The G20 and Anti-Corruption: Accountability

**G20 Commitments**

"Reducing corruption remains a top priority for the G20. Corruption is at the heart of so many of the challenges the world faces. It undermines good governance, erodes the trust that people place in public institutions, corrodes decision-making, impedes economic development and facilitates organised crime. No country is immune and governments cannot tackle it alone: we need the support of business and civil society to help prevent and uncover corruption." *G20 Anti-Corruption Plan 2017-2018*

"Since 2010, when we established the Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG), its work has been guided by two-year action plans." *G20 Anti-Corruption Plan 2017-2018*

**The Challenge**

The G20 set up its Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) at the Toronto Summit in 2010. The ACWG works on the basis of biannual Action Plans, and has also developed more than 60 resources including principles on asset recovery, asset disclosure by public officials, beneficial ownership transparency and integrity in public procurement.

However, G20 members have only partially implemented the various anti-corruption principles they have committed to over the years. Additionally, corruption all too often remains an afterthought in G20 leaders' declarations and actions. At the end of 2018 the current Anti-Corruption Plan and its Implementation Plan will end, which gives an opportunity to also discuss the set up and ways of working of the G20 ACWG.

**Recommendations**

- **Step out of the G20 silo:** Corruption is not an add-on issue that can be dealt with in isolation. The G20 ACWG should aim to have considerably more impact on the other G20 working groups and other work-streams than it currently has. Any high-level G20 pledge, for instance around infrastructure, should incorporate and consider corruption risks and countermeasures.

- **Apply existing commitments:** G20 members should implement existing anti-corruption commitments and principles, analyze whether they are having an impact, and share lessons learned.

- **Apply existing work in a complementary fashion:** Corruption tools and methods intersect and interact with each other. The thematic standards of the ACWG work must also talk to each other. For example, linking work on procurement integrity, open data principles and asset declarations can help to address problems of conflicts of interest. A small task-force of G20 countries could work together to proactively apply G20 Principles to a procurement project in-country in a sector of their choice, analyse and assess effectiveness of the Principles and report back to the group.

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1 See for example https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/just_for_show_g20_promises
• **Scale up your engagement and communicate your work better:** Ultimately very few people or organisations know about the work of the G20 due to poor engagement and communication, changing central platforms and weak reporting mechanisms. We recommend that following:
  o Invite NGOs and business representatives to additional parts of your Working Group meetings, to provide insights and guidance on a thematic basis and not in a single short session.
  o We suggest all G20 members adopt the policy of meeting with civil society groups in-country prior to G20 ACWG meetings. We welcome those governments who already convene meetings with business and civil society stakeholders in-country throughout the year.
  o We welcome the German presidency’s initiative to compile all existing anti-corruption commitment into one location. This is an excellent resource that should be maintained, potentially by a G20 guest organization such as the OECD or World Bank so as to lower the burden on previous hosts. The World Bank STAR Initiative previously collected documents into one central location.

• **Improve G20 Anti-Corruption Action and Implementation Plans:** Fundamentally, the G20 ACWG needs to communicate its ambition, a time-bound plan of action and be accountable for that plan and report back on progress or delays. There are many formats that this could take.
  o The ACWG should clearly communicate what it intends to achieve and by when. The 2015-2016 Implementation Plan was a significant improvement in communicating to the wider world the level of ambition and the scope of activity of the G20 ACWG. There may be weaknesses in the implementation plan, but reverting to a single Action Plan, especially one over several years runs the risk of remaining too-high level to allow for monitoring and accountability by interested parties.
  o We strongly support reverting back to the publication of individual country accountability reports as took place during the Australian presidency. A combined progress report is not satisfactory for monitoring progress and leads to gaps.
  o Focus must ultimately be on implementation of existing G20 commitments and reporting back on progress and challenges. There is extremely limited information on what countries are doing to implement promises, leading to loss of trust from the wider anti-corruption community in the effectiveness and ambition of the G20 ACWG.

• **G20 ACWG countries should commit to develop national-level Anti-Corruption Strategies.** These national strategies would draw G20 commitments into the national sphere in a format that is more easily implemented and context-specific. It could be complemented and consolidated by additional national anti-corruption priorities. National level Anti-Corruption Strategies should be developed in partnership with business and civil society per the commitment in the 20-17-2018 G10 Action Plan. Any country that drafts a national strategy and omits any G20 commitment should report to the G20 ACWG the reasons for the omission.

**Contact Information**

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2 [http://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/G20/G20_node.html](http://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/G20/G20_node.html)