OPERATION MERIDIAN

A regional recovery facility for the proceeds of organized online fraud

Prepared for the Office of the U.S. Director, Asian Development Bank. The enforcement precedent exists. What is missing is the institution that turns individual seizures into a standing system of recovery.

The Recovery Flywheel

Seized adversary assets fund the machine that seizes more. The Bank holds the money seat at both ends: capacity in, remission out. Enforcement authority stays sovereign at every step.

FOUR STAGES

STAGE 01

FUND

CAPACITY IN

ADB technical assistance and trust capital, alongside U.S. program lines and philanthropic capital, finance the tracing and targeting capability.

STAGE 02

OPERATE

CASES OUT

The platform produces enforcement-ready financial cases: attribution, flow tracing, and sealed evidence packages delivered to the authorities.

STAGE 03

FREEZE / SEIZE

SOVEREIGN EXECUTION

Philippine authorities freeze and forfeit under RA 9160. U.S. agencies run forfeiture, sanctions, and special measures. The badge never moves.

STAGE 04

REMIT

MONEY BACK THROUGH THE TRUST

Recovered assets route through an ADB-administered recovery trust: victims first, then a defined operations share, then sovereign shares.

The incentive loop. Every seizure pays victims, endows the next operation, and posts a visible win for Washington and Manila. Contributors are not donors. They are shareholders in recovered assets.

THE CYCLE

FUND
Technical assistance and trust capital finance the capability.

→

CASE
Enforcement-ready cases delivered to Philippine and U.S. authorities.

→

RECOVER
Freezes and forfeitures executed under sovereign authority.

→

REMIT
Recovered assets flow through the trust: victims, operations, sovereigns.

The Concept

THE GROUND

$15B
Bitcoin forfeited in a single U.S. action against a Cambodian scam-compound syndicate, the largest forfeiture in Department of Justice history (October 2025).

Billions / yr
Drained from American victims by industrial fraud operations run from compounds in the Philippines' neighborhood.

FATF + VASP
ADB's 2025 integrity agenda opens a member-state program on FATF standards and virtual-asset risk. This concept delivers it in theater.

MONEY AT BOTH ENDS

Capacity in: a financial-integrity program
Technical assistance funds an operational tracing and targeting capability supporting the Philippine authorities (AMLC, DOJ) in producing enforcement-ready cases against scam-center finances, under existing Philippine law (RA 9160).

Recovery out: a multi-donor recovery trust
A trust fund administered by ADB, on the Typhoon Yolanda precedent, receives donor capital and, through remission channels, recovered assets. Distribution order is fixed: victims first, then a defined operations share that sustains the program, then sovereign shares.

What ADB does not do
ADB does not freeze, seize, or investigate. Enforcement authority remains entirely with the Philippine authorities and with U.S. agencies. The Bank funds capacity, stewards the trust, convenes the region, and holds every account to its own fiduciary standard.

Why the U.S. Director's office
The facility places American stewardship over every recovered dollar in the region, through the U.S.-led institution headquartered in Manila, at zero cost to the taxpayer after the first recovery cycle.

The self-funding property. After the first completed recovery cycle, the operations share endows the program. Contributors are not making grants into a cost center; they are capitalizing a facility that is repaid by the assets it recovers.

THE ASK

1 A working session on the money map: where the region's fraud proceeds concentrate, move, and can be reached.
2 Championship of the technical-assistance slot within the Bank's financial-integrity program.
3 Sponsorship of the recovery-trust concept toward a sovereign proposer.