

**For discussion on
16 March 2026**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Promotion of a Clean Civil Service

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the work of the Civil Service Bureau (“CSB”) in promoting integrity management in the civil service in collaboration with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”).

Background

2. Hong Kong has been performing well in global rankings/indices related to integrity. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index 2025¹, Hong Kong rose to the 12th least corrupt place among 182 countries/territories surveyed in 2025, five places higher than 2024. It was also one of the best performing places in the Asia-Pacific region. In the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2025², Hong Kong moved up from the fifth place in 2024 to the third place in 2025 in terms of competitiveness among 69 economies surveyed, and ranked the second in the world in terms of “Government efficiency” under which Hong Kong maintained the fourth place in the world and the first in the Asia-Pacific region in respect of the “Bribery and corruption do not exist” indicator.

3. Hong Kong’s good performance in the area of integrity is the result of concerted efforts from all sectors over the years. The civil service is the backbone of the HKSAR Government. Civil servants should act honestly and with integrity at all times, which is not only vital to maintaining effective governance but also conducive to preserving Hong Kong’s integrity and global competitiveness. The Government will remain committed to upholding a high standard of probity and conduct in the civil service so as to sustain the culture of integrity in the civil service.

¹ Details are available at the ICAC website (<https://www.icac.org.hk/en/intl-persp/ranking-and-research/corruption-perceptions-index/index.html>).

² Details are available at the ICAC website (<https://www.icac.org.hk/en/intl-persp/ranking-and-research/world-competitiveness-yearbook/index.html>).

Strategy in promoting a clean civil service and the work

4. CSB and ICAC have been working closely with policy bureaux and departments (“B/Ds”) to promote and uphold the value of integrity and the culture of probity in the civil service through a three-pronged approach, namely active prevention and regulation, training, and sanctions.

(1) Active prevention and regulation

5. The provision of clear rules plays an important part in prevention. The updated Civil Service Code (the “Code”) spells out the 12 core values that civil servants are required to uphold, including “integrity”. Civil servants should act honestly and with integrity at all times. They must never act in an improper or dishonest manner, given that the public expect them to adhere to the highest probity standards. All civil servants should stay vigilant against corrupt practices and guard against breaches of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201) and the common law offence of “Misconduct in Public Office”. Furthermore, civil servants should ensure that no actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest will arise between their official duties and private interests.

6. In parallel, CSB has devised various integrity-related systems in the civil service through issuing the Civil Service Regulations, Civil Service Bureau Circulars and Civil Service Bureau Circular Memoranda, covering topics such as handling of conflict of interest situations, acceptance of advantages and entertainment, sponsored visits, private investments, outside work, etc. These systems manifest the policies of the Government in a lucid manner and establish proper mechanisms for approval and declaration, thereby providing civil servants with clear guidelines and procedures to follow and also guidance in handling the relevant situations. Non-civil service government staff³ must also comply with the Code and all conduct-related government rules and regulations applicable to civil servants. In early 2026, CSB issued the “Points-to-Note on Conduct Issues for Contract Staff” and requested B/Ds to remind their non-civil service government staff of the relevant requirements.

7. At the same time, CSB encourages B/Ds to devise and promulgate more specific internal codes or guidelines for compliance by their staff having regard to their own circumstances and operational needs. To assist B/Ds in this regard, CSB and ICAC promulgated an updated Sample Guide on Conduct Matters for Civil Servants (“Sample Guide”) to B/Ds in July 2024, providing an overview of the government rules and guidelines relating to behaviour and conduct. The Sample Guide sets out the core values under the Code which civil servants should uphold, government guidelines on managing conflict of interest in the civil

³ Including Non-civil Service Contract staff, Post-retirement Service Contract staff and staff appointed on other non-civil service terms.

service, requirements regarding prudent financial management for civil servants, etc. B/Ds can, modelling on the Sample Guide, develop/update their own codes of conduct or guidelines on integrity-related matters having regard to their own circumstances and operational needs.

8. CSB has all along maintained close co-operation with ICAC in taking forward the work on active prevention and regulation. ICAC puts emphasis on the importance of commitment to the rule of law and probity at the integrity seminars for civil servants. Besides, ICAC holds regular meetings under the Corruption Prevention Groups with directorate officers of B/Ds to discuss anti-corruption work plans and areas, and has been providing corruption prevention advice on the civil service integrity management systems as well as work practices and procedures through assignment studies and consultation services. ICAC has also consolidated the corruption prevention advice given in the assignment studies which were conducted in the past year for B/Ds' reference.

(2) Enhancing integrity training

9. Training is also an important aspect in the promotion of civil service integrity. CSB has implemented the Ethical Leadership Programme (“ELP”) jointly with ICAC since 2006 with the aim of consolidating the value of integrity and deepening the integrity culture in the civil service through the leadership and active participation of the senior management of B/Ds.

10. Under ELP, senior directorate officers are appointed by B/Ds as Ethics Officers⁴ (“EOs”) to serve as an important bridge of communication with CSB and ICAC. On one hand, EOs assist CSB in promoting activities in order to widely disseminate integrity messages at the B/D level, and providing valuable feedback to CSB so that our relevant initiatives can better suit the needs of colleagues. On the other hand, these designated officers also assist, at the B/D level, in mapping out and taking forward B/D-based activities (including talks, seminars and publicity activities) with appropriate support provided by ICAC.

11. CSB and ICAC conduct thematic workshops under ELP every year on various topics, such as acceptance of advantages and entertainment, prudent financial management, and supervisory accountability, etc. A total of five workshops were conducted with about 700 participating officers in the five years from 2021 to 2025. In December 2025, CSB and ICAC organised the latest round of thematic workshops, in which different speakers were invited to brief EOs from B/Ds on the dual-themes of “Offence of Misconduct in Public Office” and “Enhancing Supervision with Digital Solutions”. The workshop aimed at assisting EOs and their representatives in mastering relevant knowledge and

⁴ Taken up by directorate officers at D2 level or above.

applications for their further promotion at the B/D level, thereby sustaining the culture of integrity.

12. To promote connections among B/Ds on integrity issues and experience-sharing on integrity management, and enhance their communication with CSB and ICAC, CSB and ICAC conducted five small-group sharing sessions for the representatives of EOs from over 50 B/Ds according to their work areas or nature of work in the five years from 2021 to 2025. During the sharing sessions, ICAC introduced the corruption prevention measures for different areas of work, while representatives from B/Ds shared their experiences and views collected from their implementation of integrity management measures and activities. Besides, CSB and ICAC offered assistance to different B/Ds in conducting promotional activities for their respective staff, such as arranging appropriate officers to speak in various training programmes and providing suitable presentation materials.

13. CSB also conducts regular seminars on the offence of “Misconduct in Public Office” for non-directorate officers every year. Frontline staff, junior, middle and senior management, as well as non-civil service government staff are invited to participate in the seminars with a view to enhancing the understanding of this common law offence among staff of different ranks in a targeted manner. Over the past five years (i.e. from 2021 to 2025), a total of 24 seminars were conducted and attended by more than 4 000 officers. CSB continues to encourage those participating in the seminars to share the learning results with the staff of their respective B/Ds to promote the integrity culture and messages.

14. CSB (including the Civil Service College (“CSC”)) has been collaborating with ICAC to provide integrity management training for civil servants so as to establish the core value of integrity. In 2025, we conducted around 440 training programmes on corruption prevention, integrity and probity, and avoidance of conflict of interest for a total of about 29 000 government employees. At present, all new recruits are required to complete within the probationary period a foundation training programme offered by CSC, which includes briefings on the anti-corruption laws and mechanism conducted by ICAC officers. CSC also invites ICAC officers to share integrity-related cases in its leadership development programmes so that supervisors can better understand their roles and responsibilities, and lead by example to promote the culture of integrity management.

15. Apart from face-to-face classroom training, CSB has also set up the Resource Centre on Civil Service Integrity Management and the Online Community for Ethics Officers intranets for all government officers (including non-civil service government staff) and EOs respectively to provide web-based learning and reference materials. These include Civil Service Regulations on conduct and integrity matters, publications (including the “Knowing more about the Offence of Misconduct in Public Office” booklet updated by CSB in

September 2022), frequently-asked-questions, integrity promotional videos, etc. Officers of all B/Ds can get access to relevant information at any time according to their work schedule. CSB will continue to enrich the web contents, and facilitate easier navigation and retrieval of the required reference materials. In the Integrity Management e-learning Platform for Civil Servants (“the Platform”) on CSC’s Learning Management Portal, ICAC also reminds civil servants of the need to avoid money lending and borrowing among colleagues, the problems that may arise from engaging in gambling and high-risk investments, and the supervisory responsibility over regulating contractors. ICAC will keep in view integrity challenges for civil servants and enhance the contents of the Platform in a timely manner.

16. CSB and ICAC will continue to closely monitor the promotion of probity and integrity management within the civil service, and stay connected with the designated officers of B/Ds from time to time in supporting and facilitating their promotional efforts.

(3) Sanctions against staff breaching the laws or misconducting themselves

17. The Government attaches great importance to the conduct and integrity of civil servants. For individual civil servants suspected of breaching the law or misconducting themselves (including those who have committed corruption-related offences or have not acted with integrity), the Government has zero-tolerance and will handle their cases in a serious manner. Besides, ICAC compiles the “Report on Corruption and Malpractice in the Government” annually which consolidates cases involving prosecutions against and misconducts of civil servants in the previous year and identifies areas susceptible to corruption and malpractices in the Government for internal reference by B/Ds.

18. Over the past five years from 2021 to 2025, the overall corruption scene in the civil service has remained generally stable (details at Annex), indicating that corrupt activities have been under effective control and integrity upheld in the civil service. In 2025, the number of corruption complaints involving government departments received by ICAC was the lowest among the said five years, accounting for less than one-fourth of the total number of corruption complaints received in the year. Both the number of corruption complaints involving government departments and the number of persons prosecuted have shown a downward trend in recent years. To sum up, ongoing efforts will be made to upkeep integrity in the civil service. The Government will remain cautious and closely monitor the situation.

19. A total of 13 civil servants have been removed from office during the past five years (i.e. from 2021 to 2025) due to conviction(s) of offence(s) under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance or “Misconduct in Public Office”. There were another 11 officers who have been found culpable of misconduct following

departmental investigation upon referral by ICAC being removed from office in these five years.

20. According to the relevant provisions of the pensions legislations, if a retired/post-service civil servant is convicted of certain criminal offences, including any offences under Part II of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, being an offence related to the person's previous public service under the Government, the pension granted or eventually granted (the latter applicable to retired civil servants who are convicted of and sentenced for the aforementioned offences before the granting of pension benefits) to the civil servant may be cancelled, suspended or reduced. The Civil Service Provident Fund Scheme ("CSPF Scheme") also contains the corresponding terms, stipulating that if a civil servant is convicted of the specified criminal offences mentioned above or the common law offence of "Misconduct in Public Office" after withdrawing the accrued benefits from the Government's voluntary contributions and the Special Disciplined Services Contribution under the CSPF Scheme, the Government may recover the above-mentioned accrued benefits in whole or in part. The Government will not tolerate any staff who have committed corruption-related offences or have not acted with integrity.

Advice sought

21. CSB will continue to join hands with ICAC and B/Ds in fostering integrity management and stepping up promotional efforts. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
March 2026

**Figures on Corruption Complaints, Prosecutions and Convictions
Involving Government Officers in the Past Five Years** ^{Note 1}

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|------|-----------------------|------|------|----------------------|
| Corruption complaints involving government departments received by ICAC | | | | | |
| ➤ No. of cases received | 645 | 533 | 451 | 480 | 426 |
| ➤ No. of pursuable complaints | 426 | 372 | 298 | 342 | 325 |
| Government officers prosecuted for/convicted of corruption and related offences | | | | | |
| ➤ No. of staff prosecuted | 14 | 20 | 13 | 16 | 8 |
| ➤ Among those prosecuted during the year, number of government officers subsequently convicted ^{Note 2} (as of end-2025) | 11 | 16 | 13 | 8 | 2 |
| Government officers referred by ICAC to B/Ds for consideration of disciplinary or administrative action ^{Note 3} | | | | | |
| ➤ No. of officers referred | 65 | 116 ^{Note 4} | 62 | 64 | 87 ^{Note 5} |

Note 1: “Government officers” includes civil servants and government contract staff.

Note 2: As the trials take time, government officers prosecuted may not be convicted in the same year. Some cases are pending plea/trial/judgment.

Note 3: For cases where no prosecution is made against individual staff after investigation but possible misconduct or malpractice has been revealed during the ICAC investigation, ICAC may, on the advice of its Operations Review Committee, refer them to the B/Ds concerned for consideration of disciplinary or administrative action.

Note 4: The number of officers referred to B/Ds for consideration of disciplinary or administrative action in 2022 is higher because the number of staff involved in individual cases was relatively large.

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