluation of the ACI in 2018, and the outcomes of the 2019 and 2020 steering group meetings and comments from member countries and relevant partners. A revised proposal will be circulated to members in January 2021.

c. Calendar of 2021 Events

Ms. Leah Ambler, Legal Analyst and Mr. Jeroen Michels, Policy Analyst of OECD presented an indicative calendar of events under the steering group and 3 workstreams of the ACI.

1. Steering group
    - Stocktaking and capacity development needs reports
    - Revision of the strategic principles through calendar
    - Annual meetings
2. Public Integrity Network
    - Corruption prevention training by ICAC Hongkong
    - 2021 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum (GACIF – March 2021)
    - Selected regional studies and capacity building activities on corruption
3. Law Enforcement
    - Annual LEN meeting

- Regional webinars by the ACI, ADB, OECD and other regional networks
- GLEN Meeting (Dec 2021)
4. Business Integrity
   - 2021 OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum (GACIF -March 2021)
   - Annual BI Meeting
   - Regional webinars by the ACI, ADB, OECD and other regional networks

The activities presented for each workstream are subject to members' inputs on their anti-corruption efforts as well as their views on the main corruption risks, best practices and priority areas for future capacity development and other work, as documented in the stocktaking report of the regional anticorruption networks and initiatives and the report on capacity development needs of the Initiative's members to be finalized in early 2021 Members were also encouraged to inform the Secretariat of their countries' relevant anticorruption events that may be included in the list for dissemination to the ACI members .

7. Closing of the Meeting

Ms. Lisa Kelaart-Courtney, Director at the Office of Anti-Corruption and Integrity, ADB delivered the concluding remarks at the meeting. Ms. Kelaart-Courtney, in her brief remarks, thanked the members for their participation, and told the members that "corruption as we all know is a huge drain on resources to all economies, and even on what we call under normal circumstances, we cannot overlook corruption risks and its real impact". She appreciated learning more about the anticorruption developments and good practices of member countries and updates from development partners.