



Pillar 3: Systematic Integration of Anti-Corruption

The nexus between good governance and anti-corruption

SDC's Four Pillar approach aims to support the systematic integration of anti-corruption. Pillar 3 considers how anti-corruption can be integrated and mainstreamed into interventions that do not have an 'explicit' anti-corruption focus, such as sector programmes.

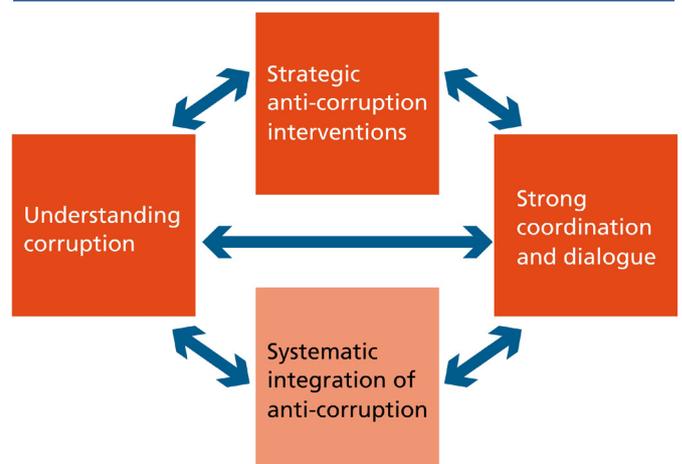
The SDC's Guidance on Governance (2020), highlights the nexus between corruption and good governance: combating corruption will lead to overall better governance, and to improved sector performance with better outcomes for citizens.

Why integrate/mainstream anti-corruption into sectoral programmes?

The reduction of corruption within a given sector will achieve the sector's own policy goals, such as providing administrative services, education, water or health

services to the population. Also, a sectoral approach offers a strategic option to engage governments together with other stakeholders (such as from the private sector and civil society).

Figure 1. The Four Pillar approach: Pillar 3



Source: Author's own.

One of a series of eight, this Issue Paper is a companion document to *The SDC's Anti-Corruption Guidance*. The series provides recommendations on how to apply the Four Pillar approach described in the Guidance for the purpose of anti-corruption programming with a thematic focus or as a transversal theme. The Issue Papers follow the structure of the Guidance and they clarify the concepts, topics and approaches it presents, and also provide links to resources that go deeper into selected topics.

Table 1. The pros and cons of integrating/mainstreaming anti-corruption into wider sectoral efforts

Pros	Comments	Cons	Comments
Integrating anti-corruption into sectoral programmes allows better tailoring of interventions to the specific needs of a sector.	Thorough sector expertise and understanding of the country context, including how the sector processes work and who the actors are, is needed to design effective anti-corruption elements within sector programmes.	Focusing on sectors may lead reformers to lose sight of broader corruption and governance problems, especially political corruption.	The role of money in politics outside a given sector may be key to understanding corruption within that sector, but if it does not have a visible link with sector policies, it may be overlooked.
Reducing corruption in sectors can translate into concrete results that affect people’s wellbeing directly, as tackling corrupt practices in a sector can make service provision more effective and efficient.	Because of their positive impact on individual citizens’ lives, integrating anti-corruption elements into sectoral programmes can achieve positive spillover effects helping future reforms.	Sectoral anti-corruption successes may be less sustainable than some explicit broad approaches.	Instead of unleashing positive spillover effects, a sectoral ‘island of integrity’ can be flooded by the ocean of corruption surrounding it. Also, high-level public officials could be removed, endangering the sector reform. However, a sector includes various actors outside the scope of direct governmental intervention. If sufficiently empowered, they can continue exerting pressure for reform and demanding accountability.
Introducing reforms at sector level may be more feasible than attempting to apply them across government, or through a more explicit anti-corruption programme.	Governments might not be willing to engage in explicit anti-corruption reforms; for example, corruption is a sensitive topic and they perceive that there are too overt political undertones in an explicit anti-corruption programme.	Corruption can migrate or adapt; this is especially true of corruption that is managed by organised crime structures. A sectoral anti-corruption approach may end up displacing corrupt practices from one sector to another.	Alternatively, corruption may shift from visible to less visible practices within the same sector. For instance, when visible practices of petty corruption, such as bribery, are contained, other forms of corruption may continue or increase, such as corruption in procurement. This critique, however, can be brought against any type of anti-corruption intervention.
		Donor staff can suffer fatigue when pressed to integrate an array of different approaches and priorities into their daily work objectives.	The term ‘mainstreaming’ often meets with a lukewarm reception. It requires practitioners to redouble their efforts, acquire new knowledge, go beyond the daily routine, and confront national partners with a difficult topic. The fight against corruption is perceived as an arduous undertaking in which progress is difficult to achieve and to measure. It may therefore be quite rational for sector programme staff to avoid committing themselves to anti-corruption.

Source: Adapted from Boehm (2014), used with permission.

Explicit vs implicit anti-corruption approaches: Weighing up the pros and cons

What should inform the decision on whether to opt for an explicit anti-corruption effort, as opposed to an integration of anti-corruption including through broader

good governance interventions? Table 1 presents arguments both in favour and against integrating/mainstreaming anti-corruption into wider sectoral efforts.

Questions, then, should test the enabling environment for anti-corruption efforts, and can include:

- Is there political will in the government to pursue explicit anti-corruption reforms?
- Is the government prepared to have a policy and a political dialogue around these reforms, and will the government be supportive of programmes and projects that help such reforms?
- Is the government genuinely committed to anti-corruption reforms? Or is the anti-corruption rhetoric being used to settle political accounts and to get rid of opponents? And where would Swiss funding be implicated in such actions? (See also Issue Paper 'Pillar 2: Supporting Strategic Interventions Against Corruption'.)

There will be numerous contexts for which you conclude that explicit anti-corruption programming with state institutions is not possible or would likely result in an inefficient and ineffective programme, or where risks of doing harm are considerable (see also Issue Paper 'Elements of M&E for Anti-Corruption Programming').

Once it has been concluded that integrating anti-corruption through a specific sector or as a cross-cutting topic integrated in the overall portfolio is a more promising avenue, aspects to consider include:

- In relation to human resources, are staff dealing with sectoral programmes and projects sensitised to anti-corruption as a transversal theme, and do they have sufficient skills and knowledge to identify anti-corruption entry points in their sectoral programmes? If not, what can be done to help colleagues (for example, enlist the support of an anti-corruption or good governance resource person at design and implementation phases)?
- Relating back to diagnostics and analysis, map any available research and resources that analyse corruption specifically at the sectoral level in order to identify entry points for anti-corruption measures.

Adaptive and iterative approach to integrating/mainstreaming anti-corruption

It can be hard to identify entry points for transversal themes in sectoral programmes. For example, a multi-phased energy efficiency programme in Ukraine initially did not have an anti-corruption component. However, during implementation, opportunities to integrate anti-corruption and accountability angles were identified, and the second and third phases of the programme worked with citizens' associations.

This means that an adaptive and iterative approach to integrating anti-corruption into sectoral programmes can be an option – so long as one is alert, once implementation begins, to spotting and considering anti-corruption measures and opportunities as the intervention progresses. It might be advisable to look out for local actors and stakeholders that might bring accountability, transparency and oversight to the intervention, and to consider how to include such actors into more advanced phases of the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation of integration and mainstreaming of anti-corruption

An obvious challenge relating to integrating anti-corruption efforts is the difficulty in knowing whether and how the efforts are succeeding, as anti-corruption is typically not the prime focus or objective of the intervention. Therefore, indicators are likely to focus on other aspects of the programme or project. For learning purposes, a small number of select indicators should be devised that will provide some concrete evidence that integration of anti-corruption into sectoral programmes work. This, in turn, will provide further incentives and motivations to mainstream anti-corruption approaches into sector programmes. For more information see Issue Paper 'Elements of M&E for Anti-Corruption Programming'.

Further reading

- Boehm, F. (2014) Mainstreaming Anti-Corruption into Sector Projects, U4 Brief