As expounded in the previous section, the will for reform is greatly contingent upon the political structure of the country. A reform initiative, one that spans five or even ten years, would not be able to alter the country's power relation or to rebuild its social trust and civil society. This poses a dilemma for the development community: a short-term governance initiative without indigenous political will cannot work, but a long-term strategy to build the political support for reform is neither practical (given the rapid cycle of loans and projects) nor justifiable (given the messy politics that inevitably ensues).

This difficulty manifests clearly in ADB’s anti-corruption effort. To date, there were three technical assistance programs to member countries, including one training program for Nepalese auditors and two programs to assist the aforementioned KPK \citep{ADB2003, 2005, 2011}. Whereas the short-term technical training successfully provided better staff, technology, and resources to the agencies, it did not address the real bottleneck of implementation gap \citep{GlobalIntegrity2012}. In fact, as soon as ADB ventured out of the purely technical area, it met tremendous resistance and apathy. Despite the enthusiasm and expertise of the consultant team in Indonesia, their advices were largely ignored in the process of writing the KPK Law \citep{ADB2003, Schutte2012}. This experience highlights the difficulty of getting involved in a country’s political matters. Firstly, it is hard to fit the short time horizon of a project with the indeterminate nature of reform. Secondly, the first-best reform that TA offers is often not viable politically, and thus of little relevance to reformers in the trench.

Besides dedicated anticorruption projects, ADB also streamlines governance and anticorruption into all sectors, embodied in the cascading risk assessment and management plan (RAMP). This is a laudable idea—certainly, since all projects involve working with the government on the ground, everyone would do better by keeping governance issue in mind.

However, the impact of this strategy on member countries’ corruption is likely to be limited for several reasons. Firstly, in design, the RAMPs only point to flaws in the system, which are symptoms, not causes, of corruption. \footnote{For example, the identified risks in Lao PDR include weak public finance mechanisms, weak capacity, irregularities in procurement, and rising corruption perception} No system materializes and persists out of thin air—rather, it is shaped and maintained by people, and it is the incentive of people that is the ultimate cause of corruption in a country (page 6, assessment). Therefore, without looking closely at the interests and capability of political actors—the root of the problem—we may be able to trim a rotten branch here and there, but definitely not to reinvigorate the ailing tree. \footnote{The Philippines’ Political Economy analysis goes the extra mile to look at the power holders in the society and is thus able to identify real entry for reform.}

Secondly, in practice, anticorruption efforts are largely contained at the project level (Example: Nepal, p. 15). Even if ADB’s projects are well safeguarded, these good practices will not automatically propagate throughout the system via demonstration alone. As argued above, weakness in a country’s system exists because there are beneficiaries that want to *keep* the system vulnerable, not because its managers do not know any better (and thus can be helped by being shown the best practices). Therefore, whereas the cascading approach does inform the project leaders of the country-level risk, the anticorruption practice of the projects does not travel upstream to the country level.