

REGIONAL BRIEF

Governance and Peacebuilding



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



PROMOTING TRANSPARENT AND CORRUPTION-FREE CITIES

In Europe and Central Asia, 1 in 3 citizens perceive that corruption is one of the main problems facing their country.¹ Corruption drains and diverts public funds from local development. Importantly, all public officials and government offices, at all levels from national to local, are bound by the obligations of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

While local governments play a key intermediary role among people, communities and the state, they can also be subject to state capture. In such cases, corruption can impact administrative processes and access to state services, including the functioning of executive, legislative and judicial branches. At the local level, corruption can affect access to health and education, equal opportunities, and, overall, the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 16, on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, includes targets for states that seek to substantially reduce corruption and bribery (16.5), and promote the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6).

Why work with municipalities on anti-corruption?

Municipalities can be particularly vulnerable to corruption due to their tight networks of power and their central role in delivering basic public and licensing services, managing local municipally owned enterprises and procuring products and services. Yet, they are also the primary interface between citizens and elected representatives. As such, they represent a major opportunity for trust-building and participatory decision-making.

Integrity Plans

Step 1

Map risks and vulnerabilities

Identify where corruption may happen.

Step 2

Design solutions

Aim to reduce risk of corruption and promote integrity in organizations.

Step 3

Implement plans

Carry out solutions, document impact and perceptions.

UNDP uses a participatory approach in this process. You can learn about it in the Manual on Integrity Planning and Management.²

Through enhanced systems of public administration, transparent and accountable processes, and open and responsive public services, municipalities can profoundly alter the way citizens relate to government and access essential services. Better quality public service delivery can help increase trust in government, and better access to quality services can lead to reducing inequalities.³

States in the region are reorganizing sub-national levels of governance, usually with the intent of

increasing local responsiveness and decentralizing power. Decentralization involves the process of redistributing power, responsibilities and funds between the central government and smaller administrative units. These processes offer unmatched opportunities to design institutions and mechanisms with limited risks of corruption and increased openness and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Individual mayors around the world have demonstrated that simple changes and solutions can impact the culture and functioning of local institutions. For example, Gjakova, Kosovo⁴ simplified and digitized the way it was procuring office supplies—from pencils to petrol—cutting its spending in city offices by 77%. This saved more than 200,000 euros between 2013 and 2015.

A key approach to addressing corruption at the local level is to develop integrity plans. Through such plans, areas of susceptible corruption can be identified, for example, where a civil servant is the only one with the right to issue a license or construction permit. Solutions to reduce corruption can be designed, for instance, by ensuring that the process to hire a civil servant is transparent and merit-based. Solutions can then be implemented, with citizens able to demand proof of results from the implementation of the integrity plan.

Our regional approach

UNDP promotes transparency, integrity and accountability at the local level by:

- Conducting participatory corruption risk assessments, involving the public and civil society, that identify vulnerabilities, and drafting integrity plans for local governments.
- Supporting municipalities to reduce the risks and opportunities for corruption in their licensing, procurement and service delivery systems by simplifying processes and increasing transparency, or by developing modern state-of-the-art service delivery.
- Supporting the [Islands of Integrity](#) network and methodology in the region, in partnership with PartnersGlobal, and with the support of RoAID, through the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵
- Facilitating the publication and visualization of municipal data and information to enable clearer communication from local bodies and allow for public oversight.
- Developing ICT and innovative tools for citizens to provide feedback to their municipalities on improving services and other issues that matter to them.
- Working with citizens and civic organizations to hold municipalities accountable, while supporting municipalities to develop response mechanisms.

Islands of integrity



35 municipalities in 11 countries have integrity plans⁶



18 local governance experts in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova trained



11 Number of languages *Guide to Cure Corruption in Cities* is in⁷

Examples of UNDP's work

- In Moldova, UNDP worked with schools in rural areas to raise awareness of youth about corruption in the education sector. This resulted in the Ministry of Education adopting an integrity charter.
- In Ukraine, municipalities are working on improving transparency in the construction sector with the aim to save millions of hryvnia in procurement costs.⁸
- In Turkey, grassroots women's organizations engage with municipalities to monitor how local development plans are gender sensitive, and how they integrate principles of transparency and accountability in municipal planning.
- In Kosovo, 21 municipalities have developed and adopted integrity plans. All municipalities are now obliged to implement e-procurement systems and open budget tools, following participatory corruption risk assessments and integrity plans.

For more information

<http://www.eurasia.undp.org>

<http://towards-sdg16.eurasia.undp.org>

Acknowledgements and Footnotes

Photo credit: UNDP Ukraine

¹ [People and Corruption: Europe and Central Asia. Global Corruption Barometer \(2016\).](#)

² [Manual on Integrity Planning and Integrity Management.](#)

³ [Regional Human Development Report 2016: Progress at Risk.](#)

⁴ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

⁵ [The Islands of Integrity anti-corruption methodology.](#)

⁶ Supported partially by UNDP. Integrity Plans developed with the [Islands of Integrity methodology.](#)

⁷ [Corrupt Cities: A Practical Guide to Cure and Prevention](#), by Robert Klitgaard, Ronald MacLean Abaroa and Lindsey Parris, published by the World Bank Institute.

⁸ Conducted with support from the municipality of Seoul, South Korea.

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