The National Integrity System methodology

The National Integrity System assessment approach provides a framework to analyse the robustness and effectiveness of a country’s institutions in preventing and fighting corruption. When the institutions and sectors that make up the National Integrity System work together effectively, like moving parts in a complex machine, they support each other and allow the anti-corruption system to run smoothly.

Conceptual Framework: Integrity Pillars

The National Integrity System is generally considered to comprise the following institutions: legislature, executive, judiciary, public sector, law enforcement agencies, supreme audit institution, electoral management body, ombudsman, anti-corruption agencies, political parties, media, civil society and business. These particular institutions may not constitute the entire integrity system in every country. Transparency International therefore allows scope for the methodology to be adapted to local circumstances, based on suggestions from a national advisory group, the lead researcher and the national chapter.

Each of the institutions and sectors included in the National Integrity System is assessed along three dimensions that are essential to its ability to prevent corruption:

• Its overall capacity in terms of resources and legal status, which underpins any effective institutional performance.

• Its internal governance regulations and practices, focusing on whether the institution is transparent, accountable and acts with integrity. These are all crucial elements to preventing the institution from engaging in corruption. Examples of internal governance mechanisms include access to information rules, whistleblower protection for those who report wrongdoing and measures to control the revolving door between the public and private sectors.

• The extent to which the institution fulfils its assigned role in the anti-corruption system, such as providing effective oversight of the government (for the legislature) or engaging with civil society and government in the fight against corruption (for the business sector).

Research Methodology: Institutional Assessment in Law and Practice

Each dimension is measured by a common set of indicators. The assessment examines both the legal framework and the actual institutional practice, thereby highlighting discrepancies between the formal provisions and reality on the ground. The assessment is primarily qualitative using a combination of primary and secondary data, including national legislation, secondary reports and research, and interviews with key experts. On the basis of the qualitative information gathered, in country research teams attribute a score to each indicator which are then aggregated to produce an overall score for each institution.1

The resulting country reports are both wide in scope, as they encompass more than 150 indicators, but also in-depth in their coverage, as each indicator section provides comprehensive qualitative information on the main issues covered by the respective indicator. The reports all include a set of key recommendations, which emerged from multi-stakeholder consultations as the main priority actions to strengthen the anti-corruption system in the respective country. For a detailed understanding of the national integrity system in a particular country, readers should refer to the National Integrity System reports published by Transparency International’s national chapters in the region.

1 Since there is no international board which reviews and calibrates all scores to ensure that the same information, methodology, and judgment process have been used across countries, we do not produce any country rankings and do not recommend using the raw scores for cross-country comparisons.