

# Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

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## **Independent Commission Against Corruption**

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China was set up in 1974. The ICAC, the principal agency with a statutory charter to investigate and prevent corruption in Hong Kong, is totally independent from the executive branch of the Government and reports directly to the Chief Executive. The principal objectives of the ICAC are –

- to enforce anti-corruption laws vigilantly and professionally, to make corruption a high-risk crime;
- to identify and eliminate opportunities for corruption in Government departments and public bodies by reviewing their procedures and practices, and promote corruption prevention in private sector businesses; and
- to educate the community about the evils of corruption and enlist their support in the battle against corruption.

Since its inception, the ICAC adopts a three-pronged approach in fighting corruption, namely investigation, prevention and education, through the Operations, Corruption Prevention and Community Relations Departments.

## **Operations Department**

The Operations Department is the investigative arm of the ICAC and the largest Department within the Commission. The Department strives to deliver the highest standard of service by sparing no effort in the investigation of every pursuable report of corruption.

The Operations Department has developed, over recent years, a strategy to employ proactive investigation techniques to identify and prosecute instances of corruption which might otherwise go unreported. The strategy includes the use of undercover operations and broader and more effective use of intelligence and information technology. The Department's investigators are given continuous professional training to keep pace with the changing commercial environment, technological advances and the latest developments in criminal investigation techniques. Such training embraces a wide range of topics, including financial investigation, IT applications, computer forensics, video interview techniques, case management and court proceedings.

Joint Operational Liaison Groups comprising senior officers of the ICAC and other local disciplined services continue to strengthen inter-departmental cooperation. Regular meetings are held with a view to stepping up operational liaison, addressing common concerns, and developing anti-corruption strategies within the respective disciplined services.

## **Corruption Prevention Department**

The main tasks of the Corruption Prevention Department are to reduce opportunities for corruption in government departments and public bodies, and to advise private sector organisations on corruption prevention. The Department conducts detailed studies of practices and procedures of public sector organisations and assists them in the effective implementation of corruption prevention recommendations. The Department also provides expeditious consultation services to public sector organisations when new procedures or policies are being formulated or when quick corruption prevention advice is called for.

In addition, the Corruption Prevention Department provides free and confidential corruption prevention advice to private sector organisations on request. These include reviewing systems and procedures, drawing up codes of conduct and holding corruption prevention seminars.

To help organisations develop their corruption prevention capability, the Corruption Prevention Department has produced easy-to-use Best Practice Packages on ways to minimise corruption opportunities in corruption prone areas such as procurement, staff administration, information system security, contract letting and administration.

## **Community Relations Department**

The Community Relations Department educates the public against the evils of corruption and enlists their support in the fight against corruption. Community education is conducted through mass media programmes and a network of Regional Offices. On a regular basis, the Department offers advice on departmental guidelines to government departments and conducts corruption prevention talks for government officers. Apart from civil servants, the Department regularly organises training seminars for public body employees. Assistance is also provided to public bodies to encourage them to launch staff integrity promotion projects within their organisations.

For the business sector, the Community Relations Department continues to maintain close liaison with various business organisations and professional bodies to promote business ethics and corruption prevention services of the ICAC. The Hong Kong Ethics Development Centre, established in 1995 in conjunction with six major chambers of commerce, aims to promote business ethics in HKSAR on a long-term basis. In November 2001, the Centre launched a website ([www.icac.org.hk/hkedc](http://www.icac.org.hk/hkedc)) to enhance the provision of its services.

## **Checks and Balances**

The ICAC is subject to a stringent system of checks and balances. Its work is scrutinised by various independent committees – each chaired by a non-official member and comprises prominent members from various sectors of the community. All committee members are appointed by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR.

## **International Co-operation**

The HKSAR Government is committed to playing a full part in international cooperation on enforcement against corruption. As an integral part of the anti-corruption strategy, the ICAC maintains regular operational liaison with other international law enforcement agencies. Since 1999, the ICAC has been a member of the Interpol Group of Experts on Corruption. Our efforts in strengthening international co-operation against corruption will continue.