

Transparency International Anti-Corruption Helpdesk Answer

National strategies for advancing good governance in Africa

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Date: 27 May 2020

Good governance has repeatedly been identified as crucial to achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth, to making governments accountable to their citizens, and to successfully tackling corruption-related challenges. Most countries in Africa have put forward strategies to reform their governance frameworks, most commonly as part of national development plans, and to a lesser extent as part of anti-corruption strategies or efforts to improve natural resource governance. Significant strides have been made in recent years in designing and implementing governance reforms and in improving the rule of law, access to justice, and citizen participation. Nevertheless, progress has been uneven between countries and challenges remain in several areas: public service delivery, insufficient checks and balances, high levels of corruption and inequality. Additionally, the governance reform programmes often suffer from ineffective coordination, an inability to sustain political will, and a lack of focus on monitoring and evaluation.

Two African countries that have made progress in the delivery of governance reforms are South Africa and Ghana. These countries have put forward comprehensive reform frameworks and have registered initial progress in ensuring citizen engagement, strengthening institutions, fostering open government, countering corruption and improving decentralisation.

Caveat: the original inquiry was to provide an overview of case studies on national governance policies. However, governance reform strategies rarely come in the form of designated, standalone policies but rather tend to form part of broader or sectoral frameworks. Additionally, governance efforts at country level are unfortunately insufficiently evaluated. This Helpdesk Answer thus broadens the scope to look at governance reform efforts in Africa more generally, as well as at strategies as part of countries' wider development plans.

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This Anti-Corruption Helpdesk is operated by Transparency International and funded by the European Union.



Query

Please provide an overview of countries that have implemented national governance policies, extending to natural resources governance or extractive governance as well as political and economic governance. If possible, focus on examples from Africa or Latin America.

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Introduction

Good governance is paramount not only to tackle a country's corruption challenges but to achieve social and economic development goals, stability, security and inclusive growth (ADB 2013; Mbaku 2020; Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020; UNDESA 2016). Thus, governments are increasingly focusing on integrating good governance components into their policy reform processes.

With countries across the world facing complex policy challenges, it is becoming more important to ensure “crosscutting, multifaceted responses”, and the addressing of longer-term structural challenges. This is especially true in times of political and/or economic crisis, low levels of trust in government, and in a context of diminishing public resources (OECD 2018).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has stressed the necessity “for more equitable, evidence-informed policymaking, and thus the need for effective, values-based governance that engages stakeholders in the policymaking process in an inclusive, and open way” (OECD 2018: 5).

Main points

- Good governance provides the tools, processes and structures to make policies more transparent, participatory and accountable.
- Successful governance reform requires continued leadership, effective coordination and meaningful citizen engagement.
- A lack of effective cooperation and alignment as well as insufficient monitoring and evaluation can derail many efforts at governance reform.
- Strides have been made in many African countries, but comprehensive governance reform programmes and effective implementation are still lacking.

Good governance is not a goal in itself but rather a means to an end (OECD 2018). It refers to the rules, processes and institutions that are put in place to arrive at more inclusive and participatory societies, more accountable governments, and more stable and prosperous countries. Eventually “sound public governance can support a shift from

traditional siloed policymaking to more integrated approaches that also balance short- and long-term interests in the pursuit of sustainable development” (OECD 2019: 14).

In response to the growing recognition of the importance of good governance, many countries across Africa have established governance reform frameworks. This includes financial governance reforms in countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya, resource governance reforms in countries such as Ghana and Botswana, open government and anti-corruption reforms in countries such as Seychelles and Senegal, and broader institutional reforms in South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire (ADB 2012a; Alam et al. 2016; Lindner 2014; Mbaku 2020; Transparency International 2020; Transparency International 2019)

Since the 1990s, good governance became a key element in several African Union legal frameworks and was recently included as one of the key aspirations in the African Union's transformation strategy Agenda 2063, which was published in 2015 (AU 2015; Mbaku 2020; Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

But progress notwithstanding, substantial challenges remain in many countries of the region. These include a lack of adequate safeguards against autocratic rule, high levels of corruption, low trust in institutions and authorities and ineffective public service delivery (APRM & AGA 2019; Mbaku 2020; Schultes 2020, Transparency International 2020).

Because good governance reforms are ultimately a tool to achieving certain economic or political goals (for example, greater democratisation, fighting corruption, reducing inequality), governance strategies are rarely developed as standalone or isolated reform efforts. Most often, especially on the African continent, they have been integrated into broader development strategies. In other cases, they have been developed as part of specific strategies aimed at reforming relevant industries or risk areas (such as natural resource governance or anti-corruption efforts).

Since elements of governance reform are sometimes scattered across different reform strategies, and because too few countries have put substantial efforts into evaluating their governance reforms, assessing the impact of broader governance reform at the national level has so far been given insufficient attention.

This Helpdesk Answer looks at the different forms that national governance reform strategies can take, and at the factors that contribute to their success or failure. It will focus on the specific governance challenges and reform attempts on the African continent and discuss case studies for South Africa and Ghana, both of which have introduced governance reform frameworks in recent years to some success.

The scope of good governance

“Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” – Kofi Annan, 2011 (in AfDB 2013).

According to the United Nations, national governance is broadly defined as “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels” (UNDESA 2016: 142). Good governance then, includes “the rule of law, effective institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives” (UNDESA 2016: 142).

According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the principles of good governance include “accountability, transparency, participation, combating corruption, and an enabling legal and judicial framework” (AfDB 2013: 1), and should be built on a foundation of: i) effective states; ii) mobilised civil societies; and iii) an efficient private sector (Mbaku 2020).

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) defines governance as “the exercise of economic,

political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels" (APRM & AGA 2019: 16). Good governance requires the presence of "legitimacy, whereby the government has the consent of the governed; accountability that ensures transparency and answerability for actions; respect for law and protection of human rights; and competence, which consists of effective policymaking, policy implementation and service delivery" (APRM & AGA 2019: 16).

Components of good public governance

The OECD has developed a policy framework for sound public governance to serve as a tool for governments to design and implement governance reforms (OECD 2018). The framework introduces key enablers and success factors of good governance reforms and introduces the key elements that a national governance strategy should incorporate, whether the strategy is targeted or broad. These include:

- improvement of government coordination, both vertical (between higher levels of government and the civil service), as well as horizontal (between ministries and agencies)
- introduction of the concept of open government and allowing for citizen participation (an area that has been vastly facilitated by digitalisation efforts)
- improvement of budgeting tools and financial performance, which includes public procurement reform
- access to justice and legal empowerment, which, among others, ensures the effectiveness of the rule of law, creates trust in institutions, minimises policy capture and ensures equal treatment before the law
- gender sensitive programming and an introduction of efforts to increase overall diversity and inclusion of marginalised groups
- strong monitoring and evaluation

The African Peer Review Mechanism, in its 2019 Governance Report (APRM & AGA 2019), identified the following issue areas as crucial in fostering good governance:

- respect for the rule of law
- promotion and protection of human rights
- public participation in governance
- accountability of the executive
- effectiveness and accountability of the public service
- independence and accountability of the legislative
- independence and accountability of the judiciary

As paramount for their achievement, the APRM also centres in on "transformative leadership", based on innovation, vision, integrity, inclusivity, responsiveness, people-centredness, public participation, effectiveness and prudent management, as well as on the nexus between development and governance (APRM & AGA 2019).

With regards to constitutionalism and the rule of law, the APRM highlights the relevance of the respect for law and for the rights of human beings, the separation of governmental powers, public participation in governance, accountability of the three arms of government to the public, independence of the legislature and the judiciary, accountability and effectiveness of the bureaucracy and access to justice (APRM & AGA 2019).

Progress and challenges in Africa

Published in 2015, the African Union's transformation strategy, [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#), provides a 50-year strategic framework for the continent, with the aim of guiding its development and providing a blueprint for inclusive growth, sustainable development and a drive for pan-African unity (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

The plan's seven aspirations cover: inclusive growth and sustainable development (Aspiration 1); good governance, democracy, respect for

human rights, justice and the rule of law (Aspiration 3); and people-driven development (Aspiration 6).

A first ten-year implementation plan was issued in 2015, which includes good governance goals in values and norms, institution building, leadership and participation. It also emphasises the need to set specific targets and define strategies to ensure the successful implementation, and notes the importance of communication, citizen participation, stakeholder cooperation, and monitoring and evaluation (AU 2015; Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

Additionally, several African Union legal instruments include crucial governance commitments, indicating a degree of consensus across the continent regarding the importance of good governance. These include the [African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption](#) adopted in 2003; the [African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance](#) adopted in 2007; the [African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration](#) adopted in 2011; and the [African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development](#) in 2014.

Many countries across the continent have developed national strategies and roadmaps to put these regional aspirations into national practice. However, when reviewing the continent's national vision statements and development plans against best practice, the APRM found that while most countries (88 per cent) had developed some form of governance or development strategy, many were falling short of Agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs (APRM & AGA 2019). This was especially true for the areas of inclusiveness, people-centredness, gender equality/discriminatory laws, clean energy, sustainable cities, and water and sanitation. Slow progress was also registered on democracy and political governance and on strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms.

Nonetheless, the APRM generally attested an improvement of governance in Africa, with the

strongest performance in socio-economic development. As improvements have been registered in many areas, together with numerous challenges, the state and outlook of governance in Africa presents a mixed picture.

Democratisation and constitutionalism

According to the APRM, African countries have made substantial progress on democratisation and constitutionalism (APRM & AGA 2019). Many countries have seen significant liberalisation and pluralism in recent years. Multi-party politics have been (re)introduced, presidential term limits are now more widely respected, judicial independence and legislative oversight have increased, constitutional rules are taken more seriously, and civil society and independent media play an increasingly important role. Most countries in Africa now practice a form of multi-party democracy, and term limits are enshrined in many constitutions “leading to regular elections and reasonably peaceful changes of power through those elections” (APRM & AGA 2019: 35).

But across the continent, executives remain dominant and with insufficient checks on power, leading to patronage, the manipulation of elections, resource misallocation and illicit enrichment, and the suppression of dissent (APRM & AGA 2019; Transparency International 2019).

In its extreme manifestation, this lack of checks on power can be seen in the persisting challenge of military coups and other forms of unconstitutional changes of government. While the continent at large saw a decisive trend towards democratisation in the 1990s, coups d'état and the insertion of the military in the political process remain widespread. In the 2000s, countries including Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, the DRC and Niger saw military coups d'état, and 26 coups (attempted or successful) have been recorded since 2010 (Barka and Ncube 2012; Kiwuwa 2019).

The mechanisms for orderly transfer of power indicator remains the weakest on average in the

Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), and one with a substantial gap between countries, with some scoring a perfect 100, but others scoring 0, “meaning these countries fail to provide any sort of constitutional and lawful transfers of power” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020: 43).

Rule of law and access to justice

Challenges with constitutionalism notwithstanding, progress has been made on the rule of law in recent years: “On average, citizens are provided with more effective and secure access to justice while at the same time judicial institutions have been strengthened by becoming more independent and making their processes more transparent” (Schultes 2020: 1). Most African citizens now view legal processes in their country as generally fair, although high costs and slowness are obstacles in accessing justice in a significant number of countries (Schultes 2020).

The APRM confirms progress in the field of access to justice, with many countries having established initiatives such as legal aid schemes, formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms, small claims courts, public interest litigation, introducing the function of public defender, and using information and communication technology (ICT) and legal information institutions to provide accessible information on their countries’ judicial systems (APRM & AGA 2019).

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation has similarly noted improvements in the aggregated rule of law category every year since 2014, and detected an accelerated progress since implementation of the Agenda 2063 began in 2014 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

However, this overall progress is overshadowed by a tremendous gap between countries. In the latest edition of the IIAG (2017) the three highest scorers on rule of law – Mauritius, Ghana and South Africa – all scored over 90 points (out of 100), while the three lowest scorers – Eritrea, Libya and Somalia – scored 20 points or lower. The same is true for rule of law’s sub-categories: access to justice,

independence of the judiciary, and independence and transparency of the judicial process. While all three have seen aggregate improvements at a continental level since 2014, all of them have seen double-digit improvements for some countries but double-digit declines for others.

A clear connection appears between low scores for the rule of law (as well as participation, safety and human rights), and the occurrence of military coups, with countries having experienced unconstitutional changes of power generally scoring worse on these indicators than those that have not (Barka and Ncube 2012).

According to Cilliers (2017), “democratic deficits” and an inability to ensure the rule of law also contribute to an increase in intra-state violence and instability, which in turn further exacerbates governance challenges.

The nexus between governance/rule of law and political instability has also been noted by Crocker (2019), who states that governments fighting internal violent opposition often end up compounding the problem by violating the rule of law in trying to meet their security challenges.

After a steady decline in inner-state conflicts since the mid-1990s, the continent has seen an uptick in armed conflict since 2010, aggravating pervasive governance challenges. But it should be noted that this overall rise in conflict levels can mostly be attributed to three regions: the Sahel, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, where some countries have been stuck in protracted cycles of instability and bad governance (Cilliers 2017; Crocker 2019).

Citizen participation

While formal or guaranteed avenues for public participation are still not sufficiently widespread, and freedom of information and of the media are still considered inadequate overall, the APRM notes substantial progress in this area (APRM & AGA 2019). Civil society stakeholders have played a crucial role in voicing citizen concerns, and many countries have enacted freedom of information

laws and using local structures to encourage citizen participation.

Corruption

Corruption remains a formidable challenge in the region, and weak institutions, a lack of political rights and an insufficiently free media, hamper anti-corruption efforts as well as governance more broadly (Transparency International 2019).

This is confirmed by the region's continued poor performance on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), where sub-Saharan Africa as a region tends to come last globally: "While a large number of countries have adopted democratic principles of governance, several are still governed by authoritarian and semi-authoritarian leaders. Autocratic regimes, civil strife, weak institutions and unresponsive political systems continue to undermine anti-corruption efforts" (Transparency International 2019).

Only just over half of these countries have passed anti-corruption strategies, and the full respect for the rule of law is still challenged by a selective application of the law, a disregard for public procurement rules and procedures, a failure to respect court decisions and heads of government abusing the law to retain power. And while many member states have ratified significant human rights instruments and have established national human rights agencies, in practice the latter often suffer from a lack of resources and autonomy, as well as overlapping or conflicting mandates with other institutions (APRM & AGA 2019).

But, as with the rule of law, although not as profound, the degree to which countries are able to foster transparency and accountability and fight corruption varies vastly between countries. Some countries, such as Botswana and Cabo Verde, score relatively well (58 or above) on both the CPI and on IIAG's transparency and accountability indicator, while others, such as Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, score substantially worse (16 or lower) (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020 and Transparency International 2020).

Progress in some countries notwithstanding, citizens across the continent have on average assessed that levels of corruption are getting worse not better, and that their governments are not doing enough to tackle the problem (Transparency International 2019b).

Monitoring and evaluation

Acknowledgment of the importance of monitoring and evaluation appears to be increasing, with the mere existence of the APRM, with 38 member states out of 55 being testament to that effect (APRM & AGA 2019). While Gruzdt (2020) argues that commitment among heads of state is still insufficient, the mechanism is an important and necessary step to advance monitoring, create learning opportunities and strengthen good governance in Africa.

Forms of national governance strategies

To tackle remaining governance challenges, a vast number of countries have put forward reform approaches to improve their governance frameworks. However, these seldom come in the form of isolated or standalone governance strategies or policies but tend to come in a variety of formats. Among them are sectoral efforts or approaches to improve governance in specific sectors (for example, extractive industries and public procurement), or topical approaches to use governance reform to tackle a specific challenge (for example, anti-corruption strategies). Perhaps the broadest governance policy reforms, particularly on the African continent, come in the form of national development plans.

About 88 per cent of countries on the continent have now passed some form of a national vision or long-term development strategy, and 86 per cent have implemented national development plans. Just over half of countries have adopted a designated anti-corruption strategy. Between 2000 and 2016, 22 out of 28 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have renewed or amended in some form

legal frameworks governing their extractive industries. But the degree of implementation and success at advancing good governance varies widely (APRM & AGA 2019; Crocker 2019; Natural Resource Governance Institute 2019).

Sectoral governance strategies

Some countries have focused on specific areas in which to improve their governance frameworks, which were identified as particularly challenging, such as extractive industries governance.

Many countries in Africa are rich in natural resources. However, poor governance in this area has led to resources often creating (at most) short-term gains but no sustainable growth or development, while at the same time increasing the risk of corruption, rent-seeking and patronage (APRM & AGA 2019; Chêne 2017).

In response, several African countries have aimed to improve their resource governance by modernising legal frameworks and increasing transparency in the hopes of increasing investment and benefits for their citizens (Chêne 2017; Natural Resource Governance Institute 2019). Examples of such efforts include the passing of the [Africa Mining Vision](#) (AMV) by the African Union in 2009, which called for a more transparent and equitable exploitation of mineral resources; and several countries have joined the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) (EITI).

However, the APRM notes that “many member states have not yet aligned their mining regimes with the AMV, although their mining policies and laws address the goals of the AMV in various respects” (APRM & AGA 2019: 54). The Natural Resource Governance Institute (2019) similarly stated that countries in the region have increasingly passed legislation to improve the governance of their resource extraction. These reformed legal frameworks enhanced transparency and accountability, and Africa now outperforms other regions in terms of the quality of their legal frameworks on resource governance. Contract

disclosure rules are especially strong in the region, on average.

However, the gap between laws and practice is still wide; compliance and implementation of the legal frameworks is still largely inadequate. The Natural Resource Governance Institute (2019) found the largest implementation gaps in the transparency of environmental and social impacts and in the sharing of revenues with local government, as well as in the transparency and oversight of key institutions and compliance with fiscal rules. A lack of transparency in licensing also continues to be a challenge across the continent, with licensing regulations insufficiently disclosed and thus negatively affecting fairness and competition.

While progress has been made in terms of resource transparency (including revenue and contract disclosure) in many countries, the effect of such measures, if applied in isolation, remains largely unknown. According to Chêne (2017), “without strong regulatory frameworks and competent institutions, transparency alone is unlikely to achieve sustainable development outcomes”. To effectively improve resource governance, flexible and collaborative management practices, context-driven decision making, sound fiscal regimes and a committed leadership are essential.

Botswana is a good example of good resource management practice, especially in regards to its mining framework. The country’s Mines and Minerals Act of 1999 provided a predictable and clear licensing process. In addition, it required the publication of details on the application process as well as costs. The country has also been commended for its fiscal policy instruments in channelling mineral revenues (Lindner 2014).

Ghana (for oil and gas) scored highest in the sub-Saharan Africa region overall on the most recent [Resource Governance Index](#), followed by Botswana, Burkina Faso, South Africa and Ghana (for gold). The country also made substantial progress on contract disclosure (see case study) (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2019).

However, no country in the region received a composite score of “good”, with the highest performer (Ghana) still being in the “satisfactory” category. According to the Natural Resource Governance Institute (2019: 8), “the overall picture remains that the more dependent a country is on natural resources, the less transparent and accountable the management of the extractive sector”.

National anti-corruption strategies

National anti-corruption strategies are another example of policy frameworks established to improve governance in a specific risk area. Successful anti-corruption strategies go beyond fighting corruption by reducing the risk of policy capture, establishing a level playing field for business, reducing inequality, increasing trust in institutions and strengthening the democratic process (OECD 2019).

Unlike anti-corruption laws, anti-corruption strategies or packages cut across different aspects of a country's governance system by tackling corruption at the policy, social and economic level, in addition to implementing legal reforms. To be successful, they need to go beyond policy reforms and include measures for a coordinated implementation (Hussman 2007; Jenkins 2019; Martini 2013; Oldfield 2017). Previous anti-corruption strategies have addressed several aspects of national governance, such as creating space for civil society, transparency in public finances, economic policy, civil service reform, financial controls and judicial independence (Oldfield 2017).

When evaluating the success of anti-corruption strategies, Martini (2013) found that, while many countries had implemented anti-corruption strategies, coming across successful cases of implementation proved challenging. This is particularly where anti-corruption efforts are crosscutting and integrated into broader governance reform packages, a lack of coordination, communication, and weak monitoring

and evaluation made assessing their effectiveness difficult (Hussman 2007; Martini 2013).

One of the few promising examples identified by Martini (2013) includes the anti-corruption strategy of Romania, which is “based on a sound knowledge base of what has and hasn't worked in the fight against corruption in the country and places great emphasis on changing the behaviour of officials, particularly in sectors deemed to be important and prone to corruption (prioritisation). In addition, the strategy emphasises the importance of monitoring and evaluation, establishing a detailed framework” (Martini 2013: 3).

A recent effort to put forth a broader anti-corruption strategy in Africa comes from South Africa, which is presently in the process of establishing a national anti-corruption strategy in addition to its anti-corruption commitments as part of its national development plan (see case study). The strategy is set to improve coordination between different stakeholders, reignite public debate, provide a robust conceptual framework, and increase accountability and respect for the rule of law. The process was initiated in 2015, but [appears not to have been finalised yet](#).

Ghana established an anti-corruption strategy in 2014. But while the strategy was generally in line with good practice and hailed for its strong multi-stakeholder inclusion, implementation has stalled in recent years due to a lack of political will, resources, monitoring and implementation capacity (see case study).

National development plans

Due to the importance of governance to inclusive growth and its focus on inclusion, participation, transparency and oversight, some of the broadest governance related policy reforms tend to come in the form of national development plans (OECD 2019). These are usually more encompassing than sectoral or topical initiatives and address a wider set of challenges including gender equality, anti-corruption, judicial reform, institutional reform, capacity building and others. National

development plans (NDPs) are ideally integrated frameworks that set out plans for countries to progress on the SDGs or, in the case of Africa, the Agenda 2063 in pursuit of resilient and sustainable development.

According to APRM & AGA (2019: 49-50), “through national visions, countries articulate political and developmental objectives for citizens. NDPs translate these visions into programmes and projects. National development plans detail the strategies, ways and means by which national visions will be realised. Subsequent national budget allocations specify the resources for implementing NDPs”. Development planning therefore provides “a systematic approach to identifying, articulating, prioritising, and satisfying the economic and social needs and aspirations of a country within a given (often limited) resource envelope”.

The vast majority of countries in Africa have now passed such NDPs in one form or another, although to differing degrees of success (APRM & AGA 2019).

Two examples are discussed in more detail as part of the country case studies below.

Success factors for policy design and implementation

According to the OECD’s Policy Framework for Sound Public Governance (OECD 2018), any effort at establishing or improving good governance needs to be accompanied by a set of behavioural and policy changes that will promote and be in service to the core values of transparency, integrity, accountability and inclusion. This includes promoting openness and stakeholder engagement through open government; building more cohesive and resilient societies by promoting inclusiveness and gender equality; and ensuring accountability based on the rule of law and access to justice (OECD 2019; OECD 2018).

Further “enablers” to good governance reform include an equitable and evidence-informed policymaking that is built on effective decision making processes and requires coherent and effective monitoring and evaluation approaches. A further key is the commitment, vision, and leadership at the highest level of government as well as within the civil service. (OECD 2019; OECD 2018). Thus, “whole-of-government coordination” is increasingly relevant “due to the emergence of crosscutting, multi-dimensional policy challenges” (OECD 2018: 11).

According to the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), key success factors in establishing good governance programmes, and consequently development goals, include political leadership that is accountable and has a clear vision for outcomes, policy coherence and coordination within government (which can be facilitated by new ICT measures), decentralisation and inclusion of communities (in both decision making and service delivery), effective monitoring and evaluation, and partnerships with a variety of non-governmental actors where governments lack the necessary resources (UNDESA 2016).

Reviewing the success of anti-corruption packages, Oldfield (2017) has identified similar prerequisites and success factors as those identified for general governance strategies. These include political leadership, will and buy-in; supportive coalitions of different stakeholders; strong public support; a data-driven approach to understand underlying challenges and where reform is needed; and citizen empowerment and access to information (Oldfield 2017).

In reviewing success factors of anti-corruption strategies, Martini (2013) similarly identifies political will and the importance of a thorough understanding of the most relevant contextual anti-corruption challenges as key. She further notes the relevance of integrating anti-corruption strategies into other ongoing governance efforts as well as establishing a strong element of monitoring and evaluation. This is mostly in line with the

Hussman's (2007) assessment, who identifies national ownership, political will and public participation as key elements that contribute to an anti-corruption strategy's success.

When looking at putting new reform approaches into practice, the OECD (2018; 2019) notes the importance of policy design, strategic planning, agenda and priority setting, and skills development to ensure effectiveness in practice.

Which policy instruments to deploy can be context specific but should commonly include regulatory frameworks and policy as well as budgetary governance. Successful implementation of a reform process requires the deployment of financial, human, and digital resources, as well as tools to ensure coordination, oversight and monitoring. To that end, it is crucial to strengthen the capabilities of public sector employees, to build digital skills, increase networking capabilities, and encourage working with citizens and elected officials in policy development and implementation. Lastly it is paramount to implement effective monitoring and evaluation tools, both to create accountability and to inform future decision making. This includes monitoring of policy priorities, financial performance, budget execution and regulatory governance. To do so, countries should establish an adequately resourced and independent monitoring agency and develop useful and measurable indicators (Hussman 2007; OECD 2019; OECD 2018).

Based on these assessments, the following three common success factors emerged as crucial, irrespective of whether a governance reform is broad or targeted.

Coordination and leadership

Effective and meaningful coordination and cooperation can be one of the biggest challenges to successfully introduce governance reform and deliver on the promise to curb corruption, increase transparency and accountability, and arrive at more inclusive growth.

Government budgets as well as accountability and oversight processes are often department specific. Moreover, immediate political or economic needs and election cycles can crowd-out long-term strategies. "Robust coordination mechanisms" and policy coherence are thus a formidable task, but crucial in ensuring success of reform approaches (OECD 2019).

The coordination between agencies tasked with countering corruption has been found to be so paramount, that inter-agency relationships appear to be a greater indicator for the success of an anti-corruption initiative than the agency set-up itself (Jenkins 2019). However, while cooperation is crucial for successful governance reform, it also often constitutes the greatest challenge. According to Jenkins (2019:1), "coordination between integrity agencies is often plagued by structural and resourcing constraints, bureaucratic pathologies and political interference. There is also an underlying tension in that, while integrity systems rely on close cooperation between different agencies to function effectively, there is also a need for these same agencies to act as checks and balances on each other". The "diversity of mandates, overlapping jurisdictions, competing agendas or differing levels of autonomy from political meddling" stand in the way of easy coordination, making cooperation "one of the most challenging aspects of anti-corruption work" (Jenkins 2019: 5).

When evaluating the success of anti-corruption strategies implemented in six countries across the globe, Hussman (2007) identified a variety of reasons why such strategies often fall short of initial aspirations. A failure to sustain leadership and high-level commitment over time was identified as a common disruptor of anti-corruption strategies, especially if a change in government occurs. Further factors that hamper the success of anti-corruption strategies include: a lack of ownership in the implementing agencies; a tension between being comprehensive and targeted; a lack of authority in coordinating agencies; a lack of ongoing technical advice and mentoring; a lack of

information and communication between relevant stakeholders; and insufficient or inadequate support from development agencies.

Stakeholder participation

To strengthen the legitimacy and acceptance of reform processes, and to ensure they respond to citizens' needs, stakeholder engagement, particularly the engagement of citizens, is paramount. This engagement should be ensured at all stages of the reform process, from policy design to implementation and evaluation (OECD 2019).

Oldfield (2017) particularly noted the strong role of civil society as crucial in the success of anti-corruption strategies in Mexico and Ukraine, whereas the only partially successful initiatives in Greece and the EU lacked a strong element of citizen engagement.

Open government initiatives, access to information and the use of digital tools can facilitate the direct engagement of citizens into the political process and maximise government transparency (OECD 2019).

Other stakeholders to engage can include business and industries, local authorities, academia, or international and regional organisations who all bring specific capacities and functions to a governance reform process, such as resource mobilisation, advocacy strength, ideas and innovation, representation of different viewpoints and so on. (OECD 2019).

Monitoring and evaluation

According to OECD (2019:52), monitoring is a “continuous function that uses systematic data collection on specific indicators to provide policy makers and stakeholders with information regarding progress and achievements of an ongoing public policy initiative and/or the use of allocated funds”. Whereas evaluation is “a structured, in-depth assessment of an intended, ongoing or completed policy initiative”.

To provide oversight and ongoing information on the progress of policies, effective monitoring is

crucial. To determine the value of any given initiative and ensure intended outcomes are achieved, evaluation is likewise paramount. Policy evaluations “in essence analyse the link between policy decisions and outcomes” (OECD 2019: 57).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) complement each other and are required for evidence-based decision making, effective resource allocation, generating learning, ensuring accountability, and a determination of needed next steps in any governance reform initiative.

The majority of anti-corruption strategies evaluated by Hussman (2007), failed to build their interventions on a sound knowledge footing that reflected challenges on the ground. Too often, “technocratic solutions” are deployed, without ensuring that underlying systems and attitudes are addressed as well.

The set-up and execution of M&E efforts can vary significantly. Responsibility can lie within a relevant ministry, a supreme audit institution or a dedicated agency, and the legal framework for carrying out M&E activities may include constitutional provisions as well as dedicated policies (OECD 2019). But irrespective of the set-up, political commitment, stakeholder engagement and quality assurance are needed to ensure not only high-quality evaluations but also that results of evaluations actually inform decision making and policy design (OECD 2019).

Mixing different evaluation methods (for example, self-assessments, peer reviews and feedback mechanisms) and the engagement of different stakeholders has also been recommended to improve M&E outcomes (Hussman 2007; Martini 2013).

Country case studies

There are substantial gaps among African countries in terms of their governance challenges, structure, willingness and ability to put forward meaningful reform (APRM & AGA 2019; Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2020).

South Africa and Ghana are among those that have done comparatively well in recent years, challenges notwithstanding. In [the latest edition of the IIAG](#), both scored relatively high overall (around 68 points versus a regional average of 49.9); and did well on rule of law (around 90 points versus a regional average of 53.9). Both countries received a full 100 points on the mechanisms of orderly transfer of power indicator, and both score high on access to justice (Ghana 94.7, South Africa 80), against the African average (59.3). They both fared well on independence of the judiciary (South Africa 92.6, Ghana 85.8) against the African average of 43.8. They are also both among the better performers on the Resource Governance Index and have seen some successes in advancing decentralisation and local governance reform (Alam et al. 2016; Crocker 2019; Natural Resource Governance Institute 2019).

Despite this progress, challenges remain. For example, both countries have dropped on the transparency and accountability indicator of the IIAG in recent years and have remained largely stagnant (South Africa) or slightly deteriorated (Ghana) on the CPI. Nonetheless, both countries have been noted positively as “countries to watch” by Transparency International: South Africa for renewed anti-corruption efforts under President Ramaphosa (Transparency International 2019a) and Ghana for needed institutional and legal reform (Transparency International 2020).

South Africa

South Africa has made remarkable progress since its democratisation and the end of apartheid in 1994. The country has built inclusive and democratic institutions and an inclusive public sector, succeeded in ensuring the political participation of all citizens, and improved access to education, health and housing, as well as social and economic opportunities for many of its citizens (Alam et al. 2016).

Challenges remain in the country, particularly with regards to service delivery, corruption, poverty,

and inequality (Alam et al. 2016; National Planning Commission of South Africa 2011; Cotteril 2020).

South Africa’s governance reform efforts are enshrined in a variety of strategies, chief among them the national development plan. But other reform efforts, such as decentralisation and anti-corruption, and commitments made under the Open Government Partnership are likewise relevant to the country’s governance reform progress.

The national development plan

Much of South Africa’s commitments to improve governance are set out in its NDP with a [vision for 2030](#) titled Our Future: Make it Work (National Planning Commission of South Africa 2012). Among others, the plan sets out strategies for improving the country’s economic infrastructure, natural resource management and public sector capacities; fostering greater socio-economic inclusion; advancing gender equality; and promoting accountability and strengthening anti-corruption measures.

Along with the NDP, a diagnostics report was issued to identify the central challenges the country was facing and to tailor reform approaches accordingly. The key challenges identified included a lack of inclusion of the poor, the resource intensiveness of the economy, the poor quality and uneven distribution of public services, divisions in society and high levels of corruption (National Planning Commission 2012). With regards to the latter, the report notes that “South Africa suffers from high levels of corruption that undermine the rule of law and hinder the state’s ability to effect development and socio-economic transformation. The performance of state systems of accountability has been uneven, enabling corruption to thrive” (National Planning Commission 2012: 446).

The NDP focuses on political will, deterrence, prevention and education to tackle the country’s significant corruption challenges. It is also noted that critical institutions, such as the Special Investigative Unit and the public prosecutor, suffer

from a lack of funds and staff and external interference.

Furthermore, it was noted that while a substantial number of corruption cases are investigated, very few go to court, and the system of public procurement was deemed ineffective and prone to fraud (National Planning Commission 2012). A lack of coordination between government entities as well as between government, the private sector and civil society, was identified as one of the reasons previous reform efforts fell short of expectations.

Several of the broader development goals as well as the more governance specific aims include reform commitments that relate to an improvement of the country's governance. For example, the plan includes goals to professionalise the police force, building community participation measures and improving relationships between national, regional and local governments. To professionalise the public sector, a recruitment reform is envisioned to ensure the merit-based appointment of public sector employees.

The plan sets out specific indicators for success and actions to be taken to achieve it. Under the target, "A corruption-free society, a high adherence to ethics throughout society and a government that is accountable to its people", actions include: the centralisation of large tenders; taking legal and political steps to insulate anti-corruption agencies from external interference; the setting up of dedicated prosecution teams, courts and judges; making it illegal for civil servants to benefit from certain business activities; strengthening the protection of whistleblowers, and strengthening the multi-agency anti-corruption system (National Planning Commission 2012).

Progress and challenges

Decentralisation, service delivery and institutional reform

Following the end of apartheid, the newly democratic South Africa invested substantial efforts in decentralising the country and building

inclusive institutions at the national and local levels (Alam et al. 2016).

The country's transformation opened a "unique reform space" (Alam et al. 2016: 31), allowing for a degree of far-reaching institutional reforms that most countries fail to achieve. This included a successful financial decentralisation, which saw larger shares of the budget being spent at the local and provincial levels and larger shares going to education, health, and social assistance. According to Purfield (2016), key to South Africa's success in fiscal decentralisation were a committed leadership, a high degree of cooperation and trust between national and local government, evidence-based and data-driven policymaking, and a prioritisation of measures.

Despite these successes, challenges remain: public financial management remains weak, inefficiency and corruption in public spending remain challenging, the quality of public service delivery remains problematic and an initially successful consultative process eroded gradually, as the economic and political landscape changed (Purfield 2016).

A Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) was established in 2010 to strengthen performance evaluation and improve service delivery. According to Plangemann (2016), the DPME has taken "impressive steps toward anchoring a greater performance approach across sectors and levels of government" and has been a "powerful driver of reforms". The success of South Africa's DPME, according to Plangemann, lies partially in its design. When establishing the new department, experts and international best practices were consulted to build a strong and credible system. Further success factors include the contextualisation of the system to local needs, strong collaboration between different stakeholders, continuous feedback integration and a gradual development of the system, (international) knowledge sharing, sufficient funds, and strong leadership.

Anti-corruption efforts

The country has put additional efforts into addressing corruption. Having identified coordination as a gap in previous anti-corruption efforts, the country established the Anti-Corruption Inter-Ministerial Committee in 2014 to coordinate and oversee the work of different anti-corruption institutions. In 2015 the committee was further charged with [developing a new anti-corruption strategy](#), a discussion version of which has since been shared for consultation (Jenkins 2019).

In 2014, the APRM (2014) stated the country had an increased political will to fight corruption and noted an increase in collaboration between government, private sector and civil society, as well as increased public discourse to advance transparency and accountability. The founding of Corruption Watch and the launch of a national anti-corruption hotline are seen positively as expressions of this trend.

Despite these efforts, the country continued to face tremendous corruption challenges. Reporting from the Eastern Cape region of Makhande, Cotteril (2020) noted that “money that should have been spent on infrastructure has been diverted to patronage, bloated payroll, and contracts held by cronies, [in] what one local researcher calls ‘a kind of medieval system of fiefdoms’”.

The country’s pervasive corruption challenges came to the forefront during the presidency of Jacob Zuma (2009–2018), which was marred by allegations of patronage, state capture and corruption. It was estimated that as much as US\$339 billion (about a third of South Africa’s GDP) was lost due to state capture (Merten 2019). In 2019, charges were brought against the former president on 16 counts of fraud, racketeering and money laundering (Burke 2019; Nantulya 2019).

Anti-corruption and governance efforts appear to have gained new traction and high-level support since Cyril Ramaphosa took over the presidency in 2018 and promised to increase efforts to fight

corruption (Gruzd 2020; Nantulya 2019; Transparency International 2019a).

Since then, the country has taken important steps to address corruption challenges at the national level (Burke 2019; Transparency International 2019a). According to Transparency International (2019a), the national anti-corruption strategy, which had been in progress for years, has seen renewed momentum under the current administration, [by encouraging and including public feedback](#). Further positive developments include strong citizen engagement on social media, the launching of several inquiry commissions into corruption abuses, the renewed efforts of the Special Investigating Unit in exposing corrupt officials, and the increased efforts of the ANC’s internal integrity commission in vetting political candidates (Nantulya 2019; Transparency International 2019a).

However, the extent to which these efforts will lead to lasting improvements remains to be seen. There is still dissatisfaction on anti-corruption efforts; for instance, Corruption Watch and other civil society organisations have criticised that too little has been done to hold those guilty of state capture to account (Corruption Watch 2020).

Citizen participation

In 2014, APRM reviewed South Africa’s progress on its commitments related to increased citizen participation (APRM 2014). According to the report, several forms of local citizen participation are in place and function as a means for citizens to have their voices heard in the political process. These include public forums, participatory processes as part of the country’s integrated development plans and local economic development plans, as well as participatory provincial growth and development strategies. Measures have been taken to “mainstream public participation and the development of models, informed by research, on international best practices to make public participation more effective and robust” (APRM 2014: 23).

Community development workers have been deployed in communities and received capacity building to ensure information flow and feedback mechanisms with the population on policy matters. Government petitioning has become increasingly prominent in letting citizens address the government on gaps in service provision, and government outreach programmes have been established to improve information flow to citizens and facilitate citizen feedback. In addition, a designated social cohesion programme has been established to fight racism and advance unity.

As part of the [Open Government Partnership](#), South Africa has made significant commitments to foster transparency, accountability and public participation. Its action plans were developed in several regional consultation summits between government and civil society and several commitments were made, including the establishment of service delivery forums, the establishment of an accessible portal for environmental management information, and mainstreaming citizen participation in public service (Open Government Partnership 2016).

Civil society organisations have criticised the slow implementation and a lack of ongoing and meaningful civil society engagement, and have accused the government of putting forward action items that had already been committed to and achieved elsewhere. But some critical successes were achieved, such as the establishment of an open data portal, advancements in open budgeting, and the extension of citizen-based monitoring (Humby 2019; Mpungose and Chisiza 2016).

Challenges

While access to water, electricity and sanitation has risen tremendously since the mid-90s, the quality of service delivery remains an issue. Perceived inefficiency and high levels of corruption in service delivery compounded the problem, resulting in recurring protests (Alam et al. 2016; APRM 2014). In response, the government intensified efforts to improve service delivery by improving cooperation between the national

government and regional and local structures (APRM 2014).

South Africa is up for its next APRM review this year, and Gruzd notes that if the country “conducts an open, participatory, credible and rigorous APRM process, that honestly describes and accepts past failures and seeks solutions, this will have a demonstration effect for its peers” (Gruzd 2020).

Ghana

Ghana is considered one of the more stable countries in Africa, and it has made significant strides towards democracy since the introduction of multi-party rule in 1992 (Rahman 2018). In the most recent publication of the [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#), Ghana came in third, topped only by Botswana and Namibia.

But progress notwithstanding, the country still faces significant challenges in its decentralisation process and public service delivery; despite some successes, it still struggles with corruption related challenges (Rahman 2018; Swallah Awal 2020).

As with South Africa, Ghana’s governance reform efforts are enshrined in a variety of strategies, chief among them an NDP. But other reform efforts, such as decentralisation, resource governance reforms, an anti-corruption strategy, and commitments made under the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and EITI are likewise relevant to the country’s governance reform progress.

The national development plan

After a series of medium-term development strategies, Ghana set out to establish a more long-term development plan for the country, the Long-Term National Development Plan of Ghana (2018–2057) (Republic of Ghana 2018). The process of establishing the new NDP included an extensive consultation process in which public discussions were held in different regions with citizens and various political parties. Special consultation sessions were held for the disabled, university students, minority religious communities and

selected industries (National Planning Commission of Ghana 2018).

The plan sets out five overarching strategic goals. One of the goals refers to the building of “effective, efficient and dynamic institutions” with sub-goals to deepen democratic governance, reform of ministries and state agencies, improving public service, advancing decentralisation, inclusion of women and marginalised groups in the political process, building public sector capacities and strengthening good governance in the corporate and civic sectors (Republic of Ghana 2018).

Along with progress reports, the [National Development Planning Commission](#) publishes regular expenditure frameworks and budget plans that align with the NDP (Republic of Ghana 2019), as well as [sector-specific performance reports](#) and [district-level performance reports](#), although none seem to have been issued since 2017.

Progress and challenges

In the country’s most recent submission to the APRM (National African Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council 2011) some improvements were registered regarding Ghana’s governance structure and performance. These include composite budgets introduced between national and local structures to deepen decentralisation, measures introduced to improve service delivery, and an increase in judicial independence, although corruption and lacking funds remained challenges. The work of the national election commission in conducting and supervising national and local elections and advancing voter registration was also noted positively (National African Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council 2011).

While threats to freedom of expression had slightly increased in 2011, a vast majority of Ghanaians (over 90 per cent) indicated they were able to freely exercise their right to freedom of association, and the country continues to rank among the highest on the continent in terms of freedom of expression (National African Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council 2011; Rahman 2018).

Decentralisation, participation and service delivery

A mixed picture emerges on the important goal of decentralisation and service delivery (Juma and Mutuku 2019; Swallah Awal 2020). Substantial decentralisation reforms have been implemented since the 1990s to foster the participation of citizens in governance. Decentralisation commitments were enshrined in the country’s 1992 constitution, and additional goals were set out as part of the country joining of the OGP in 2011 to increase citizen participation and accountability at the grassroots level.

However, progress has been mixed so far. Local institutions were still considered too weak and lacking in accountability, coordination and financial resources. Juma and Mutuku (2019) have further noted low participation and awareness rates of the OGP process and have criticised the lack of a meaningful engagement of women and a gender perspective into the process.

Overall, despite some progress and increasingly ambitious goals, Ghana has only partially delivered on its commitments made as part of the OGP, including the establishment of an open data portal (Ayaji 2018).

Following calls for deeper decentralisation due to ineffective service delivery at the local level, the government has initiated key policy reforms in political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation (Swallah Awal 2020). These reforms include the passage of a new local governance framework, a national popular participation framework, local government performance contracts and a new local government assessment tool. Further reforms to strengthen local democratic participation and fiscal transfers are currently under discussion.

Natural resource governance

According to Rahman (2018), corruption challenges remain an issue in Ghana, particularly in natural resource governance, the judiciary and the police. However, despite these challenges, Ghana tops the region in the 2017 Resource

Governance Index for its oil and gas sector, and comes in fifth for its gold mining sector (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2019).

Ghana joined the EITI in 2003 and became a compliant member by 2010. In 2011, the country passed the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, to provide a framework for the collection and management of petroleum revenues “in a responsible, accountable and sustainable manner for the benefit of Ghana” (Dyna and Sothat 2013: 30). According to Dyna and Sothat (2013), the law commits to principles of transparency and establishes effective checks and balances, with oversight responsibilities given to parliament, the auditor general and a public interest accountability committee.

After previously only publishing partial information on extractive industries’ contracts, Ghana passed the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act in 2016, and, in line with the new law, launched a petroleum register in 2018. The register discloses petroleum agreements, licences, permits and authorisations (Pitman 2018). The Natural Resource Governance Institute noted that the register includes a full-text publication of contracts, in line with international best practice: “NRGI has used the register as a good practice example in other countries and as a tool for giving technical advice to governments and companies aiming to publish their own contracts” (Natural Resource Governance Institute 2018).

Anti-corruption measures

After several years of preparation and multi-stakeholder discussions, Ghana’s parliament passed a National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) (2015–2024) in 2014 to improve the prevention, investigation and prosecution of corruption (GACC 2019; Rahman 2018; Republic of Ghana 2011).

The NACAP was drafted by a working group including government representatives, civil society stakeholders and development agencies, and went through nationwide consultations with citizens and

relevant institutions (GACC 2019; Republic of Ghana 2011). The plan’s focus on multi-stakeholder cooperation and on including not only the public sector’s role and viewpoint but also that of business and civil society was commended by the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC 2019).

The plan reinforces the role of existing institutional bodies tasked with countering corruption, namely the [Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice \(CHRAJ\)](#), the Economic and Organised Crime Office, and the financial intelligence centre. It goes on to identify shortcomings that had prevented the success of previous strategies, such as an inadequate understanding of the complexity of the nature of corruption, insufficient public participation in the development of anti-corruption measures, lack of local ownership, lack of effective and sustained coordination, and insufficient government commitment.

The NACAP is built around four strategic objectives: i) building public capacities to counter corruption; ii) increasing efficiency, accountability and transparency in the public, private and non-profit sectors; iii) engaging key stakeholders (including media and civil society); and iv) conducting effective investigations and prosecution of corrupt acts.

The strategy also identifies further reform needs in broader governance areas, such as the need for reviewing financial management practices, improving service delivery, professionalising the public sector, effective resourcing and capacity building of relevant institutions, improving inter-agency cooperation and ensuring access to information. The strategy also emphasises the need for: political will; non-interference by political leaders in law enforcement; facilitating the reporting of corruption; protecting whistleblowers; raising public awareness; and establishing a sound M&E plan.

NACAP implementation is coordinated by CHRAJ and overseen by a multi-stakeholder high-level implementation committee (HILIC), who are also

responsible for regular review and reporting (CHRAJ 2017; GACC 2019; Republic of Ghana 2011).

Implementation of NACAP began in 2015, and the subsequent three years saw a successive increase in implementation efforts (CHRAJ 2017 and GACC 2019). While annual progress reports are required to be published, according to NACAP, [no progress report appears to have been issued since 2017](#).

Some reports have criticised a lack of enforcement, inadequacy of the legal framework, insufficient political will and a lack of resources at the anti-corruption agencies (GACC 2019; Rahman 2018). The [GACC](#) (2019) published an extensive report on the implementation status of NACAP last year, which criticised the low level of awareness and knowledge of NACAP among the general population and among relevant implementing partners. It also found a low level of implementation, exacerbated by resource constraints at the implementing agencies, low political buy-in, and insufficient monitoring and oversight.

Similarly, CHRAJ's last annual report on NACAP (2017) noted the low participation rate of relevant stakeholders in NACAP implementation, insufficient funding and challenges in reporting from implementation partners. Ghana has also dropped in the CPI in recent years, from 48 in 2014 to 41 in 2019 (although still scoring above the sub-Saharan average of 32), and doubt has been cast on the country's commitment to counter corruption (Transparency International 2020).

There are some positive developments in support of the anti-corruption strategy. For instance, a special prosecutor's office was established in 2017, with the power to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption, and the performance of the auditor general's office has improved (Transparency International 2020). The Companies Act and Public Financial Management Act were amended in 2016, providing transparency of beneficial ownership information (GACC 2019). Plus, a Witness Protection Law was passed in 2018 to provide protection for witnesses in crime

and corruption cases beyond the country's Whistleblower Law (Africa News Radio 2018).

And while both GACC (2019) and CHRAJ (2017) have identified significant challenges in NACAP implementation, they also both note that a variety of awareness raising and capacity building efforts took place, such as social media campaigns, community anti-corruption forums, training for the anti-corruption agency, and corporate governance and anti-money laundering training for the private sector.

Earlier this year, [a memorandum of understanding was signed](#) to increase cooperation between relevant stakeholders in improving anti-corruption efforts and the implementation of NACAP. The MoU is spearheaded by CHRAJ and was signed by key relevant stakeholders, among them the Economic and Organised Crime Unit, the parliament of Ghana, the office of the attorney general, the Ministry of Justice, the Ghana audit service, the bureau of national investigation and others.

It remains to be seen whether this new momentum in NACAP will lead to greater and sustained implementation.

In 2019, 20 years after it was initially drafted, parliament passed a long-debated and awaited access to information law, which came into effect in January 2020 (Media Foundation for West Africa 2019; Transparency International 2020). While a general right of access to information was already covered in the Ghanaian constitution, passing and implementing dedicated RTI laws is still crucial. It empowers individuals, journalists and civil society to hold government and civil servants to account, makes political processes more transparent, and allows citizens to better understand policies and decision-making processes in crucial areas such as health, education, trade and infrastructure (Alhassan 2020; Egbunike 2019).

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