

What is foreign bribery?

Companies engage in the bribery of foreign public officials—‘foreign bribery’— when they offer, promise or give a bribe to a foreign official to win advantages in an international business transaction, such as winning a construction contract, an oil or gas concession, or an operating license.

Which industries are most affected by foreign bribery?

The construction, mining, defence and military industries, natural resources and energy, medical and pharmaceutical, telecommunications, transportation sectors, infrastructure projects and property development activities seem to be particularly prone to foreign bribery.

How many sanctions have been handed down for foreign bribery?

Since 1999, 444 companies and individuals have been sanctioned in 17 of the countries that are States Parties to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention for committing foreign bribery and related offences.

The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention: Key Figures

- There are 41 States Parties to the Convention: the 34 OECD members, plus Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Latvia, Russia, and South Africa.
- Together, the 41 States Parties account for nearly 80 percent of world exports.
- The 41 States Parties to the Convention also accounted for nearly 90 percent of global outward flows of foreign direct investment.
- 444 companies and individuals have been sanctioned in 17 States Parties for foreign bribery and related offences (as of December 2013).
- Sanctions have resulted in fines, having totalled approximately EUR 1.24 billion against one single company, and prison sentences for involved company representatives.
- There are currently roughly 390 ongoing investigations in the Parties to the Convention concerning allegations that could be covered by the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention (as of December 2013).

What has been the highest monetary sanction so far?

Courts in three different jurisdictions ordered sanctions totalling approximately EUR 1.24 billion against an engineering company with worldwide operations.

Have individuals been sentenced to prison for foreign bribery?

In all 41 States Parties to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, foreign bribery may result in imprisonment for the individuals who commit this crime. Prison sentences have been ordered against at least 87 individuals convicted of foreign bribery and related offences.

Other than monetary sanctions and prison sentences, do companies face other types of sanctions for foreign bribery?

Companies that bribe foreign public officials may also face non-monetary sanctions, such as debarment from participating in public procurement or official development assistance contracts. They may also have restricted access to official export credits or other government advantages. In practice, these sanctions could hit companies even harder than fines.

How many investigations are ongoing in the States Parties to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention?

There are roughly 390 ongoing investigations in the 41 States Parties concerning allegations of corruption of foreign public officials that could be covered by the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.

Who is part of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention?

There are 41 States Parties to the Convention: the 34 OECD members, plus Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Latvia, Russia and South Africa. The OECD is also engaging major emerging economies—including China, India, and Indonesia—bilaterally and through regional anti-corruption programmes.

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For more information on foreign bribery and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, go to www.oecd.org/bribery.