

* UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) shares Korea's tested-and-proven policy tools with other countries through its SDG Partnerships programme. SDG Partnerships provide a combination of support to partner countries, including seed funding and policy advisory services. As part of its technical guidance to partner countries, USPC produces resource books on select policy tools of Korea in the areas of anti-corruption and tackling sexual and gender-based violence. Find out more about our publications at <https://www.undp.org/policy-centre/seoul/publications>.



Introduction to Korea's Clean Portal



United Nations Development Programme

Seoul Policy Centre
Korea University 4F, International Studies Hall
145, Anam-Ro, Seongbuk-Gu,
Seoul, Republic of Korea
www.undp.org/policy-centre/seoul



Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

Government Complex-Sejong 20,
Doom 5-ro, Sejong-si, 30102
Republic of Korea
www.acrc.go.kr



Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or their Member States.

Information on uniform resource locators and links to websites contained in the present publication are provided for the convenience of the reader and are correct at the time of issuance. The United Nations takes no responsibility for the continued accuracy of that information nor for the content of any external website.

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

Learn more at undp.org or follow us at [@UNDP](https://twitter.com/UNDP).

Copyright ©UNDP 2024. All rights reserved.

Manufactured in the Republic of Korea

Acknowledgements

▫ Author

Ms. Gichung Lee, Policy Analyst, UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC)

Mr. Eung Tai Kim, Director, Inspection Planning Division, Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC)

▫ Provided strategic direction and advisory support for this publication.

Mr. Jeong Taek Oh (ACRC), Ms. Hye Jin Kim (ACRC), Ms. Nam Haeng Kim (ACRC), Dr. Anne Juepner (USPC),

Dr. Anga Timilsina (UNDP), Ms. Aida Arutynova (UNDP)

▫ Assisted in the editing and refining of the text.

Ms. Hye-Jin Park (USPC), Mr. Youngchan Kim (USPC), Mr. Mujin Lee (USPC), Ms. Sujin Kim (USPC),

Ms. Cheyeon Kim (USPC), Ms. Esther Dunay (USPC), Ms. Gahyun Shin (USPC), Ms. Haeun Choi (USPC),

Ms. Heejin Jung (USPC), Ms. Hyunjee Sung (USPC), Ms. Hyunjin Nam (USPC), Ms. Subin Kim (USPC),

Mr. Yunyeong Kim (USPC)

The main technical content of this book is drawn from the materials shared by the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea and other documents cited in the reference section.

Donor partner

This publication has been made possible through the generous support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

▫ ACRC	Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission
▫ ACRC Act	Act On The Prevention Of Corruption And The Establishment And Management Of The Anti-Corruption And Civil Rights Commission
▫ AI	Artificial Intelligence
▫ AIA	Anti-Corruption Initiative Assessment
▫ CP	Clean Portal
▫ DB	Database
▫ FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
▫ IA	Integrity Assessment
▫ IT	Information Technology
▫ MACRO	Merge and Correlate Recorded Output
▫ MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
▫ NLP	Natural Language Processing
▫ SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
▫ SNS	Social Networking Service
▫ UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
▫ USPC	UNDP Seoul Policy Centre
▫ WAS	Web Application Server

Foreword

Corruption steals from the poor and undermines economic growth. It eats into the cultural, political, and economic fabric of society and undermines democracy and the rule of law. UNDP's approach to anti-corruption is grounded in the belief that sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing corruption and promoting good governance. Preventing corruption, promoting transparency, and strengthening institutions is crucial if the targets foreseen in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to be met. SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies includes key factors needed to ensure access to justice, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and tackle corruption. Goal 16 is not only a valuable and important aspiration but also a critical "enabler" for the achievement of the entire sustainable development agenda.

Digitalization is a powerful tool in the fight against corruption. For example, **whistleblowers can report corruption and provide evidence in a secure and confidential manner via digital platforms, which can help uncover and prosecute corrupt practices.**

The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) of the Republic of Korea has restructured existing systems into a new digital anti-corruption platform called the 'Clean Portal' in 2019 to improve the process of corruption and public interest violation reporting and support data-driven anti-corruption policymaking. This resource book on **Clean Portal** provides an overview of the platform including its background, objectives, legal basis and benefits. It also aims to answer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and provide strategic recommendations for the countries benchmarking such a system.



Seung-Yun Chung

Vice-Chairperson of
the Anti-Corruption & Civil
Rights Commission,
Republic of Korea



Anne Juepner

Director of the
UNDP Seoul Policy Centre

Since 2015, ACRC and the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) have been supporting partner countries in developing and implementing anti-corruption policies and strategies through USPC's flagship SDG Partnerships Programme. We have been in close cooperation with partner countries providing policy advisory and technical support, capacity-building and knowledge sharing activities together with USPC's catalytic seed funding. Our institutions will strive to jointly support countries in learning about the Clean Portal and tailoring it to the policy environment of each country to improve respective anti-corruption efforts on-the-ground.

Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to those who contributed to the publication of this resource book.

Table of Contents

I. Background of the Clean Portal	7
II. Legal Basis of the Clean Portal	7
III. Objective of the Clean Portal	9
IV. Establishment of the Clean Portal	9
V. Main Functions of Clean Portal	12
VI. Benefits of the Clean Portal	12
A. For Users	13
B. For Public Service Providers	18
VII. Key Considerations for the Successful Implementation of a Digital Governance Tool	19
VIII. Frequently Asked Questions	20
A. Legal Basis	20
B. Institutional Support	20
C. Human resources	21
D. Main features	22
E. Process and Feedback	22
F. Whistleblower Protection and Compensation	24
G. Awareness Raising	25
H. Data and Network	26
IX. Strategic Approaches for Establishing CP-Inspired Systems: Lessons Learned from ACRC	27

Background of the Clean Portal(Corruption and Public Interest Violation Reporting System)

The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) of the Republic of Korea was established in 2008 to improve the integrity of public institutions, eradicate corruption at various levels, and respond to the growing demands for a more transparent society. In 2018, ACRC decided to establish a digital system that guides the reporting process of public interest violations.

ACRC recognized the need to protect and compensate whistleblowers, encourage citizens to actively report violations, and increase pressure on public institutions to abide by the law. Furthermore, as the number of applicable laws and cases of corruption increased, citizens expressed difficulties when attempting to pinpoint the exact type of corruption or violated provisions. Thus, the corresponding demand for an accessible corruption reporting system that automatically classifies and manages public interest violations increased. Therefore, the development of a digital system became crucial to help citizens overcome any barrier when filing a report.



Legal Basis of the Clean Portal

The authority of ACRC is stipulated in the <Act On The Prevention Of Corruption And The Establishment And Management Of The Anti-Corruption And Civil Rights Commission> ¹ (ACRC Act). Operation of the Clean Portal (CP) ² is based on the <Enforcement Decree of the ACRC Act>, the <Public Interest Whistleblower Protection Act> and the internal guidelines of ACRC.

¹ Available at https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=62479&lang=ENG.

² Available at <https://www.clean.go.kr/eng/>.

It is also worth highlighting the importance of the <Public Interest Whistleblower Protection Act>, which has been enforced since 2011 as the corruption reporting system goes hand in hand with the whistleblower protection. Article 10-2 (Construction and Operation of Integrated Information System for Whistleblowing Disclosure) states that ACRC has the authority to operate an integrated information system such as CP.

Article 10-2 (Construction and Operation of Integrated Information System for Whistleblowing Disclosure)

- (1) The Commission may construct and operate an integrated information system that manages the current status of the receipt and treatment of whistleblowing disclosures (hereinafter referred to as "integrated information system").
- (2) Where necessary to construct and operate an integrated information system, the Commission may request organizations and agencies under the subparagraphs of Article 6 to provide data and information on the receipt and treatment of whistleblowing disclosures, and retain and use such data and information within the scope of purposes of the provision thereof. In such cases, any person, in the receipt of a request for providing data and information, shall comply with such request unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.
- (3) The Commission shall take measures necessary to protect data and information it retains and uses pursuant to paragraph (2).

[This Article Newly Inserted on Jul. 24, 2015]

The relevant definitions and clauses regarding the accountability of ACRC can be found in the ACRC Act. Below is the legal definition of an investigative body (prosecution, the investigative office, or the police) per Article 59 (6).

Article 59 (Verification and Referral of Details of Reports)

- (6) Where a person suspected of committing an act of corruption regarding which the Commission has received a report is any of the following high ranking officials and details of his or her suspected act of corruption require an investigation for criminal punishment and an institution of prosecution, the Commission shall file an accusation with the competent investigative agency, such as the prosecution, the Investigation Office, or the police, against him or her in the name of the Commission: <Amended on Mar. 21, 2017; Apr. 16, 2019; Dec. 29, 2020; Aug. 17, 2021; Jan. 4, 2022>
 1. A public official with the rank of Vice Minister or higher;
 2. The Special Metropolitan City Mayor, a Metropolitan City Mayor, a Special Self-Governing City Mayor, a Do Governor, or a Special Self-Governing Province Governor;
 3. A police officer with the rank of superintendent general or higher;
 4. A judge or a prosecutor;
 5. A military officer with the rank of general;
- (5) 6. A member of the National Assembly.

Article 60 of the ACRC Act defines the procedures and deadlines of the investigation in detail as follows.



Article 60 (Handling of Findings of Inspection)

- (1) An inspection agency shall complete its audit, investigation, or inspection of a case within 60 days from the date a report thereon is referred or forwarded to the inspection agency: Provided, That if any good reason exists, the period may be extended and the inspection agency shall notify the Commission of the reason for such extension and the extended period. <Amended on Jan. 4, 2022>
- (2) An inspection agency to which a report is referred or forwarded under Article 59 (3) or (4) (including other inspection agencies to which the inspection agency refers, re-refers, requests an audit on, transmits, requests an investigation of, or files an accusation on any report referred to the inspection agency; hereafter in this Article the same shall apply) shall notify the Commission of the findings of an audit, investigation, or inspection within 10 days from the date it completes such audit, investigation, or inspection. <Amended on Dec. 10, 2019; Jan. 4, 2022>
- (3) Upon receipt of the findings of an audit, investigation, or inspection pursuant to paragraph (2), the Commission shall notify the reporting person of the gist of the findings, and may request the inspection agency to explain the details of such notification, if necessary. <Amended on Jan. 4, 2022>
- (4) Upon receipt of notification under paragraph (3), a reporting person may file an objection to the findings of an audit, investigation, or inspection with the Committee. <Newly Inserted by Jan. 4, 2022>
- (5) Where an audit, investigation, or inspection conducted by an inspection agency to which a report is referred or forwarded under Article 59 (3) is deemed inadequate, the Commission may request the inspection agency to conduct a re-investigation stating reasonable grounds, such as the submission of new evidential materials, within 30 days from the date it is notified of the findings of the audit, investigation, or inspection. <Amended on Jan. 4, 2022>
- (6) An inspection agency requested to conduct a re-investigation shall notify the Commission of the findings thereof within seven days from the date it completes the re-investigation. In such cases, the Commission upon receipt of the notification shall immediately serve a notice on the reporting person of the gist of the findings of the investigation. <Amended on Jan. 4, 2022>

ACRC has the right to file an objection against the result of the investigation pursuant to Article 61-2 when the relevant case is not transferred to a prosecutor.

Article 61-2 (Filing Objections)

Where the Commission has filed an accusation with the competent investigative agency pursuant to Article 59 (5), it may file an objection with the head of the police station to which a senior judicial police officer belongs pursuant to Article 245-7 of the Criminal Procedure Act when the Commission receives from the senior judicial police officer a notice that the relevant case will not be transferred to a prosecutor. <Amended on Aug. 17 2021>
[This Article Newly Inserted on Dec. 29, 2020]

III

Objective of the Clean Portal

CP aims to provide a holistic yet customized service for different types of users who seek to report corruption and violations of public interest. CP helps reporters/whistleblowers not only report corrupt practices they witnessed but also apply for protection and compensation systematically and efficiently.³ In addition, CP serves as a repository for integrity-related information and a data centre for activities and reports regarding the anti-corruption policies of various institutions in the public sector.

IV

Establishment of the Clean Portal

In 2003, the corruption-reporting system in operation was restructured into a new digital anti-corruption platform, which was named CP in 2019. The purpose of the platform was to facilitate the process of reporting corruption and violations of public interest and to increase anti-corruption policymaking based on data. Users can file online reports of corruption and public interest violations on the CP website (www.clean.go.kr), regardless of the agency in charge, such as violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act.⁴ On the CP website, users can also request protection and compensation from ACRC. Furthermore, CP allows proxy reporting to guarantee the full protection of whistleblowers.

³ *Perspectives on Integrity, Trust and Anti-Corruption*, 2021, p. 6. Available at <https://anti-corruption.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UNDP-New-Technologies-for-Sustainable-Development-Perspectives-on-integrity-trust-and-anti-corruption.pdf>.

⁴ The purpose of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act is to guarantee fair performance of public duties of public servants, etc. and to secure trust of the people in the public offices by eradicating improper solicitations and acceptance of money or valuables, etc. (Source: <https://www.acrc.go.kr/menu.es?mid=a20201020400>)

CP was established through the following three phases: In Phase I, CP started as a digital platform that focused on digitizing and standardizing the process of handling corruption and public interest violation reports submitted to ACRC through a single channel.

During Phase II, CP integrated other public institutions' corruption reporting functions under the CP website. Reporters can also file reports directly to ACRC or the relevant organization using the CP website.

During Phase III, big data related to corruption was accumulated through CP to enable systematic diagnoses and analyses of corruption-prone areas. The results of big data are used to improve the policies of government agencies and to increase transparency in the public sector.

Citizens can also utilize CP to identify current corruption issues, trends of corruption reports by type (of corruption), the current status of their reports by region, and other major anti-corruption trends. Public organizations can check the types of reports relevant to their organizations, reports related to specific corruption issues, keywords of news articles, the status of an ongoing investigation, management of a report, and information concerning officials dismissed for corruption.

The information mentioned above can be utilized by public organizations to implement and improve their anti-corruption policies.

The following is a summary of each phase of CP's establishment:

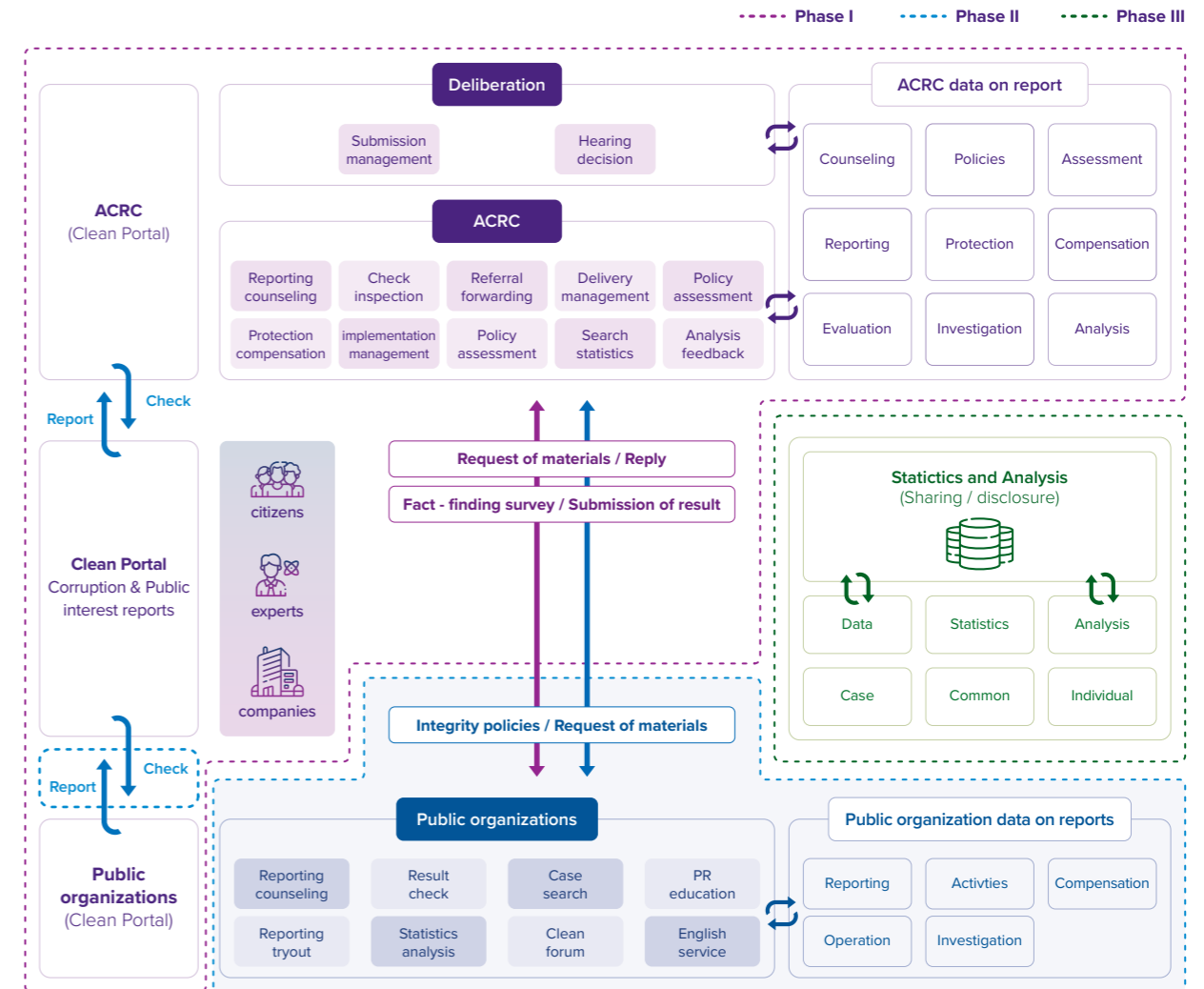
- **Phase I (June 2018–January 2019):**
The development of a digital system that files reports to ACRC and handles the protection and compensation of whistleblowers/reporters
- **Phase II (June 2019–February 2020):**
The development of a whole-of-government corruption reporting system by linking and integrating other public organizations
- **Phase III (June 2020–February 2021):**
The accumulation of big data regarding anti-corruption for the analysis of corruption trends and improvement of relevant policies

Figure I. Outlook of CP ⁵



"Clean Portal" is an online channel for reporting corruption & public interest violation to public organizations

Figure II. CP (Phase I – III) ⁶



Using the 'Clean Forum' function embedded in the CP website, CP serves as a channel not only for reporting corruption but also for the disclosure and sharing of information. Clean Forum is where public organizations share all integrity-related information, including the anti-corruption guidelines of various organizations, information about corrupt officials, and results of their Integrity Assessments (IA). Public organizations can refer to the methodologies of other organizations for preventing corruption, while citizens can examine each organization's level of integrity. As of November 2023, a total of 1,122 public organizations participated in Clean Forum.

⁵ Available at <https://www.clean.go.kr/index.es?sid=a1>.

⁶ ACRC, "Digital Anti-Corruption System (CP Corruption Reporting) operated by the ACRC", PowerPoint resource.

V

Main Functions of Clean Portal

Introduction to Laws and Institutions



You can get information on laws and institutions in detail in relation to report of violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, recruitment corruption, fraudulent receipt of welfare and subsidy or false claims for public funds, acts of corruption, violations of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, or acts detrimental to the public interest, as well as protection and reward for the reporters.

Consultation



You can inquire about reporting violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, recruitment corruption, fraudulent receipt of welfare subsidies or false claims for public funds, acts of corruption, violations of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, or acts detrimental to the public interest, as well as protection and reward for the reporters.

Filing a Report




You can file a report on violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, recruitment corruption, fraudulent receipt of welfare subsidies or false claims for public funds, acts of corruption, violations of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, or acts detrimental to the public interest.

Protection and Reward



You can submit an application form for protection or reward in relation to a report.

Archives



You can get information and resources on report of violations of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, fraudulent receipt of welfare and subsidy or false claims for public funds, acts of corruption, violations of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, or acts detrimental to the public interest, as well as protection and reward for the reporters. The integrity-related information of all public organizations is also available in the Clean Forum.

View Results



You can safely and conveniently check the results of a consultation, report, reward, or request of protection.



VI

Benefits of the Clean Portal

From the citizens' point of view, CP: (a) provides an effective one-stop corruption reporting service for the public sector; (b) enables citizens to safely report various types of grievances, including acts of corruption, violations of relevant anti-corruption laws, and acts that infringe upon public interest; (c) supports citizens with writing reports by providing ready-to-use templates and relevant information through Artificial Intelligence (AI); (d) allows users to monitor the status of their cases and request for whistleblower protection and rewards; and (e) helps users receive responses in a defined time-frame with the right to appeal guaranteed.

Types of Reporting Channels and Number of Cases Received

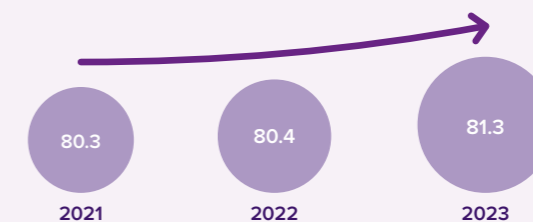
(Unit: case)

Channel Year	Clean Portal (incl. mobile)	Mail	Fax	E-People	Others	Total
2021	13,901 (2,672)	20	82	233	952	15,188
2022	10,423 (1,966)	7	75	166	664	11,335
2023	9,695 (1,815)	17	106	141	827	10,786
Total	34,019 (6,453)	44	263	540	2,443	37,309

*Collected on the report date

The graph below illustrates the rise in the rate of user satisfaction with CP from 2021 to 2023. The survey is being conducted every December for around 10 days and the sample size varies each year (230 people in 2021; 3,291 people in 2022; and 1,311 people in 2023).

Figure III. User Satisfaction Rate with CP (2021 ~ 2023)



From the government's point of view, CP enables the administration to effectively coordinate, resolve, and store registered cases across the public sector. The benefits and unique features of CP will be explained from the perspective of users and public service providers in the following section.

The graph below shows the increase in the number of public institutions that adopted the standardized CP system from 2021 to 2023.

Figure IV. Number of Public Institutions that Adopted the Standardized CP System (2021 - 2023)

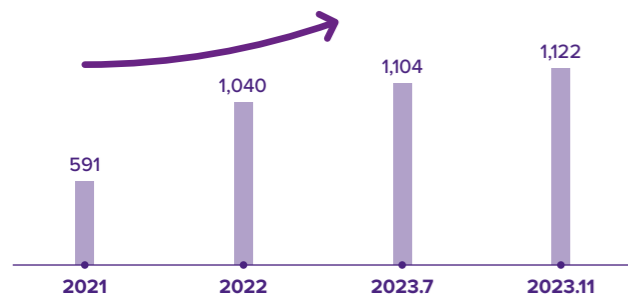
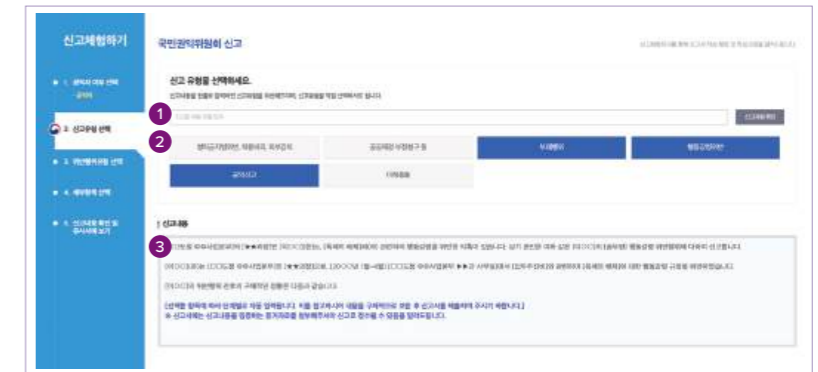


Figure V. User-friendly interface and a detailed step-by-step manual with an AI-based report generation function that allows users with no legal background to identify the rules and regulations relevant to their corruption report



1. AI-based system will examine the keyword entered automatically and suggest the category of which the reported case falls under.
2. Keyword 'bribe' was entered and the system suggested three categories including 'corrupt act', 'violation of code of conduct', and 'public interest report'. Reporter may follow the suggestions or manually choose the category(-ies).
3. Once the category is selected, the system suggests a ready-made template for ease of reference. Reporter can also disregard these suggestions and directly input detailed contents of report.



1. AI-based system automatically provides the list of laws and regulations that are relevant for the reported case. User may type keyword and filter these suggestions.
2. Using this function, users can easily recognize and select which laws or regulations were violated.
3. After choosing the types of corruption, the users can elaborate how the corruption was conducted, by whom, and what the situation was like, etc. The system will suggest a ready-made template for ease of reference. However, user can also disregard these suggestions and directly input detailed contents of report.

A For Users

1. Convenience

The CP website has a 'Filing a Report' function that provides example of corruption reports.

Users can search for sample cases by using keywords, characteristics of violations, or their area of work. The AI analysis function helps users to easily fill out the form by identifying which provisions among about 500 laws may have been violated and providing standard sample forms. This makes it easier and convenient for regular citizens to file a report even without legal expertise.

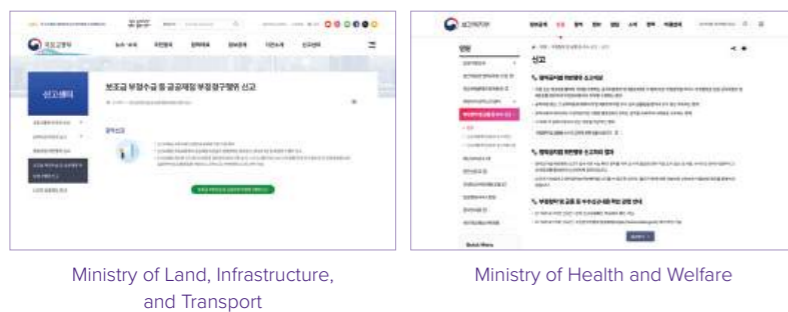


1. System allows the user to review the contents of report before the final submission.
2. At the same time, AI-based system shares similar cases/historical parallels for the ease of reference.

2. Standardized Corruption Reporting System and Process

CP enables standardized corruption reporting across various public institutions. As of December 2023, 950 public institutions have integrated the CP system and have a direct link to the CP website on their respective websites.⁷ This integration allows users to file reports to ACRC and other public institutions using the same system.

Figure VI. Example of linkages to the corruption reporting systems of different government ministries



Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport

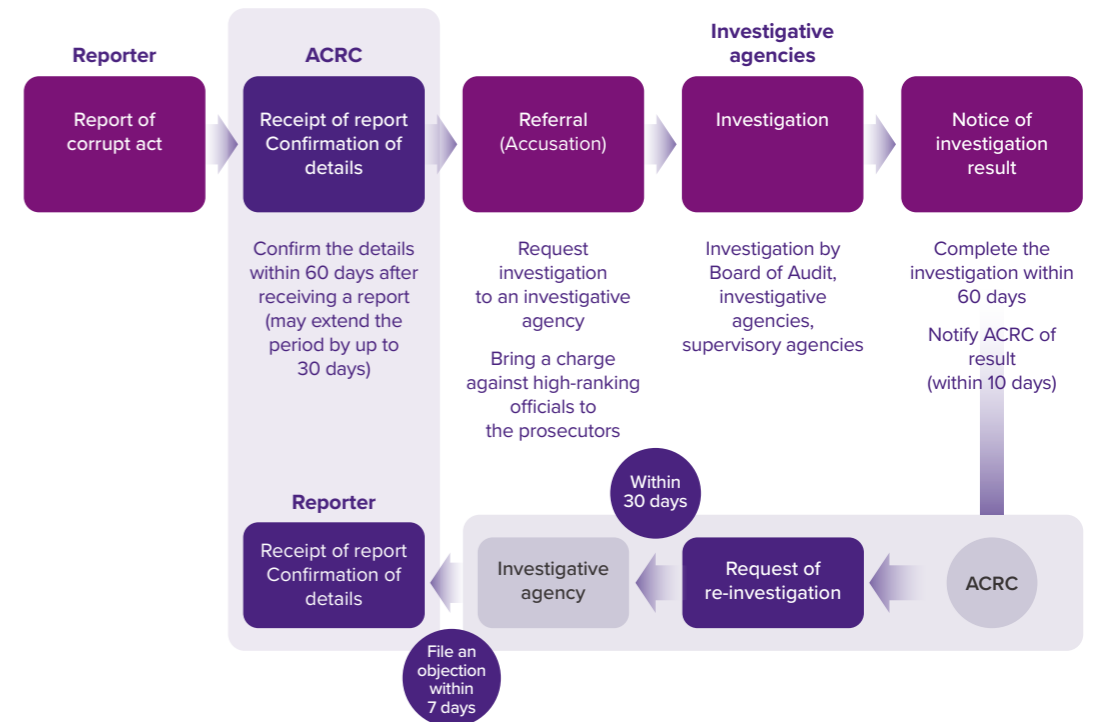
Ministry of Health and Welfare

3. Effective Follow-up and Accountability Ensured

One of the key strengths of CP is the smooth and efficient channeling of corruption reporting to the ministry or agency in charge. Once ACRC confirms the details upon receipt of the report, an investigative agency (such as the Prosecutor's Office and the Police) must complete the investigation within 60 days. Following its result, ACRC will provide a response within the stipulated deadline (10 days). Reporter can file objections for reinvestigations when the result is unsubstantiated or deemed unsatisfactory. An easy-to-use and real time tracking system is available, and the name and contact information of a designated officer in charge are disclosed through the system.

Furthermore, functions that enable easy tracking of the report and real time status monitoring are examples of the citizen-centered approach taken by CP. The 'My Result' function of CP allows reporters to track the progress of the reported case with only a few clicks. People can also review the status and process of requested services, such as counselling, reporting, protection, and rewards. Additionally, users will be informed via SMS if any major changes in the status of their report status occur.

Figure VII. Reporting process at a glance



⁷ Available at <https://www.clean.go.kr/menu.es?mid=a10702000000>.

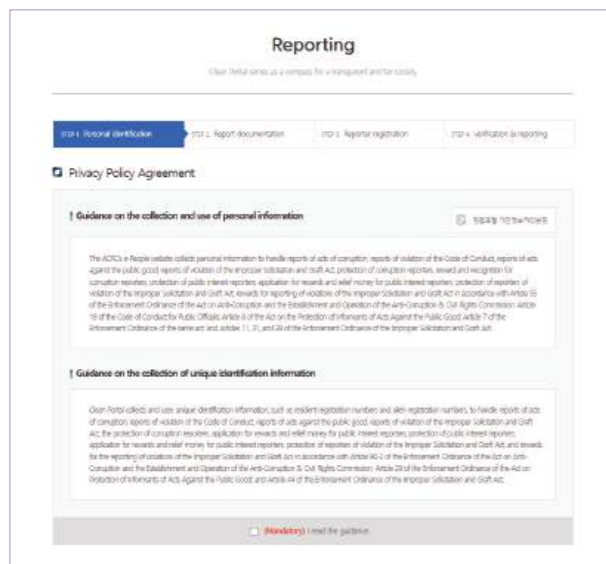
4. Whistleblower Identity Verification & Confidentiality Protection

CP ensures the protection of personal information and prevents false reporting through identity verification. Various methods such as an identity check through a mobile phone, digital pass, and joint or bank certificate are utilized to verify the identity of the reporter before filing a corruption report. In doing so, reporters are notified of their confidentiality as per the <Whistleblower Protection Act> to assure them of the protection provided.

Figure VIII. Multiple channels for identity verification and log-in



Figure IX. Guarantee of the reporter's confidentiality for protection



B For Public Service Providers

1. Efficiency (Time and cost saving)

CP provides a unified and integrated system for various governmental bodies to manage and supervise reported anti-corruption cases.

This enhances work efficiency and reduces unnecessary administrative costs. CP also prevents budget waste by reducing investments in independent anti-corruption systems and ensuring a more efficient, collective use of resources through a standardized reporting system. In short, the streamlined use of CP reduces the strain on financial and human resources by enabling users to quickly connect to an aggregate database of knowledge and the appropriate reporting agencies and mechanisms. Moreover, the participation of 1,122 public institutions (as of November 2023) in the “Clean Forum” section within CP, improves the sharing of and access to information.

This can further help improve internal anti-corruption policies and compliance with external government regulations.

Moreover, as corruption is reduced, public perception of the integrity of institutions improves, which has the potential to increase the efficiency of public service providers.

2. Sustainable Policy Development for Anti-Corruption

CP helps ACRC to develop anti-corruption policies that are based on data and evidence. Big data and expertise accumulated by CP help construct a sustainable ecosystem that promotes research and analysis related to anti-corruption.

Users can use the platform as a database, whereas public organizations can share information related to integrity and corruption, such as anti-corruption guidelines, information on corrupt officials, new policies, and the results of the Anti-Corruption Initiative Assessment (AIA).

ACRC plans to develop a comprehensive plan, guidelines for integrity policies, and institutional improvements to prevent corruption based on the real-time status of reports, keywords, and reports by type.

VII

Key Considerations for the Successful Implementation of a Digital Governance Tool

Several key factors are vital to the successful implementation of a digital governance tool like CP, based on the experience of ACRC in establishing and maintaining the platform.

First, a secure internet connection is necessary for the stable operation of the tool. This should be complemented by an overall basic digital infrastructure or 'e-governance' system to ensure sustainability.

Clear political will or support from high-level officials must be acquired to maintain the momentum and investment in this long-term project. Furthermore, any room for legal grounds that enable the main anti-corruption agency to design and operate such a tool would be desirable. Lastly, the long-term financial investment from a public fund should be guaranteed to provide a stable enabling environment, while a pre-existing similar system would be an asset.

Internet Connectivity	A stable internet connection is needed as this is a digital tool.
Digital Infrastructure	Basic digital infrastructure is a requirement as it increases the likelihood of the sustainable operation of the project and maintenance of the system.
Legal Basis	It is desirable to have legal grounds to mandate and enable a relevant institution to design and operate this tool.
Clear Demonstration of Political Will	Identifying the right government institution and mobilizing its political will are prerequisites for this partnership.
Tangible Resources for Sustainability	The system is very costly, especially given that it requires solid internet infrastructure. Thus, pre-existing infrastructure or systems to file reports on corrupt practices or violations of public interest and well-trained officers in charge of processing reports will be an advantage. Furthermore, a clear indication (or at least willingness) that the government will allocate its budget to this tool in the long term is desirable.

In short, the existence of the government's strong interest in and ownership of anti-corruption work, experience related to corruption reporting, and mechanisms that handle violations of public interest (preferably in the digital field) would be prerequisites for the establishment and sustainable operation of a CP-inspired mechanism.



VIII

Frequently Asked Questions

A

Legal Basis

1. What is the legal basis for ACRC to establish CP and deal with corruption reporting?

- The authority of ACRC is stipulated in the <Act On The Prevention of Corruption And The Establishment And Management Of The Anti-Corruption And Civil Rights Commission> (also known as the ACRC Act).
- The operation of CP is based on the <Enforcement Decree of the ACRC Act>, the <Public Interest Whistleblower Protection Act>, and the <Enforcement Decree of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act>, <Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Prohibition of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of Illicit Profits>, <Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants>.
- ACRC also has internal guidelines for operating and managing CP.
- The Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea has guidelines and regulations on managing and operating information systems. For example, government agencies are obligated to respect guidelines and standards when establishing and operating administrative information systems. Moreover, the ministry conducts inspections into whether agencies are complying with such guidelines and rules.
- ACRC adheres to regulations and standards on data management for establishing an AI-based system.

B

Institutional Support

1. CP hosts a large number of public institutions. How was their cooperation and willingness to participate ensured? (e.g., legal solution, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), state strategy)

- It is up to each institution to participate as the use of CP is not compulsory. However, the benefits provided to institutions that save financial and human resources help garner support and voluntary participation from public institutions. For example, a standard reporting system that each institution can utilize prevents budget waste by limiting overlapping investments in the system and ensuring an efficient use of resources. In addition, efforts to strengthen integrity (including the utilization of CP) are monitored through AIA, which is another corruption prevention tool developed by ACRC. The submission of related documents and the release of preliminary assessments are conducted through CP.

2. Is there integration between CP and other systems utilized by law enforcement institutions? Are different methods to report corruption (e.g., mail, personal visits, fax) available? If so, are the reports filed through methods other than the database included in the CP system?

- As of November 2023, a total of 1,122 organizations including national, metropolitan, and provincial police agencies are operating Clean Forum. Clean Forum is a service within CP that integrates anti-corruption information and reports published on the websites of each public institution. This enables people to find and report corrupt practices easily. The information on Clean Forum consists of anti-corruption guidelines, information related to corrupt or dismissed officials, the results of IA and AIA, integrity training, and exemplary reports on corruption.
- Citizens seeking to report corruption on a police website are redirected to CP, which results in a comprehensive and aggregate collection of corruption reports on a single system.
- ACRC also registers and manages reports received in writing, through fax, personal visits, and mail on CP.



C

Human resources

1. What kind of capacities and expertise are required to operate CP? How many personnel oversee the operation of CP and manage corruption reports? Have there been any changes in the number of human resources allocated to CP since its establishment?

- At the initial development stage of CP, five staff members were involved. Two staff members currently operate and manage CP as the system has stabilized.
- In addition, the CP maintenance team includes 11 developers and 3 help desk staff. All personnel are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and security note to maintain a high level of security.
- Consultations, reports, applications for protection/compensation, etc. are identified and utilized for analysis.

D

Main features

1. What specific features of CP have citizens found the most useful?

- First, the AI report documentation guide of CP is very useful for citizens. Citizens can intuitively sense when corruption has occurred but are not always aware of which specific law(s) has been violated due to their lack of expertise. Such uncertainties can prevent citizens from reporting because reporting a case accurately would require further research or external help (e.g., legal aid), increasing the stress and financial burden of the process.

However, the report documentation guide helps reduce the time and burden of reporting corruption as it uses AI to analyse keywords the reporter has used to detect which law(s) has been violated. It proposes a ready-made template so that citizens can create a clear and fully informative report by following the sample or filling in the blanks in a template.

- This AI function is a simple and cost-efficient technique that countries can adopt easily. While some AI technologies require a long-term investment of financial and human resources, a simple automation and data analysis mechanism such as the AI report documentation guide can be an economical first step in the right direction.
- Second, the provision of online access to reporting processes is another useful feature of CP. Reporting corruption requires not only courage and time but also having the right resources. Hence, citizens need to be able to access both the processing status of the report and its results. As information relevant to each case is available online, citizens can be assured that their report is being handled properly without spending too much time or revealing their identity during each verification step.

Thus, online access to corruption reports and results provides citizens with courage, trust in the process, and the protection they need. This is crucial as whistleblower protection is a key element that must be considered in every step of corruption reporting.

1. How are complaints filtered? Is a rejection note sent to reporters, or do they remain unanswered? Does CP have a function that automatically sorts out irrelevant or false reports?

- Staff members check reports manually as CP currently does not have a function that automatically filters reports. Cases will be handled by staff if deemed relevant, and the case will be closed if deemed irrelevant. In either situation, the reporter will be informed of how the report was handled.
- <The ACRC Act> requires the inclusion of evidence in a corruption report. When an insufficient amount of evidence is provided and a report is rejected, the results are accompanied by an explanation of why a report was rejected or not investigated. Reporters are also informed that they can file a report again once they collect and attach a sufficient amount of evidence.

2. Are there any recommendations to ensure timely feedback to citizens on the progress of their complaints? For instance, if the filed complaint needs to be sent to the police, and there is a delay in receiving a response, what does ACRC do to ensure that the reporter is not discouraged?

- The 'My Result' function of CP allows reporters to track the progress of the reported case. Users can also review the status and processes of the services they requested such as counselling, reporting, protection, and rewards. They will be informed via text if any major changes in status occur.
- More specifically, once the citizen files a report, ACRC confirms the details of the report through an appointed staff member who closely follows, reports on, and handles the case. ACRC subsequently transfers the investigation to an investigative agency. The investigation is conducted for a maximum of 60 days and the results are notified to ACRC within 10 days of completion of the inquiry. ACRC informs the results to the reporter, who can file an objection within seven days via SMS messenger or the 'My Result' page of CP if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. In such cases, ACRC requests a reinvestigation, which is conducted for 30 days before the reporter receives the results again.
- Efforts for transparency and accountability are being monitored as an indicator so that responses to cases are being reported and forwarded to ACRC promptly. The relevant manuals and training are also provided. In short, operational guidelines that assure the timely handling of the report and notification to the reporter through CP are in place.



3. What is the procedure to appeal against the results of a report through CP?

- Appeals can be submitted for reports that have already been filed and processed through CP by resubmission of the report with additional supporting documents or evidence. Other methods can also be utilized (e.g., phone, fax, email, or in-person visit).

4. How does ACRC ensure accessibility to CP for people with disabilities?

- CP does not provide a separate page for people with disabilities. However, the Korean government provides a screen reader programme for individuals with visual impairments and operates a 24/7 real time communication service centre for individuals with hearing impairments to facilitate the utilization of online government services.

1. What are the mechanisms for protecting the rights of whistleblowers through CP (including data confidentiality and labour rights)?

- An innovative feature of CP is the Whistleblower Confidentiality Protection system. The most important aspect of an online corruption reporting system is to uphold credibility and guarantee the confidentiality of whistleblowers. ACRC verifies the identity of reporters via authentication systems to prevent false reporting. However, it is also possible to make reports anonymously via lawyers.
- ACRC strictly prohibits the disclosure of whistleblowers' personal information without their consent. Violating this confidentiality agreement will result in imprisonment for up to five years or a fine of a maximum US\$37,075 (KRW50 million).
- If a public interest reporter is subject to disadvantageous measures against his or her societal or economic status or suffers discrimination in the workplace due to the reporting, the appropriate measures of reinstatement will be taken. ACRC can also request the police to provide protective measures if an act of reporting endangers the physical safety of the reporter or their relatives. If a filed report results in the detection of a crime committed by the reporters or one in which they participated, disciplinary action may be reduced or exempted.

2. What is the compensation procedure for whistleblowers? Is it done in person or electronically? What happens if the court judgement is annulled?

- ACRC provides compensation services for whistleblowers. If a report directly results in the recovery of or an increase in revenues of public institutions, monetary rewards will be paid for up to 30% of the amount of money restored to the central or local governments and public institutions. Rewards will only be paid to whistleblowers for reporting acts that are detrimental to the public interest.
- When a public interest violation report enhances public interest, a monetary award will be paid for up to \$37,075 (₩500 million) even when there is no direct recovery of or increase in revenue.
- Whistleblowers, collaborators, or relatives who have suffered financial damages such as treatment costs, moving costs, or wage losses due to public interest reporting can also apply for relief funds from ACRC through CP. Once ACRC reviews the requested/necessary documents, an appropriate amount of compensation will be calculated. Subsequently, ACRC will pay the determined amount to the reporter via a bank account. However, the compensation may be confiscated in the case of payment through false and illegal channels, duplicate payment for the same case, or incorrect payment. Full payment is made through an account transfer. Direct (in-person cash) payment is not possible.
- Compensation is paid when the recovery of the income of public institutions is completed legally. In other words, once the amount is determined and transferred, it is unlikely to change. However, if the court resolution is annulled based on new evidence, the compensation can be cancelled.

3. How are staff members protected from malicious comments or threats from corruption reporters?

- Citizens can report the same incident multiple times using MACRO (Merge and Correlate Recorded Output). To prevent such misuse, CP captures repeated reports and does not allow anonymous reporting.
- ACRC has not implemented specific measures to protect its staff, but it (a) provides treatment programmes for staff members, (b) records phone calls in cases of legal conflicts, (c) provides a waiting message notifying reporters of the rights of staff members and investigators, (d) disseminates a manual on how to respond to unexpected situations, and (e) informs corruption reporters that anonymous reports are not rewarded and that they should reveal their real names if they seek protection and rewards.



4. Can ACRC punish an agency that does not proceed properly after a case is reported and is unwilling to share the results?

- ACRC cannot view cases reported to other organizations. However, ACRC recommends that cases be processed within the designated deadline through educational training and campaigns. The deadline is within 60 days from when the case is reported (an extension of 90 days is also possible).
- Although ACRC does not manage it separately, violations can be subject to criminal punishment or fines. ACRC also recommends reports to be processed with additional support from the whistleblower protection mechanism.

G Awareness Raising

1. How does ACRC raise public awareness of CP? What types of awareness campaigns have been conducted to encourage the utilization of the platform?

- ACRC hosts a council of inspectors from public institutions every year to request cooperation for promoting CP. It also plans to activate social media promotion in collaboration with the Korean government.
- Regarding the system management of CP, ACRC operates intensive reporting periods separately. For example, ACRC highlighted violations of the code of conduct by public officials during the Lunar New Year holidays in 2023. ACRC has also conducted an intensive crackdown on fraudulent beneficiaries of COVID-19 government subsidies.
- The features that allow users to file a report and apply for protection/rewards simultaneously are highlighted when promoting CP to citizens. It is also emphasized that CP benefits public officials as well because the standardized system allows them to easily handle reports and does not generate additional costs.

Figure X. Examples of ACRC's social media posts on CP



1. What types of data are analysed by AI algorithms? Are both numeric and text data used or only one of them?

- The entered and analysed data includes both numeric and text data.

2. Can you provide information on the network infrastructure that hosts CP?

- CP is operated based on monitoring tools including database (DB), web application server (WAS), and log analysis engines to manage the de-identification of personal information, forgery prevention, email security, screenshot prevention, and search engine optimization.
- DB and WAS are configured dually.

3. What algorithms does CP use to analyse text data and detect corruption? Does it rely on natural language processing (NLP) or other types of algorithms?

- Commercial software related to big data analysis (e.g., big data collection engine, AI-based automatic classification engine) is in operation.

4. Has CP implemented any methods to analyse and select text data from social media or other online sources to identify potential corruption committed by public officials and politicians based on their lifestyle?

- It analyses media and Social Networking Service (SNS) data through 'Hye An (pan-governmental big data platform)' operated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea.

5. Does CP utilize AI? How does ACRC utilize the data accumulated via CP?

- In addition to the AI report documentation guide, CP utilizes AI to automatically categorize types of reports, while the system continuously learns and upgrades its classification skills.
- ACRC also collects anti-corruption information by analysing the current status of reports and keywords from media reports to create a database for detecting corruption-prone areas.



Strategic Approaches for Establishing CP-Inspired Systems: Lessons Learned from ACRC

Having the legal basis to develop/operate a corruption reporting system and provide protection for whistleblowers is vital. This process can begin with drafting bills to legalize such systems or codifying the rights of whistleblowers and public interest reporters.

However, countries without such provisions can still initiate the development of a corruption reporting system by raising awareness and formulating policy recommendations to government agencies. It is important to note that even when compensation and rewards for whistleblowers are not feasible, it is important to implement a system where the confidentiality and protection of reporters are ensured and laws that subject violators to criminal punishment are in place. Overall, there should be coordinated efforts to implement a sustainable system to protect whistleblowers in the long term.

Securing institutional commitment and support from relevant stakeholders is needed for the sustainable development and operation of a CP-inspired mechanism. Support from strong institutions and high-ranking officials will also help prevent resistance or internal backlashes. Demonstrating that new IT (Information Technology) can help reduce burdens on human and financial resources and automate certain time-consuming roles will help promote the wider usage of the digital system.

For example, the benefits of a government-wide, cloud-based, integrative system include reporters being connected to the appropriate channels and institutions and automated reporter notification systems being streamlined. Officials in charge can save time and effort as they do not have to go back and forth among different agencies to find the results of a specific case. It is also worth noting that the relevant anti-corruption agency would need to secure a sufficient amount of budget to maintain the system, handle information provided to reporters properly, and educate staff members on the revisions of laws.

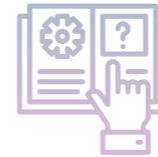
It is of utmost importance to develop the system from the perspective of public officials and reporters who will be the actual users of the platform. From the onset of its development, the opinion of the users, including government officials of anti-corruption agencies and the public, should be collected and reflected. It is of equal importance to regularly incorporate user feedback in the maintenance phase. For instance, there was an opinion from a public official to increase the visibility of urgent and imminent reports by highlighting them in yellow as a user-friendly function to increase the system's efficiency. In order to catalyse such positive feedback cycles, public officials should be trained in how to use the system and have access to feedback mechanisms at all times.

For developers, it is necessary to ensure their understanding of the key laws relevant to the overseeing anti-corruption agency and the development and management of the system. To **equip developers with an understanding of the key laws and regulations**, an orientation manual should be shared, and a focal point should be designated among agency staff with an incentive mechanism in place to reward them with additional responsibilities.

Updating the system based on an understanding of the overall legal and policy landscape will help expand and reduce gaps in the legal scope of reporting. Before, ACRC had to codify new areas of reporting once relevant laws were drafted and enacted. Additional target areas of reporting can now be quickly identified and updated by amending the laws that appear in the Korean Law Information Center.

For public users, **ensuring accessibility** is particularly crucial. It is imperative to increase the accessibility of the reporting channel within two steps so that anyone can file a report easily. Key features to be considered during the initial stages of the establishment are functions of (a) online reporting and handling; (b) saving and analysing search logs; and (c) providing access to information while simultaneously prohibiting access to unassigned cases.

To summarize, below step-by-step guide and DOs and DON'Ts of establishing CP-inspired mechanism could be useful for countries interested in benchmarking the CP.



Step-by-step guide on establishing CP-inspired system ⁸

1. Political commitment	Acquire political will and support for establishing the system (especially from the top).
2. Legal basis	Initiate the development of a corruption reporting system while beginning the process to provide a legal basis of such system and whistleblower protection in parallel (take advantage of any room for legal grounds that ensure the sustainability of the system).
3. System design	Design a system that ensures accessibility and protection for the reporters/whistleblowers (Key features to be included from the initial stage: 1) online reporting and handling; 2) saving and analysing search logs; and 3) provision of access to relevant information).
4. Technology / big data	Enable the data collection and plan ahead how to utilize (store, load, process, analyze, and visualize) accumulated big data from the designing stage of the system.
5. Capacity building	Regularly train the public officials who use the system and handle corruption cases.
6. Public relations / advocacy	Promote the system and demonstrate that the new system can help reduce burdens on the human and financial resources so that the system can be widely used by not just the citizens but also the public officials handling the reported corruption.

* [Phased approach] Pilot-test the system with a narrower scope (e.g. reporting to the Anti-Corruption Agency only) and expand it (e.g. a whole-of-government corruption reporting system with linkages to other public organizations). Continue to upgrade the system gradually.

** [Long-term planning for sustainability] Mobilize sustainable (multi-year) funding sources for the periodic upgrade/ maintenance of the system.

⁸ Please note that this is to serve as a reference for those who aim to build corruption reporting system and the order of the steps can be interchanged depending on the country context.

DOs and DON'Ts of Establishing an Online Corruption Reporting System

	DOs	DON'Ts
Legal foundation	Draft bills to provide a legal foundation of corruption reporting system and whistleblower protection.	Postpone the development of a corruption reporting system until the legal basis is fully established.
Whistleblower protection	Safeguard the protection of the whistleblowers first where confidentiality is guaranteed.	Focus on compensation and rewards for whistleblowers rather than protection.
Verification of reporter identification	Verify the identity of the reporter to prevent false reporting and ensure confidentiality by anonymizing the data.	Always receive reporting anonymously as confidentiality is important.
PR / advocacy	Demonstrate that the new system can help reduce burdens on the human and financial resources for not only the reporters but also the public officials on the receiving end.	Promote the convenience of the new system only to the general public as they are potential reporters.
Feedback and training	Receive feedback from all types of users and regularly train public officials for the seamless operation of the system.	Receive user feedback from the citizens only not investing on regular training of public officials who use the system and handle corruption cases.
Engagement with developers	Equip developers with a comprehensive understanding of the relevant laws and regulations before building the system.	Provide developers with information limited to the engineering/technical side of the Portal, as they do not need to know the laws.
Accessibility	Simplify and build user-centred interface to ensure easy access and use (especially for the low- and middle-income countries where the internets are slow).	Build sophisticated features to provide comprehensive services for the users.
Phased approach	Build a system with a narrower scope and gradually expand it.	Try to build a sophisticated system that covers all at once.

References

- ACRC. Available at <https://acrc.go.kr/>
- Clean Portal. Available at <https://www.clean.go.kr/eng/>
Clean Portal. Available at <https://www.clean.go.kr/menu.es?mid=a10702000000>
- ACRC, "Digital Anti-Corruption System (CP Corruption Reporting) operated by the ACRC", PowerPoint resource
- Republic of Korea, Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, Act No. 19268 (21 March 2023). Available at https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=62479&lang=ENG
- UNDP, New Technologies for Sustainable Development: Perspectives on Integrity, Trust and Anti-Corruption, 2021. Available at <https://anti-corruption.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UNDP-New-Technologies-for-Sustainable-Development-Perspectives-on-integrity-trust-and-anti-corruption.pdf>