



Pillar 4: Stronger Coordination and Dialogue

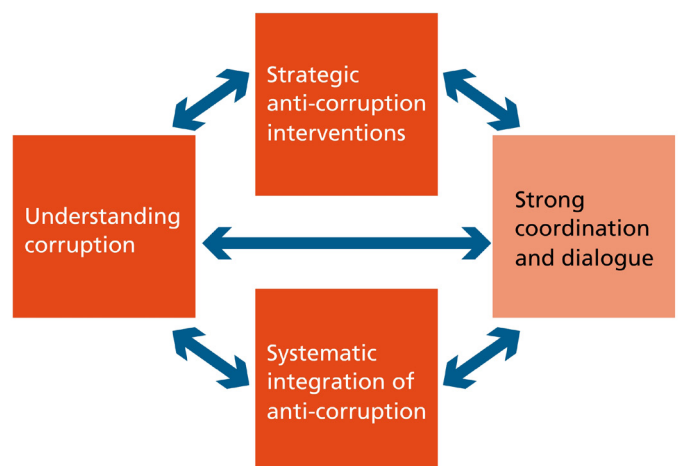
An essential component of SDC's Four Pillar approach to anti-corruption is promoting stronger coordination and dialogue.

Anti-corruption reforms, both explicit and implicit (i.e. integrated into sectoral approaches), are time-consuming and costly. As with any other area of development cooperation, technical solutions offered by anti-corruption interventions cannot succeed in any institution where there is an absence of political will for reform and continuous, long-term, persistent engagement by donors, including SDC.

The **overarching framework**, and underpinning rationale, for Switzerland's engagement on anti-corruption in partner countries is outlined in the *Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23*, which identifies corruption as an obstacle to economic development and prosperity, and as a driver for political instability and migration. These foreign policy objectives are adapted in *Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy*

2021–24 and the Cooperation programmes at country level. Policy dialogue for anti-corruption is underpinned by the principles stipulated in the Governance Toolbox

Figure 1. The Four Pillar approach: Pillar 4



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.

Policy Dialogue page, as well as in the How-to Note, Result-Oriented Policy Dialogue (2017).

In terms of **entry points for political and policy dialogue with partner governments**, as well as options for technical assistance, SDC should consider using opportunities provided by:

- International instruments and standards directly or indirectly related to corruption, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the recommendations coming from its review process; other, regional anti-corruption conventions and their review mechanisms; and standards and recommendations coming from bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Box 1. Key lessons specific to past anti-corruption assistance

Lessons that need to be elements of donor coordination, political and policy dialogue include the following:

- **Donors should acknowledge that the governments they are working with are part of the problem.** Despite sharing the anti-corruption rhetoric, they often do not share an equal ambition to fight corruption as donors.
- **Anti-corruption interventions are fundamentally political.** Approaching anti-corruption through technical solutions only, is likely to fail. In other words, anti-corruption is not solely about knowledge transfer to government counterparts on how to address corruption. Rather, donors need to explore how to increase expectations from below, by citizens and the public, and how to the public can pressure for change.
- **Creating pressure beyond the funding of anti-corruption interventions to governments and civil society should be considered to bring about change.** This can include freezing the assets of corrupt politicians or imposing travel restrictions. It can also mean exploring the potential provided by international standards on corruption and anti-corruption (most governments care about their international reputation).

Source: Adapted from Mason (2020).

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a useful framework to discuss anti-corruption programmes and projects with partner countries' governments. While corruption is most often associated with SDG 16, it is also a cross-cutting issue affecting the achievement of all the SDGs.
- Strong and effective donor cooperation, an area where SDC is the lead in several countries and sectors.
- Policy dialogue at country level with governments but also at technical and sectorial levels. A number of SCOs at country level have developed policy dialogue tools and messages, including at domain level. Corruption and anti-corruption should be incorporated into these messages and communicated during policy dialogue. For example, health sector reform is typically affected by corruption, and this message should be specifically a part of policy dialogue at national and local levels and with implementers (multilateral and local NGOs piloting projects on the ground).

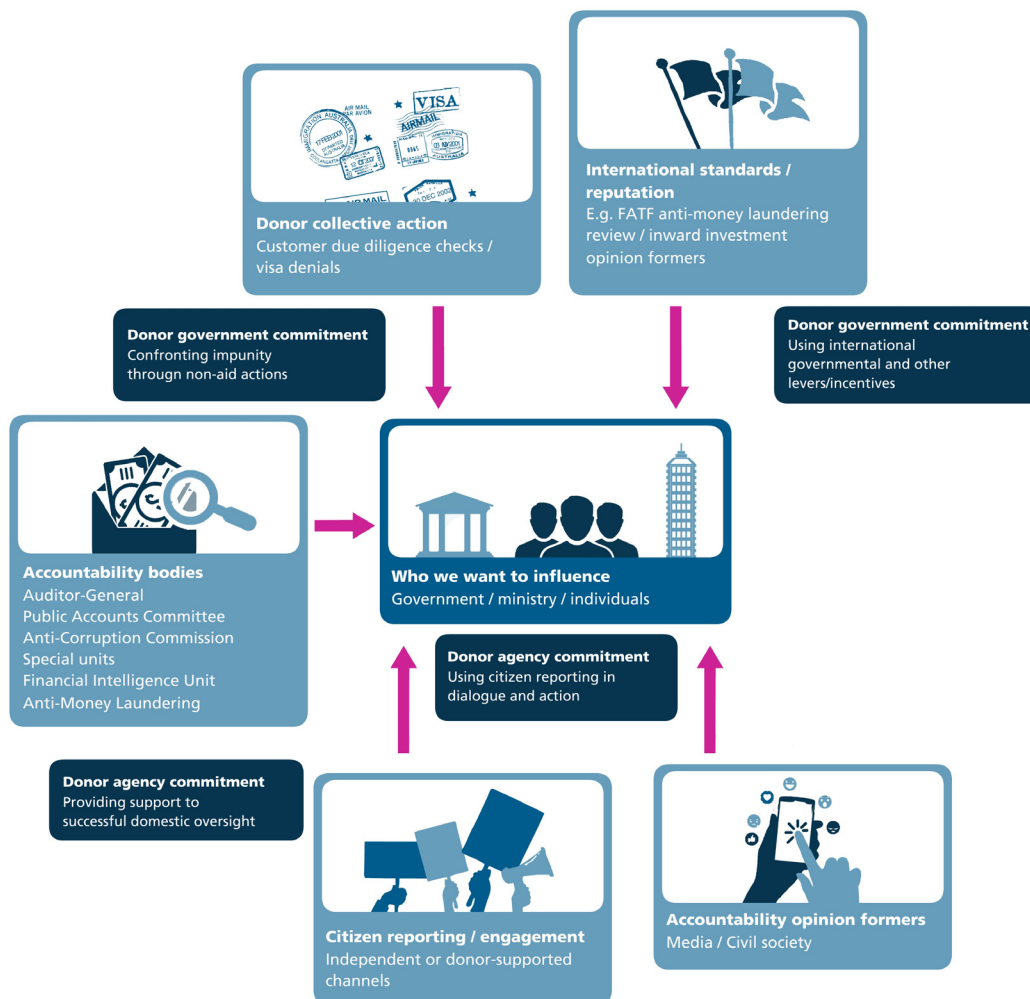
Figure 2 provides an overview of the vectors of pressure that donors should employ simultaneously.

At a practical level, there are a number of aspects that should be considered when developing anti-corruption programmes or interventions:

Planning/design stage

- What are other donors already doing? Proactively seek dialogue with development partners and other donors to understand how your programme/project fits into ongoing efforts.
- What are the fora in which these projects are coordinated?
- Ensure that SDC implementing partners understand the requirement to participate in donor coordination mechanisms.
- Assess whether implementing partners are likely to need support from the SCO to engage in coordination mechanisms.
- When joining efforts with other donors, still do a risk assessment of these efforts, even if these have been successfully implemented for a while, and ascertain whether the other donors have done their own separate risk assessment.

Figure 2. Strengthening the donor approach: Policy coherence for anti-corruption



Source: Mason (2020), used with permission.

- In multi-donor efforts, agree on joint learning and monitoring as well as evaluation processes.

Implementation stage

- Do SDC implementing partners have sufficient resources (time and staff) to attend donor coordination mechanisms?
- Does the SCO have sufficient resources (time and staff) to attend to donor coordination mechanisms? Does the SCO have the knowledge, skills and capacity to argue for the complex political and technical aspects of reforms? If the necessary resources are not available to undertake technical discussions with government and other donor counterparts, it may be worth considering whether it is possible to deploy an anti-corruption expert on an on-demand basis from headquarters to support SDC's efforts.
- To what extent are Swiss national policies and strategies guiding the engagement in anti-

corruption? Increasingly, as part of the debate around policy coherence for sustainable development and the importance of a **whole-of-government approach**, the attention is shifting to how practices and legislation in donor countries facilitate corruption in partner countries; for example, in the sheltering of monies gained from corrupt practices and other forms of economic crime. Challenges might be raised, by partner governments and other donors, as to how Switzerland reconciles its anti-corruption efforts with domestic policies that, despite progress in recent years, are still favourable to sheltering illegal money.

- Are the international legal and policy standards that the partner country has committed to taken into consideration and could they be used as arguments for reform?

Further reading

- Mason, Phil (2020) Twenty Years with Anti-Corruption, Part 10, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre