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# RESEARCH CAPACITY

## IMPLEMENTATION NOTE ON FACTI PANEL RECOMMENDATION 10C BY THOMAS STELZER

**RECOMMENDATION 10C: STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF UNODC TO DO RESEARCH ON ANTI-CORRUPTION, INCLUDING IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WITH A STRATEGIC AIM OF IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

### INTRODUCTION

The systemic nature of financial integrity problems, and the vast range of sectors in which they are involved, means that the international community must periodically update a broad range of policies, and support the global implementation process. The lack of necessary knowledge, skills and capacities is a major impediment that must be addressed.

In particular, anti-corruption intervention effectiveness needs improvement, partly because of the historical lack of attention to research on the effectiveness of different interventions in different contexts. Much early research focused on corruption, rather than on evaluating anti-corruption policies. A wealth of studies on different anti-corruption policies has emerged only recently, as some development cooperation providers increased their focus on evaluation and effectiveness. These studies show mixed effectiveness of different types of anti-corruption interventions and demonstrate the need for better understanding of what works. As part of a recommitment to anti-corruption, the World Bank has done some stocktaking of lessons from its programmes, but coordination with capacity building related to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and United Nations Development Programme programmes on governance is relatively weak.

### PROPOSED SOLUTION

The FACTI Panel believes that capacity must not only be assessed based on the ability to adopt legal provisions, but must be based on clear and transparent criteria of effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. Anti-corruption policies, laws and enforcement mechanisms should consider features of corruption in different regions, countries and sectors. This requires a greater capacity to do research on all aspects of anti-corruption strategies, including corruption prevention. It also calls for learning from and collaborating with relevant international institutions such as United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank, UNDP, and the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA). Moreover, research outcomes and lessons learned must be applied to capacity building agendas.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

**Policy development and implementation:** The UNODC should take a lead and initiate consultations with State Parties to the UNCAC to identify gaps in anti-corruption research which are critical to fill to enable effective policy development and implementation. The UNODC, in collaboration with other agencies, could also initiate a global research project on measuring corruption and developing an evidence-based background for the evaluation of effectiveness of anti-corruption policies and strategies. Other institutions beyond UNODC should also develop projects on anti-corruption research capacity, which can contribute to greater understanding in the international system.

**Integrate research with monitoring and capacity building:** UNODC, IACA, the World Bank and others can improve knowledge generation and understanding through collaborative research. It is critical that the findings of all international research projects are shared with all international partners, including with the UNODC Corruption and Economic Crime Branch who coordinate and implement the UNCAC implementation review mechanism (IRM). The UNCAC IRM produces significant information on country practices in its work, but efforts to systematically aggregate and analyse information are limited. Research projects should make use of this information to generate new findings and conclusions. Simultaneously, research findings in general should inform the capacity building that is offered to Member States to improve implementation of the Convention. The evidence base for capacity building interventions can be strengthened.

**Develop research partnerships:** As noted earlier, there is an increasing amount of research into corruption intervention

effectiveness. The UNODC should be partnering and establishing joint research groups with other international institutions as well as academic and independent researchers in the field to ensure that research work is not duplicative, is effectively targeted, and builds on the strengths of different actors. Other international institutions should also take initiatives in this area.

The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) has a strong research mandate. It promotes research collaboration among research and academic institutions, and anti-corruption think tanks around the world. IACA's research network, along with its in-house research department, can contribute to implementation of international research projects in partnership with UNODC and other international institutions, including at the regional level.

To ensure unbiased research, it will be important to dedicate time and energy to working with researchers and institutions not based in Europe/North America, which can be promoted with partnerships with regional development banks and regional institutions like the African Union and its capacity building initiatives.

**Create an anti-corruption research advisory board:** While UNODC-led research should be conducted by experts, it is always valuable to have a high-level group of researchers and academics with an independent view, who can review work, advise on priorities and help with partnerships. Such an anti-corruption research advisory board would entail modest costs to have meetings a few times a year alongside or in advance of other UNCAC meetings. It is essential to have geographic and gender balance on such a board.

## LOOKING FORWARD

As capacity building initiatives increase to generate financial integrity for sustainable development, it is critical that they focus on impact. Strengthening the capacity of UNODC and other international institutions to initiate and coordinate

research on anti-corruption with a strategic aim of improving the effectiveness of capacity building and technical assistance can greatly contribute to shaping the world we want.



## **ANNEX: POSSIBLE RESOLUTION LANGUAGE**

Below is possible language for use in a United Nations General Assembly resolution or UNCAC COSP Resolution:

We agree to strengthen the capacity of the UNODC and other relevant international organizations, such as the International Anti-Corruption Academy, to conduct research on anti-corruption with the strategic aim of improving the effectiveness of capacity building and technical assistance; and will increase the financial resources available for this purpose in the next programme budget cycle.

Below is possible language for an amended UNODC programme budget document:

### **Subprogramme 6:**

#### **Research, trend analysis and forensics**

##### **Objective**

The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to ensure that Member States have enhanced knowledge of trends on drugs, **and** crime **and corruption** for effective scientific and evidence-based policy formulation **and capacity building**.

##### **Strategy**

The subprogramme will provide research and analysis of economic and financial crime, with particular attention to anti-corruption interventions and related transnational dimensions. The subprogramme will collaborate with other agencies to publish data and analyses on the effectiveness of anti-corruption interventions, as well as provide support and input to capacity-building initiatives on preventing and combatting corruption. Furthermore, the subprogramme will seek research partnerships with other research institutions, particularly those in developing countries, and take the advice of an anti-corruption research advisory board.

## **ANNEX: FURTHER READING**

Bajpai, Rajni and Bernard C Myers (2020) Enhancing Government Effectiveness and Transparency: The Fight Against Corruption (Vol 2), World Bank, Washington, DC, 2020.

Gans-Morse, Jordan, Mariana Borges, Alexey Makarin, Theresa Mannah-Blankson, Andre Nickow and Dong Zhang (2018) "Reducing bureaucratic corruption: Interdisciplinary perspectives on what works", World Development, Volume 105, pp. 171-188;

Khan, M. H. (2018) "Political settlements and the analysis of institutions", African Affairs, 117(469), 636-655.

Prasad, Monica, Mariana Borges Martins da Silva and Andre Nickow, (2018) "Approaches to Corruption: a Synthesis of the Scholarship", Studies in Comparative International Development, 54(1), 2018, pp. 96-132.