# Good practices for facilitators of anti-corruption Collective Action

Outcomes from a Peer Learning Workshop
in Basel, Switzerland

**LUCIE BINDER | DECEMBER 2023**

## 1. Introduction

The Basel Institute was delighted to host its fellow Siemens Integrity Partners and other facilitators of Collective Action in Basel in June 2023, to continue the discussion on sharing and implementing best practice in anti-corruption Collective Action initiatives. The Basel Institute hosted a similar event in 2018, as well as a series of online workshops in 2020.

The 2023 workshop focused on reviewing themes that are common to organisations that support and facilitate anti-corruption Collective Action initiatives, such as:

→   **identifying** strategies for engaging stakeholders in new or expanding initiatives;

→   **ensuring** they are sustainable and achieve their goals;

→   **measuring** results and evaluating effectiveness.

We welcomed over 30 participants, representing chapters of Transparency International, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN), Fight Against Facilitation Payments Initiative (FAFPI), Alliance for Integrity, The Ethics Institute, Vienna University of Economics and Business, University of Washington School of Law and The Wolfsberg Group.

> *"Collective Action is an approach that has the potential to help solve some of the most intrinsic problems affecting society."*
> — Peter Maurer, President of the Board of the Basel Institute on Governance, during his introductory presentation at the workshop

Over a day and a half, workshop participants discussed topics in small groups and plenary sessions with the overarching aim of identifying good practices for the facilitation of Collective Action initiatives. The key messages and learnings from these sessions are detailed in this report, supplemented with additional analysis from the Basel Institute.

### 1.1 The role of the facilitator in Collective Action

> *"Facilitators act as process guides and create a balance between ensuring individual participation and producing meaningful results."*
> — The International Association of Facilitators

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[1]Integrity Partners are organisations that receive funding under the Siemens Integrity Initiative.

Facilitators play a critical role in:

i.      establishing an initiative and securing funding for it,
ii.     supporting or leading operations;
iii.    monitoring progress and evaluating impact.

Figure 1 below was developed collaboratively by participants at the 4th International Collective Action Conference in 2022, and was available to the Integrity Partner workshop participants as part of the event programme. It summarises the roles different actors in initiatives can play.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

**ENGAGE**
… with other industry players on compliance and corruption prevention

… with governments to co-develop anti-corruption frameworks and monitoring systems

… with civil society for expertise in developing an initiative

**COMMIT**
… to harmonise and raise business integrity through tailored anti-corruption standards, tools and procedures

… to develop a trust-based dialogue to share experiences, struggles and good practices

… to provide resources to develop and sustain initiatives

**DRIVE**
… the implementation of standards and commitments through self-assessment, monitoring and certification

… greater impact by expanding initiatives to supply chains, SMEs, competitors and others

… and consider expanding initiatives to broader ESG topics such as human rights

## PUBLIC SECTOR

**CONSULT**
… with the private sector through institutionalised dialogue platforms

… with other government entities and experts on the benefits of Collective Action

… international organisations to streamline anti-corruption strategies with international guidelines

**INCENTIVISE**
… companies to engage in corruption prevention / Collective Action initiatives for a better investment climate

… companies to invest in compliance and Collective Action

… the implementation of industry standards by calling for robust monitoring mechanisms

**ENGAGE**
… and demonstrate leadership by actively participating in Collective Action

… to develop anti-corruption tools such as Integrity Pacts, High Level Reporting Mechanisms and public-private integrity initiatives

… and establish Collective Action as the go-to approach for collaborating with the private sector

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACADEMIA

**FACILITATE**
… knowledge sharing between companies and other stakeholders

… and help set up governance structures for initiatives

… communication between peers by sanitising and filtering information to alleviate antitrust concerns

**PROVIDE EXPERTISE AND CONDUCT RESEARCH**
… on best practices in other contexts

… on indicators for measuring the effectiveness of initiatives and standards

… to help develop tailored standards, policies and guidelines

**MONITOR**
… progress through tailored assessments

… and implement sanctions in cases of non-compliance
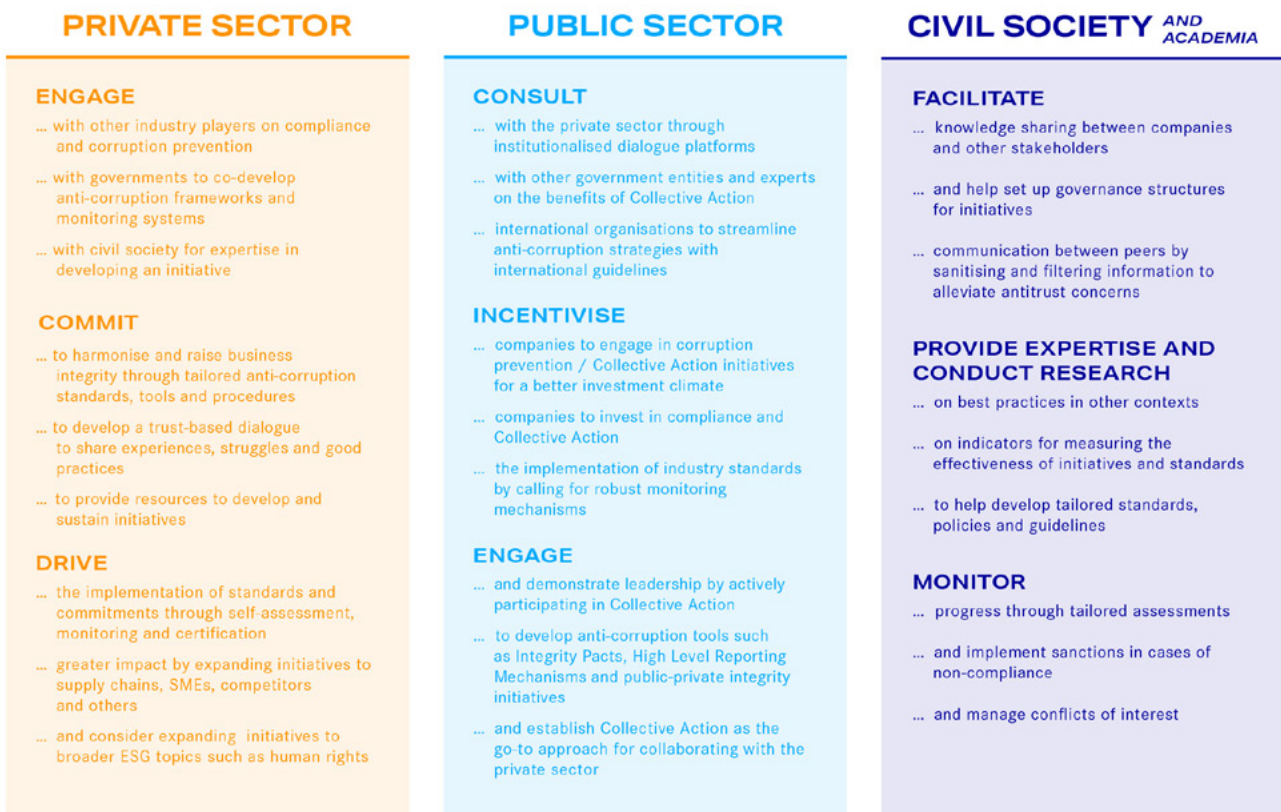
… and manage conflicts of interest

Figure 1: Anti-corruption Collective Action: what stakeholder groups can bring

At this year's workshop, participants focused primarily on themes under i) **establishing and securing funding** for Collective Action initiatives, and iii) **monitoring progress and evaluating their impact**. The good practices identified during their discussions are detailed below.

## 2. Establishing a Collective Action initiative and securing funding for it

In many ways, establishing a Collective Action initiative is a lot like initiating a project. Some Collective Action initiatives have defined start and end dates, as well as ring-fenced funding. Other initiatives may have developed in a less planned way and/or be envisaged as ongoing or even permanent endeavours. Regardless of what stage of development an initiative is at, participants noted that adopting some of the tools and methodologies used in project management can be a helpful way of planning and organising the work required to support and facilitate them.

### 2.2. Specify objects

> *"What most initiatives have in common is that they are developed and implemented through collaborative activities with the explicit support of the various stakeholders. The level of active engagement by the stakeholders may vary according to the type of initiative and the context. In every case, though, the aim is to work towards solutions to a specific problem, identify best practices, or address an agreed set of issues."*
>
> — 4th International Collective Action Conference Report

At the heart of every Collective Action initiative is the **ultimate goal of creating a clean, fair and sustainable business environment.** Underneath that goal, an initiative usually has specific, achievable objectives that address a common problem or aim. Some initiatives will start with an already clearly defined issue and a small group of stakeholders who can work together to address it.

Others will be broader, beginning with an idea such as improving business integrity in a specific sector or industry. In these latter cases, workshop participants empha-sised the importance of narrowing down the focus from a broader idea onto specific topics or issues, regions and/or companies. This creates a focus for activities and often also provides access to pre-existing networks of organisations or other stakeholders that can be used for support and resources.

→ **Example**

The Transparency International chapter in Bulgaria has a broad remit to improve business integrity. However, it has decided to focus on building Collective Action initiatives with companies of different sizes in the health and energy sectors, where existing knowledge of anti-corruption measures can vary significantly between organisations of different sizes and maturity. This focus has helped TI Bulgaria to: i) build on existing professional networks to facilitate communication and cooperation; ii) focus first on educating companies with less knowledge of what compliance and anti-corruption work mean in practice, before delving into more complex topics.

💡 **Idea**

A **Theory of Change** is a visualisation and explanation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Developing a Theory of Change for a new or ongoing Collective Action initiative can be an effective way to focus efforts on the desired outcomes, and therefore to prioritise activities that will be most effective in achieving these outcomes whilst de-prioritising other work.

## 2.3. Identify stakeholders

**Defining features of a Collective Action initiative are private-sector involvement and a business focus** – this is what differentiates them from other kinds of multi-stakeholder initiatives. Additionally, government representatives and civil society organisations can be actively involved. Together, these three sectors often constitute the *active stakeholders*, whose direct involvement in co-operating with each other and "doing the work" can determine the success or failure of an initiative. They are also considered the *participants* in an initiative.

*Passive stakeholders* are those who have an interest in, or influence upon, an initiative, but are not directly involved in it. These may be those who ultimately

benefit, such as the general public. It may also be the government of a country where the initiative is based, if not directly involved in the initiative, which has significant influence on macro-environmental factors like business freedoms and legal frameworks.

Either at the planning stage for a new initiative, or as part of a review of an established one, facilitators should seek to explicitly identify the active and passive stakeholders targeted by the Collective Action initiative. In doing so, a granular approach was suggested during the workshop. It isn't enough to identify the "private sector". Exactly which companies in this sector will the initiative target? For example, will it be businesses of all sizes, or just small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a particular industry? Which government agencies or individual champions do you need to get support from?

In the same way as specifying objectives, stakeholder identification enables facilitators and participants to prioritise – and de-prioritise – work and resources in support of an initiative's overall aim.

## 2.4. Analyse context

Understanding the contexts in which organisations operate is important for identifying and creating **incentives** for their involvement in Collective Action. **Those facilitating initiatives should seek to explicitly identify – and then put in place strategies to promote or address – the incentives and limitations for stakeholders to participate.**

→ **Example**

Multiple workshop participants spoke about the importance of targeting younger people in educational initiatives in order to train the next generation of leaders. This contributes to their overall aim to "normalise" Collective Action as an approach for tackling corruption and other pressing social issues. The OECD promotes knowledge of international standards and practices in the area of anti-corruption and integrity for competitiveness in academic curricula. Transparency International Bulgaria has worked with Sofia University to get business integrity on the curriculum of the Masters in Business programme.

Through its flagship certificate programme, the International Anti-Corruption Academy promotes the practical implementation of Collective Action. Among UNODC's five Collective Action projects which aim to reduce corruption, one focuses on "Global Integrity Education".

Trust takes a long time to build, especially between companies that normally act as competitors, or between the private and public sectors. Building trust between participants in a Collective Action initiative is an important long-term aim. However in the shorter term, facilitators can focus on the common incentives that make organisations want to engage in an initiative, even if they don't fully trust those sitting alongside them.

For example, when targeting the private sector, think about what specific reasons companies might have to join an initiative:

> ▪ Would it improve their **reputation** following an industry scandal? If so, how will you build on the momentum created by this scandal and what will you do to support "reputation building" for participating companies while safeguarding the reputation of the whole initiative?

> ▪ Would it provide companies with access to **networks of peers** who can help them to improve their understanding of compliance legis lation and strengthen their compliance programmes? If so, how will you facilitate ongoing online and in-person communication and networking between participants, ensuring they feel confident to discuss challenging topics in a safe and, when necessary, confidential space?

On the other hand, what might hinder or even prevent a company from participating, and how will you overcome these barriers?

> ▪ In some countries, participation in non-government led initiatives might attract the wrong kind of attention from local or national authorities. What will you do to garner support from the government? Or if that's not possible, to demonstrate that Collective Action can be beneficial for all parties and shouldn't be considered a threat to the establishment?

> ▪ If an initiative will focus on supporting micro businesses or SMEs, how will you make sure that you provide added value to businesses with limited resources and shifting priorities?

→ **Example**

Meeting complex compliance standards can feel like an overwhelming task for SMEs. The Ethics Institute in South Africa has found that SMEs are incentivised to work with them in Collective Action when they re-frame the conversation from one that revolves around a company's legal responsibilities to one that focusses on their human rights. In doing so, The Ethics Institute is communicating the message that ensuring integrity in a business can be a benefit rather than a burden, and it's therefore something worthwhile to invest in.

Even in larger companies, most are in the early stages of acknowledging that corruption is a human rights issue. In practical terms, this means that they often deal with corruption and human rights from different departments. Workshop participants noted that Collective Action can be a useful way to get departments within and between larger companies to talk to each other, and to identify synergies in plans and approaches.

An important part of analysing and responding to context is to **consider the communication styles and methods that will be most meaningful and attractive to participants**. Try to keep language straightforward and clear, avoiding the use of terminology that might be widely used in civil society or academia, but is not well understood beyond these sectors.

Making sure that stories of success in improving business integrity are shared between members of a Collective Action initiative can be very motivating for everyone. It's also important to communicate "bite-size" goals and achievements rather than continuously making participants work towards bigger goals that can feel overwhelming.

→ **Example**

The Fight Against Facilitation Payments Initiative (FAFPI) is a business-led Collective Action leading the fight against demands for facilitation payments. Since they put a specific focus on attracting companies to join their initiative, they use business-friendly language and try to avoid using terminology that might be common in the anti-corruption space but is not common in the private sector.

Similarly, the Transparency International chapter in Argentina chooses to refer to "improving business integrity" rather than "fighting corruption", which can be perceived as an undesirable topic for companies and governments to get involved with, even if the aims are positive and remain the same.

**2.5.  Build the business case**

Completing the three steps of specifying objectives, identifying stakeholders, and analysing – and responding to – context, will enable facilitators to build the business case (i.e. the rationale) for a Collective Action initiative. This in turn can be used to attract both participants and funding.

Sometimes participants in an initiative will bring funding with them; e.g. participating companies will each make small contributions to fund facilitator support. In other instances, external donor support is sought. Regardless of the funding model, the workshop participants emphasised that:

i) Facilitators need to demonstrate to funders and donors how the Collective Action activities they are supporting are creating impact in improving business integrity. For this, a Theory of Change model can be an important visualisation tool, as well as a guide for which data to collect for monitoring progress and evaluating impact;

ii) Facilitators need to demonstrate the added value of their expertise in Collective Action. Facilitators have a critical role to play in the success of Collective Action initiatives and therefore need to manage expectations on what they can provide and at what cost.

## 3.  Monitoring progress and evaluating impact

In project management, monitoring progress and interim results takes place during a project, whereas evaluations are held at important milestones and the end of a project. For ongoing Collective Action initiatives, a similar process can be adopted: monitoring should be ongoing, whereas evaluation can be a periodic exercise. During the workshop, participants identified the following tips for good practice in monitoring and evaluating Collective Action:

Collect numerical data to support monitoring, but don't forget to capture stories when evaluating outcomes and impact – these are where the powerful examples of change are really demonstrated.

Even if they're estimates, capturing data on savings that companies can make (e.g. by not making facilitation payments) can be really powerful for attracting participants to a Collective Action initiative.

Don't overburden participants with requests for information: be clear about which data you want to collect and why, and do it periodically.

There's often tension between confidentiality and transparency in collecting and processing data, but even when you can't share data externally, you can use it to inform learning internally.

Adjust your metrics to the context and evolution of initiatives, and don't be afraid to define longer-term impact – perhaps through the creation of a Theory of Change – even if the role your initiative will play in creating that change will have limitations.

Don't set up monitoring processes that are beyond the capacity of facilitators or participants to deliver.

Don't overcomplicate or overuse project management or monitoring & evaluation terminology with participants.

Make your goals achievable and specific: we're all trying to achieve wider societal goals in the long term, but what are the specific changes you're targeting in the short to medium term?

More guidance on monitoring and evaluation can be found in the summary of the previous Integrity Partner Workshop, held as a series of webinars in 2020.

## 4. Learning from each other

The B20 Collective Action Hub is an important resource for learning and collaboration, especially for facilitators of Collective Action. It includes an open database of known anti-corruption Collective Action initiatives around the world. Users can search for initiatives by country and sector.

If you know of an initiative not featured in the database that you think should be added, please contact the free Helpdesk. The Helpdesk, hosted by the Basel Institute, can also be used for any queries or technical assistance related to Collective Action.

## Acknowledgements

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