BASEL INSTITUTE ON
GOVERNANCE

2022 Annual Report

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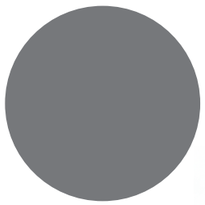


Gretta Fenner
Managing Director

Peter Maurer
President

For decades corruption was seen primarily as an instrument for personal, short-term enrichment. Today, we see political forces, business and other non-state actors alike wielding corrup-tion as part of their domestic, geopolitical or corporate agendas. Conflicts of interest, nepotism, influence peddling, manipulation of legislative processes… these tools, amplified by disinformation and a lack of account-ability and transparency, are destroying level playing fields and fair power competition.

Also, we do have today a greater understanding of the systemic and long-term destructive effects of corruption and poor governance on our societies and our planet. The negative impacts stretch from social cohesion to the environment, to basic health and education, and to peace and security, to name but a few.

And we have much greater insight into the role of different stakeholder groups, both when they are part of the problem and when they are part of the solution.

But while we understand corruption better and see more international drive to fight it, we don’t see enough progress. Also, we get more opposition to our work. For example, in the form of “lawfare” against anti-corruption prosecutors, of intimidation and the killing of journalists, and of shrinking space for civil society and thus for transparency and accountability.

We therefore continue to ask ourselves if we have the right tools and are applying the right methods, and if we learn, adjust and improve sufficiently. We are convinced that with our multi-pronged and “all-hands-on-deck” approach, we are on the right track to defend the gains that the global anti-corruption movement has made in the past two decades, and to continue making tangible inroads.

Ukraine has been a renewed focus of our work, building on our existing country programme that dates back to 2014. Our work there illustrates how we operate, and in turn what we believe can help tip the balance:

First, we look at anti-corruption from an asset recovery angle, because if crime doesn’t pay, it loses its attractiveness. We contribute our hands-on experience to debates on confiscating assets linked to war-related sanctions. Fully using legal means to recover illicit assets will provide funds for Ukraine at a time of immense need, we argue. It also supports prevention and deterrence, by strengthening both corruption defences and asset recovery mechanisms, and ending the type of kleptocracies that harm societies.

Second, we look at mechanisms in place to prevent corruption happening in the first place. For example, our support for anti-corruption compliance in Ukraine’s major state-owned infrastructure agencies expanded in 2022 as their scope extended to cover reconstruction. With significant amounts of money set to flow to support recovery, strengthening internal controls and boosting integrity in this sector will be critical, so that neither money nor trust is lost. In o ering this institutional support, we engage, we listen, we share our experience, and hope to guide the country’s decision-makers in finding solutions that work in their context.

A third theme for our interventions is breaking down silos to foster dialogue and learning between stakeholders. In that spirit, we are a founding member of the RISE Ukraine coalition, which unites civil society and international actors and is actively backed by Ukraine’s government. The idea in this, and many other contexts around the world, is that all stakeholders can work collectively for a transparent and sustainable reconstruction and rehabilitation of society. In the same vein, our Collective Action team is mentoring organisations on how to engage across stakeholder groups to foster integrity and transparency.

And it underlies our asset recovery and Green Corruption communities of practice, which bring together often segregated professionals to share experiences and seek solutions to a common problem.

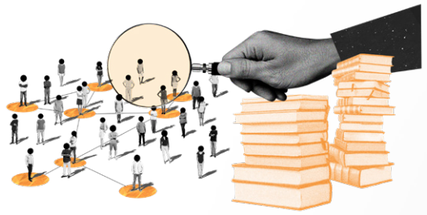
Overall, demand for our work has not ceased – to the contrary. Our partners are facing enormous challenges. In 2022, we therefore expanded to 12 countries with a permanent field presence, plus many other countries where we work through our Basel-based team and numerous local and regional partners. We also see a growing demand from state-owned enterprises for assistance to strengthen their internal compliance systems. This is a positive sign that anti-corruption is crossing into sectors that previously were less responsive.

Wherever we can, we seek to pass on our knowledge and enable others to help multiply the impact of anti-corruption action, be it through education, partnerships, communities of practice, mentoring, sharing research or practice-based advocacy.

The stories in this annual report showcase some of our successes in anchoring anti-corruption in new communities, and in making multi-stakeholder collaboration against corruption a global norm. Meanwhile, you’ll read how we have been promoting under-used asset recovery mechanisms like illicit enrichment and non-conviction based forfeiture, and advancing tools like behavioural science and social network analysis for anti-corruption.

Despite the immense challenges of countering corruption’s evolving face, we see in so many places that unity, creativity, persistence and courage can tilt the balance to more inclusive societies. This motivates us, and we look forward to working with our partners from across the world to continue contributing to this positive change.

Who we are, what we do



Public Governance

Our Public Governance team connects corruption research with anti-corruption practice. In 2022, the team generated new evidence on behavioural anti-corruption interventions – including through a pilot project in Tanzania – and analysed informal networks involved in corruption and money laundering. Their technical assistance , from anti-corruption strategy development to political economy analysis and project design. spanned 10 countries.

Green Corruption

This multidisciplinary programme targets the corruption and weak governance that drive environmental degradation . Our team expanded into two new countries in 2022 – Bolivia and Indonesia. Ten new team members joined to support our partners in government and civil society in preventing and combating green corruption.

CORRUPTION IS...

... the abuse of power and influence

from political office, a high position in business, personal wealth or social standing

... for undue benefit

for an individual, political party, corporation or other group

... a long-term game

as a tool to preserve and expand power or geopolitical influence

... more than bribery

spanning conflicts of interest, patronage, embezzlement, influence peddling, manipulating legislative processes and more

A multi-pronged approach to ght corruption and strengthen governance

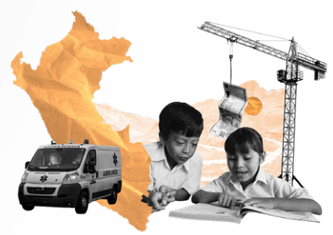
For peace, prosperity and sustainable development

Asset Recovery

Our International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR) works globally to strengthen asset recovery capacity, practice and policy. Our team of 40+ specialists supported 33 anti-corruption and judicial institutions in 18 partner countries in 2022, achieving 21 convictions and three confiscation orders. In addition to 14 training programmes, we organised several peer-learning events.

Private Sector

Our Private Sector team takes a dual approach to strengthening business integrity. First, by advancing anti-corruption Collective Action, including by facilitating multi-stakeholder initiatives and convening a conference. Second, through compliance advice and technical assistance to companies and state-owned enterprises, from Indonesia to Ukraine.



Public Finance Management

Since 2015, our Programa GFP Subnacional team in Peru has worked hand in hand with 11 subnational governments to strengthen public finance management practices and recovery stolen funds. In 2022, the team worked to consolidate its methods, deepen dialogue and boost sustainability to prepare for a next phase of reform.