



ANTI-CORRUPTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE ARAB REGION

PROPOSED REGIONAL INTERVENTIONS (2010-2013)

Background

In the Arab region, the last five years have witnessed the transformation of anti-corruption from a taboo-issue, nearly banned from public debate, into a critical policy area and a governance reform priority, articulated by governments and non-governmental actors, albeit in varying degrees and forms. This critical transformation is feeding demand for anti-corruption cooperation and creating fresh opportunities to advance governance reforms and development effectiveness in the Arab region.

Recent key developments, including the adoption of the review mechanism for the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the focus on transparency and integrity in the post global financial crisis environment, and the need to advance progress on development in the region, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are expected to perpetuate this transformation as the Arab countries' stake in having more effective anti-corruption systems becomes even higher than before.

The UNDP has played a catalytic role in contributing to this transformation and continues to work at the regional level and in individual countries to support concrete steps forward, in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other regional and global actors. Over the past two years, Arab stakeholders were empowered to take important steps forward with the support of UNDP's Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) and its strong and diverse network of experts and partners in the region and beyond.

- Nineteen Arab countries issued a joint ministerial statement in January 2008, at the Dead Sea, committing to work together to support the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), breaking the traditional silence on the issue of confronting corruption and paving the way for greater Arab ownership of the anti-corruption agenda.
- Anti-corruption government authorities from seventeen Arab countries met in July 2008, following a number of workshops and inclusive consultations, to launch the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET) as the Region's platform for collective action against corruption and an Arab-owned mechanism for knowledge networking, capacity development and policy dialogue in the area of anti-corruption.¹

¹ For more information on ACINET, please write to info@arabacinet.org or arkan.el-seblani@undp.org.



- Carefully developed Arab-owned activities directly contributed to (i) enhancing the ratification and implementation of the UNCAC; (ii) developing the governments' capacity to conduct UNCAC assessments with a view to identifying specific implementation gaps and technical assistance needs and improving reporting to the Conference of State Parties;² (iii) creating more space for productive interaction between governments and non-governmental actors in a number of countries; and (iv) facilitating bilateral cooperation with Arab governments on this area, including, *inter alia*, designing and implementing national anti-corruption strategies and developing the capacity of anti-corruption authorities including specialized anti-corruption bodies.

On 7 November 2009, on the side of the sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity (Doha, 7-8 November 2009), the United States Department of State together with UNDP organized a donor information meeting to share related achievements and lessons learned and to introduce prospective activities and the main approaches and priorities identified by Arab stakeholders in the area of anti-corruption to a larger group of partners.

This document presents the proposed anti-corruption interventions that UNDP plans to support in 2010-2013, building on its previous anti-corruption work in the Arab States region, its diversified and expanding partnerships with regional and global actors, and its strong working relationship with Arab governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. For more information about the Doha donor information meeting, please contact susanne.kim.siao@undp.org.

Proposed Anti-Corruption Interventions

The proposed interventions draw on extensive consultations and interaction with governmental and non-governmental counterparts from across the region over the past years, as well as on the various inputs provided by UNDP Country Offices in various Arab States and members of the regional anti-corruption community of practice. They will be carried out by UNDP in the framework of a regional anti-corruption project (2010-2013).

The regional project is conceived as an instrument that will promote collective action against corruption in Arab countries, and add value to related bilateral and multilateral cooperation efforts. It will engage key stakeholders from all Arab countries with a primary focus on the project-signatories. Beneficiaries will include specialized anti-corruption bodies, key ministries, the judiciary, and parliamentarians, in addition to non-governmental stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, media as well as academic and research institutions.

Subject to the availability of funding, the regional project will support various activities under four main areas of work (i) anti-corruption assessments; (ii) implementation of key UNCAC

² More on the experience of the Arab Governmental Expert Group (AGEG) on UNCAC Self Assessment, which was the framework under-which related activities were undertaken, may be found in a recent U4 publication found at <http://www.cmi.no/publications/publication/?3484=maximising-the-potential-of-uncac-implementation>.



provisions; (iii) anti-corruption in specific vulnerable sectors; and (iv) anti-corruption in post conflict situations. The primary focus will be on the first two areas, with a number of innovative and catalytic activities supported under the other two areas.

The knowledge and skills acquired by prospective beneficiaries, under the four areas of work, would enable them to act collectively in advancing their countries' national anti-corruption agenda in line with the UNCAC and broader governance and developmental considerations, including sector-specific considerations.

Under the first area of work – **“anti-corruption assessments”** – the regional project will improve the capacity of governments and non-governmental practitioners to design implement and use anti-corruption assessments in a detailed and contextualized manner, with a focus on the new and improved UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist.

- Related activities will (i) enhance the participating Arab countries' capacity to report to the CoSP in a more effective and efficient manner; (ii) support the eventual participation of Arab countries in the UNCAC implementation review mechanism; (iii) provide tools and expertise for Arab countries to adopt a more evidence-based approach to anti-corruption reforms and UNCAC implementation; and (iv) help create a common language, and foster productive cooperation, between governments and non-governmental actors on anti-corruption.
- Beneficiaries will include governmental and non-governmental actors organized into two coherent regional groups of “trained-trainers” with a view to sustaining the training benefits and enabling an effective training-of-trainers approach to anti-corruption assessments in the Arab countries at the regional- and country-levels.

Under the second area of work – **“implementation of UNCAC thematic priorities”** – the regional project will support ACINET as a regional public-private platform for knowledge networking, capacity development and policy dialogue aimed at enhancing institutional capacities to support UNCAC implementation in relation to specific themes that are prioritized by project stakeholders. So far, the following six themes have been identified as UNCAC priority themes: specialized anti-corruption bodies; judicial integrity; criminal procedures; asset declaration systems; witness and whistleblower protection measures; and integrity in the private sector.

- Related activities will (i) generate knowledge on concepts, good practices and lessons learned on each theme; (ii) provide stakeholders with an interactive space for inclusive policy dialogue on these themes; (iii) develop the capacity of beneficiaries to better address thematic challenges in their countries' context in policy, law and practice.
- Beneficiaries will include governmental and non-governmental institutions depending on the particular activity, with the priority given to ACINET members.

Under the third area of work – **“anti-corruption in specific sectors”** – the regional project will support linkages between UNCAC implementation and national anti-corruption strategies on the



one hand, and the national development agendas on the other, particularly the MDGs, through a focus on specific sectors such as energy, healthcare, water, telecommunication and education.

- Related activities will (i) generate knowledge on governance frameworks, corruption vulnerabilities, and good preventive practices in selected sectors, including case studies, with an emphasis on operational aspects, such as procurement, administration, and human resources; and (ii) provide a regional platform to help stakeholders better understand and address corruption prevention in the selected sectors and integrate findings in the ongoing anti-corruption debate, and UNCAC implementation process.
- Beneficiaries will include sector-related governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Under the fourth area of work – **“anti-corruption in post-conflict situations”** – the regional project will identify and raise awareness on anti-corruption challenges and potential responses for Arab countries in post conflict situations.

- Related activities will (i) generate knowledge on the post-conflict anti-corruption environment including correlations between corruption and human security and comparisons between pre-conflict and post-conflict corruption patterns; (ii) promote dialogue on the content, sequencing and timing of anti-corruption interventions including UNCAC implementation and sector-specific interventions; and (iii) foster innovative pilot responses to anti-corruption challenges in post-conflict situations.
- Beneficiaries will include governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in countries that are in conflict and post-conflict situations in the Arab region.

The regional project’s partnership strategy will build on the achievements and lessons learned from past cooperation. In addition to drawing on UNDP’s vast internal resources and the strategic partnership with UNODC, project partners are expected to include the Global Compact, INTERPOL, the League of Arab States, OECD, the World Bank and the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. Cooperative relationships will be developed with other partners, especially specialized UN agencies to maximize resources and project benefits.

For more information on UNDP’s regional anti-corruption activities in the region, please visit www.undp-pogar.org/governance/anticorruption.aspx.
