OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND CONDUCT

ANNUAL REPORT 2022
INSPIRING ACTION
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<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADBI</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPMSD</td>
<td>Budget, People, and Management Systems Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+</td>
<td>lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer-plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCA</td>
<td>workplace climate assessment</td>
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The Asian Development Bank (ADB) set up its Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct (OPEC) to inspire staff to take further action to eliminate unethical behavior and build a more respectful and inclusive workplace underpinned by ADB’s core values.

In OPEC’s second full year of operations, we have seen encouraging signs that the “speak up” culture we are seeking to nurture throughout the bank is growing stronger. And its benefits are already proving to be far-reaching.

Increasingly, people working for ADB know how OPEC can help them identify potential personal conflicts of interest, tackle ethical concerns, and seek advice to combat any bullying and discrimination in the workplace.

Not surprisingly, OPEC saw a spike in inquiries over the year as staff filtered back to the office after working at home during the pandemic.

It may sound counterintuitive, but this is a positive sign. It means staff understand how OPEC offers support and are taking advantage of the increased range of solutions and tools we rolled out during the year.

Our behavioral coaching and workplace mediation services are an important way to resolve clashes and improve productive working relationships between staff. The new workplace climate assessments (WCAs) we offer help managers take the temperature to better understand how their teams can resolve any issues they may face.

Additionally, we have taken a proactive approach to bridging the gap between ADB headquarters and our field offices by bolstering our CARE peer support network. This team acts as a first point of call for staff dealing with workplace concerns.
By changing our name in 2022 from the Office of Professional Conduct, we are signaling that our focus has expanded to managing conflicts of interest and other issues that may breach ADB’s Code of Conduct.

Despite the considerable headway made over the year, there is still more to be done. We need to foster a deeper sense of trust among staff and encourage them to raise any concerns without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

By inspiring further action and encouraging everyone to apply ADB’s values, OPEC is playing a pivotal role in building a more positive and professional environment in which we can all thrive.
INTRODUCTION

The bank’s return to the office after 2 years of largely working from home during the pandemic meant the Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct (OPEC) doubled down on its mission to support a more respectful, professional, and inclusive work environment.

The Asian Development Bank’s (ADB’s) newest independent unit is fostering a “speak up” culture in which personnel recognize possible conflicts of interest and unprofessional behavior and seek advice to resolve issues.

Throughout 2022, OPEC has gradually expanded its focus from promoting compliance with the core provisions set out in the Code of Conduct to supporting everyone working at ADB to put into practice the bank’s values and principles.

By changing its name from the Office of Professional Conduct during the year, OPEC signaled its stronger focus on ethics. This encompasses a wide range of topics related to personal conflicts of interest and external engagements.

OPEC takes a holistic approach to employee well-being and has expanded its portfolio with the addition of a confidential and professional workplace mediation service. This is designed to help employees and people interacting with ADB staff to deal with incidences of minor misconduct and work through conflicts and tensions that may arise.

In an important expansion of OPEC’s role, it also responds to concerns related to domestic violence. These concerns often understandably affect people’s ability to thrive at work.

With the majority of staff taking part in its comprehensive training and outreach programs, OPEC is playing a pivotal role in driving cultural change throughout ADB by guiding and coaching people who are facing workplace concerns and ethical issues.

The substantial rise in the number of inquiries it received in 2022 can be directly attributed to OPEC’s work to raise awareness and inspire ADB staff to take action. The inquiries ranged from questions on outside interests, political activities, and social media use to discrimination, bullying, and harassment.

The extension of OPEC’s volunteer CARE peer support network throughout the year has also made it easier for staff in field offices and resident missions throughout Asia and the Pacific to take the first step toward resolving issues they face.

This second annual report for OPEC explains its mission, details the types of inquiries the office handled in 2022, and shows how its portfolio and responsibilities are evolving.

It outlines OPEC’s mediation service and training programs and provides examples of the issues and concerns OPEC is helping people tackle to build a more equitable, safe, and healthy workplace.
Formerly known as the Office of Professional Conduct, OPEC was launched in May 2020 to strengthen a professional and positive workplace environment at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in line with ADB’s Strategy 2030. It actively encourages all personnel to act professionally and nurtures a “speak up” culture within ADB where uncivil behavior, microaggressions, and harassment can be flagged without worry of retaliation.

Using the Code of Conduct as its guide, OPEC also helps steer staff away from potential personal conflicts of interest and supports them in maintaining high standards of professional conduct.

It provides comprehensive training and outreach programs and seeks to resolve issues before they escalate into stressful and time-consuming investigations.

Based in ADB’s Manila headquarters, its four-strong team of international employment lawyers and human resource experts uses a secure and confidential management system which allows people to report concerns anonymously via email, telephone, or through a secure online form.

Drawing on an external team of professional mediators, it offers confidential sessions designed to help staff work through conflicts around issues including uncivil behavior or perceived harassment.

Increasingly, its growing team of CARE peer support volunteers are the first point of contact for staff in field offices who may be seeking advice and support on how to deal with workplace issues but are unsure where to start.

Unprofessional behavior takes myriad forms but most commonly includes the following:1

- intimidation and bullying;
- sexual harassment;
- rude and loud comments;
- offensive and abusive language;
- persistent lateness in joining activities and attending meetings without valid and reasonable cause;
- vexatious litigation, retribution, and violent threats;
- passive aggression such as refusing to perform assigned tasks;

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• demands for special attention and treatment;
• uncooperative behavior during regular activities;
• unwillingness to talk about issues and concerns with colleagues in a respectful and cordial manner; or
• excessive criticism.

OPEC offers timely, transparent, and confidential support and has developed an effective three-pronged “AAA” approach centered on:

**Awareness.** It uses its training and outreach programs to ensure everyone working at ADB is fully aware of the Code of Conduct and understands how to respond to breaches of those core principles.

**Attitude.** It encourages staff to take a positive approach to all interactions with their colleagues and uses coaching and mediation to help them navigate tricky situations.

**Action.** It is focused on building a listening culture and ensuring all staff members feel confident that they can speak up and report cases of unprofessional behavior or conflicts of interest when they occur.

OPEC offers impartial and confidential advice on the following issues:

• general conflicts of interest;
• outside activities and interests;
• political activities and interests;
• private conduct including domestic abuse;
• trading activities;
• allegations of discrimination and harassment;
• performance management;
• allegations of retaliation;
• allegations of workplace incivility; and
• allegations of sexual harassment.

By integrating its training programs, advisory, coaching, and mediation services into the fabric of everyday life at ADB, OPEC plays an important role in creating ethical and accountable workplaces throughout the region.
As the impact of the pandemic eased, ADB requested that staff return to the office in September 2022 after spending more than 2 years working remotely. ADB provided hybrid working arrangements for the majority of employees to ease the transition.

For many international staff, this policy change meant relocating back to ADB headquarters in Manila or resident missions across Asia and the Pacific. The shift also meant that many locally hired staff had to make considerable changes to their personal lives to accommodate their return to the workplace.

As staff readjusted to working in person with their colleagues in 2022, OPEC saw a 21% rise in the number of inquiries on a wide range of ethical issues and workplace concerns.

This increase was largely related to the extensive training and outreach programs OPEC has carried out since it was launched in 2020. These explained how people could contact the office for advice and access its coaching and mediation services.

Some previous tensions and grievances resurfaced as people resumed working closely together while issues such as bullying and harassment, which may not have been so apparent in a virtual setting, once again came to light.

The new hybrid working arrangements also prompted concerns from some staff members that they were not adequately included in team meetings on the days they worked from home, while worries over job security spurred additional inquiries.

The number of inquiries linked to ethical issues jumped 38% during the year as people sought to make sure they were not in breach of the Code of Conduct due to activities they engaged in while working from home.

These included questions around outside employment such as helping with family businesses or setting up online ventures during the pandemic. Other inquiries concerned staff being permitted to accept personal speaking activities and academic work or participating in political events such as rallies during election campaigns.
MEASURING OPEC’S ACTIVITIES

The number of inquiries received by OPEC rose by 21% in 2022 as staff began to readjust to the office workplace and sought to ensure any activities they engaged in while working from home were not in breach of ADB’s Code of Conduct (Table 1).

OPEC recorded 315 inquiries in 2022, up from 261 in 2021 when ADB staff members were working from home due to pandemic regulations.

Table 1: Types of Inquiries Received by the Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, 2021–2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiries by Category</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace concerns</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics-related inquiries</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy advice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>261</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.

The number of ethics-related inquiries rose 38% to 245 in 2022 from 177 a year earlier, with more than 60% of the inquiries coming from women (Figure 2).

More than 70% of inquiries came from employees in ADB headquarters, while the number of ethics inquiries from resident missions doubled to 24.

Of the total inquiries recorded in 2022, 58 were related to workplace concerns. These involved allegations of harassment, bullying, discrimination, abuse of authority, and inappropriate outside activity.

Notably, 44 of those 58 inquiries were resolved by OPEC before they escalated into formal cases. This was due to efforts to facilitate discussion and mediation, a process that is often less stressful for the staff involved and less time-consuming for ADB.

Of those 44 cases, 23 were resolved through coaching, 6 through mediation, and 15 through corrective warnings. In the 23 cases resolved through coaching, the time OPEC invested in the coaching process ranged from 1 hour for very simple cases to over 40 hours for the more complex ones.
Inquiries by Gender, 2021–2022

To compare its case load over time and detect emerging risk areas, OPEC classifies all inquiries according to the type of issue raised (Figures 1, 2, and 3). This helps build the framework the office needs to expand its activities within the wider ADB community, including the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI).

Figure 1: Workplace Concerns

![Graph showing Workplace Concerns by Gender and Year]

Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.

Figure 2: Ethics-Related Inquiries

![Graph showing Ethics-Related Inquiries by Gender and Year]

Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.
Figure 3: General Inquiries

Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.
MAKING WORKPLACE MEDIATION PART OF OPEC’S TOOL KIT

The launch of the comprehensive workplace mediation service was a significant development for OPEC during the year. This confidential service supports participants in conflicts or grievances to discuss issues and work together to tailor solutions.

It is designed to offer people in ADB the opportunity to use a tried-and-tested practical method of resolving workplace concerns. By creating an environment in which each party can freely discuss issues without fear of judgment, mediation can reinforce workplace relationships as well as improve communication, collaboration, and productivity.

It can also be an effective way to avoid protracted disputes and therefore limit the number of workplace issues that escalate into formal investigations. Besides being stressful for those involved, these investigations can be distracting for teams and time-consuming to resolve.

OPEC’s mediation service is provided by an external team of 14 professional multilingual mediators who share a broad gamut of international experience and expertise in fields including dispute resolution, law, and academia.

Throughout the year, six cases were resolved through mediation, and this number is expected to grow in 2023 as more people learn about the service and the lasting solutions it can bring about.

All ADB and ADBI staff, managers, and supervisors can request mediation, which is best suited to dealing with interpersonal issues and low-level misconduct cases such as incivility and perceived harassment and discrimination.

Mediation is a voluntary process. To be effective, both parties need to be fully committed to communicating openly and finding a long-lasting solution to ensure they can work better together in the future.

ADB’s Workplace Mediators.
Source: ADB.
At the start of the process, mediators lay down the ground rules and ask both parties to act with respect, avoid assigning blame, and listen carefully to each other as they navigate issues.

Mediators explain their own neutrality and outline how they can help each person make informed decisions but cannot offer advice or argue for one side over another. Mediation sessions usually take around two hours and can be held remotely or face-to-face if both parties are in the same office.

If the parties reach agreement on a proposed course of action, mediators help draw up a written outcome statement. This is submitted to OPEC, which follows up to track progress.

OPEC developed the Workplace Mediation Guide and a brochure to inform staff about the different phases of the mediation process and the steps to be taken to move toward resolution.

OPEC will increase the number of workplace issues it resolves using the transparent and impartial mediation process so staff can swiftly overcome these hurdles and get back on track in a timely and effective manner.
Estrella works closely with her colleague Orion but his behavior toward her is making her feel increasingly uncomfortable and anxious. Recently, he suggested in an email to their team that she was incapable of completing tasks without close supervision, and they have since stopped communicating directly.*

Feeling stressed and struggling to be productive, she decides to email OPEC to find out what options are available. She is advised to initially discuss the issue with their team manager, who quickly calls her and Orion into a meeting. However, they both feel embarrassed to speak up and leave feeling discouraged.

After contacting OPEC again to see what else it could suggest, she decides to try its workplace mediation process. She is encouraged when she hears it will be led by a neutral mediator who will listen to their concerns and help them create the solutions they need to move forward.

However, Orion needs to be fully on board for the process to work. Initially, he dismisses Estrella’s concerns as an overreaction and is unsure about voluntary mediation. When OPEC explains that the mediation will be private and will be led by a trained external mediator, he agrees to take part.

During the session, the professional mediator helps Estrella and Orion draw up a list of issues affecting their working relationship and encourages them to listen to each other to better understand their different perspectives. The mediator emphasizes that mediation is not about judging who was right or wrong in the past, but about agreeing to work better together in the future.

Estrella and Orion agree to brainstorm creative solutions that can help them tackle the challenges they discussed during the session. The mediator then documents the agreement they eventually reach.

They both say that discussing their issues and seeking solutions provided them with fresh ways to work together and avoid issues escalating in the future.

* This is an example case for illustrative purposes only.
During the year, OPEC piloted its first workplace climate assessments (WCAs). These are designed to provide managers with valuable insights into their teams’ organizational culture and to help tackle any pressing concerns they face.

WCAs can be tailored to help managers better understand team dynamics and assess challenges such as promoting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, boosting staff engagement, and increasing employee retention.

The assessments also affirm that ADB staff have an equal voice and role to play in creating a respectful and inclusive workplace. They can highlight what works best within a department or a team and get to the root of issues that prevent staff from maximizing their potential.

Led by expert consultants, the WCA process begins by asking staff to take part in comprehensive anonymous surveys. These give insight into how a department functions and its strengths and opportunities.

The surveys are followed by focus group “listening sessions” which give staff the chance to openly discuss any pain points and concerns they may be experiencing in the workplace and set out clear goals for their team.

Information that emerges from the assessments is used to draft a detailed report for department heads and devise actionable outcomes that empower teams and help them overcome hurdles to fully thrive.
Moving to new self-contained offices in ADB headquarters means OPEC now has the facilities it needs to host meetings, coaching, and mediation sessions within a private setting.

The office space, which is equipped with videoconferencing facilities, can be accessed via three different doors to support confidential consultations.

Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.
WHY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE

In 2022, the Budget, People, and Management Systems Department (BPMSD) assigned OPEC as the designated focal point for domestic violence, which ADB now treats as a workplace concern because its damaging impacts often spill into the professional arena.

Domestic violence is a common problem, with the World Health Organization estimating that one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence often perpetrated by their husbands or male intimate partner.

Likewise, men who are victims of intimate partner violence may also suffer in silence as they struggle to overcome social stigma to talk about or report it.

The pandemic sparked a sharp rise in domestic violence as restrictions increased the time people were forced to spend with abusive partners.

Not surprisingly, the high levels of stress and anxiety suffered by people dealing with domestic violence can often take a toll on how they perform in the workplace.

In some cases, their productivity and the standard of their work may start to slide, and they may be more likely to arrive late or take extra days off sick. They may be worried the perpetrator could arrive at their place of work and cause additional problems.

Since absorbing responsibility for addressing domestic violence from BPMSD, OPEC has been fostering an environment where people feel safe speaking out about intimate personal violence. They can also raise concerns about colleagues they worry could be affected.
Throughout 2022, OPEC participated in a series of webinars and produced materials designed to raise awareness of intimate partner violence and help people recognize different forms of abuse.

These illustrate that besides physical and emotional violence, financial abuse is common. Financial abuse can occur when a person is cut off from access to their bank accounts, or when payments such as alimony and health insurance stop.

Once OPEC is made aware of domestic violence cases, it listens to concerns on a confidential basis and provides guidance on the available internal resources, which include medical, security, and psychological services. It outlines the role BPMSD can play and gives people specific information about support services in their countries.

As it expands this role in 2023, OPEC will design a comprehensive domestic violence policy for the whole of ADB to ensure it supports employees who are dealing with challenging personal situations.
Sivas, an ADB consultant, is feeling stressed by the behavior of her colleague Izmir, who regularly criticizes the quality of her work in front of other staff and publicly questions her competence and qualifications.*

She has raised concerns about Izmir’s bullying behavior with his supervisor, but there has been little improvement and she is now suffering from bouts of anxiety and sleeplessness.

She contacts OPEC to discuss her options and discovers it can actively intervene with the aim of immediately stopping the negative behavior and potentially arranging mediation.

With Sivas’s consent, OPEC schedules a meeting with Izmir, who insists his behavior was justified by her poor performance. OPEC cautions that any performance issues must be addressed respectfully and that Sivas would have grounds for a harassment claim against him if his alleged bullying is found to have taken place.

He agrees to immediately change his behavior, take part in mediation, and apologize to Sivas. He joins OPEC behavioral coaching sessions on respectfully managing conflicts and performance issues in the workplace.

His supervisor is advised to closely monitor the situation and report back to OPEC if the bullying continues.

* This is an example case for illustrative purposes only.
To be able to best serve people throughout ADB, understanding the often complex local issues and challenges employees face in resident missions across Asia and the Pacific is key to OPEC’s work.

Since COVID-19 travel restrictions were lifted, OPEC staff have begun a series of resident mission visits to highlight the role the office plays and learn how diverse environments impact workplace dynamics.

During the year, OPEC Director Christel Adamou visited missions in Australia, Bangladesh, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea to meet staff and explain how OPEC is helping ensure workplaces are positive and professional.

These meetings were carried out in conjunction with BPMSD, which works closely with OPEC to prevent conflicts of interest and to strengthen a professional and positive workplace.

In each resident mission, OPEC held general briefings to outline the training resources, CARE peer support team, advice, coaching, and mediation services it provides. It also reiterated the need for all staff members to adhere to the Code of Conduct, both inside and outside the workplace.

Focus group discussions in each resident mission provided an opportunity for staff to highlight the country-specific challenges they face, while one-on-one consultations helped them understand how they could use OPEC’s resources to resolve individual issues.
Common concerns raised during resident mission visits ranged from how the cost-of-living crisis risked increasing unethical behavior to social media use and conflicts of interest related to work outside of ADB.

As a result of these visits, OPEC is undertaking mission-specific training programs that tackle particular concerns. It is also increasing local capacity through the CARE peer support network that now has representatives in 12 resident missions.
The CARE peer support “buddy” network is composed of volunteer staff members located in headquarters and resident missions who act as a valuable bridge between OPEC and ADB staff.

CARE team members are often the first point of contact for people who are seeking informal information and guidance on workplace concerns but may want to speak in their preferred language and face-to-face with someone they know.

During 2022, OPEC reinforced its peer support network and expanded its reach as it increased the number of volunteers from six to 18. It now has six CARE team members at ADB headquarters and 12 in resident missions, including Bangladesh and Viet Nam.

This growing network plays an integral part in OPEC’s mission to promote a positive workplace and ensure everyone working in ADB understands how its policies and guidelines apply to their own situations.

CARE peer support members come from diverse genders, backgrounds, and cultures but share empathetic and compassionate attitudes. Above all, they are good listeners and strong communicators. Easily approachable and trusted by others, they are also nonjudgmental, discreet, and highly respectful of other cultures and views.

All new members take part in an OPEC-led induction training program to help them spot early-warning signs that coworkers may need support. They are also trained to find ways to interact with people who seek advice and deal with special challenges.

While each CARE network member signs a stringent confidentiality agreement, they provide feedback to OPEC on broad-brush, anonymized concerns to help guide future strategies, policies, and actions. These are some of the newest CARE support members:
Htet Myat “Viviane” Ko
Senior Finance and Administration Officer
Myanmar Resident Mission

“I want to be in a good working environment as well as create one for others. I would like to build a safe space for anyone who needs to talk or open up about their concerns.”

Shyam S. Mehndiratta
Senior Procurement Officer
India Resident Mission

“We used to come across many workplace issues and struggled to find the right solutions. It gets particularly challenging when working in ADB’s multicultural environment. I consider it fortunate to help someone.”

Anne Thapa Magar
Operations Assistant
Nepal Resident Mission

“I care about and understand others’ concerns and am willing to listen and help as much as possible.”

Janeesha Samarasekera
Senior Operations Assistant
Sri Lanka Resident Mission

“I want to utilize my strength as a good listener and a reliable person who can fully support my fellow workers without judgment to ensure and encourage a healthy workplace in ADB.”

Narghiza Alikulova
Communications Officer
Uzbekistan Resident Mission

“I have realized how the opportunity to access a colleague who can provide necessary support and information is important, especially for newcomers. I decided to become such a colleague.”
"I would like to extend support to my colleagues and peers who have difficulty in expressing their thoughts and ideas. I want my colleagues to know that they are not alone when going through challenging experiences."

Marjana Chowdhury  
Senior Water Resources Officer  
Bangladesh Resident Mission

"I want to support people in reducing their mental stress."

Ratna Gomes  
Executive Assistant  
Bangladesh Resident Mission

"I would like to help my colleagues in the Viet Nam Resident Mission to solve their problems and get updates from headquarters so they can enjoy a comfortable working environment and deliver their best results."

Phuong Thi Lan Phan  
Project Analyst  
Viet Nam Resident Mission

"Along my career path and personal journey, I have dealt with workplace and personal issues which have helped me learn new lessons and grow. Through my experiences, I would like to help others."

Vandana Kashyap  
Investment Officer  
India Resident Mission
ADB staff member Sol has been invited to become an unpaid board director of a nonprofit organization.* She would be expected to attend four board meetings a year and provide occasional support. The nonprofit organization has no direct business relationship with ADB but is involved in its social development work.

Sol asks OPEC to review the proposed appointment. It determines she may take the new role if she agrees to the following conditions to protect ADB’s interests:

- She must make clear to the nonprofit organization, its partners, and stakeholders that she is acting in her personal capacity and not representing ADB.
- She must not use her ADB affiliation to promote the nonprofit’s interests. She must not disclose or use nonpublic ADB information to support it or use ADB resources, including work time.
- She may not spend more than 15 hours a week assisting the entity unless she is on leave.
- Accepting reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses is permitted. If remuneration is offered later, she cannot accept it.
- If the organization attempts to develop a business relationship with ADB or becomes a for-profit entity, Sol must inform OPEC and may need to resign from its board or accept other restrictions.

* This is an example case for illustrative purposes only.
Throughout the year, OPEC extended the outreach and training programs at the core of its mission to ensure all ADB and ADBI employees understand why a professional and positive workplace matters and know how to seek advice on Code of Conduct breaches.

Using a mixture of e-learning modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinars, OPEC engaged more than 3,150 people in 2022, ranging from new entrants to members of the staff council and managers.

OPEC undertook 22 outreach programs and two tailored training events. These were designed by OPEC’s team, who are all experienced in human resources management, employee relations, and dispute resolution.

The primary aim of OPEC’s training and outreach modules is to raise awareness of potential conflicts of interest and inappropriate behaviors to better address them before they escalate into concerns.

All of OPEC’s training and outreach programs are benchmarked against the international best practices promoted by the Ethics Network for Multilateral Organizations and the Ethics and Compliance Initiative.

Its outreach activities are aligned with the ADB’s internal Professional Conduct Coordination Committee.

### Table 2: Outreach and Training, 2022

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<th>Events Held</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,156</strong></td>
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Source: Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, ADB.
OPEC’s Main Training and Outreach Activities:

Respect at Work
OPEC’s compulsory e-learning course provides an overview of ADB’s standards and processes and aims to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace. All new staff members are required to complete the e-training program within 30 days of their appointment. OPEC monitors compliance rates monthly.

The Right Conduct Webinar Series: Whistleblower and Witness Protection
Co-presented by OPEC and the Office of Anticorruption and Integrity (OAI), this online event uses practical examples to outline the Administrative Order 2.10 Whistleblower and Witness Protection Policy. It also explains the roles offices play in resolving workplace concerns.

Managing Conflicts of Interest as International Civil Servants
This webinar covers key conflicts of interest issues for staff and other personnel covered by ADB’s Code of Conduct. The OPEC team answers questions relating to private speaking engagements, publishing, trading and other employment, alongside political activities and social media use.

Creating a Positive Workplace Culture
OPEC offers an overview of the responsibility of both staff members and managers to promote a respectful workplace environment. It provides practical examples and discussions with managers from both headquarters and field offices.

Other Activities in 2022:

Social Media Ethics and Netiquette
In partnership with the Department of Communications, OPEC offered guidance on how to use social media effectively and responsibly for both work and personal applications while complying with ADB’s Code of Conduct and values.

Global Ethics Day 2022
OPEC organized a series of hybrid in-person and online events for Global Ethics Day. These focused on issues around personal activities outside of ADB and highlighted OPEC’s workplace mediation service.

Basic Coaching and Mediation Skills for CARE Network Members
OPEC provided basic coaching and mediation skills for new CARE peer support network members from ADB resident missions. The training for these small groups of volunteers was designed to build their capacity to listen and respond empathetically to staff concerns.
After the selection exercise to expand the CARE Peer Support Network, OPEC arranged a virtual induction and training for the members, led by one of OPEC’s mediators.

Source: ADB.
In the run-up to high-profile national elections, OPEC receives an anonymous tip that Ola, a staff member, is posting comments to her 2,000-plus Facebook friends in support of a prominent opposition candidate.*

OPEC sees screenshots of her posts that use aggressive language to refer to rival candidates, including members of the current government with which ADB works closely.

OPEC has repeatedly advised all staff of their responsibilities as international civil servants to exercise high levels of caution when they engage in political activities and to avoid public advocacy.

This is to protect ADB’s reputation for independence and impartiality as an international intergovernmental organization.

OPEC calls a meeting to discuss the social media posts with Ola, who insists she has a right to participate in her country’s political processes. OPEC reminds her that she agreed to limitations on partisan political activities when she accepted her role as an international civil servant. OPEC issues an informal warning.

Ola agrees not to make further public comments about political candidates or national political issues, and changes her privacy settings so any personal social media comments are restricted to close friends and family.

* This is an example case for illustrative purposes only.
OPEC’s core team is made up of four staff members based in ADB’s headquarters, alongside 14 external multilingual mediators and 18 CARE peer support members spread across the Asia and Pacific region.

Its team members have considerable experience in international and employment law as well as human resources practice and management. Hands-on and approachable, they seek to support staff and resolve issues sensitively and swiftly to prevent stressful concerns from escalating.

Offering impartial and confidential advice, the OPEC team acknowledges receipt of an inquiry within two days and usually schedules a meeting to discuss the issue. As its work depends on transparency, it makes sure people understand their options for resolution and know what to expect from the process, as well as possible outcomes.

The team assesses whether it can resolve a credible and verifiable issue through avenues such as coaching and mediation. If this is unlikely, it may opt to escalate cases to OAI or refer them to other offices or departments including BPMSD.

The team also handles anonymous reports and ensures that any staff members and personnel who raise issues related to discrimination, harassment, and bullying are protected from retaliation.

Christel Adamou

Christel is the director of OPEC. An international lawyer with a background in dispute resolution and human resources management, she joined ADB from the Seoul-based Global Green Growth Institute where she was head of human resources.

She previously served with the United Nations in Geneva, Nairobi, Liberia, New York, and Haiti. She studied at the University of Paris-Sorbonne and holds master’s degrees in European Law, English-American Studies, and European Studies. She also earned a global Master of Business Administration from Durham University Business School.

“At OPEC, we support staff and managers to engage in behaviors that move us toward living ADB’s values and maintaining an ethical and trustworthy work culture at all times. Our Code of Conduct acts as a compass for who we are, how we behave in particular situations, and where we want to go as an organization.”
Meet the OPEC Team

**Lawrence Paulsen**

Lawrence is an ethics and conduct specialist, responsible for managing inquiries about the Code of Conduct and the resolution of workplace concerns.

He joined OPEC from the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and previously worked as an employment lawyer in the Seattle area. He has a law degree from the University of Washington and a master’s degree in international relations from the University of Cambridge.

“It’s been quite a journey as we raise awareness and facilitate action among staff and other personnel regarding their right to enjoy—and responsibility to help create—a positive and productive work environment. I see our successes every day on the faces of dozens of staff who have come to OPEC for help.”

**Patricia Reyes Vega**

Patricia is a senior ethics and conduct officer, responsible for providing advisory services about the Code of Conduct.

She is a lawyer and human resources professional who worked for private sector companies in the Philippines before joining ADB.

She holds law and legal management degrees from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

“When we live our values and inspire action, we create a culture of accountability that enables employees to act ethically and make the right decisions. We not only protect the reputation of ADB, but we also contribute to a more just and ethical society.”

**Sharon Tan**

Sharon is an associate ethics and conduct analyst who provides administrative and documentation support for OPEC’s work programs.

Certified as a human resources practitioner and coach, she previously worked in ADB’s Respectful Workplace Unit and BPMSD.

She holds a legal management degree from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila and a law degree from the Philippine Law School.

“Living our values every day, even in not so good times, can be a challenge, but it’s the only way we can achieve a changed culture, underpinned by a positive and respectful workplace.”
After 2 full years of operation, OPEC has embedded its procedures into the fabric of ADB. It is focused on expanding its services to foster a more professional and positive workplace for staff and other personnel.

OPEC has made significant progress in advancing its mission to promote a more professional and ethical workplace culture throughout ADB in which each person feels confident, safe, and supported.

By providing opportunities for mediation and expanding its information, training, and education programs, OPEC will ensure the “speak-up” culture it is fostering becomes an integral part of ADB’s workplace.

In the year ahead, OPEC will focus on ramping up its comprehensive efforts to ensure everyone understands the role they can play in building a diverse and inclusive environment in which issues are swiftly acknowledged and tackled. OPEC’s priorities will include:

- **Rolling out its new Code of Conduct training.** This provides a comprehensive rundown of the core principles that underpin ADB and emphasizes the responsibility of all staff and managers to uphold the highest standards of behavior, both inside and outside the workplace. The program will be delivered online and will form a central part of the orientation procedure for all new staff.

- **Launching its compulsory anti-harassment training modules for staff and managers.** Comprising real-life case studies, videos, and quizzes, this e-learning program helps employees swiftly identify what constitutes bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination. It explains the need to avoid issues such as social media risks and helps identify unconscious bias and racial microaggressions to build a diverse and inclusive workplace.

- **Starting its LGBTQ+ Authentic Understanding and Allyship course.** This mandatory unit aims to make ADB a more inclusive and welcoming environment for people from throughout the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer-plus (LGBTQ+) community. Using videos recounting people’s experiences, it is designed to increase understanding of the challenges many LGBTQ+ people face and to encourage ADB staff members to become stronger workplace allies.

More information about OPEC’s training courses can be found at:
https://asiandevbank.sharepoint.com/teams/opec/
How to Contact OPEC

OPEC’s services and resources are available to all current and former staff members, as well as retirees, consultants, and contractors who are seeking authoritative advice on the practical application of ADB’s Code of Conduct.

OPEC is only able to review allegations of possible misconduct that are made against current and former staff members. Concerns regarding unethical conduct by consultants, contractors, board members, the President, or third parties can be submitted through OPEC and will then be referred to the appropriate authority.

Concerns can be reported in confidence or anonymously to OPEC. The office does not disclose information to third parties without authorization from the staff member, or unless required to do so under ADB rules.

These are the various channels available to contact OPEC:

Visit us: 1B 504, ADB headquarters
Telephone: +63 2 8632 4088
Anonymous hotline: +63 2 8580 7990
Email: ethics@adb.org

Secure online form
(accessible from any device 24/7)

Internal website
https://asiandevbank.sharepoint.com/teams/opec/

External websites:
https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/professional-ethics-and-conduct
https://www.adb.org/work-with-us/respectful-workplace
Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct Annual Report 2022

Inspiring Action

This annual report shows how ADB’s Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct (OPEC) worked throughout 2022 to enable a more respectful and inclusive workplace as employees began to return to the office post-pandemic. It outlines how OPEC is expanding its mediation, training, and counselling to help people identify potential conflicts of interest, tackle ethical concerns, and prevent workplace harassment and discrimination. It sets out the types of inquiries OPEC handles, shows how it is bolstering its peer support network, and explains why creating a “speak up” culture helps everyone recognize unprofessional behavior and seek advice to resolve issues.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members — 49 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.