

# Evaluating the Ombudsman System of Hong Kong: Towards Good Governance and Citizenship Enhancement

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## Abstract

In Asia, with the exception of the sub-continent and the Philippines, Hong Kong has set up an Ombudsman institution ahead of others. This article discusses the institutional evolution of the Ombudsman system during Hong Kong's political and historical transition from a British colony to a special administrative region of China in 1997. From an initial decade in the 1990s where its powers and jurisdiction were rather restricted, in line with Hong Kong's typical path of incremental reform, the Ombudsman has become more settled in the second decade, moving from steadiness to confidence, building public trust and establishing an independent investigative and proactive watchdog role. There are always tensions between oversight bodies and the administration, but the Ombudsman has proved that it has performed an important role in strengthening Hong Kong's system of good governance.

## Introduction

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Ombudsman, initially known as the Commissioner for Administrative Complaints, in Hong

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