



INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) Project

Holistic Integrity Frameworks to Address Corruption

Corruption is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon which hinders development and undermines the security of societies. Combating corruption in all its forms requires a response that is holistic, multi-disciplinary, co-ordinated and goes beyond the traditional public-private sector divide.

In recognition of the adverse impact of corruption on development and security, nearly all Pacific Island countries (PICs) have either ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (see Figure 1). UNCAC is the only legally binding, global anti-corruption instrument. The Convention was adopted by the General Assembly in October 2003 and entered into force in December 2005. To date, there are 187 States parties to UNCAC, representing a ground breaking commitment to tackle corruption.¹

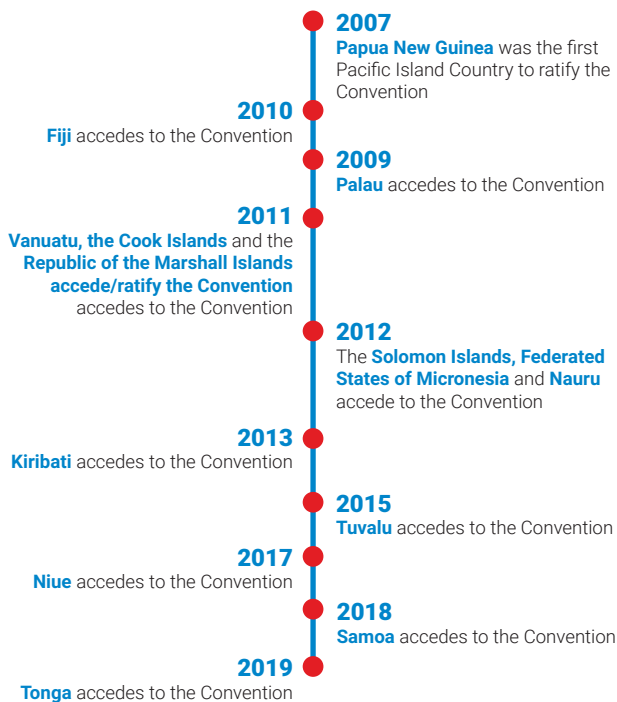
UNCAC has since facilitated Pacific State parties to adopt measures to prevent and fight corruption, such as the development of National Anti-Corruption Strategies (NACS), capacity-building of national integrity institutions and corruption prevention engagement of governments with non-State actors, including civil society, the private sector, youth groups and the media.

The 2030 Development Agenda includes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”², which makes an explicit link between corruption, peace and justice, and inclusive societies. In addition to being a critical goal in its own right, SDG 16 provides the necessary foundation for advancing the other SDGs, and is a key driver for societal empowerment. Its corruption-focused targets recognize that limited institutional capacity to deal with corruption undermines efforts for sustainable development and security.³

The Pacific’s Boe Declaration on Regional Security (Boe Declaration) articulates an ‘expanded concept of security’, which includes both human and environmental security.⁴ Its associated Action Plan highlights the importance of good governance and anti-corruption measures in creating an enabling environment for implementation. This implicitly recognizes that countries with greater institutional capacity and good governance are generally more resilient to shocks that pose a persistent threat to development, such as natural disasters or rapid demographic changes.

UNCAC articles 5 and 6 require States parties to develop and implement preventive anti-corruption policies and practices, as well as ensure the existence of a preventive anti-corruption body or bodies. UNCAC article 36 focuses on specialized authorities, notably the existence of a body or bodies or persons specialized in combating corruption through law enforcement. While UNCAC recognizes the need for implementation to be tailored to a country’s specific context, the Convention provides a framework (e.g. policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency

FIGURE 1: PICs’ ratification or accession to UNCAC



1 UNODC. 2020. Signature and Ratification Status (as of 17 January 2020) [online]. Available from: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/ratification-status.html>.

2 United Nations SDGs Knowledge Platform. 2019. Progress of Goal 16 in 2019. [online]. Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>.

3 Ibid.

4 Pacific Islands Form Secretariat. 2018. Boe Declaration on Regional Security. [online]. Available from: <https://www.forumsec.org/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>.

and accountability; such a body or bodies or persons be granted the necessary independence to carry out its or their functions effectively and free from any undue influence).⁵

Good practice appears to be the establishment of a multi-faceted, whole-of-society approach to preventing and fighting corruption that is tailored to a country's context. Such an approach can include the development and implementation of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS). A Strategy can include five key aspects: the drafting process; preliminary evaluation and diagnosis of corruption challenges; policy priorities and sequencing; implementation plan; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting (see Figure 2).⁶ Three PICs (PNG, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati) have already developed NACS (see Figure 3). These NACS are supported by Anti-Corruption Committees, coordinating mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the Strategies, but these Committees are often mandated to focus on national anti-corruption efforts also more broadly. Two PICs (Fiji and the Solomon Islands) have nearly successfully established Independent Commissions against Corruption,⁷ and two PICs are on their way; Papua New Guinea (PNG) voted unanimously to amend the Constitution to allow for an ICAC to be established and Tonga legislated to establish an ICAC.

Adopting a whole-of-society approach enables a State to address corruption in a holistic manner, also taking into consideration not only national but also the Pacific's regional concerns and priorities. One such step can be through the establishment of a NACS and National Coordinating Committee. Similarly, establishing transparent, accountable and inclusive national integrity institutions will bring the Pacific closer to achieving UNCAC and SDG 16, as well as the facilitating the broader implementation of the other SDGs. Doing so in an inclusive and transparent manner is likely to ensure buy-in from stakeholders, including non-State actors, and enable governments to draw in the wider community to support their national anti-corruption efforts.

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FIGURE 2: Whole-of-society approach for developing NACS

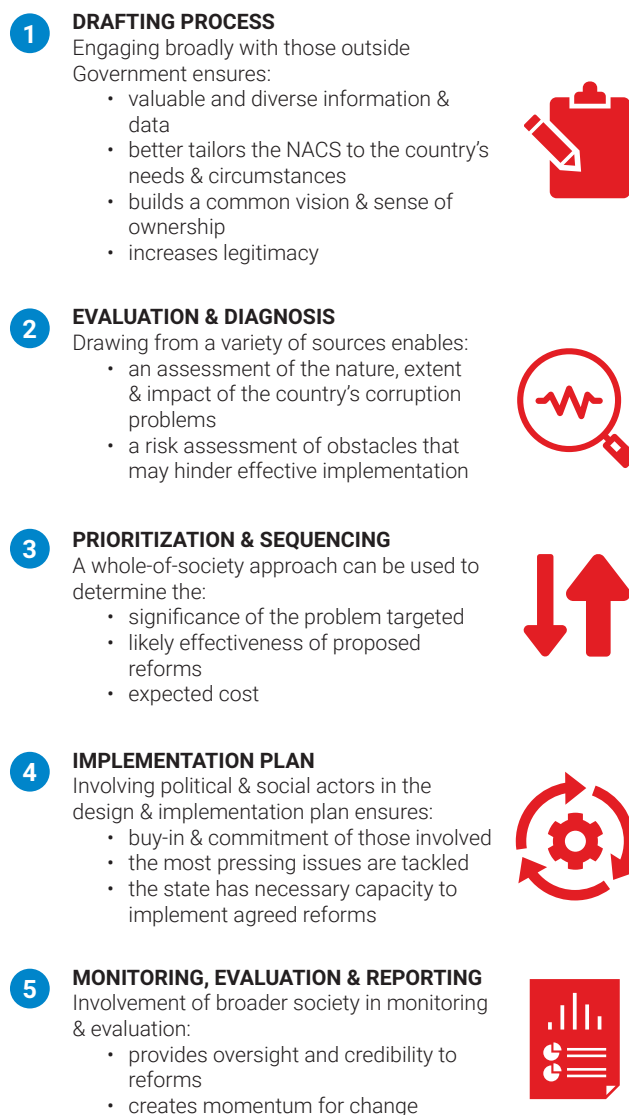
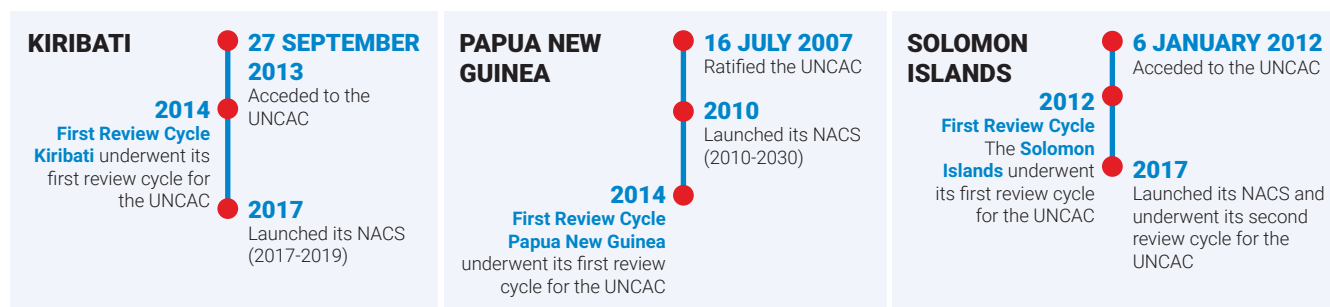


FIGURE 3: Development of Pacific NACS



5 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). 2004. United Nations Convention against Corruption. [online]. Available from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf.

6 Palicarsky, C. 2015. National Anti-Corruption Strategies: A Practical Guide. [online] Vienna, Austria: UNODC, for Development and Implementation. [online]. Available from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session6/SpecialEvents/2015_11_04_ConstantinePalicarskyUNODC.pdf.

7 Boussalis, C, Coan, T, Peiffer, C and Walton, G. 2018. Key trends from complaints to Fiji's Independent Commission Against Corruption. *Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre*. 31 January. [online]. Available: <https://devpolicy.org/key-trends-from-complaints-to-fijis-independent-commission-against-corruption-20180131/>; see also FICAC's website. [online]. Available from: <https://ficac.org.fj/>; [Solomon Islands' Anti-Corruption Act (2018) s. 7; RNZ. 2019. Solomons govt to launch anti-corruption commission this year. *Radio New Zealand*. 31 July [online]. Available from: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/395598/solomons-govt-to-launch-anti-corruption-commission-this-year>.

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