



Putting business integrity on the global agenda

Report from the 5th International Collective
Action Conference

November 2024

About this report

The Basel Institute on Governance, as the host of the International Collective Action Conference series and Collective Action Awards, thanks the Siemens Integrity Initiative for supporting and providing funding for the conference's 5th edition, as well as all speakers and breakout session facilitating organisations. The full list of presenters and sessions can be found on conference pages of the [B20 Collective Action Hub](#).

This conference report was jointly prepared by the Private Sector, Communications and Visual Design teams at the Basel Institute on Governance.

Graphic recording illustrations: Tetyana Kalyuzhna, Basel Institute on Governance.

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The Collective Action community convenes in Basel

The 2024 International Collective Action Conference in Basel, Switzerland, represented another significant milestone in promoting multi-stakeholder approaches for achieving business integrity.

On 24 and 25 June, the Basel Institute on Governance, with the support of the Siemens Integrity Initiative, welcomed around 200 people from around the world for the fifth edition of the conference. It built on the success of four predecessor conferences since 2014, as well as two regional Collective Action Forums in 2023, in Southern Africa and Asia Pacific.

Five panel discussions, three interactive breakout sessions and multiple networking opportunities, including an exhibition, offered many occasions for sharing experiences and best practices in anti-corruption Collective Action.



Summary of conference participation

The overarching aim of the conference was to promote the development of responsible and ethical business practices through anti-corruption Collective Action. Collective Action is a private sector focused multi-stakeholder approach for achieving a variety of business integrity goals.



Peter Maurer, President of the Board of the Basel Institute, opened the 5th International Collective Action Conference 2024 with an inspiring speech about global challenges related to corruption and the role of Collective Action in addressing them. The recording of his keynote address is available on [YouTube](#).

“Collective Action has shifted the balance from often quite ‘mechanical’ compliance practice to opening a space for agreement on concrete steps forward. It anchors ethical behaviour and compliance with norms in specific contexts and times, and around concrete action plans. It is a mobilising force, giving agency to multiple stakeholders.”

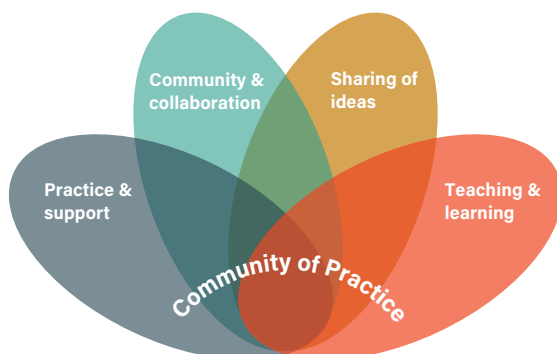
– Peter Maurer, President of the Board of the Basel Institute

Building communities of practice

A key theme of this year’s conference, raised by speakers and participants throughout the entire event, was the importance of building local, regional and international **communities of practice**.

These communities bring together different constellations of people and organisations interested in the Collective Action approach to improve skills, develop joint solutions and advance knowledge about how to make initiatives effective in different contexts.

Indeed, it was repeatedly emphasised during the event that taking on the complex phenomenon of corruption requires targeted efforts from different stakeholders. **These efforts are more impactful when people and organisations genuinely cooperate, breaking down silos** between the private and public sectors, as well as between industry players, to openly discuss issues and find solutions to problems of business integrity.



Communities of Practice, [Centre for Teaching and Learning, Queen's University](#) (used with permission)

“We are not alone, it is clear – there are many good people doing good things – ever since we started working in Collective Action, we have connected with a great community.”

– Oscar Caipo Ricci, President of the Board of Directors, Empresarios por la Integridad, Peru

The role of the public sector in improving business integrity goes beyond enforcement



Julia Fromholz from the OECD Anti-Corruption Division giving a lightning talk on how anti-corruption Collective Action is becoming an established norm. The recording of her talk is available on [YouTube](#).

“Fostering and sustaining Collective Action is a challenge. It is crucial to take stock, assess what has been successful, and to disseminate best practices.”

– Julia Fromholz, Head of the Anti-Corruption Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Collective Action is now endorsed by multiple international organisations as an effective method for countries to use to improve business integrity in their jurisdictions. For example, the [2021 OECD Anti-Bribery Recommendation](#) recommends that member countries “consider fostering, facilitating, engaging, or participating in anti-bribery collective action initiatives with private and public sector representatives, as well as civil society organisations, aiming to address foreign bribery and bribe solicitation”. This is consistent with the recommendations for multinational enterprises in the [OECD Guidelines for](#)

[Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct](#), updated in 2023.



Session 1 on regulatory and normative approaches in this new era for Collective Action: Isabelle Jégouzo, French Anti-Corruption Agency (AFA); Brooke Stearns Lawson, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); Marcelo Pontes Vianna, Office of the Comptroller General of Brazil; Salifu Koray, Ghana Revenue Authority; moderated by Xiaohong Li, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The session recording is available on [YouTube](#).

Within the context of growing engagement from governments, panellists in the conference’s opening session agreed that the public sector’s role in improving business integrity goes beyond enforcing laws and regulations and sanctioning violations.

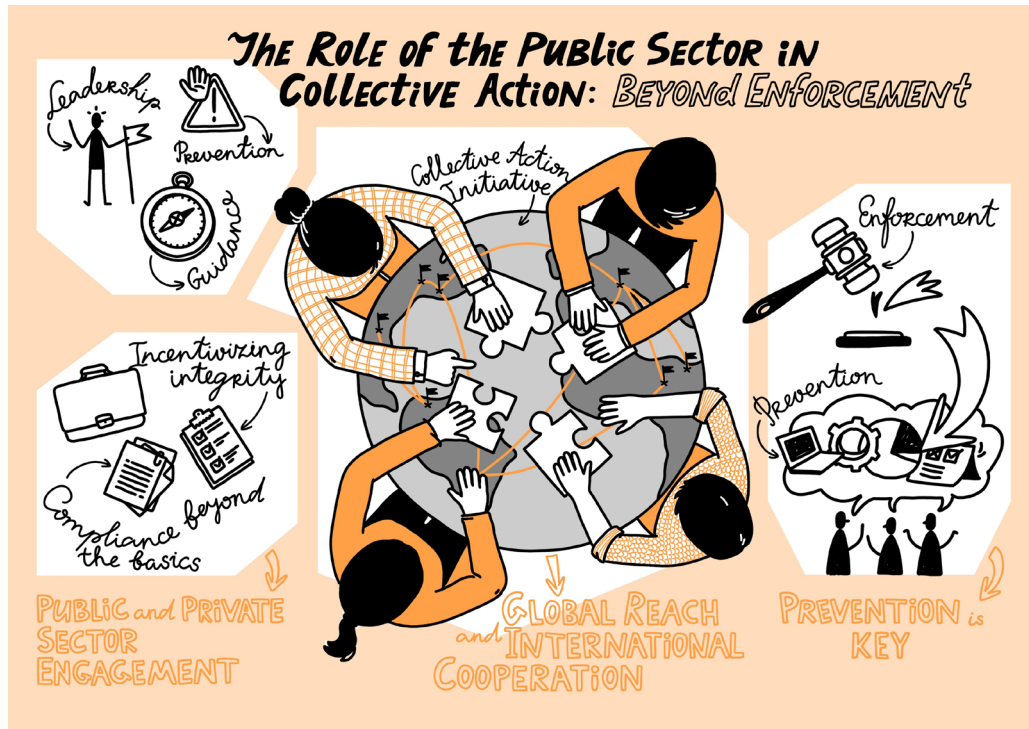
Governments also play a key role in prevention, by incentivising companies and providing guidance on anti-corruption and integrity compliance processes.

To develop and facilitate the dissemination of this guidance, **numerous governments have already embraced Collective Action in their national anti-corruption strategies** and other policies.

“Dealing with malpractice after it has occurred is difficult – prevention is a much more effective approach.”

– Salifu Koray, Chief Revenue Officer, Ghana Revenue Authority

Beyond national actions, governments also have the opportunity to collaborate to fight transnational corruption and organised crime. International communities of practice such as the Network of Corruption Prevention Authorities (NCPA), currently chaired by the French Anti-Corruption Agency, are innovative instruments to this end.



Collective Action initiatives continue to evolve to strengthen business integrity

“Initiatives start small but they can grow and their impact will grow in proportion.”

– Lisa K. Miller, Head, Integrity Compliance, Integrity Vice Presidency, World Bank Group

Collective Action initiatives are diverse, be it in terms of industry focus, level of maturity, number and type of participating stakeholders, specific goals or geographic scope. But there are also certain aspects that individual initiatives have in common that make them part of a broader Collective Action community:

- Private sector focus

- Overall aim of building and strengthening industry or country integrity standards
- Need to secure trust among participants
- Sustained commitment to achieve tangible impact



Session 2 on the evolution and variety of Collective Action initiatives: Lisa K. Miller, World Bank Group; Jonas Søberg Erlandsen, Maritime Anti-Corruption Network; Prof Deon Rossouw, Banknote Ethics Initiative; Giorgio Melega, Tenova S.p.A./Metals Technology Initiative; moderated by Scarlet Wannewetsch, Basel Institute on Governance. The session recording is available on [YouTube](#).

Collective Action is key to **increasing the impact and credibility of individual company actions, enhancing competitiveness, levelling the playing field** between businesses and providing transparency – all factors which are critical for meeting heightened integrity expectations from customers and investors. What still remains a challenge is to translate these collaborative efforts into tangible actions that are well articulated to help attract new stakeholders.

Indeed, common needs to build capacity, strengthen incentives for engagement and increase visibility towards growing and future-proofing Collective Action initiatives were identified during the conference.

To address these needs, schemes such as the Basel Institute on Governance's Collective Action Mentoring Programme can help initiatives develop the skill sets of facilitators and participants and attract new members. They also create a positive domino effect as previous mentees start to mentor new organisations.



Effective compliance across supply chains is a shared responsibility



Session 3 on assessing the effectiveness of compliance efforts: Anke Struckmeier-Eickenberg, METRO AG/Alliance for Integrity, Vibeke Lyssand Leirvag, Felicia Design/Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand; Rafael Mendes Gomes, Novonor/OEC Engineering and Construction; Ayotola Jagun, Oando Plc; moderated by Vanessa Hans, Basel Institute on Governance. The session recording is available on [YouTube](#).

The conference provided the opportunity for representatives of different-sized companies operating in diverse environments to exchange their respective experiences on measuring the impact of compliance efforts. **They agreed that anti-corruption compliance is an ongoing process requiring continuous effort.** While significant investments are required to implement mature compliance programmes, the benefits eventually outweigh the costs.

However, it needs to be recognised that many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have limited knowledge and resources for establishing an effective compliance programme. And yet, **SMEs need to be brought on board**, as they represent a critical part of the economy and are often part of wider supply chains. Collective Action can help make the voices of SMEs heard and build their capacity, which will allow them to access global supply chains and new markets.

“First, Collective Action gives SMEs a voice. It gives them a platform and a network where they can communicate their challenges. And second, being in a collective network gives SMEs access to tools and opportunities.” – Anke Struckmeier-Eickenberg, Head of Compliance, METRO AG and Chair of the Steering Committee of Alliance for Integrity

No matter the size of the business, education and training on compliance are essential, from top to middle management and outwards. **Training needs to address mindsets that undermine compliance and be adapted to different cultural contexts.** Larger companies need to ensure their smaller supply chain partners are educated on compliance and its benefits. And academia also plays a key role in fostering ethics and integrity from the ground up and enabling the younger generation.

Working together by exchanging experiences, communicating best practices, and sharing toolkits is vital. In working with government and civil society, the private sector can contribute to making sure compliance programmes are actually effective for both larger corporations and SMEs and help create an enabling environment for responsible business conduct.

“Companies can play a part in changing the narrative.”

– Ayotola Jagun, Chief Compliance Officer and Company Secretary, Oando Plc

Communities of practice provide a “torch in the dark”

“The biggest challenge that we faced was the feeling of isolation...”

– Noah Arshinoff, Director, Canadian Centre of Excellence for Anti-Corruption

Effective Collective Action involves not just the private and public sectors, but also other stakeholders such as civil society organisations (CSOs) and academia. CSOs typically play a role in initiating, facilitating and engaging in Collective Action initiatives to help raise awareness and build bridges between different sectors



François Valérien, Chair of Transparency International, in his lightning talk on the role of civil society in Collective Action. The recording of his talk is available on [YouTube](#).

and stakeholders. Acting as neutral facilitators or monitors, their presence brings credibility and accountability to the initiatives.

In his powerful lightning talk, François Valérien, Chair of Transparency International, highlighted the **crucial role CSOs play in advancing global anti-corruption efforts**. He also stressed the need to ensure the utmost respect for the protection of whistleblowers and other anti-corruption advocates.

Four members of the Basel Institute’s [Collective Action Mentoring Programme](#) and its global community of participating organisations shared their experiences of leveraging the power of a group to overcome challenges collectively.

The Mentoring Programme offers tailored one-on-one mentoring to CSOs and also creates dedicated spaces for regular exchanges in order to build sustainable and successful initiatives.



Session 4 on building a community of practice for Collective Action: Noah Arshinoff, Canadian Centre of Excellence for Anti-Corruption; Ken Graversen, Fight against Facilitation Payments Initiative (FAFPI); Joe Ching’ani, CoST Infrastructure Transparency Initiative Malawi; Oscar Caipo Ricci, Empresarios por la Integridad (Entrepreneurs for Integrity); moderated by Liza Young, Basel Institute on Governance. The session recording is available on [YouTube](#).

The feeling of isolation as anti-corruption facilitators was among the most prominent common challenges mentioned. Regional or international communities of practice, such as the network of Collective Action mentees, enable individuals and organisations to **come out of their isolation and become part of a network of like-minded leaders** outside of their usual geographic or thematic ‘bubble.’

They provide a space for sharing best practices and exchanging knowledge on crucial topics such as setting up a sustainable governance structure, tailoring funding models or communicating impact. Network members can support each other, learn from peers and get exposed to different models of Collective Action.

“The mentoring programme has been like a torch in the dark for us.”

– Joe Ching’ani, Chairperson of the Multi-Stakeholder Group, CoST
Infrastructure Transparency Initiative Malawi



Financial institutions and investors have a key role in incentivising business integrity

“It’s in everyone’s interest that funds reach the intended interventions and beneficiaries.”

– Cristina Ritter, Head of Anticorruption and Governance, United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)

Representatives of development finance institutions (DFIs) and other investors acknowledged the importance of addressing corruption risks in their portfolios, as well as **incentivising improved business integrity by setting clear expectations** for organisations and markets they invest in.

Norges Bank Investment Management, for instance, launched a set of indicators with the Basel Institute on Governance that can be considered by companies when reporting on the effectiveness of their anti-corruption efforts to external stakeholders. Such voluntary disclosures could also be useful to build trust with external stakeholders, mitigate reputational risk and identify best practices.

DFIs can also play an essential role in providing capacity building where integrity compliance systems need to be strengthened. In fact, in order to harmonise approaches to investigation and sanctioning processes, six Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) have already come together in a Collective Action effort to develop the General Principles for Business Integrity Programmes.

“Companies start realising that taking steps towards business integrity is good business practice in general – not just for having sanctions lifted and getting back into the game.”

– John Versantvoort, Head of the Office of Anticorruption and Integrity, Asian Development Bank



Session 5 on incentives for business integrity and the role development finance institutions and investors can play: John Versantvoort, Asian Development Bank; Berna Gungenci Kilincoglu, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Huma Yusuf, British International Investment; Caroline Eriksen, Norges Bank Investment Management; moderated by Cristina Ritter, UNGC. The session recording is available on [YouTube](#).

Supporting peer learning

Three interactive breakout sessions

Three interactive breakout sessions allowed conference participants to explore specific topics in greater depth and engage in smaller groups.

- **Good governance: leveraging Collective Action and ESG**
— moderated by Transparency International
- **Human rights and anti-corruption: Collective Action as a strategy for closer cooperation**
— moderated by Alliance for Integrity
- **Communicating impact of Collective Action initiatives**
— moderated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)

All sessions saw engaging participation with attendees eager to share knowledge and learn from each other.



18 posters

An exhibition with informative posters developed by the facilitators of 18 Collective Action initiatives was accessible to participants throughout the conference. It showcased the depth and variety of current approaches and served as inspiration to others.

Representatives of the initiatives were available during breaks in the main programme to take questions from delegates.



International Collective Action Awards 2024

A highlight of the conference was the ceremony for the prestigious International Anti-Corruption Collective Action Awards, acknowledging and celebrating organisations and initiatives that have demonstrated exceptional outcomes, emerging best practices and innovative strategies in confronting corruption to improve business integrity.



Awards were presented in two categories: the Outstanding Achievement in Collective Action Award – renamed the Gretta Fenner Outstanding Achievement in Collective Action Award in memory of the Basel Institute's late Managing Director, who was a passionate champion of Collective Action approaches and initiatives over the years – and the Inspirational Newcomer Award.

A total of 23 initiatives were nominated, out of which three finalists were shortlisted for each of the two categories. They were reviewed by an expert jury consisting of a senior member of the Basel Institute and three leading figures in the anti-corruption Collective Action community, before an online public vote by around 1,700 people decided on the winners.

The Gretta Fenner Outstanding Achievement in Collective Action Award went to the Agribusiness Anti-Corruption Collective Action in Brazil, which aims to enhance integrity within Brazil's agribusiness sector and its supply chain.

The Inspirational Newcomer Award for organisations and initiatives active in the field of Collective Action for less than two years was presented to the Transparency 100% Movement of the UN Global Compact Network Brazil. This initiative encourages companies in Brazil to commit to five ambitious transparency goals that go beyond the legal requirements.



Jury members Gilbert Sendugwa, Senior Regional Manager for Africa at the CoST Infrastructure Transparency Initiative, and Phrommet Bencharongkit of the Thai Private Sector Collective Action Against Corruption (Thai CAC), both previous regional award winners, announcing the winners of the 2024 International Anti-Corruption Collective Action Awards.



Shawn Teixeira, Siemens Integrity Initiative; Chantal Castro, Global Compact Network Brazil; Ana Luiza Aranha, UN Global Compact; Brenda Franco, Global Compact Network Brazil; Cristina Ritter, UN Global Compact. Representatives from the UN Global Compact Network received the awards on behalf of the two initiatives.

For more information on the awards and the 2024 finalists, check out the [blog](#) and the [Awards page](#) on the B20 Collective Action hub and explore more Collective Action initiatives in the [database](#). The recording of the awards ceremony is also available on [YouTube](#).

Looking ahead: joining forces to amplify the impact of Collective Action in improving business integrity

It is when courageous people from all over the world and from different stakeholder groups come together and contribute their different perspectives on common issues that silos start breaking down and the power of many can be leveraged.

The 5th International Collective Action Conference offered 1.5 days of engaged discussion between thought-leaders across different sectors on cross-cutting Collective Action themes. It contributed to increasing the prominence of the approach as an effective way to strengthen business integrity and tackle corruption globally.

Check out the [conference page](#) of the B20 Collective Action Hub and the [conference playlist on YouTube](#) for more impressions from the conference, including photos and session recordings.

Support from the Siemens Integrity Initiative over many years has been instrumental in moving the concept of Collective Action forward. Important efforts such as the International Collective Action Conference series have been made possible thanks to funding from the initiative.

“Collective Action has gained momentum on the global policy stage as well as at grassroots level, among companies large and small. It’s now up to new generations of committed



Sabine Zindera from the Siemens Integrity Initiative pointing out open access platforms such as the B20 Collective Action Hub as important knowledge bases.

professionals across sectors to drive forward Collective Action initiatives and approaches in order to address the evolving challenges of future business markets.”

– Sabine Zindera, former Vice President, Legal and Compliance at Siemens.

There are many ways to **join and engage with the global network of Collective Action practitioners** from all sectors!

- Explore the [B20 Collective Action Hub](#) to learn about different Collective Action tools and approaches to raise standards of governance and address corruption, consult relevant publications, or discover over 300 Collective Action initiatives in different sectors and industries worldwide in the available initiatives database. The World Bank Group’s Integrity Compliance Knowledge Sharing Platform is another great resource.
- Contact the Basel Institute’s [helpdesk](#) with questions on any aspect of anti-corruption Collective Action and get free advice within 10 days!
- Catch up with the webinar “[Leveraging Collective Action and business integrity tools: From theory to practice](#)”, which was held on 19 September 2024 as a follow-up to this year’s International Collective Action Conference.
- Enrol in the new interactive [eLearning course](#) on anti-corruption Collective Action on our online learning platform [Basel LEARN](#). Develop your own roadmap and learn about the roles of businesses, government and civil society in Collective Action along the way. The course is free and self-paced!

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With the support of the Siemens Integrity Initiative