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CORRUPTION ASSESSMENT TOOLBOX

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Public Integrity
Topic Guide

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What are public integrity assessments?

We define public integrity[1] assessments as those tools which aim (a) to assess the institutional framework for promoting integrity and combating corruption across the public sector, or (b) to diagnose corruption and/or corruption risks within specific government agencies and/or among public officials.

The focus of such assessments is on the broad area of public administration rather than on the delivery of public services. Nevertheless, as a cross-cutting area, public integrity assessments overlap with many other tools related to corruption in the public sector, which are covered in other topic guides. Figure 1 below describes these relationships to help make sense of this complex field and to clarify the scope of the tools covered here.

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[1] Public integrity refers to "the proper use of funds, resources, assets, and powers, for the official purposes for which they are intended to be used" (OECD – Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector A Toolkit)). In this sense integrity can be understood as the *opposite* of corruption. However, we also include public sector corruption risk and perception assessments here as these can be useful for identifying vulnerabilities which pose a threat to public integrity.
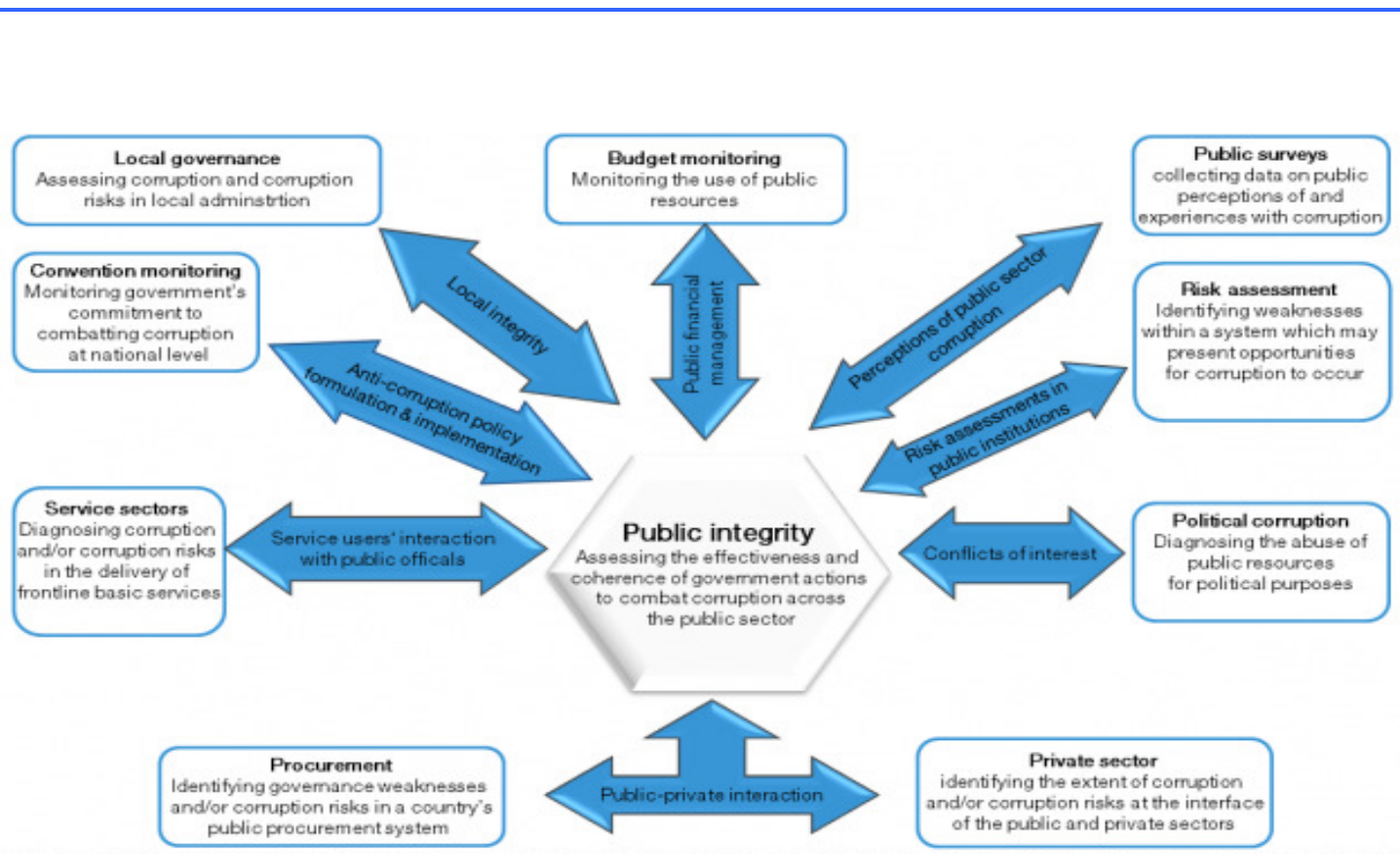
Figure 1: Relationship between public integrity assessments and other corruption assessment tools

Blue arrows show those assessment areas where the tools overlap

Purpose and context of the assessments

The purpose of most public integrity assessments is to identify weaknesses in the institutional framework for combating corruption in order to prioritise areas for reform. The level of assessment can range from multi-country tools which look at the public sector as a whole at national level, down to assessments of a given public agency in a given country. The specific objectives of the assessment will depend largely on whether it is driven by the government in question (internal) or by a third party (external):

Internally-driven

- To provide evidence on whether anti-corruption efforts are achieving the desired results, and to demonstrate to citizens the impacts of government actions to combat corruption[2].
- To identify sources of corruption risks in order to inform the design of policies to address these[3].

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[2] E.g. OECD - Public Sector Integrity: A Framework for Assessment

[3] E.g. USAID - Anti-corruption Assessment Handbook: Library of Illustrative Diagnostic Guides, COE - Project Against Corruption in Albania (PACA): Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide, CCECC - Corruption Risk Assessment in Public Institutions

- To produce evidence on the effectiveness of national anti-corruption efforts for external advocacy efforts[4]
- To compare (the implementation of) anti-corruption/integrity strategies across government agencies[5], with a view to identifying best (and worst) practice[6].
- To identify the extent and forms of corruption in government agencies[7]

Assessment approaches

The majority of public integrity tools focus, in one way or another, on what is being done to control corruption in the public sector, both in law and in practice[8]. Among these different 'anti-corruption' tools a distinction can be made between system wide approaches and those which focus on specific institutions and actors within the system:

- System-wide approaches involve assessing the existence, feasibility, effectiveness and coherence of institutions, systems and mechanisms for promoting ethics and countering corruption in the public service – often referred to as the 'integrity system' or 'ethics infrastructure'[9]. This usually involves evaluating the performance of, and relationship between, institutions relevant to combating corruption at national level (e.g. executive, legislature, judiciary, oversight institutions etc) [10]. Increasingly the approach is also being adapted and applied at the sub-national level[11]. Finally, whilst not strictly a system-wide approach, a number of tools assess and compare the level of integrity among public sector institutions[12].

- Institutional assessments take a more targeted approach by assessing the role, capacity and/or effectiveness of specific anti-corruption related institutions, such as anti-corruption agencies[13] or internal oversight and regulatory bodies within public

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[4] TI – National Integrity System Assessments, Transparencia pro Colombia - Índice de Transparencia de las Entidades Públicas

[5] In some cases, this purpose may also apply to internally-driven tools

[6] E.g Centro de Integridade Publica - Relatório Anual de Controlo da Corrupção em Moçambique, Philippines Office of the Ombudsman - Understanding the Integrity Development Review (IDR) Project, Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana - Índice de Integridad de las Instituciones Públicas de Panamá

[7] E.g. KICAC - Integrity Perceptions Index, KACC - National corruption perception survey, Transparency Chinese Taipei - Survey of Government Integrity and Service Performance in the Ministry of Finance

[8] E.g. OECD - Public Sector Integrity: A Framework for Assessment, TI – National Integrity System Assessments, USAID - A Rapid Anti-Corruption Assessment Technique for USAID/Africa

[9] This is sometimes in the context of monitoring the implementation of anti-corruption conventions, covered in the Anti-Corruption Monitoring Topic Guide

[10] OECD - Public Sector Integrity: A Framework for Assessment, TI – National Integrity System Assessments, Global Integrity – Global Integrity Report, Tiri - Reconstruction National Integrity System Survey, Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana - Índice de Integridad de las Instituciones Públicas de Panamá

[11] Global Integrity – Local Integrity Initiative, Huberts et al. - Local Integrity Systems: Analysis and Assessment

[12] E.g. , Transparencia pro Colombia - Índice de Transparencia de las Entidades Públicas

[13] UNDP - Methodology for Assessing the Capacities of Anti-Corruption Agencies to Perform Preventive Functions, Anchorage-Net - National Assessment Survey on ACAs

sector agencies[14]. An alternative, but related approach, is to focus on corruption risks within specific public institutions[15]. Risk assessments aim to identify the preconditions for corruption which exist in a particular institution as well as broad 'risk factors' or 'red flags' that are assumed to increase the risk of corruption in the public sector. Risk assessments sometimes also make an assessment of the actual incidence of corruption in the institution, as an indicator of the seriousness of any risks of future corruption. The risk assessment process can help to identify those issues on which to focus in more depth (see corruption risk assessment user guide). Finally, assessments of organisational culture and ethics in the public sector involve reviewing values, behaviours and specific individual actions often to identify potential conflicts of interest among public officials. Whilst a conflict of interest does not necessarily indicate corruption, it may present a greater risk for corrupt conduct to occur[16].

As well as these *anti-corruption* tools, there are also a smaller number of tools which focus on diagnosing *corruption* in the public sector[17]. These tend to elicit citizen and/or private sector perceptions of integrity and corruption through the use of surveys. Such surveys tend to differ from standard public corruption surveys in that they focus on institutions rather than individuals by targeting users of government services to capture their perceptions and/or experiences of corruption when interacting with public bodies.

Data sources
The types of data used for public integrity assessments vary according to the approach taken. What we have termed 'system-wide' and institutional approaches rely largely on legal- institutional analysis to assess the strength of the institutional framework for combating corruption, combined with primary data (key informant interviews or public officials surveys) to evaluate how these institutions operate in practice and/or to validate the findings of the assessment.

Risk assessments and institutional assessments on the other hand often combine secondary data with the use of checklists and questionnaires, focus groups and/or key informant interviews either for self-assessment purposes or to gather information from public officials and/or external experts on corruption risks and conflicts of interests.

Key issues and challenges
There are some common challenges which confront any approach to assessing integrity and corruption prevention measures in the public sector, including: defining the scope of the assessment, ensuring credible results and integrating these into policy making. Beyond these generic challenges, a key consideration is how to select the most appropriate tool(s) according to both the purpose of the assessment and the resources available:

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[14] TI Bangladesh - Bangladesh Public Service Commission: A Diagnostic Study, Transparencia Mexicana - Diagnostico Institucional del Sistema Federal de Control (DSFC), TI Moldova - Study on the Implementation of the Decisions of the Chamber of Accounts and Integrity of Its Auditors

[15] E.g. , COE - Project Against Corruption in Albania (PACA): Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide, CCECC - Corruption Risk Assessment in Public Institutions

[16] E.g. OECD - Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector. A Toolkit, ICAC (NSW) - Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector

[17] E.g. - Integrity Perceptions Index, KACC - National corruption perception survey, Transparency Chinese Taipei - Survey of Government Integrity and Service Performance in the Ministry of Finance World Bank – Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Surveys, University of Vaasa - Trust and Integrity Violations in Finnish Public Administration: The Views of Citizens

- Système wide approaches: System-wide approaches to integrity assessments are useful to obtain a rather general holistic picture of the entire governance system in a country, but they do not offer an in-depth diagnosis of any specific institution. They can however point to those institutions where such an assessment might be needed. These approaches can be rather resource and time intensive as they generally require a team of researchers to undertake the analysis across the different strands of public service. Global integrity, for example, uses a network of more than 1,200 on-the-ground analysts plus a team of journalists to provide both quantitative and qualitative data for their global integrity report, whilst TI's National Integrity System research process is conducted by either one lead researcher supported by research assistants or by a team of subject specialists depending on the context. Due to its consultative nature involving key stakeholders in the process, an assessment takes about one year to complete.

- Institutional risk assessments: The main benefit of this approach is that it offers a relatively quick and cost-effective way of identifying those areas where corruption risks are greatest and prioritising corrective action. Because there are a number of existing 'out-of-the-box' indicators and checklists[18] which can be adapted and applied at the institutional level, they require minimal investment. The drawback is that they tend to cover a range of 'standard' risks which may or may not be applicable to the specific context under analysis. In addition because the approach often involves some form of assessment 'from within' there is a greater incentive for respondents to misrepresent information to avoid implicating themselves or colleagues in any wrongdoing.

- Surveys: Surveys can identify the specific types, forms, frequency, and costs of public sector corruption. They are more representative than the findings derived from selected interviews and can identify important regional and inter-agency differences. Furthermore, surveys of users of government services can identify gaps in implementation that may not emerge from expert evaluations or interviews with public officials. However, surveys can be costly and take a long time to implement. They are also less useful for examining the laws which govern public institutions. Furthermore, translating the complex concepts required for a system-wide assessment into clear and simple survey questions can present a significant challenge.

Examples of promising practices

- Building political will: Getting political buy-in is particularly important in the case of public integrity assessments if findings are ultimately to be acted upon. In recognition of this, a number of tools put a particular emphasis on including public officials and other relevant stakeholders in the assessment process. The National Integrity System assessment tool for example, takes a consultative approach, involving the key anti-corruption agents in government, civil society, the business community and other relevant sectors with a view to building momentum, political will and civic pressure for relevant reform initiatives. Likewise the World Bank's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Surveys place a great deal of importance on

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[18] E.g. COE - Project Against Corruption in Albania (PACA): Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide, CCECC - Corruption Risk Assessment in Public Institutions, Blais and Schenkelaars - Institutional Risk Assessment Best Practices Compendium

government-civil society cooperation to provide the basis for politically sustainable reform.

- <u>Identifying good practice</u> The principle aim of risk assessments is to identify those areas of the public sector which are most vulnerable to corruption. However, risk assessments may also identify institutions or processes/units within institutions that work effectively and with integrity. The Council of Europe's approach, for example, as well as indentifying risk areas, aims to understand why successful institutions function as they do as a source of inspiration when formulating policies to improve the situation in other institutions that do not function as well[19].

- <u>Context:</u> The OECD has developed a generic assessment framework to assess the state of public integrity in a given country. In order to help public organisations apply this framework to the specifics of a country and organisational context, the OECD provides an inventory of methods and solutions which have been tried and tested in OECD member countries for developing a well-designed assessment project[20]. Likewise USAID provides a set of 19 diagnostic guides to support analyses of government sectors and functions, which can be selected depending on the context of assessment[21].

All tools referenced in this guide are accessible via the gateway tool database:
http://gateway.transparency.org/tools

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[19] COE - Project Against Corruption in Albania (PACA): Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide
[20] OECD - Public Sector Integrity: A Framework for Assessment
[21] USAID - Anti-corruption Assessment Handbook: Library of Illustrative Diagnostic Guides

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