

Webinar on Safeguarding Integrity in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific

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Welcome Remarks

by

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Good day, ladies and gentlemen!

Welcome to the first webinar for the member countries and jurisdictions of the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific, and observer countries. We have Australia; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Cambodia; Georgia; Hongkong, China; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyz Republic; Macau, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Solomon Islands; Thailand; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam registered and are joining the webinar today. A warm welcome also to the participants from the Philippine Commission on Audit, colleagues from OECD, ADB, and Transparency International; UNDP; World Bank; American Bar Association, and German Technical Cooperation!

The Secretariat of the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific is grateful for your participation at this webinar which we believe is timely and relevant specially during these challenging times.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Asian Development Bank, it is a multilateral development bank established in 1966 and is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. ADB is owned by 68 members, including 49 from the region. Strengthening governance and institutional capacity, including supporting

governments efforts in eradicating corruption and strengthening anti-money-laundering activities, are one of the ADB's Strategy 2030 seven operational priorities.

May I also briefly say a few words about the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific or the ACI. The Initiative was established by ADB and OECD in 1999 to support countries' efforts in the fight against corruption. To date, we have 32 member countries and jurisdictions, and would like to extend our congratulations to Azerbaijan for joining the Initiative recently. We expect one more country (Georgia) from the Asia-Pacific to join soon. This is one of the largest networks of the anticorruption and law enforcement agencies in the region.

2. ADB's Response to COVID-19 and Objectives of the Webinar

Dear participants, 2020 will be marked as the year that brought one of the big pandemic emergencies in last century that changed the lives of every nation in the world. As of mid-July, according to John Hopkins University and Medicine, we have more than 14 million cases confirmed with COVID-19 infection and more than 600,000 deaths worldwide. All affected countries are mobilizing resources internally and externally to combat this deadly pandemic.

ADB was one of the first development partner to quickly respond and deploy assistance to its developing member countries to counter the impacts of Covid-19 and address critical challenges. ADB is allocating more than \$24 billion to save lives and ensure economies of the region rebound quickly. As of 13 July, ADB has allocated more than \$11 billion to its 41 member countries in Asia-Pacific.

The following short video will show what types of assistance ADB provides to its member countries in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

RUN THE VIDEO <https://www.adb.org/news/videos/adbs-response-covid-19-side-our-developing-members>

I am sure many countries are allocating vast amount of resources to fight the devastating consequences of the pandemic on economies, lives and well-being of the population. However, we have to remember that public integrity is a key to ensure that all of these response and recovery efforts reach the real beneficiaries. It is evident that emergency crisis like COVID-19 creates opportunities for misuse

of funds, money laundering, and other integrity violations in public procurement, budget support stimulus, and distribution of social security assistance.

In today's webinar on Safeguarding Integrity in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery, OECD will present the recommendations from its recently published policy papers on how governments and development partners should ensure that responses and efforts towards recovery from the crisis are effective and not undermined by corruption and bribery.

The policy papers will provide the key integrity challenges and recommend short-term and long-term anticorruption measures to strengthen public procurement, accountability and oversight, integrity in public organizations, law enforcement, and business ethics.

3. Introduction of the speakers

Before we proceed with the presentation, let me introduce you to our speakers:

Jeroen Michels is currently Policy Analyst of the Public Sector Integrity Division at the OECD. Jeroen has almost 20 years of extensive experience in the areas of good governance, public administration reform, integrity and accountability, international cooperation, and programme management, having worked with various multilateral agencies and institutions such as International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria, UNICEF Viet Nam, Belgian Development Agency, and UNESCO France. For 3 years now, Jeroen has been actively managing the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific together with ADB as a member of the Secretariat. He holds a postgraduate degree in Economics and Management, and a Master's degree in Sociology, and has numerous list of publications and articles under his name.

Paul Whittaker has more than 20 years of experience in law enforcement and white collar crime, including foreign bribery related investigations. In the Anti-Corruption Division (ACD) at the OECD, Paul is working on country evaluations under the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention monitoring mechanism and the impact of the Covid-19 crisis related to foreign bribery. Paul's previous role was as a senior manager in the Enforcement Division at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), Australia's corporate regulator, where he was managing a multi-disciplinary

team of lawyers, investigators and accountants investigating corporate crime, including foreign bribery related matters.

Paul has previously worked at the Australian Attorney-General's Department assisting Pacific Island countries develop anti-money laundering regimes, at the International Criminal Court in the Hague and at the Serious Fraud Office in the UK.

Now, let me invite Jeroen to share the integrity challenges and policy recommendations for public integrity of COVID-19 response and recovery.

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