

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE 2002-2003

SINGAPORE: STOCK TAKING PILLAR I

UPDATED MARCH 2003 (UPDATES IN BOLD)

1. PILLARS OF ACTION

S/N	Anti-Corruption Action Plan - Pillars of Action	Existing Systems and Measures that Addresses the Pillars of Action
	In order to meet the above objectives, participating governments in the region endeavour to take concrete steps under the following three pillars of action with the support, as appropriate, of ADB, OECD and other donor organisations and countries:	NA

2. PILLAR 1 – DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE AND TRANSPARENT SYSTEMS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Integrity in Public Service

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	<i>Establish systems of government hiring of public officials that assure openness, equity and efficiency and promote hiring of individuals of the highest levels of competence and integrity through:</i>	
		Employment in the Singapore Public Service is guided by the principles of meritocracy and equal opportunities for all. Recruitment into the Public Service is open and transparent.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of systems for compensation adequate to sustain appropriate livelihood and according to the level of the economy of the country in question; 	Salaries and benefits are constantly reviewed by a central department (the Public Service Division) with inputs from the relevant agencies. There is also conscious policy of the Government to peg salaries to the level of the economy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of systems for transparent hiring and promotion to help avoid abuses of patronage, nepotism and favouritism, help foster the creation of an independent civil service, and help promote a proper balance between political and career appointments; 	Oversight of appointment and promotion is provided by the Public Service Commission. Promotion procedures are formulated by a central department (the Public Service Division under the Prime Minister's Office), and Government Ministries have to comply with these procedures. Promotions and hiring have to be approved by the Personnel Boards, with across the department representation, and oversight by a central body, i.e. the Public Service Commission. Recruitment is mostly done through open invitation by advertising in the local newspapers and other electronic media (e.g. internet websites).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of systems to provide appropriate oversight of discretionary decisions and of personnel with authority to make discretionary decisions; 	The Government Instruction Manual requires individual Government Ministries to review work procedures for corruption prevention, and to have control systems for effective supervision wherever there is discretionary powers. The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau also makes such reviews if investigations reveal that corruption is due to such systemic shortcomings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of personnel systems that include regular and timely rotation of assignments to reduce insularity that would foster corruption; 	The Government Instruction Manual provides the framework for Ministries to regularly and systematically rotate officers for prevention of corrupt practices.
<i>Establish ethical and administrative codes of conduct that proscribe conflicts of interest, ensure the proper use of public resources, and promote the highest levels of professionalism and integrity through:</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibitions or restrictions governing conflicts of interest; 	The Government Instruction Manual has provisions to prevent conflicts of interest, requiring officers to declare whenever he has a personal interest in any issue being decided in the course of his work. Officers are also not allowed to hold shares in private companies, unless prior approval (with certain conditions) is obtained from their Ministries.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems to promote transparency through disclosure and/or monitoring of, for example, personal assets and liabilities; 	<p>The Government Instruction Manual requires public officers to make declaration of non-indebtedness annually. They must also declare annually their interest in investments and properties, and personal assets and shareholdings in non-listed private companies.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound administration systems which ensure that contacts between government officials and business services users, notably in the area of taxation, customs and other corruption-prone areas, are free from undue and improper influence; 	<p>The Government Instruction Manual has a section on Conduct and Discipline, with guidelines that prohibit public officers from furthering their private interest by making use of their official position and duties. The manual also has a section dedicated to prevention of corruption, with guidelines on how to prevent corrupt practices.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of codes of conduct taking due account of the existing relevant international standards, as well as each country's traditional cultural standards, and regular education, training and supervision of official to ensure proper understanding of their responsibilities; 	<p>There are also Regulations and Directions that are used to discipline public officers if they do deviate from service and departmental guidelines.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures which ensure that officials report acts of corruption and which protect the safety and professional status of those who do. 	<p>The Government Instruction Manual specifically requires officers to report any corrupt acts that come to their knowledge. The Prevention of Corruption Act also makes it mandatory for public officers to report instances of bribe offers. Furthermore, the Act protects the identity of informers in civil and criminal proceedings.</p>

Accountability and Transparency

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<p><i>Safeguard accountability of public service through effective legal frameworks, management practices and auditing procedures through:</i></p>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures and systems to promote fiscal transparency; Adoption of existing relevant international standards and practices for regulation and supervision of financial institutions; Appropriate auditing procedures applicable to public administration and the public sector, and measures and systems to provide timely public reporting on performance and decision making; 	<p>Various legislative and administrative measures ensure accountability and transparency. The Government publishes the Budget annually. Annual estimates of revenue and expenditure are presented to the Parliament and legislative approval of the estimates is shown in the passing of a Supply Act. The Parliament's Estimates Committee keeps watch on Government expenditure. The Accountant's General's Department supervises and administers the Government accounting systems. The Auditor-General's Office (AGO) derived the power to audit ministries and statutory boards from the Constitution, the Audit Act and various other laws. The AGO's audit procedures are generally based on standard issued by Singapore's Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Annually, the Accountant-General prepares accounts and financial statements of the Government as required by the Financial Procedure Act. The Government accounts and statements are submitted to the Auditor-General for audit, before a report is submitted to the President and Parliament within three months of the end of the financial year. The report is referred to the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee for consideration. This Committee considers the Auditor-General's Report and examines the Government's accounts and statements that were presented to Parliament. A report on the findings and recommendations of the Committee is presented to Parliament and is published. Similar requirements for the audit of accounts of statutory boards by AGO are in place. In addition, the Constitutional provisions also give the elected President the mandate of safeguarding the Government's reserves.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate transparent procedures for public procurement that promote fair competition and deter corrupt activity, and adequate simplified administration procedures. 	<p>The Government Instruction Manual has sections on financial and procurement policies and procedures. The measures implemented in these Manuals meet the requirements set out in the Action Plan. The fundamentals and principles guiding our policies ensure accountability with checks and balances to prevent corruption. We have an effective and transparent procurement system which also meet our other international commitments, e.g. the World Trade Organisation – Agreement on Government Procurement, which Singapore has gained ascension to. Also, the Ministry of Finance has a system to provide</p>

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		suitable responses to public feedback.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing institutions for public scrutiny and oversight; 	<p>The Government publishes the Budget annually. Government accounts and statements prepared by the Accountant-General are audited by the Auditor-General and presented to the Parliament, for examination by the Public Accounts Committee. The report on the Committee's findings is published. Any Member of Parliament may query a Minister on the way in which money has been spent, and may suggest ways in which Government money could be better utilised.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems for information availability including on issues such as application processing procedures, funding of political parties and electoral campaigns and expenditure; 	<p>Details for various application procedures are readily available to the public, both in print and on electronic media (e.g. internet). For funding of political parties, there are provisions in the Political Donations Act that govern the issue. For funding of electoral campaigns and expenditure, there are provisions in the Parliamentary Elections Act relating to them.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplification of the regulatory environment by abolishing overlapping, ambiguous or excessive regulations that burden business. 	<p>Government agencies welcome any feedback from the business community regarding any regulations under their charge that affect businesses. In addition, the Government has also specifically set up three panels, namely Pro-Enterprise Panel (PEP), the Zero-In Process (ZIP) panel and the Public Officers Working on Eliminating Red-tape (POWER) initiative, under the "More Vision, Less Bureaucracy" (MVLB) movement. PEP responds to private sector feedback on bureaucracy and aims to cut red-tape and revise Government rules and regulations to be more pro-enterprise. ZIP aims to reduce bureaucracy and resolve overlapping or grey areas in regulations, so that the public need not go separately to different agencies for related services but enjoy integrated services. POWER aims to let public officers cut red tape by eliminating cumbersome and obsolete public sector rules/regulations.</p>