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Mapping and strengthening the evidence base for anti-corruption Collective Action

Models, metrics and insights

Lucie Binder | Joseph Pozsgai-Alvarez | Giovanna Rodriguez-Garcia | June 2025

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About this Working Paper

This Working Paper provides a theoretical and practical contribution to strengthening the evidence base for anti-corruption Collective Action – i.e. collaborative efforts by diverse actors from the private sector, civil society and public institutions to address integrity challenges that no single actor can resolve alone.

It combines a new conceptual framework for Collective Action initiatives, updated data and practical tools. Together, these will help researchers, practitioners and policymakers compare initiatives, test assumptions and design more effective collaborations.

The paper provides insights into how Collective Action works in practice; the impact of different social and political environments; how to link Collective Action with real-world improvements in corruption prevention; and whether initiatives' activities are actually contributing to their stated goals.

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Executive summary

Anti-corruption Collective Action is widely recognised as a practical strategy to strengthen business integrity and contribute to preventing corruption in industries or countries worldwide. It typically involves businesses, civil society and/or public institutions working together in a sustained and committed way to tackle corruption risks that no single actor can solve alone.

Yet despite the growing role of Collective Action in anti-corruption efforts and standards, the evidence base behind this approach is still developing. There is a clear need for a more consistent, data-driven approach to compare what works, where and why.

This paper presents the results of a project led by the Basel Institute on Governance, which helps to address that gap by introducing a unified conceptual framework and common terminology. The aim is to help practitioners and researchers describe and understand how Collective Action emerges, how initiatives are formed and governed, and what realistic impact they can have – especially in preventing corruption, where most efforts focus.

Rather than offering definitive answers, the framework provides a shared language and a set of guiding questions that can be used to compare initiatives across contexts, explore what shapes their success and test assumptions in future research.

To put the framework into practice, the project maps, classifies and analyses Collective Action initiatives from the global database of the B20 Collective Action Hub, hosted and maintained by the Basel Institute. It also compares aspects of the framework to external governance indicators to explore correlations between Collective Action and a reduction in corruption. This iterative approach allows the framework to be tested against real-world data, generating practical insights and highlighting gaps and questions for further study.

Key insights include:

How Collective Action works in practice: Most initiatives remain national in scope and are led by the private sector and civil society, with practical activities like awareness raising, training and integrity tools dominating. Broader policy-level reforms and formal assurance mechanisms remain relatively rare.

Context matters: More open democratic environments and stronger rule of law in countries tend to support broader initiatives with more ambitious goals, such as legal reforms or transparency standards. In more restrictive political settings, narrower or company-focused initiatives may be a more realistic entry point for Collective Action.

Link to outcomes: This paper suggests that Collective Action can plausibly contribute to measurable improvements in corruption prevention, although results vary widely. Activities like capacity building and practical tools

appear more consistently linked with positive change than symbolic commitments alone.

Strategic alignment: Many initiatives show strong alignment between goals and activities, but some do not. This gap may reflect deliberate adaptation to local constraints, but it could also signal a lack of real commitment.

To help advance both practice and research, this paper provides a practical reporting protocol to encourage consistent data collection and a diagnostic question set to promote reflection on what works. Practitioners and policymakers can use the framework and tools to design or promote more credible, context-sensitive initiatives. Researchers can build on this baseline to test and refine how Collective Action functions in diverse settings.

Priorities for practice and research include:

- Promoting standardised reporting and greater data transparency.
- Supporting longitudinal and case-based studies to understand how initiatives adapt and sustain impact.
- Tailoring initiatives to local socio-political conditions to improve their chances of success.
- Strengthening strategic alignment by examining whether an initiative's activities actually contribute to its goals.
- Fostering communities of practice to share lessons and resources.
- Integrating Collective Action into broader anti-corruption strategies to complement enforcement and policy reform.

Taken together, this paper offers both a practical starting point and a conceptual foundation for a more coherent, evidence-based approach to Collective Action. It invites deeper testing of when, where and how Collective Action can help strengthen business integrity and contribute to preventing corruption in industries and countries worldwide.

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1 Introduction

Anti-corruption Collective Action refers to collaborative efforts by diverse actors from the private sector, civil society and public institutions, sometimes with support from academia, to address integrity challenges that no single actor can resolve alone. In contexts where public enforcement mechanisms are weak or mistrusted, Collective Action is increasingly recognised as a promising approach to mobilise cooperation, build trust and generate systemic change.

Yet, despite its growing prominence in global anti-corruption discourse, the knowledge base that informs this approach is still developing. Strengthening this base is essential to enable more consistent comparison and evaluation of different initiatives. This will help practitioners, policymakers and academics understand what works, share lessons across contexts and build more effective partnerships over time.

This paper represents the final phase of a multi-year research project led by the Basel Institute on Governance. The research has been guided by three overarching objectives:

1. **To develop a unified conceptual framework** that provides a common language for describing, exploring and explaining when, why and how Collective Action emerges, and how it interacts with external contextual factors.
2. **To test this framework** by systematically reviewing and re-tagging over 300 initiatives in the B20 Collective Action Hub (the "B20 Hub"), the world's largest repository of anti-corruption Collective Action initiatives. This involves creating new classifications and improving data consistency to establish a more robust baseline evidence base.
3. **To support both future research and practical application** by offering insights into what works, under what conditions, and how Collective Action can be adapted to different governance environments.

In seeking to achieve these objectives, this paper provides valuable resources for multiple audiences. For researchers, it offers a structured foundation for future empirical work, including a new guiding questionnaire and proposed reporting protocol. For practitioners and policy-makers, it delivers practical insights into how the design and success of Collective Action efforts are shaped by political and institutional contexts. The findings help identify which types of initiatives may work best in which settings.

The paper is structured as follows:

Section 2 | Conceptual framework: This section introduces the unified framework developed to describe and evaluate Collective Action. Drawing on four core models – system change, organisational decision-making, network formation and network impact – it offers a lens for understanding how initiatives can emerge and evolve. A structured set of diagnostic

questions and practical checklists is also introduced to support consistent application.

Section 3 | Operationalising the framework: This section explains how the conceptual model has been applied to real-world data from the B20 Hub. It describes the data review and re-tagging process, introduces new classifications (e.g., initiative status, goals, stakeholder types), and explains how these updates improve analytical clarity. A proposed reporting protocol is offered to enhance consistency and transparency in the field.

Section 4 | Metrics and insights: This is the analytical heart of the paper, organised into three parts:

4.1 Mapping the landscape: A descriptive profile of Collective Action initiatives, covering geographic distribution, goals, activities, typologies, stakeholder compositions and sectoral focus.

4.2 Reviewing coherence: Mapping the initiatives' internal alignment between goals and activities, including patterns of coherence and divergence, and plausible explanations.

4.3 Exploring contextual conditions: An exploration of how broader political, civic and legal environments shape the composition and strategies of initiatives, using cross-referenced data from global governance indices.

Section 5 | Shaping national-level outcomes: The final section links Collective Action activities to measurable anti-corruption outcomes, focusing on prevention. It explores whether and how initiative characteristics correspond with changes in national prevention environments and reflects on the complexity of drawing causal links in real-world settings.

Each section builds on the last to progressively move from theory to application, and from individual initiative characteristics to system-level implications. Together, the paper offers both a detailed snapshot of the current anti-corruption Collective Action landscape and a practical tool for shaping its future development.

2 Conceptual framework to understand anti-corruption Collective Action

We wanted to better understand how anti-corruption Collective Action (referred to simply as "Collective Action" throughout the document) works – when and why it emerges, what shapes its success and how different actors come together to make it happen. Although Collective Action is gaining attention as a practical response to systemic corruption, particularly in places where institutional reform is slow or ineffective, there are few tools currently available to systematically compare or assess these initiatives across different contexts.

We therefore set out to build a structured framework that could help us describe and evaluate Collective Action in a consistent way. Our goal was to go beyond high-level advocacy and offer a practical, evidence-based foundation that both researchers and practitioners could use.

The definition of Collective Action is explored in more detail in the Basel Institute's paper introducing a new typology for Collective Action.[1] For the purpose of this project, we refer to the defining features of Collective Action as set out in that paper. Collective Action:

- **engages, focuses on, or is driven by the private sector**, and facilitates dialogue or engagement between the private sector and another stakeholder group such as government or civil society;
- **addresses a corruption or corruption-related issue**; and
- **aims to raise standards of business integrity** and level the playing field in an industry or country/region through **sustained engagement** and demonstrated commitment towards raising those standards and **addressing the issues collectively**.

The definition provides sufficient granularity by clearly outlining the key elements of actors, coordination, shared goals and corruption risk reduction. This allows for a structured exploration of the various forms, drivers and mechanisms of Collective Action in practice.

2.1 Developing the conceptual framework

To guide our thinking, we developed a framework made up of four interconnected models based on knowledge of existing Collective Action initiatives and the wider anti-corruption environment. Each model helped us explore a different part of how Collective Action works in practice. The four

1 Wannenwetsch, Scarlet. 2025. 'Anti-corruption Collective Action: A typology for a new era.' Working Paper 56, Basel Institute on Governance. Available at: baselgovernance.org/publications/wp-56.

conceptual models (system stability and change, organisational decision-making, Collective Action network formation, and network impact) each capture a key dimension of how Collective Action initiatives emerge, evolve and have impact. Rather than standing alone, these models are combined in the unified framework shown in Figure 1.

The framework weaves these models into a dynamic system that illustrates how corruption problems and contextual triggers prompt stakeholders to coordinate, how organisations decide whether to join, how initiatives are built and sustained, and how actions feed back into the broader system through their impacts.

I. System stability and change

We started by looking at the broader context in which Collective Action becomes either possible or desirable. What prompts actors to coordinate in the first place? Often, it is a triggering event – a high-profile corruption scandal, a political transition, new legislation or external pressure from international partners. These moments disrupt the status quo and open a window of opportunity for collaboration. But the same systems that enable Collective Action can also resist it. Dampening events, like political backlash, funding cuts or leadership changes, can delay or derail progress.

This model helps us understand how change is catalysed and how fragile that momentum can be.

II. Organisational decision-making

Next, we focused on how individual organisations decide whether to participate in a collective anti-corruption effort. This is not a simple yes/no question. It often involves weighing reputational risks, peer behaviour, regulatory pressure, leadership incentives and opportunity costs. An organisation's "ideal self" (its values, mission or public image) may align with the goals of Collective Action, but that alone may not be enough to justify participation.

This model helps us unpack how perceived risks and benefits – both subjective and objective – influence the decision to act, and why some organisations step forward while others hold back.

III. Collective Action network formation

Once organisations decide to act, we considered how initiatives are built. Who moves first? How do others get involved? What kinds of trust, resources and coordination are needed? We also looked at the structure of Collective Action initiatives and their networks or organisations – how broad or narrow they are, and how responsibilities are shared.

Once the decision to act is made, the focus shifts to how initiatives are built and sustained. This model examines the structure and composition of Collective Action networks: who the first movers are, how they recruit

others, how trust is built and how power and resources are distributed. We looked at the frequency and quality of interactions, the degree of consensus around goals and the diversity (or fragmentation) of actors involved.

This model is especially important for helping to guide questions aimed at understanding why some initiatives are resilient and effective, while others struggle with coordination or lack of engagement.

IV. Network impact

Finally, we examined whether and how Collective Action initiatives make a difference. This model explores the types of outcomes Collective Action initiatives produce, such as improvements in transparency, accountability and business integrity. It also considers feedback loops: do positive results reinforce engagement and expand participation? Or do weak or symbolic outcomes lead to disillusionment and drift?

Critically, this model informs questions about whether initiatives are changing systems, not just company behaviour, and whether those changes are durable and replicable.

Rather than treat these models as separate or linear steps, we pulled them together into one unified framework. This gave us a comprehensive lens for understanding Collective Action. We identified 10 key elements that show up in almost every initiative: the problem being addressed, the place and time, the actors and stakeholders involved, the institutions that shape what is possible, the arenas where decisions and actions happen, the actions themselves and the goals being pursued.

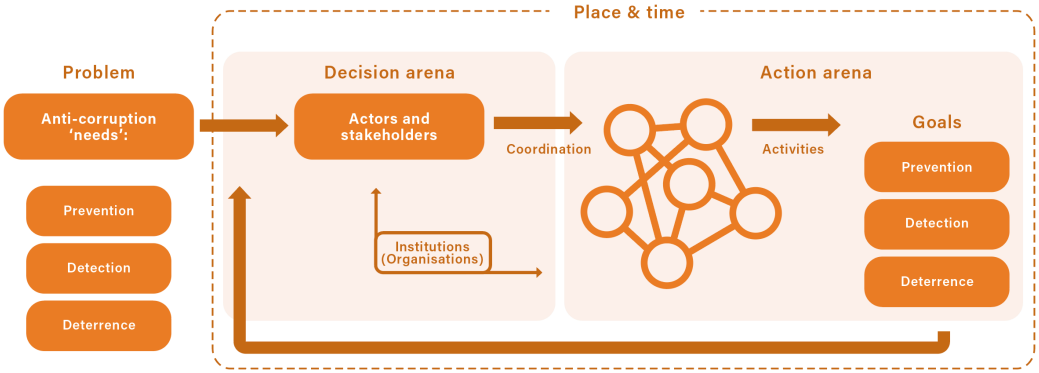

Figure 1: A unified framework for analysing anti-corruption Collective Action.

We visualised this as a dynamic system, not a straight line. For example, corruption problems or internal incentives may prompt stakeholders to consider joint action. These discussions take place in a "decision arena", influenced by formal rules, social norms and practical constraints.

If Collective Action seems viable, the effort moves into an "action arena" where people start working together, aligning roles and sharing resources. The outcomes – whether they focus on prevention, detection or deterrence – feed

back into the system, prompting re-evaluation or realignment. Context, both in time and place, plays a critical role at every stage.

This approach helped us capture the recursive, adaptable nature of Collective Action. The approach doesn't follow a rigid script but evolves as situations change and as participants learn. Our framework helps make sense of that complexity in a structured way.

2.2 Developing the question set

Once we had the framework, we developed a set of guiding questions to bring it to life. The aim of these questions was to help us systematically describe and compare different Collective Action efforts. We organised them around core themes drawn from the framework, such as:

- What triggered the initiative?
- What motivated participants to join?
- Who was involved and what roles did they play?
- What was the geographic or sectoral scope?
- Were the goals clear and shared?
- What institutional factors influenced success or failure?
- What results did the initiative achieve?

In developing these questions, we consulted with a number of international experts in anti-corruption[2] and interviewed Collective Action practitioners from around the world. We also hosted a roundtable of practitioners at the 5th International Collective Action Conference in Basel, Switzerland, in June 2024, which helped us to better understand what kinds of questions those engaged in Collective Action are interested in pursuing or are able to answer. Annex 1 provides the full list of questions that were developed within the unified framework.

The framework provides a common language and structured approach for describing, analysing and strengthening Collective Action initiatives. It is intended to serve two main purposes:

1. Prompt practitioners to ask critical questions when designing or refining Collective Action initiatives.
2. Support and guide further research in this area.

To support these aims, we have developed two practical checklists, included as Annexes 2 and 3.

2 Contributors are listed in the Acknowledgements section.

3 Operationalising the conceptual framework

In developing the unified framework, we made a deliberate decision to work with the database of Collective Action initiatives hosted on the B20 Collective Action Hub – the most comprehensive global repository of its kind, hosted and maintained by the Basel Institute. Our aim was to test and begin to operationalise the framework by applying it to real-world examples. However, we also recognised from the outset that this dataset could only take us part of the way toward answering the broader questions we are posing about how and why Collective Action works in practice.

To make effective use of the database, we undertook a detailed review and re-tagging process over several months. This exercise was essential to align the data with the analytical dimensions of the framework. It also brought the added benefit of improving the dataset's overall quality, including more consistent categorisation and enhanced search functionality.

We acknowledge that many of the most important questions raised by the framework, particularly those relating to motivations, power dynamics and impact, cannot be fully answered by publicly available data alone. Some will require more in-depth qualitative methods, such as case studies and interviews. Furthermore, we also recognise that the B20 Hub only hosts information on initiatives that are known to the Basel Institute through its own research or submission by external parties. There are likely to be other initiatives operating that are not yet included in the database. It is our hope that this paper provides an incentive for new initiatives to be added to the B20 Hub. We provide a protocol for doing so in Annex 4.

Nonetheless, this foundational effort provides a valuable starting point: it clarifies what information is currently available, highlights key gaps and establishes a baseline for more targeted and rigorous research going forward.

3.1 Tagging the Collective Action dataset

As part of the data improvement exercise, we created new tagging categories to better capture the scope and composition of Collective Action initiatives. These include:

Geographic scope, distinguishing between:

- **Global** initiatives with an explicitly international focus not limited to specific countries.
- **International** initiatives operating in two or more identifiable countries.
- **National** initiatives focused on a single country, including both national and sub-national efforts.

Status, reflecting the stage of development:

- **Aspirational:** Commitments or plans for future Collective Action, not yet fully operating as an initiative.
- **Ongoing:** Currently active initiatives.
- **Completed:** Initiatives that have concluded with finalised outputs.
- **Dormant:** Initiatives where activities have been suspended or their current status is unknown.

Stakeholders, identifying the key actors involved:

- **Private sector (Pri):** For-profit entities of all sizes, including small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Public sector (Pub):** Government institutions at the national or sub-national level, including state-owned enterprises (SOEs).
- **Civil society (Civ):** Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private foundations, faith-based organisations, professional and industry associations, Chambers of Commerce, and local Global Compact Networks.
- **Academia (Aca):** Research and educational institutions, both public and private.

We have also tagged the data according to the Basel Institute's recently developed typology of Collective Action initiatives, which identifies three distinct categories of initiative:

- **Engagement-focused initiatives (ENG):** Centred on trust building, knowledge sharing and collaborative efforts to strengthen business integrity.
- **Standard-setting initiatives (SSI):** Developing industry- or country-specific anti-corruption frameworks, codes of conduct and best practices.
- **Assurance-focused initiatives (AFI):** Incorporating external verification, compliance certification and monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability.

Mission: To better understand and compare Collective Action initiatives, we developed **three mission categories** that reflect the different levels at which these efforts aim to influence anti-corruption outcomes.

- **The first category operates at the environment level**, where initiatives seek to shape the broader policy and institutional frameworks that enable or constrain corruption. This might include pushing for stronger enforcement mechanisms or improving conditions for public-private dialogue.

- **The second category targets the community level**, focusing on groups of businesses, industry associations or networks that work together to build common standards, share knowledge and address sector-wide risks that no single company could tackle alone.
- **The third category focuses on the organisational or individual level**, where initiatives aim to change the behaviour of a small group of companies or individual actors. This might involve strengthening internal compliance systems, delivering training or promoting ethical decision making in daily business operations.

In practice, these levels are closely interconnected: for example, influencing the behaviour of a critical mass of businesses can help shift standards across an entire sector and contribute to wider changes in the policy environment. Collective Action relies on this reinforcing dynamic, where work at one level supports change at another. By using these categories as a lens, we can better compare how initiatives position themselves, understand where they concentrate their efforts and reflect on how these levels interact to strengthen overall impact.

Goals: Further, we developed a list of **common goals** for initiatives and then categorised the initiatives according to those goals based on the information they publish about themselves online. The goals reflect the declared intentions of initiatives and are classified by the level at which the initiative seeks to generate change at the mission level.

Goal	Mission level	Description
Increased public-private dialogue	Environment	Promotes anti-corruption collaboration and communication between public and private actors.
Legal and institutional reform	Environment	Focuses on changes in legal frameworks, public policy or institutions to reduce corruption.
Administrative procedures and law enforcement enhancement	Environment	Aims to improve administrative efficiency and strengthen the enforcement of anti-corruption laws.
International coordination, cooperation, and assistance	Environment	Builds cross-border partnerships and global collaboration for anti-corruption efforts.
Business engagement in anti-corruption	Community	Encourages the private sector's active participation in anti-corruption efforts.
Strengthen private sector-ethics and compliance	Community	Seeks to improve transparency in business practices through public reporting and open data.
Strengthen private sector-ethics and compliance	Community	Promotes ethical conduct and internal compliance through collective standards and self-regulatory mechanisms.

Training and capacity building	Organisation	Focuses on strengthening the skills and systems within organisations to better combat corruption.
Anti-corruption education	Organisation	Develops employees' understanding and ability to resist corruption.
Business incentives for anti-corruption compliance	Organisation	Reward structures (e.g., recognition, certification) that promote anti-corruption compliance within a company.

Activities: We took the same approach to classifying **activities**, which are the concrete actions undertaken by initiatives. We ensured that these matches the example activities set out in the typology working paper. Activities are the building blocks through which goals are operationalised:

Activity	Description
Engaging in industry specific working groups	Participating in sectoral initiatives to collectively address corruption risks.
Declarations of intent	Public statements or commitments made by organisations to uphold anti-corruption principles.
Capacity building and learning activities	Trainings, workshops, and other learning formats to improve anti-corruption knowledge and skills.
Development of integrity tools and publications	Creating tools, guidelines, handbooks, or research that support ethical business practices.
Events/awareness raising/ engagement platforms	Organising events or platforms to raise awareness or gather stakeholders around anti-corruption themes.
Setting codes of conduct	Establishing ethical guidelines for behaviour within a company or sector.
Setting industry anti corruption compliance standards	Creating or promoting sector-wide compliance frameworks and benchmarks.
Setting national anti corruption policies	Contributing to the formulation of public policy addressing corruption at the national level.
Self assessment and implementation tools and mechanisms	Providing internal tools to help organisations evaluate and strengthen their compliance practices.
Integrity Pact	Agreements between a government and bidders to prevent corruption in public procurement (developed by Transparency International[3]).

3 Transparency International, Integrity Pacts, https://www.transparency.org/en/tool-integrity-pacts, retrieved June 2025.

Providing compliance certification	Issuing formal recognition to organisations that meet specific anti-corruption criteria.
Providing compliance monitoring and reporting mechanisms	Systems for overseeing adherence to anti-corruption standards and ensuring transparency.

Although the initiatives in the database have been reviewed, updated and re-tagged, there remain many entries for which key information is still missing. In most cases, this is due to the limited availability of publicly accessible data, either on the initiatives' own websites or through other online sources. This lack of standardised and transparent information poses a challenge for comparative analysis and informed decision making.

To support this, we have developed a proposed reporting protocol – the B20 Hub Initiative Database Entry Form included as Annex 4 – which we encourage Collective Action initiatives to use when providing information about themselves. The protocol is designed to support consistency and completeness in data collection, thereby contributing to a more robust and standardised body of knowledge on Collective Action. We make this available on the B20 Hub.

Building on the foundation of the improved dataset, we then systematically analysed the initiatives. This involved mapping them against the key dimensions of the framework and, where possible, integrating insights from external datasets to enrich our analysis. Out of over 300 initiatives recorded in the B20 Hub, we analysed 212 that met our foundational reference of Collective Action.

The remaining initiatives were excluded because they did not align with this reference, often lacking the private-sector engagement that distinguishes Collective Action from other forms of anti-corruption efforts.[4] Further, Integrity Pacts were excluded from the core analysis because they represent a distinct and formalised type of Collective Action, with clearly defined contractual boundaries and implementation timelines. Including them would have skewed the data, given their unique structure and higher likelihood of reaching formal completion compared to more adaptive, ongoing initiatives. Nonetheless, Integrity Pacts remain a core instrument within the broader Collective Action toolbox, particularly in contexts requiring structured, enforceable commitments.

The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections, alongside reflections on emerging patterns and questions for future research.

4 The B20 database includes programmes or projects that support Collective Action and are therefore worthy of being included in the database but are not strictly Collective Action initiatives as we define them in this project.

4 Metrics and insights

4.1 Mapping the landscape: descriptive profile of Collective Action initiatives

This section provides a descriptive overview of initiatives captured in the B20 Hub database, offering a clearer understanding of the types and distribution of efforts. By mapping the landscape, we aim to ground the broader analysis of trends, gaps and opportunities in a factual baseline of what Collective Action looks like in practice. Alongside this, we also provide some analysis of what the data may be signalling about how initiatives are designed, where momentum exists and where further support could be valuable.

4.1.1 Status distribution

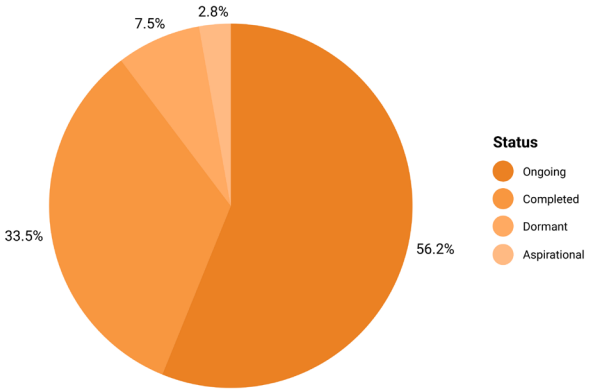

Figure 2: Status of initiatives at time of analysis: ongoing, completed, dormant or aspirational.

The fact that most initiatives remain ongoing reflects the broadly understood view that Collective Action is not just about short-term interventions but relies on maintaining relationships, adapting to evolving risks and sustaining dialogue among stakeholders over time. This ongoing nature can help build trust and ensure that anti-corruption measures keep pace with changing contexts.

Nevertheless, the sizeable proportion of completed initiatives points to the value of setting clear goals with defined timeframes and closing an initiative once those have been achieved. However, “completed” does not necessarily mean that every objective was met; in some cases, initiatives may have come to a natural end, lost momentum or faced challenges that prevented full delivery. Capturing lessons from these varied outcomes will be crucial for shaping more resilient and impactful projects in future. We recommend the transparent sharing of information by those running initiatives about the successes and challenges they have faced in delivering outputs and outcomes.

Dormant projects may highlight common challenges such as loss of engagement, insufficient resources or shifting stakeholder priorities. Meanwhile, the existence of aspirational initiatives shows there is appetite for new partnerships and ideas in this space.

4.1.2 Geographic scope distribution

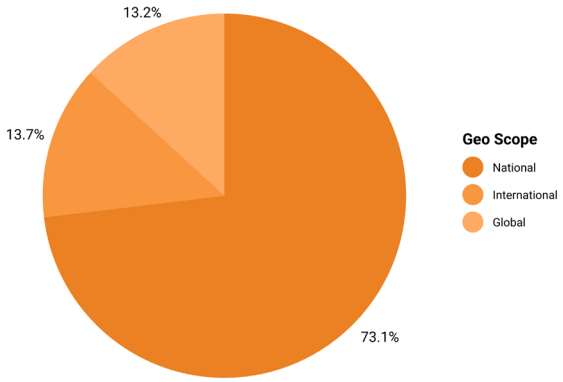

Figure 3: Geographic scope of initiatives: national, international or global.

The majority of Collective Action initiatives in the dataset are designed with a national scope, focusing on anti-corruption challenges within a specific country. This prevalence demonstrates a focus on strategies that respond to local institutional frameworks and corruption dynamics, which often vary widely by jurisdiction. Working nationally can help build trust among stakeholders who share the same regulatory environment and cultural context.

In contrast, 13.7 percent of initiatives operate at the international level, often involving cross-border coordination or engagement with regional governance structures. These initiatives recognise that many corruption risks do not stop at borders and benefit from shared standards or peer learning across countries. Another 13.2 percent are classified as global, addressing issues that transcend national boundaries or promoting good practices that can be adapted anywhere. This spread suggests that while Collective Action is often grounded in local realities, there is clear value in connecting national efforts to broader regional and global agendas.

4.1.3 Initiatives by country

Country	Number	% of total
Multiple countries (defined as involving more than one country, or explicitly globally focused)	28	13.20%
No clearly specified geographic focus made available	25	11.80%
Brazil	10	4.70%
Colombia	8	3.80%
India	7	3.30%
South Africa	7	3.30%
Argentina	6	2.80%
China	6	2.80%
Indonesia	6	2.80%
Ghana	5	2.40%

Mozambique	5	2.40%
Russia	5	2.40%
Türkiye	5	2.40%
Canada	4	1.90%
Egypt	4	1.90%
Mexico	4	1.90%
Nigeria	4	1.90%
Ukraine	4	1.90%
Bangladesh	3	1.40%
Kenya	3	1.40%
Romania	3	1.40%
South Korea	3	1.40%
Thailand	3	1.40%

Australia	2	0.90%
Bulgaria	2	0.90%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	0.90%
EU or European-wide initiatives	2	0.90%
Italy	2	0.90%
Ivory Coast	2	0.90%
Mauritius	2	0.90%
Morocco	2	0.90%
Paraguay	2	0.90%
Philippines	2	0.90%
Vietnam	2	0.90%

Remaining 15.5% includes multiple countries with one initiative.

The 212 Collective Action initiatives identified in the dataset operate across the globe, but with a clear trend towards targeting emerging markets. 13.2 percent explicitly target multiple countries, but 11.8 percent of cases have no clearly specified geographic focus in their published information – potentially identifying an area for improvement in communications by initiatives. Among single-country initiatives, the most commonly targeted countries include Brazil, Colombia, India and South Africa. Further research could seek to identify reasons for this distribution.

The long tail of countries with smaller numbers of initiatives shows that Collective Action is present but more dispersed in certain contexts. It also suggests untapped potential to expand these efforts into additional jurisdictions.

4.1.4 Mission category distribution

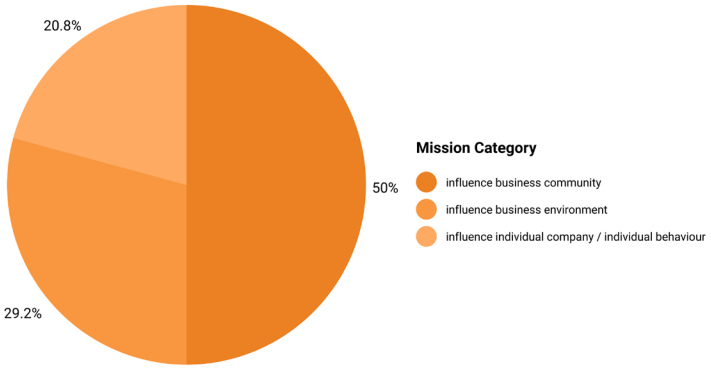

Figure 4: Missions of initiatives: influence business community, business environment or individual company/ staff behaviour.

The mission focus of Collective Action initiatives shows a clear emphasis on influencing specific business communities, with around half of all initiatives working toward this goal. This reflects the reality that Collective Action relies

on businesses joining forces to tackle integrity risks that are difficult to address alone, by helping build common standards and promote self-regulation within and across sectors.

Interestingly though, while most initiatives are community focused, most still operate across multiple industries (see Figure 9). This cross-industry approach likely recognises that many corruption risks – such as procurement fraud or bribery in supply chains – do not stop at the boundaries of a single industry. By engaging companies from different industries that face similar challenges, initiatives can share practical solutions, encourage peer learning and create more level playing fields in markets where actors interact across sectors.

A smaller but notable share, about 29 percent, works to shape the wider business environment by targeting regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity. This signals an understanding that corruption is often rooted in systemic issues which need supportive laws and fair enforcement. However, this can be compared against the activities distribution of initiatives (chart 3.1.7), which suggests that in practice, few initiatives focus on wider policy-level changes.

The remaining 21 percent of initiatives concentrate on changing the behaviour of smaller groups of individual companies or people. While narrower in scope, this focus remains important for building strong internal compliance and personal responsibility.

4.1.5 Goal distribution

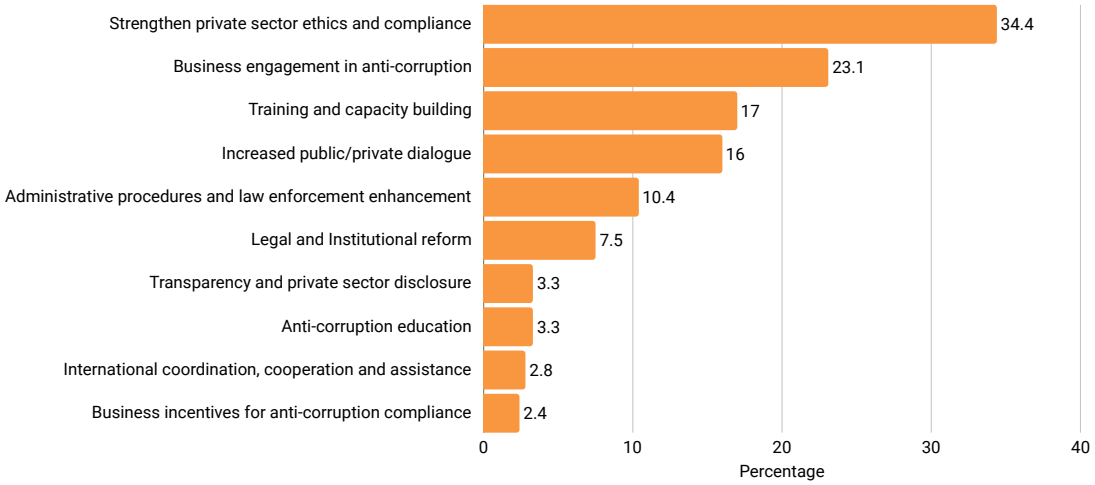

Figure 5: Different goals of initiatives and their prevalence across the dataset.

*Note: 18.9 percent of the initiatives aim to achieve more than one of the specified goals. As a result, the percentage distribution across goals exceeds 100 percent.

This figure illustrates that Collective Action initiatives predominantly focus on strengthening private-sector ethics and compliance and fostering business engagement in anti-corruption efforts. These top priorities reflect a practical recognition that companies must have robust internal systems and work collaboratively with peers to address shared corruption risks. Training and

capacity building and increased public-private dialogue are also frequently targeted. This underlines the importance of equipping stakeholders with skills and fostering trust-based collaboration between business and government.

Notably, goals that aim at broader systemic or institutional change (such as legal and institutional reform or whistleblower disclosure) appear less frequently. This suggests that while many Collective Action initiatives tackle immediate, operational aspects of integrity, fewer directly address structural reforms or cross-border challenges. These areas may require stronger engagement or complementary policy-level interventions to sustain impact in the long term.

Overall, the figure highlights the multidimensional nature of Collective Action: nearly one in five initiatives pursue multiple goals simultaneously.

4.1.6 Activities distribution

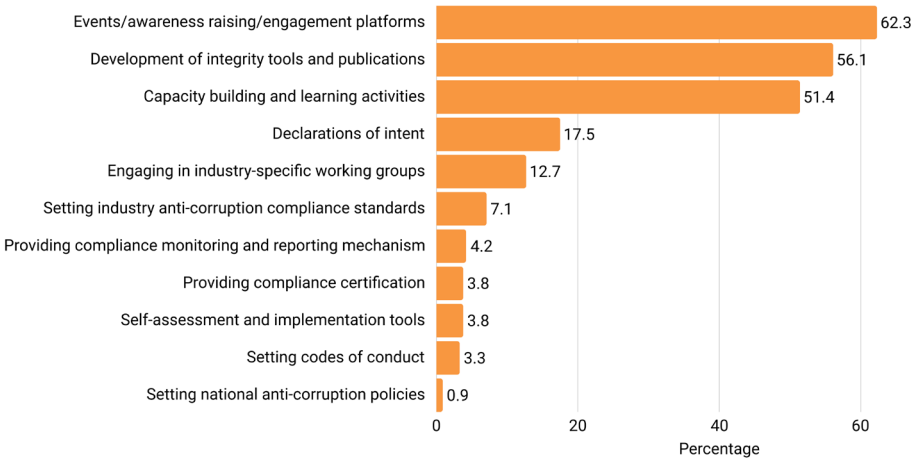

Figure 6: Activities of initiatives and their prevalence across the dataset.

The distribution of activities shows that Collective Action initiatives tend to prioritise practical, dialogue-based measures that foster collaboration and knowledge exchange. The most common activities are events, awareness raising and engagement, undertaken by 62.9 percent of initiatives. This indicates a strong focus on creating spaces where stakeholders can share experiences, build trust and develop joint solutions to corruption risks.

Closely following are the development of integrity tools and publications and capacity-building/training activities. These activities emphasise the importance of equipping participants with concrete guidance, resources and skills to implement anti-corruption measures effectively. Together, these top three activities highlight how Collective Action is often rooted in building shared understanding and practical know-how.

Less frequently pursued activities include more formalised or structured measures, such as providing compliance certification, developing self-assessment tools or setting industry codes of conduct. These lower frequencies suggest that many initiatives focus on soft tools rather than binding commitments or external verification. The very small share dedicated to setting

national or anti-corruption policies (0.9 percent) reflects that Collective Action typically complements, rather than replaces, formal policy reform processes.

4.1.7 Typology distribution

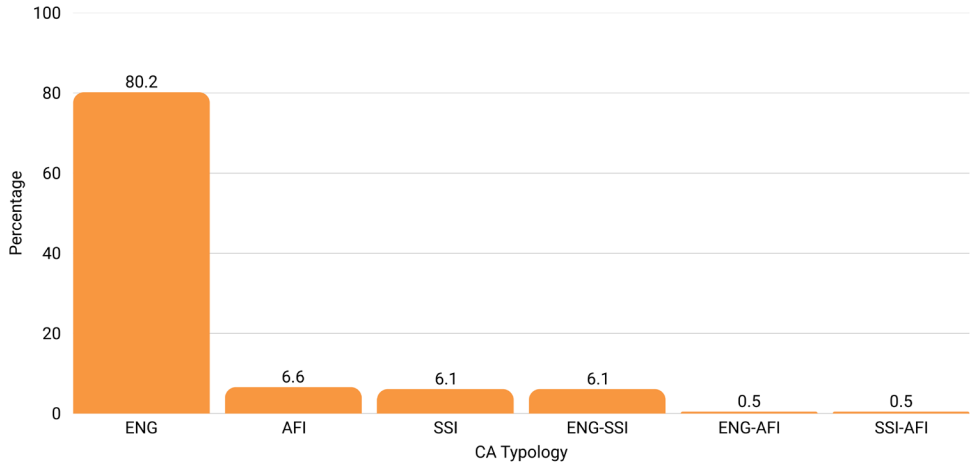

Figure 7: Categorisation of initiatives as engagement-focused initiatives (ENG), standard-setting initiatives (SSI) and assurance-focused initiatives (AFI), or a combination.

According to the Basel Institute's typology, initiatives can be categorised into three main categories: Engagement-Focused Initiatives (ENG), Standard-Setting Initiatives (SSI) and Assurance-Focused Initiatives (AFI).

The dominance of engagement-focused initiatives, accounting for over 80 percent of those identified in the analysed dataset, likely reflects the foundational role that trust building and dialogue play in Collective Action. Many corruption challenges, especially in emerging or high-risk markets, require diverse stakeholders to first come together, align interests and build a common understanding of risks before more formalised standards or third-party assurance mechanisms can take root. Engagement-focused activities such as roundtables or multi-stakeholder forums are also comparatively easier to launch and often require fewer upfront resources than developing binding standards or assurance systems.

In contrast, standard-setting initiatives and assurance-focused initiatives each account for only around 6 percent of the total. These types of initiatives typically require a higher degree of stakeholder maturity, consensus and capacity. Developing credible standards demands intensive negotiation, technical expertise and buy-in from diverse actors. This can be challenging, especially in environments with low trust or fragmented industry structures. Likewise, assurance-focused models such as certification schemes or external monitoring often involve independent oversight or compliance audits. This adds costs and complexity that not all stakeholders are prepared to adopt.

The small proportion of hybrid initiatives that combine elements from multiple typologies points to a pragmatic, phased approach. Many Collective Action efforts start by building trust and shared commitment (ENG). Over time, they can evolve to incorporate standards or independent verification once the necessary relationships, capacity and governance structures are in place.

This progression highlights how Collective Action is often an iterative process: the dominance of engagement activities reflects both a practical starting point and a necessary step toward more institutionalised and enforceable forms of collaboration, although it should be noted that many initiatives will begin and end as ENG. These themes are further explored in the typology working paper.

4.1.8 Stakeholder distribution

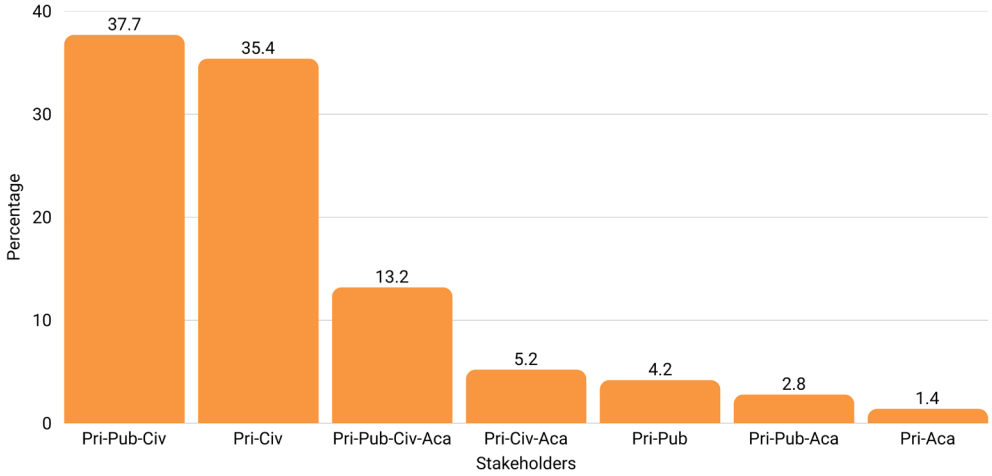

Figure 8: Stakeholders involved in initiatives: private sector, public sector, civil society, academia.

Pri: Private sector: for-profit entities of all sizes, including Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Pub: Public sector: government institutions at national or sub-national level, including State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

Civ: Civil society: Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private foundations, faith-based organisations, professional and industry associations, Chambers of Commerce, and local Global Compact Networks

Aca: Academia: research and educational institutions, both public and private

As expected, stakeholder composition in Collective Action initiatives reflects a strong trend toward multi-sector collaboration. The most common configuration involves partnerships between the private sector, civil society and public institutions (Pri-Pub-Civ), representing 38 percent of all initiatives.

Close behind are initiatives that include only the private sector and civil society (Pri-Civ), which make up 35 percent of the total. This shows that in some contexts, businesses and non-governmental organisations can target goals without public sector involvement – a theme discussed later in this paper.

Smaller shares reflect more complex or specialised combinations. Initiatives that add academia into the mix (Pri-Pub-Civ-Aca) account for 13 percent and highlight the role that research institutions can play in providing evidence, training and thought leadership. Other combinations like Pri-Civ-Aca or Pri-Pub-Aca remain less common. This points to an opportunity to engage academic actors more systematically where their expertise can strengthen credibility and impact.

The presence of purely bilateral partnerships, such as Pri-Pub or Pri-Aca, is minimal. This suggests that while bilateral collaboration can be valuable, multi-sector configurations are at the heart of the definition of Collective Action. They offer a balanced way to build trust and ensure accountability.

4.1.9 Industry distribution

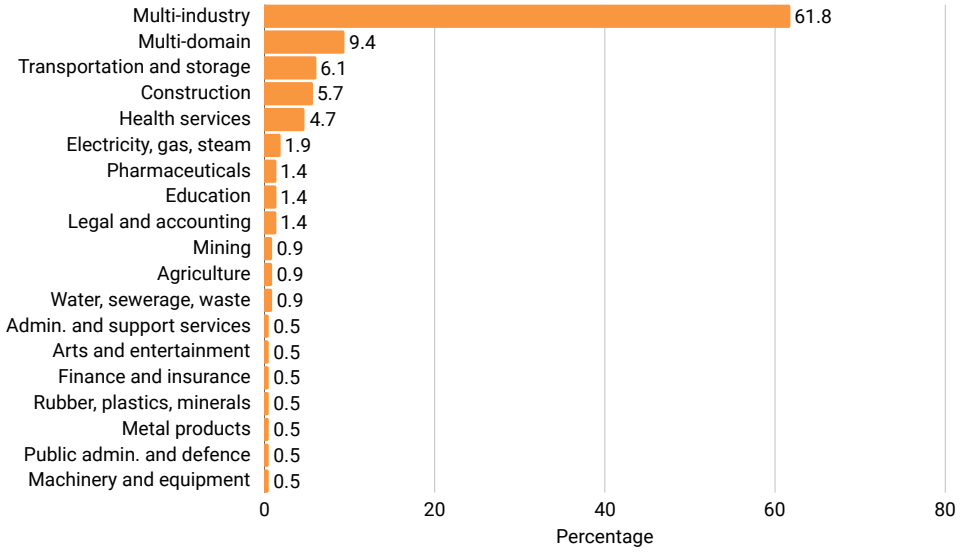

Figure 9: Categorisation of initiatives by industry.

Based on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC)5, we categorised initiatives by industry. A majority (62 percent) operate across multiple industries, suggesting broad sectoral engagement without a single dominant industry focus. This reflects the reality that corruption risks often cut across sectors and value chains, requiring Collective Action initiatives to bring together diverse stakeholders who face shared integrity challenges in different parts of the economy. Another 9 percent fall under multi-domain, indicating initiatives that target more than one specific industry classification (for example, simultaneously addressing construction and healthcare).

Among the initiatives with a clear sectoral focus, the most commonly represented industries include transportation and storage, construction and health services. This pattern suggests that Collective Action tends to gain traction in industries where awareness and understanding of its value have already taken hold. There remains clear potential to expand its reach into new industries, especially as most initiatives aim to drive change at the industry level (see Figure 4).

4.1.10 Analysis

Based on the data presented in Section 4.1, we can make several observations and identify questions for further research and policy:

First, the data shows that Collective Action is predominantly nationally focused. Most initiatives are designed to address corruption risks within

5 See https://unstats.un.org/unsd/classifications/Econ/isic, retrieved June 2025.

specific countries and are tailored to domestic institutional frameworks. This national orientation reflects the practical reality that trust building and collaboration often work best when anchored in a familiar legal and cultural context. However, the smaller share of international and global initiatives points to untapped potential for expanding cross-border cooperation, especially in addressing transnational corruption risks that individual countries cannot tackle alone.

Second, there is a strong representation of initiatives in emerging markets such as Brazil, Colombia, India and South Africa and **in transportation and storage, construction and health services. A clear focus for most initiatives is on influencing business communities.** Together, these trends suggest that once awareness of Collective Action grows in a country or industry, it can help build the foundations for wider uptake. At the same time, there is clear scope to extend Collective Action into new countries and industries that remain underrepresented in the dataset.

Third, the data highlights the multi-dimensional nature of Collective Action design. Many initiatives combine multiple goals and activities, with a focus on practical tools such as awareness raising, dialogue platforms and training. This underscores the preventive and facilitative character of most efforts, as opposed to regulatory enforcement or assurance-focused approaches, which remain rare. The dominance of engagement-focused initiatives (over 80 percent) reflects this preference for building trust and shared understanding over more formal standards or verification mechanisms.

4.1.11 Questions for further research

- What metrics or indicators could be developed to assess the long-term effectiveness of ongoing Collective Action efforts?
- What factors contribute to initiatives becoming dormant? Which support the transition from aspirational to fully operational?
- How can successful national-level models be scaled or adapted to regional or global levels without losing local relevance?
- Why are certain regions or sectors underrepresented in terms of Collective Action initiatives (according to the current dataset) and how could this be addressed?
- Are there missed opportunities for Collective Action that goes beyond engagement and prevention to strengthen enforcement, regulatory functions or binding standards? If so, why, and what are conditions conducive to such evolution?

4.2 Reviewing coherence between activities and goals

This section presents the framework we used to assess programmatic fitness, which we define as the internal coherence between a Collective Action initiative's stated goals and its implemented activities. Our intention is not to judge the effectiveness of individual initiatives, but to explore how well goals and activities are aligned – and why, in some cases, they might not be. In our view, this approach offers a window into the strategic alignment of initiatives without making normative claims about their effectiveness or impact.

In essence, programmatic fitness is the degree to which an initiative's goals are reflected or advanced by its stated activities. In our understanding, a programmatically fit initiative shows evidence of alignment between mission and method. This concept is particularly useful for examining whether initiatives are translating their stated ambitions into practical action.

We recognise that perfect alignment is unlikely in all cases, and that deviations might be both deliberate and legitimate. It is also important to acknowledge that Collective Action is typically a medium- to long-term endeavour. Many initiatives focus first on building trust and shared understanding among diverse stakeholders. This means that some goals may only be fully realised over time as relationships strengthen and initiatives mature.

4.2.1 Evaluation methodology

To evaluate programmatic fitness, we applied the structured classification of goals and activities detailed in Section 3.1. We then developed and applied matching rules to determine whether each activity could plausibly be said to contribute to one or more of the initiative's stated goals:

Activity	Mission level	Contributes to goal	Rationale
Engaging in industry specific working groups	Environment	Increased public private dialogue	Fosters collaborative interactions between public and private sectors while directly involving businesses in anti corruption discussions.
	Community	Business engagement in anti corruption	Promotes ethical conduct within business communities.
	Environment	International coordination, cooperation, and assistance	Cross border working groups pro-mote international collaboration and information exchange.
Declarations of intent	Community	Business engagement in anti corruption	Public commitments demonstrate a willingness by businesses to adopt ethical practices and adhere to anti corruption standards.
	Environment	Increased public private dialogue	Open declarations can spark broader dialogue between the public and private sectors.

Capacity-building and learning activities	Organisation	Training and capacity building	Enhances skills and deepens knowledge among organisational stakeholders to prevent corrupt practices through formal training.
	Organisation	Anti corruption education	Builds awareness and long-term knowledge to resist corruption.
Development of integrity tools and publications	Environment	Applied anti corruption research	Generates research based tools and disseminates best practices, supporting evidence based decision making.
	Community	Transparency and private sector disclosure	Promotes openness and public access to private sector conduct.
Events / awareness raising / engagement platforms	Environment	Increased public private dialogue	Interactive events connect stakeholders and promote shared solutions to corruption.
	Community	Business engagement in anti corruption	Encourages private actors to engage publicly in anti corruption efforts.
	Organisation	Anti corruption education	Raises awareness and empowers individuals within organisations.
Setting codes of conduct	Community	Strengthen private sector ethics and compliance	Establishes clear ethical guidelines that help organisations and industries adhere to integrity standards.
Setting industry anti corruption compliance standards	Community	Strengthen private sector ethics and compliance	Formalises industry benchmarks to promote consistent, ethical practices and discourage corrupt behaviours.
Setting national anti corruption policies	Environment	Legal and institutional reform	Develops a robust legal framework that supports reforms needed to deter corruption at the national level.
	Environment	Administrative procedures and law enforcement enhancement	Integrating enforcement measures within policies strengthens administrative oversight and law enforcement capabilities.
Self assessment and implementation tools and mechanisms	Community	Transparency and private sector disclosure	Enables organisations to internally review and improve practices, enhancing transparency.
	Community	Strengthen private sector ethics and compliance	Encourages internal responsibility and self-regulation to uphold anti-corruption standards.
Providing compliance certification	Organisation	Business incentives for anti-corruption compliance	Recognises and rewards organisations that meet established anti corruption standards, incentivising ethical behaviour.
Providing compliance monitoring and reporting mechanism	Environment	Administrative procedures and law enforcement enhancement	Establishes systems for monitoring, detecting and reporting irregularities, strengthening enforcement mechanisms.
	Environment	International coordination, cooperation, and assistance	Cross border monitoring enhances cooperation and supports joint enforcement actions.

These assessments were based on conceptual relevance rather than literal interpretations. In our view, this method allowed for a fair and consistent comparison across diverse initiatives, while still acknowledging the contextual nature of Collective Action. Each initiative's activities and goals were coded

accordingly, and alignment was assessed using predefined matching logic. This produced an indicator of programmatic fitness, allowing us to visualise patterns of alignment or misalignment across the sample.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that while this matching logic and programmatic fitness assessment bring greater structure and rigour to the analysis, it should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of effectiveness. The connections identified between activities and goals reflect plausible hypotheses based on functional and conceptual relevance but have not yet been empirically validated in all contexts. Each initiative's real-world contribution to its stated goals will depend on many factors, including design quality, implementation and local conditions.

As such, this approach should be seen as an initial step that highlights potential alignments to be tested and refined through further research, in-depth case studies and longitudinal evaluation.

4.2.2 Programmatic fitness across initiatives

Across the 212 initiatives analysed, the average programmatic fitness score is 60.2 percent, with a standard deviation of 45.8. This high level of dispersion suggests substantial variability in how well initiatives translate goals into action. Regarding the levels, among the 212 Collective Action initiatives analysed:

- 54.3 percent (115 initiatives) demonstrate *Full programmatic fitness*, meaning every stated goal is supported by at least one implemented activity.
- 33.5 percent (71 initiatives) fall into the *No programmatic fitness* category, with no activities aligned to any of their declared goals.
- The remaining 12.2 percent of initiatives (26) have *Partial programmatic fitness*. These initiatives reflect some strategic coherence, alongside remaining gaps between intentions and actions.

4.2.3 Analysis

The data shows that most initiatives are strategically aligned with their stated goals. Two-thirds of all initiatives exhibit either full or partial alignment between their intentions and their implementation. This suggests a strong overall pattern of strategic coherence, with most initiatives translating ambition into action despite many operating in complex and often constrained environments.

However, **a sizeable minority of initiatives show little or no clear alignment between their stated goals and actual activities.** While this could point to gaps in communication or data quality, it may also signal deeper issues of strategic realism or commitment.

Divergences between goals and activities do not automatically imply failure: in many cases they could reflect deliberate choices to balance ambition with political and operational constraints. For example, an initiative might adopt broad, reform-oriented goals to align with donor priorities or signal support for international norms, but focus its day-to-day work on lower-risk activities such as awareness raising or training. Practitioners we have interviewed confirm that such trade-offs are sometimes necessary to maintain trust or manage risk.

At the same time, it is also possible that some initiatives overstate their ambitions or use the language of Collective Action primarily as a public relations exercise, without a real commitment to deliver substantive change. In these cases, bold goals may serve reputational or branding purposes rather than reflect a genuine strategic plan. This points to an important distinction: while some apparent misalignment can be adaptive or tactical, in other cases it may indicate a lack of genuine impact or that the conditions for meaningful Collective Action are not yet in place.

Defining what "effectiveness" means in this context is therefore essential. An initiative that falls short of its stated goals may still add value by raising awareness or creating new networks that lay the groundwork for longer-term change. Others may have limited or symbolic effects, with little evidence that they contribute meaningfully to stronger integrity systems. The concept of programmatic fitness introduced here should therefore be seen as a diagnostic tool rather than a definitive judgement. It helps identify where there is coherence between goals and actions, but does not alone prove effectiveness in practice.

4.2.4 Questions for further research

These findings highlight the need for more in-depth research to unpack when and why divergences occur and what they mean for real-world outcomes. Future work could explore questions such as:

- When is a gap between goals and activities a sign of healthy adaptation versus a sign of ineffectiveness or window dressing?
- How do initiatives navigate political and financial constraints while maintaining credibility?

4.3 Exploring macroenvironmental conditions

Collective Action initiatives are shaped not only by their internal design but also by the broader socio-political contexts in which they are embedded. Features such as the quality of democracy, levels of corruption and the structure of the economy may influence both how these initiatives are formed and whether they are likely to align with broader objectives.

Rather than focusing solely on abstract contextual conditions, this section explores observable patterns across countries and regions. Specifically, we analyse how Collective Action initiatives differ in design and composition depending on the nature of their environment. Are initiatives in stronger democracies more inclusive? Do countries with high corruption or limited freedoms host fewer or more focused Collective Action initiatives? Do regional contexts influence programmatic fitness or stakeholder composition?

This section aims to illuminate how environmental variation shapes the form and potential nature of Collective Action. Understanding these patterns can provide valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers seeking to adapt anti-corruption strategies to local realities. Our analysis was based on comparing the B20 Collective Action sample to the following external variables available from V-Dem:

Contextual domain	Variable	Description	Source/Data availability
1. Political Freedoms	*v2x_libdem*	Civil society organisation (CSO) entry and exit – ease of forming or dissolving CSOs	V-Dem
2. Civil Freedoms	*v2cseeorgs*	Civil society organisation (CSO) entry and exit – ease of forming or dissolving CSOs	V-Dem
3. Rule of Law	*v2x_rule*	Rule of Law Index – quality and impartiality of law enforcement and legal compliance	V-Dem
4. Corruption Environment	*v2x_pubcorr*	Public sector corruption – perception of bureau-cratic corruption	V-Dem

4.3.1 Liberal Democracy Index by stakeholder type

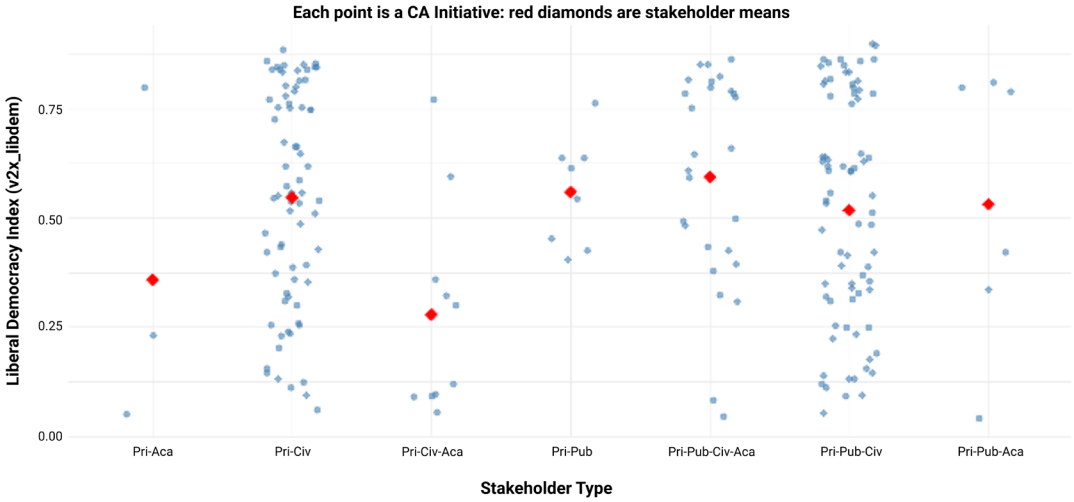

Figure 10: Association between Liberal Democracy Index scores and stakeholder types in Collective Action initiatives.

The figure suggests a modest but meaningful association between stronger democracies and broader stakeholder participation in anti-corruption initiatives. Initiatives that include public-sector actors, such as Pri-Pub-Civ-Aca (mean/median Liberal Democracy Index: 0.59), Pri-Pub (0.56/–), and Pri-Pub-Civ (0.52/–), tend to operate in countries with higher democracy scores. By contrast, initiatives composed mainly of civil society and academic partners, such as Pri-Civ-Aca (0.28/0.28) and Pri-Aca (0.36/–), appear more frequently in contexts with weaker democratic conditions.

When grouped more broadly, initiatives that involve the public sector show slightly higher Liberal Democracy Index scores (mean/median: 0.54/0.59) compared to those without public participation (0.51/0.54). Although the differences are modest and variation exists across initiative types, the pattern suggests that stronger democratic environments may help enable or encourage broader multi-sector collaboration in anti-corruption efforts.

This finding is probably not surprising, given that open civic spaces and participatory norms are more common in democracies. However, it is useful to see the data confirm this general assumption that where democratic conditions are stronger, initiatives tend to bring together a more diverse mix of stakeholders to tackle corruption collectively. At the same time, the data also shows that more focused initiatives can still operate in less democratic settings. This suggests that smaller or more informal partnerships may offer a practical entry point where broader collaboration is not feasible.

4.3.2 Liberal Democracy Index by mission category

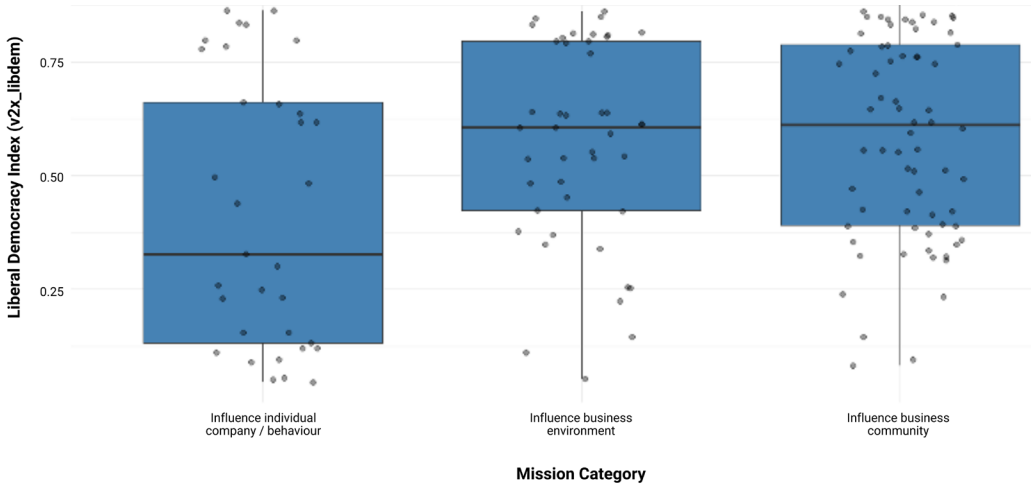

Figure 11: Association between Liberal Democracy Index scores and mission category in Collective Action initiatives.

The figure shows that mission types vary systematically with levels of democracy. Initiatives that aim to influence the business community (mean Liberal Democracy Index: 0.59) or the wider business environment (0.57) are more common in democratic contexts, where institutional openness and policy engagement are more feasible. In contrast, initiatives that focus on individual companies or behaviours tend to be more common in less democratic settings, with a lower average score of 0.42.

This pattern suggests that broader, system-wide reform goals are more likely to gain traction in democratic regimes, while more targeted, company-level interventions may be more practical or acceptable in contexts where political space is limited. While this is not surprising, the data is valuable for confirming assumptions that democratic conditions create more scope for Collective Action efforts that seek wider institutional or policy change.

4.3.3 Rule of Law Index by mission category

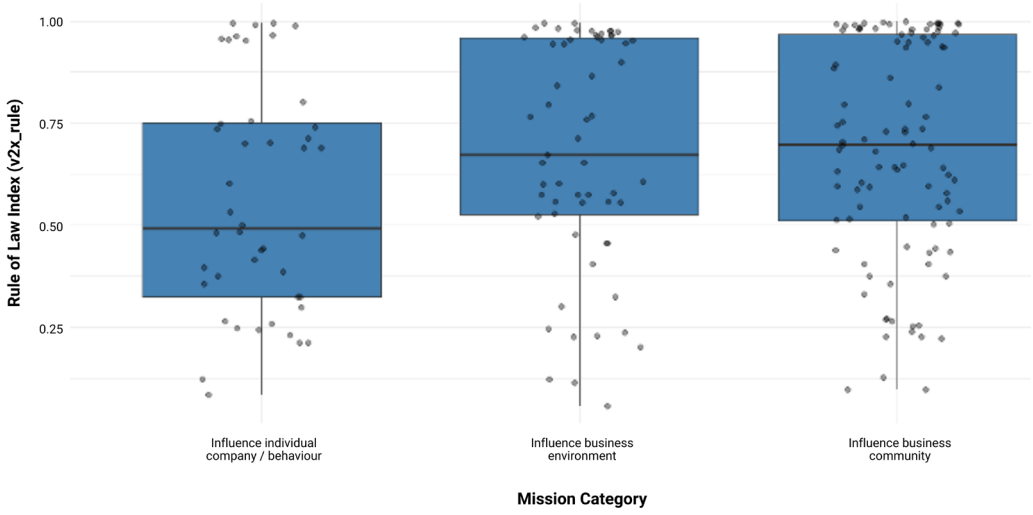

Figure 12: Association between Rule of Law Index scores and mission category in Collective Action initiatives.

This figure shows that initiatives targeting the broader business environment tend to operate in contexts with stronger rule-of-law conditions. Their median index is around 0.57, with moderate spread and a range from approximately 0.06 to 1.00. Initiatives aimed at influencing the business community show a similar pattern, with a median near 0.55 and a comparable degree of variation.

By contrast, initiatives focused on individual company behaviour have a noticeably lower median, around 0.41, and greater dispersion, with values spanning from about 0.09 to 0.99. This suggests that missions working at the environment or community level are more likely to take hold in contexts where legal frameworks and enforcement are relatively strong. Company-level efforts are more common across a broader, and on average weaker, rule-of-law spectrum.

Taken together with the previous analysis, this reinforces the idea that favourable governance conditions, like a stable rule of law and democratic openness, help enable Collective Action approaches that target systemic or industry-wide reform. Where such conditions are weaker, more focused or firm-specific initiatives may be a more realistic entry point.

4.3.4 Liberal Democracy Index by anti-corruption goal

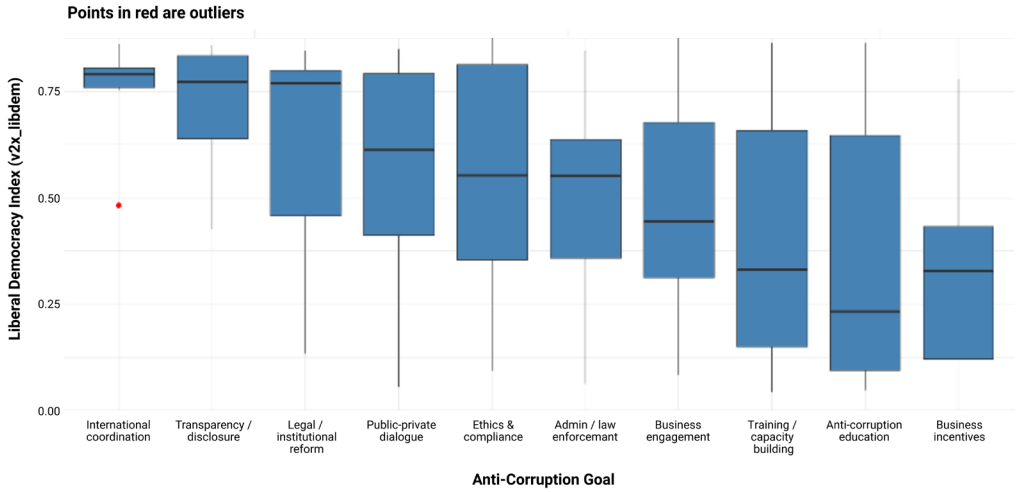

Figure 13: Association between Liberal Democracy Index scores and initiatives' anti-corruption goals.

The figure shows that Collective Action initiatives in more democratic countries tend to prioritise different goals than those operating in less democratic contexts. For example, Goal 4 on international coordination, cooperation and assistance (mean LibDem: 0.75) and Goal 6 on transparency and private sector disclosure (0.71) are most commonly pursued in highly democratic environments. This suggests that these goals often depend on a high degree of institutional openness and alignment with international standards.

Similarly, Goal 2 on legal and institutional reform (0.61) and Goal 1 on increased public-private dialogue (0.57) are more prevalent in democratic contexts, reflecting the participatory and rule-based nature of these systems. In contrast, Goal 10 on business incentives for anti-corruption compliance (0.36) and

Goal 9 on anti-corruption education (0.37) appear more frequently in less democratic settings. These goals tend to focus on individual or organisational behaviour change, which may be more practical or politically acceptable where opportunities for broader systemic reform are limited.

This pattern is consistent with the earlier findings on mission focus and stakeholder coalitions. It confirms that the wider political environment shapes not only how Collective Action is structured but also the type of goals it can realistically pursue.

4.3.5 Public Sector Corruption by activity type

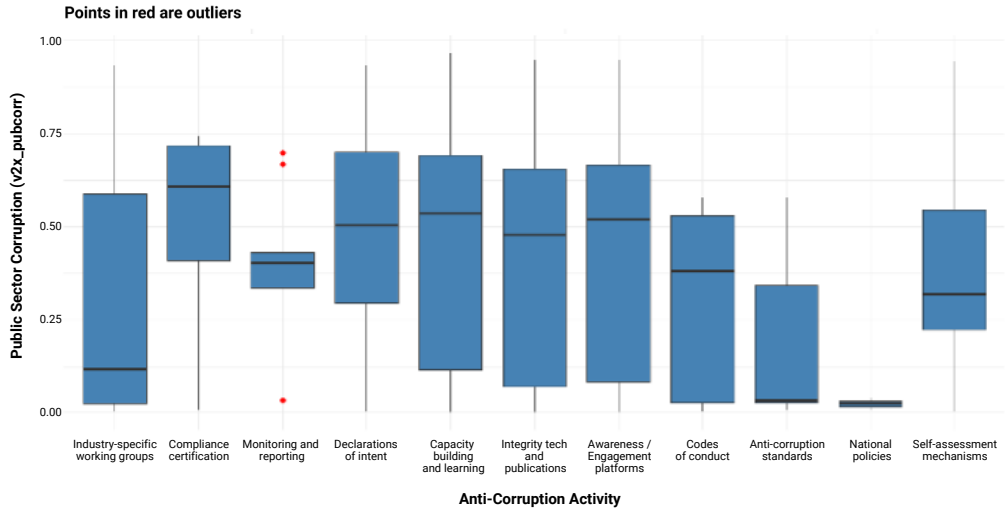

Figure 14: Association between Public Sector Corruption scores and initiatives' activities.

The figure shows that some anti-corruption activities are more commonly implemented in countries with higher levels of perceived public corruption. For example, compliance certification (mean score: 0.50), declarations of intent (0.46) and capacity-building and learning activities (0.45) are all linked with contexts where corruption is seen as relatively widespread. This suggests that these activities may be used strategically in more corrupt environments, either because there is external pressure for visible action or because there is an urgent need for practical reforms that can be quickly adopted.

In contrast, activities such as setting national policies (0.02), establishing anti-corruption standards (0.20) and codes of conduct (0.30) appear more often in less corrupt contexts. This indicates that these more structural measures may be easier to put in place or more likely to succeed in countries where institutional frameworks and enforcement are already stronger.

4.3.6 Analysis

The analysis confirms that stronger democratic conditions tend to create more flexible environments for Collective Action. Countries with open civic spaces and robust rule of law are more likely to see initiatives that bring together a broader mix of stakeholders, including

the public sector, civil society, businesses and academia. In these contexts, there is often more trust in institutions, more space for dialogue and more opportunities for stakeholders to shape systemic reforms together. This makes ambitious goals like legal or institutional change, transparency and cross-border cooperation more feasible.

By contrast, in less democratic settings, where civic space is restricted and legal systems are weaker, Collective Action initiatives are more likely to be narrower in scope. Initiatives may consist of civil society or business and academic actors working together in less formal ways, often focusing on company-level or behavioural interventions that are less politically sensitive. Similarly, the activities chosen in high-corruption environments often lean toward compliance tools, awareness raising or symbolic commitments that serve as practical entry points, rather than attempting broader structural reform that may not be viable.

These patterns are not surprising, but the data is valuable because it backs up what practitioners often assume: that political context shapes not only how Collective Action is formed but what it can realistically hope to achieve. It also shows that while broader, multi-sector initiatives are more common in open democracies, narrower or more focused initiatives still play an important role in more challenging governance environments. They can build trust, strengthen skills and lay the groundwork for bigger changes when conditions allow.

At the same time, the link between rule of law and Collective Action design is clear. Where legal frameworks are stronger and enforcement is more predictable, initiatives that aim to influence whole sectors or the wider business environment are more likely to take hold. In contexts with weaker rule of law, company-specific or ad hoc initiatives may offer a safer or more flexible starting point.

Overall, these findings reinforce that Collective Action is not one-size-fits-all approach. Understanding how governance conditions shape initiatives, goals and activities can help donors, practitioners and policymakers design approaches that are realistic and locally appropriate.

4.3.7 Questions for further research

- What explains the resilience of certain types of Collective Action in less democratic or more corrupt contexts?
- Do initiatives in restricted civic environments evolve over time to involve more stakeholders or take on more systemic goals as conditions change?
- How does the presence of international actors such as donors or multinational companies shape Collective Action in contexts with high corruption or limited freedoms?

- Is there a threshold of democracy or rule of law beyond which more ambitious goals, like transparency or legal reform, become viable?
- How do political transitions, including democratic backsliding or openings, affect ongoing Collective Action efforts?
- What mechanisms enable public-sector actors to participate in Collective Action in high-corruption settings where trust in institutions may be low?

5 Shaping anti-corruption outcomes at a national level

This final section shifts the focus from internal alignment to potential external impact by exploring whether and how Collective Action initiatives might be associated with changes in national-level anti-corruption outcomes.

Rather than attempting to measure corruption or prevention outcomes directly, we constructed a composite indicator based on publicly available governance variables that are commonly associated with stronger corruption prevention systems. This approach brings together factors such as transparency, civic participation, complaint mechanisms and financial oversight to produce a single prevention score for each country.

It should be emphasised that this score is not a comprehensive or definitive measure of prevention capacity. Instead, it serves as a proxy for key aspects of the enabling environment that are thought to help reduce opportunities for corruption.

By comparing changes in this composite indicator with the presence of Collective Action initiatives, we aim to identify plausible associations worth exploring further. However, these findings should be treated as preliminary hypotheses rather than evidence of direct causal impact, since many other factors shape national prevention capacity and our approach cannot isolate the role of any single initiative. The analysis suggests where Collective Action activities may contribute to stronger prevention conditions, but also underscores the need for more rigorous, longitudinal and context-specific studies to test and validate these relationships.

The prevention score and related findings presented below should therefore be seen as part of a broader learning process: they illustrate how the conceptual framework and improved dataset can help generate new questions and test assumptions about what works, under what conditions and why. As the field matures, more robust evaluation methods will be essential to refine these early hypotheses and strengthen the evidence base for Collective Action as a tool for systemic change.

5.1 Defining anti-corruption outcomes in Collective Action

Anti-corruption outcomes represent key functions that contribute to the overall integrity and effectiveness of a governance system. We identify three core outcome categories: prevention, detection (investigation) and deterrence (prosecution). These align with internationally recognised pillars of anti-corruption systems and serve as benchmarks to evaluate how initiatives address systemic vulnerabilities.

While all three outcomes are relevant, this section focuses specifically on **prevention**, understood as the institutional capacity to reduce opportunities for corruption through transparency, accountability and engagement.

This focus is driven by two key considerations. First, most Collective Action initiatives are designed to prevent corruption rather than detect or prosecute it. Second, prevention-related outcomes are more likely influenced by non-state actors and multi-stakeholder efforts, making them more suitable for assessing the effects of initiatives. By narrowing the scope to prevention, we ensure analytical clarity and increase the likelihood of detecting meaningful relationships between initiative characteristics and anti-corruption impact.

5.2 Developing a composite prevention score

We developed a four-step procedure to construct a composite **prevention score** that reflects each country's institutional capacity to prevent corruption.

First, we selected a set of governance indicators that conceptually aligned with the prevention function. These cover different aspects of preventive capacity, such as the transparency of laws, civic participation, complaint mechanisms and public financial oversight. All indicators were drawn from reputable global datasets and chosen to reflect a range of factors that contribute to stronger prevention systems. The variables, together with their sources and polarity, are shown below:

Need	Variable Name	Source	Polarity
Prevention	Publicised laws and government data	World Justice Project[6]	positive
Prevention	Right to information	World Justice Project	positive
Prevention	Civic participation	World Justice Project	positive
Prevention	Complaint mechanisms	World Justice Project	positive
Prevention	Open Budget Index	International Budget Partnership[7]	positive
Prevention	(Lack of) favouritism in decisions of government officials	World Economic Forum[8]	positive

6 World Justice Project, https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=21846723301&gbraid=0AAAAA-TYemueML_rfcE-eQi4LraQF1CvD&gclid=Cj0KCQjwm93DBhD_ARIsADR_DjF2knxEbE-UxEV3ohSROUoD-Y9yc_gcmyhwWfyk0LMaJByw60z_h8saAmp7EALw_wcB, retrieved June 2025.

7 International Budget Partnership, https://internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/open-budget-survey-2023?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=21384437256&gbraid=0AAAABU9cx-ZimG0xuY7Xi4kd1NLc5EPM&gclid=Cj0KCQjwm93DBhD_ARIsADR_DjFfnCRyt0yuR2MWnDEnFZ0ICWsa9wC_eNeySwbJ9H4nOPO8alsB-NcaArUmEALw_wcB, retrieved June 2025.

8 World Economic Forum, https://www.weforum.org/, retrieved June 2025.

Prevention	Financial Secrecy Score	Bertelsmann Stiftung[9]	positive
Prevention	Financial Secrecy Score	Tax Justice Network[10]	negative

Most variables already followed the convention that higher values indicated stronger preventive capacity. The exception was the Financial Secrecy Score from the Tax Justice Network, which required inversion since higher secrecy meant weaker prevention.

Second, we standardised each variable to a common scale from 0 to 1 to ensure comparability across countries and indicators. This standardisation allowed us to combine data from different sources and units without distortions.

Third, we adjusted the polarity of each variable as needed so that higher scores consistently reflected stronger prevention capacity.

Finally, we calculated the composite prevention score for each country-year by taking the simple average of all standardised, polarity-adjusted variables. This resulted in a continuous score ranging from zero (very weak) to one (very strong), providing a baseline measure for the analysis.

To assess whether Collective Action initiatives were associated with measurable improvements, we then compared each country's prevention score in the year the initiative began and three years later. The percentage change was calculated using the following formula:

$$\%Change = \frac{Score_{+3\ years} - Score_{start\ year}}{Score_{start\ year}} \times 100\%$$

The three-year period allowed enough time for activities to be implemented and for early institutional effects to become visible, while limiting the influence of unrelated structural or political changes. This approach provides a standardised way to compare how prevention capacity changed across initiatives, countries and contexts.

5.3 Connecting initiative activities to national-level outcomes

The assumption underlying our analysis is that Collective Action initiatives, through their operational design and choice of activities, can contribute to improved prevention outcomes at the national level. While attribution remains complex, there are strong theoretical and practical reasons to expect that the preventive effects of these initiatives can be reflected in aggregate governance indicators over time.

9 Bertelsmann Stiftung, https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/startseite, retrieved June 2025.

10 Tax Justice Network, https://taxjustice.net/, retrieved June 2025.

This expectation is grounded in the nature of the activities commonly implemented by initiatives, most of which are explicitly or implicitly designed to strengthen prevention. These activities promote ethical standards, transparency, capacity building and proactive institutional reform: all key pillars of corruption prevention. The table below summarises how we have hypothesised how each activity contributes to the prevention function and the rationale for its potential influence:

Activity	Contribution to prevention
Engaging in industry-specific working groups	This activity contributes to prevention by fostering ethical dialogue among stakeholders, encouraging the sharing of anti-corruption best practices and promoting a proactive culture of compliance within specific sectors.
Declarations of intent	These public commitments help prevent corruption by signalling a clear stance against unethical behaviour, setting expectations for transparency and deterring corrupt practices from the outset.
Capacity-building and learning activities	Training sessions, workshops and similar formats enhance prevention by equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and tools needed to recognise, resist and mitigate corruption risks in their organisations.
Development of integrity tools and publications	By producing handbooks, guidelines and analytical tools, this activity builds preventive capacity through the institutionalisation of standards and the dissemination of practical resources that promote ethical governance.
Events / awareness raising / engagement platforms	These activities support prevention by increasing public and stakeholder awareness of corruption risks, promoting ethical values and mobilising collective support for integrity initiatives.
Setting codes of conduct	Codes of conduct help prevent corruption by establishing formal ethical guidelines and behavioural expectations that promote integrity and reduce discretionary decision making.
Setting industry anti-corruption compliance standards	This activity advances prevention by defining sector-specific compliance benchmarks, encouraging harmonised ethical practices and reducing vulnerabilities to corrupt behaviour across organisations.
Setting national anti-corruption policies	Although also linked to deterrence, this activity supports prevention by embedding transparency and accountability principles into public policy and legal frameworks, thereby strengthening institutional safeguards.
Self-assessment and implementation tools and mechanisms	These tools contribute to prevention by enabling organisations to proactively evaluate and improve their own systems, identify weaknesses before misconduct occurs and build a culture of continuous improvement.
Providing compliance certification	Certification mechanisms prevent corruption by incentivising ethical behaviour, recognising organisations that meet high integrity standards and promoting a culture of accountability through public recognition.

In our view, nearly all activities undertaken by initiatives contribute directly or indirectly to prevention. Even those not exclusively focused on preventive functions often have embedded components that strengthen organisational and sectoral integrity frameworks.

By comparing changes in the national prevention scores with the launch of initiatives, our aim has been to explore whether there is an association between the implementation of these activities and improvements in the institutional environment.

Nevertheless, we fully acknowledge that establishing causality at the national level is inherently challenging. The complexity of governance ecosystems, the interplay of multiple reforms and the long time horizons required for institutional change make it difficult to isolate the specific impact of any single initiative. However, we felt it was essential to adopt a national contextual lens in this analysis to reflect the core "theory of change" underpinning Collective Action: that coordinated, integrity-driven efforts by diverse stakeholders can contribute to broader improvements in the business environment and reductions in corruption.

By situating initiatives within their macro context, we aim not to prove linear cause and effect, but to illustrate the plausibility and pathways through which Collective Action can shape national-level governance outcomes. This approach helps bridge operational realities with policy-level ambitions, providing a more grounded understanding of how micro-level actions might collectively drive systemic change.

5.4 Initiative characteristics and their relationship to prevention

The change in prevention was calculated based on 147 observations out of a total of 212. The mean change is 21.5, the median is 7.33 and the standard deviation is 59.2. These results indicate that most countries with implemented initiatives show positive changes; however, some countries have experienced negative changes.

5.4.1 Prevention change by mission category

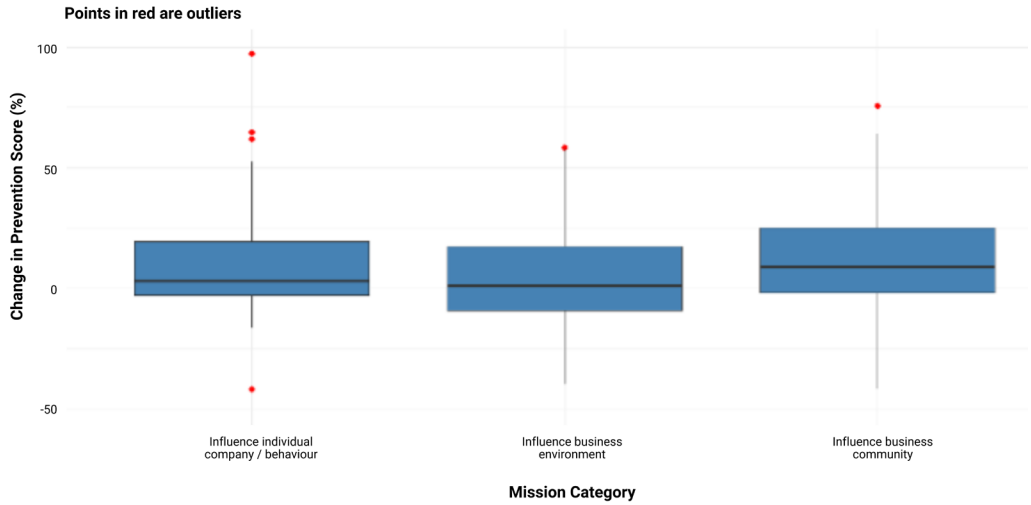

Figure 15: Changes in the prevention score vs. mission category.

The analysis of prevention score change by mission category reveals relatively modest average impacts, but incorporating the median provides a more nuanced understanding. Initiatives aimed at influencing individual company or staff

behaviour show the highest mean change (24.4 percent), though the median is just 4.87 percent, suggesting that a few high-performing cases may inflate the average.

Similarly, initiatives targeting the business community report a mean of 20.8 percent and a median of 9.35 percent, while those focused on the business environment show a mean of 20.4 percent and a median of 2.73 percent. These gaps between mean and median values, coupled with high standard deviations – particularly in the business environment group (76.5 percent) – highlight substantial variation in outcomes.

This variability suggests that while some initiatives might produce prevention gains, many may have more limited effects. These results underscore the importance of looking beyond mission focus to also consider implementation quality, contextual conditions and outlier sensitivity when evaluating Collective Action effectiveness.

5.4.2 Prevention change by activity type

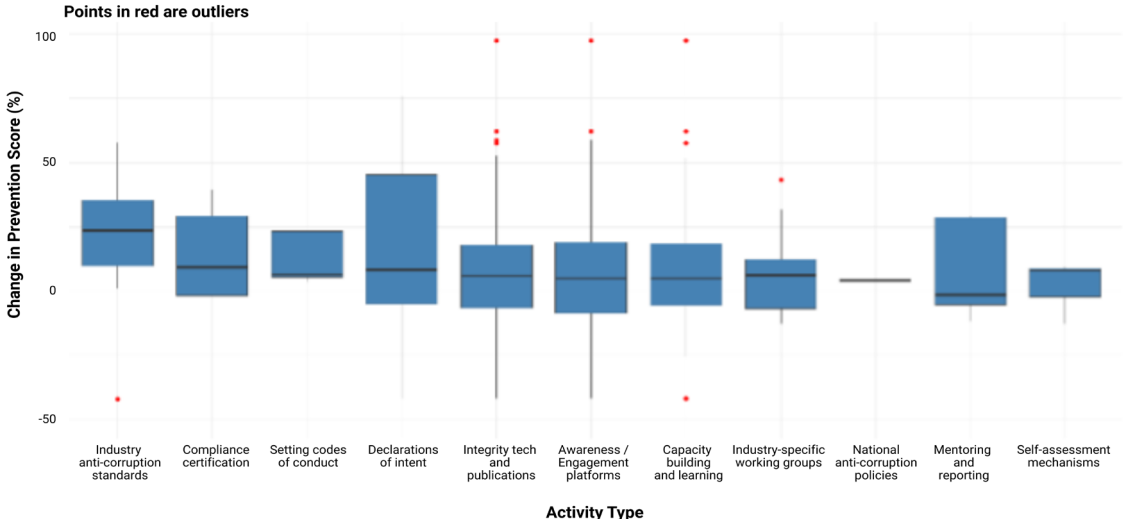

Figure 16: Changes in the prevention score vs. activity type.

This figure reveals notable differences in how various activities were associated with changes in prevention scores. Activities such as capacity building and learning (mean change: 42.0, median: 15.0) and integrity tools and publications (mean: 39.3, median: 10.5) showed the highest average improvements, although both had high variability. Declarations of intent also ranked among the more effective activities (mean: 36.4, median: 19.3), with individual changes ranging from –1.99 to 144. Interestingly, setting codes of conduct had a lower mean improvement (24.6) and a modest median (7.48), yet also included some of the highest recorded gains (maximum: 436), indicating highly uneven results.

By contrast, more widely implemented activities such as industry anti-corruption standards (mean: 21.2, median: 6.63) and events, awareness and engagement platforms (mean: 19.9, median: 7.48) yielded relatively moderate effects overall. Structural interventions such as national anti-corruption policies (mean: 18.9, median: 6.42) were linked to the lowest average improvements.

Additionally, compliance certification (mean: 14.5, median: –2.3) and self-assessment mechanisms (mean and median: 4.12) appeared to contribute little on average to prevention outcomes.

Taken together, these results suggest that while popular activities may boost visibility and stakeholder engagement, more targeted interventions – particularly those focused on internal learning and practical tools – may have greater potential to strengthen anti-corruption capacity. However, it was also clear that several activity categories had very few observations, and the wide range and high standard deviations point to the need for cautious interpretation. This underlines the importance of looking at design quality, local context and how activities are implemented, not just their type.

5.4.3 Prevention change by typology

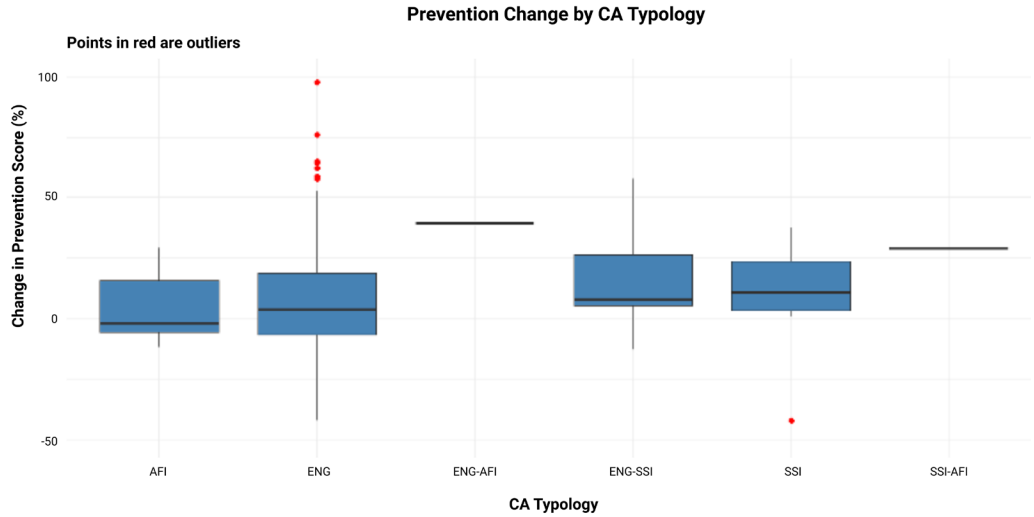

Figure 17: Changes in the prevention score vs. typology.

This figure reveals substantial variation in performance among different models. Engagement-focused initiatives (ENG), the most common type, showed a moderate mean increase of 22.8 percent. However the median was much lower at 6.77 percent, indicating a skewed distribution with a few high-performing cases lifting the average. Typologies that combined engagement with standard-setting instruments (ENG-SSI) showed a higher mean improvement (38.3 percent), but the median remained low (8.7 percent) and the high standard deviation (65.3 percent) pointed to very uneven results.

Standard-setting only (SSI) initiatives had a negative mean (–1.31 percent) but a positive median (5.5 percent), suggesting limited or inconsistent effectiveness overall. Similarly, assurance-focused (AFI) initiatives showed a mean improvement of 16.6 percent but a negative median (–1.6 percent), again highlighting variability and mixed outcomes. Hybrid models like ENG-AFI and SSI-AFI displayed promising mean scores (39.6 percent and 29.3 percent, respectively), but these were each based on single cases and therefore could not be generalised.

Overall, the results suggest that mixed or hybrid approaches may offer greater potential for impact, but the large variability and small sample sizes for certain typologies underscored the need for cautious interpretation.

5.4.4 Analysis

The results of this analysis reinforce that prevention is the main function of Collective Action in practice, since most initiatives are designed to reduce corruption risks by promoting transparency, integrity standards, capacity building and collaborative problem-solving.

The composite prevention score offers an initial way to track changes over time and test for plausible connections between the design of initiatives, the activities they deliver and shifts in the broader institutional environment. Overall, the findings suggest that the prevention environment does tend to improve in many contexts where initiatives are implemented. However, the gaps between mean and median scores and the large variation across cases highlight how uneven these gains can be.

Some mission categories, such as those focused on influencing individual companies or behaviours, show higher average gains but also significant outliers. Similarly, activities such as capacity building, learning and practical integrity tools appear more closely associated with positive change than symbolic or highly structural measures. However, patterns remain far from consistent.

Comparisons across typologies point to the potential of hybrid or mixed approaches that combine engagement with standard-setting or assurance elements. Small sample sizes and variation in results mean these should be interpreted with caution. These patterns reinforce that context, design quality and sustained implementation matter just as much as the formal type of initiative when it comes to achieving meaningful prevention outcomes.

More broadly, this section highlights how important and challenging it is to situate Collective Action within a wider anti-corruption theory of change. No single initiative will transform an entire governance system alone, but understanding where Collective Action can strengthen prevention helps connect practical activities with policy-level ambitions. This analysis is an initial attempt to do so, providing a baseline approach that can be tested, refined and built upon in future studies.

The development of a prevention score also has potential uses beyond this study. It could support practitioners and researchers to compare country contexts when designing new initiatives, monitor shifts in institutional capacity over time, or serve as a baseline for more in-depth case studies that examine how Collective Action interacts

with other governance reforms. This kind of measurement could help generate stronger evidence on how, when and why Collective Action contributes to more resilient anti-corruption systems.

5.4.5 Questions for further research

- What conditions help explain why some Collective Action initiatives produce measurable prevention gains while others do not?
- How do different combinations of stakeholders, including public-sector participation, shape prevention outcomes in practice?
- Which design features make hybrid or mixed approaches more likely to deliver impact, and where are they realistic?
- How long does it realistically take for Collective Action efforts to contribute to lasting improvements in prevention capacity?
- Which combinations of activities appear most promising for different governance and corruption contexts?
- How can initiatives track and report prevention impacts more consistently to strengthen the collective evidence base?
- In what other ways could the prevention score be applied to support Collective Action design, evaluation and policy dialogue?

6 Conclusion

This project set out to map, measure and make sense of Collective Action as a practical approach to tackling corruption risks that no single actor can solve alone. It combines conceptual clarity, an updated evidence base and practical recommendations for researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

First, the unified conceptual framework shows that Collective Action is best understood as an adaptive system shaped by multiple factors: the urgency of the problem, the conditions that enable or constrain collaboration, the incentives that drive organisations to participate, and the internal dynamics that make initiatives thrive or fail. By offering a clear set of models and diagnostic questions, the framework provides a shared language for designing, comparing and improving initiatives across different contexts.

Second, the operationalisation of the framework has improved the B20 Hub database of Collective Action initiatives, the world's largest dedicated dataset on anti-corruption Collective Action. Beyond just updating records, this effort applied new typologies, clearer stakeholder classifications and a structured programmatic fitness measure to test how well initiatives link their goals with their activities. The proposed reporting protocol in Annex 4 will help initiatives present more complete, comparable information. If used consistently, this will support greater transparency and shared learning in a field where data gaps have long limited progress.

Third, the descriptive mapping highlights the core patterns that shape Collective Action today. Most initiatives focus on building trust, raising awareness and setting voluntary standards rather than developing binding rules or formal assurance mechanisms. Many operate in national settings, often in emerging markets, where businesses and civil society see a clear need to work together to improve integrity conditions. The evidence confirms that factors like democracy, civic space and rule of law influence what's realistic, from who sits at the table to the scope and scale of goals.

Fourth, the analysis of potential outcomes shifts the conversation from intentions to plausible impacts. The prevention score, while not definitive, offers an initial way to track whether the conditions that reduce corruption risks are improving where Collective Action is active. The patterns are encouraging: some types of activities, particularly capacity building and practical tools, appear more consistently linked with positive change. But the large variation across cases, the gaps between mean averages and medians, and the limited reach of more formal standards show that not all efforts deliver equally.

Taken together, this research answers many of the key questions set out in the diagnostic framework in Annex 1. It provides insights into who participates (Q4.1–4.2), where and when initiatives operate (Q2.1–3.4), what goals they pursue (Q9.1–9.2), what actions they take (Q10.1–10.2), and how those goals and activities align (Q10.3). It also explores how context matters, especially the

influence of governance conditions such as democracy, civic space and rule of law (Q6.1–6.4), and begins to test how Collective Action may contribute to prevention-related outcomes (Q10.4).

However, important questions remain open. The dataset does not systematically capture the triggers that launch or stall initiatives (Q1.1–1.3), the incentives or risks that shape organisational decision making (Q7.1, Q8.2), or the trust and power dynamics that influence an initiative's behaviour over time (Q6.3, Q9.3, Q8.3). Nor does it yet examine how initiatives adapt and evolve as conditions change (Q3.3, Q8.4). Funding models (Q7.2.1) remain poorly documented. And while this study focuses on prevention, the links between Collective Action and detection or deterrence functions (Q10.4 continued) are still underexplored.

Situating Collective Action within a wider anti-corruption theory of change is essential, even if complex. This study represents one step in showing how practical collaboration among businesses, civil society and public-sector actors can contribute to stronger systems of integrity. The prevention score can support future research and planning, whether to compare country contexts, monitor progress over time or guide deeper case studies on how Collective Action interacts with other reforms.

These findings resonate with recent work by the OECD, whose 2024 study *Advancing business integrity through collective action*[11] also underscores the contextual nature of Collective Action and the importance of internal dynamics such as trust, governance and shared incentives. Like this report, the OECD highlights the predominance of engagement-focused and trust-building initiatives, as well as the challenges of achieving lasting impact without institutional buy-in. Both studies affirm that political and regulatory environments shape what is feasible, and both stress the need for clearer reporting, longer-term monitoring and greater strategic alignment. Integrating insights from both studies can help guide more context-sensitive, adaptive approaches to Collective Action and support the evolution of the field toward greater credibility and impact.

To build on this foundation, we suggest several priorities for the field:

- **Promote standardised reporting and data transparency.** Use the common reporting protocol (Annex 4) to strengthen consistency and comparability. Better data will help practitioners learn from each other, support donor coordination and build a more credible evidence base.
- **Support longitudinal and case-based research.** Collective Action is inherently a long-term process: building trust, aligning diverse interests and influencing systemic change all take time, often unfolding over years. It will therefore be important to invest in studies that follow initiatives over time, using in-depth case studies, interviews and mixed-method evaluations to understand how initiatives adapt, sustain trust

11 Advancing business integrity through collective action, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/advancing-business-integrity-through-collective-action_38d2665e-en.html, retrieved July 2025.

and generate impact in different political and economic conditions. This should also include more structured approaches to examining the behavioural dimensions of trust building, such as how incentives, perceptions and power dynamics shape collaboration in practice.

- **Tailor Collective Action to context.** Apply the insights on democracy and rule of law to design realistic, locally grounded initiatives. In restrictive settings, softer entry points like business-led codes or education campaigns may be more feasible. In more open contexts, broader initiatives and policy-level reforms become viable.
- **Strengthen strategic alignment.** Use tools like the programmatic fitness concept to assess whether goals and actions match in practice. Honest reflection on gaps can help initiatives avoid drift and maintain credibility.
- **Foster communities of practice.** Support regional or sector-specific networks for peer learning and practical problem solving, especially in places where donor or government support may be limited.
- **Integrate Collective Action into broader anti-corruption strategies.** Position Collective Action as a complementary element in national or regional plans, helping bridge the gap between public policy commitments and real-world implementation.

This paper shows that Collective Action is not a substitute for strong institutions, enforcement or political will. Its real contribution lies in helping diverse actors build trust, set common standards and take collective responsibility for risks they cannot manage alone.

To fulfil that promise, the field must keep testing ideas, learning from what works and what does not, and sharing that knowledge more openly. This study is only a starting point – one that invites further research and collaboration, as well as more practical experimentation to ensure Collective Action remains a credible part of the global fight against corruption.

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Annex 1: Conceptual framework | Full question set

(CA = Collective Action)	1. PROBLEM	2. PLACE	3. TIME	4. ACTORS	5. STAKEHOLDERS	6. INSTITUTIONS	7. DECISION ARENA (INCENTIVES)	8. ACTION ARENA	9. ACTIONS	10. GOAL
SYSTEM STABILITY & CHANGE	1.1. Which events inside or outside the organisation(s) triggered the identification of a corruption problem requiring CA?	2.1. Where (industry and location) did the activities associated with the CA take place? 2.1.1. What is the level of corruption in the industry and location under assessment?	3.1. When did the triggering event(s) take place?	4.1. Which actors are involved in pursuing the CA goal(s)?	5.1. Which stakeholders have reacted to the CA initiative? What overt (or covert, if available) actions have they taken?	6.1. Are there formal or informal rules that facilitate or obstruct CA initiatives?		8.1. Where are the CA initiatives selected meant to be carried out?	9.1. What are the CA initiatives selected and/or carried out by the network? What activities do they comprise?	10.1. What are the stated goals of the CA?
ORGANISATIONAL DECISION MAKING	1.2. What are the corruption risks (economic and/or reputational) that actors perceive? 1.2.1. What are the enabling conditions for CA that actors perceive?	2.2. What are the main political, economic and social characteristics of the industry and location under assessment?	3.2. When did the actors decide to form a CA network? When was the CA network created or launched?			6.2. What standards of behaviour are considered to be appropriate for actors in the industry and location under assessment? 6.2.1. What are the risks and opportunity costs of the CA under assessment?	7.1. Does the CA goal fit the reputational aspirations of the actors involved? What are the perceived rewards (e.g., economic or market position) of the CA goal for the actors involved? What is the risk appetite of the actors involved? How do actors perceive the interests of other actors and stakeholders?	8.2. Does the arena selected for CA reflect the reputational aspirations of the actors or their power position within the industry and location under assessment?	9.2. Do the intensity of actions match their reported interests?	10.2. Do the activities of the CA initiative match the selected goals?
CA NETWORK FORMATION	1.3. How does the CA network describe the problem situation?	2.3. What are the main characteristics of the relations between government, private sector and civil society?	3.3. When was the CA network active? What is the frequency of network activities?	4.2. How many organisations are part of the CA network? Who were the first movers? Which industries are represented?	5.2. Which external actors participate or engage with the network? Are they supportive or antagonistic?	6.3. What is the degree of trust within the industry and location under assessment? Does the legal framework support collaboration and dispute resolution?	7.2. What is the pool of resources made available by the members (and supporting actors) of the CA network? 7.2.1. Are the resources spread across the network or concentrated in few nodes? 7.2.2. What are the perceived rewards of the CA activities and/or goal for the networked actors involved?	8.3. How can the role of network actors and/or stakeholders operating within and outside the action arena be typified? Do the actors have concerns or grievances about the distribution of responsibilities or costs of the CA?	9.3. What is the quality of interactions and exchange within the network? What is the degree of efficiency and capacity of the network?	10.3. Is there consensus about the goals of the CA network? Are the goals abstract or specific?
CA NETWORK IMPACT		2.4. Are there specific environmental conditions facilitating corruption in the industry and location under assessment?	3.4. When did the network outputs take place?		5.3. How do stakeholders perform in relation to their own anti-corruption roles?	6.4. What is the quality of supportive anti-corruption conditions, such as rule of law, independent judiciary, freedom of the press, etc.?		8.4. What is the significance of the action arena to the overall corruption level in the industry and location under assessment?	9.4. Is the scope of actions broad or narrow vis-a-vis the overall integrity system?	10.4. To what degree have the goals of the CA been attained? How have they altered the larger integrity system?

Annex 2: Collective Action design checklist for practitioners

Use this checklist to reflect on the design, feasibility and readiness of your Collective Action initiative.

Problem recognition and trigger events

- ❒ What more can we do to make the corruption or business integrity issue clear to everyone involved?
- ❒ How can we actively use any recent trigger events (like a scandal or reform) to build momentum and show why action is urgent?
- ❒ How can we communicate the problem and trigger to engage and motivate stakeholders?

Organisational positioning

- ❒ How can we clarify and communicate the specific risks and benefits for each potential participant?
- ❒ What can we do to ensure this initiative clearly aligns with organisations' values and strategic priorities?
- ❒ How can we use participation to strengthen credibility with regulators, investors, customers or the public?

Network formation and governance

- ❒ Who are the first movers and key actors we should mobilise – and what's our plan to bring them on board?
- ❒ What concrete steps can we take to build and sustain trust among all participants?
- ❒ How can we design or strengthen governance structures to guarantee accountability and transparency from day one?

Contextual alignment and feasibility

- ❒ What supportive legal, political or social factors can we leverage - and how will we do it?
- ❒ Which barriers (e.g. backlash, weak enforcement, vested interests) are most likely - and what is our plan to mitigate or respond?
- ❒ Who can help us navigate the local context to boost feasibility?

Strategic fit and adaptive capacity

- ❒ Are our planned activities truly advancing our shared goal - and what adjustments are needed if they don't?
- ❒ How will we gather feedback, learn from experience and adapt our approach as we go?
- ❒ What will we do to sustain engagement and commitment if the context shifts?

Annex 3: Research survey for academic research

This Annex provides a set of initial research questions that could be used and built upon for interviews, case studies or further comparative analysis of Collective Action initiatives.

Emergence and enabling conditions

- ❒ What political or institutional factors contributed to the emergence of this Collective Action initiative?
- ❒ Was there a specific trigger? How was it perceived by different stakeholders?

Decision-making and incentive structures

- ❒ What were the perceived risks and benefits for each participating organisation?
- ❒ How did participants' perceptions compare with the actual costs and benefits over time?

Network structures and dynamics

- ❒ How was the Collective Action network structured? Which sectors and actors were involved?
- ❒ What mechanisms were used to build trust and manage power imbalances?

Impact measurement and attribution

- ❒ What specific outcomes (such as increased transparency or institutional reforms) can be attributed to the initiative?
- ❒ How are these impacts measured, and who verifies them?

Adaptation and sustainability

- ❒ How has the Collective Action initiative adapted over time in response to internal or external changes?
- ❒ What factors contribute to its long-term sustainability, and what challenges could undermine it?

Annex 4: B20 Collective Action Hub | Database of initiatives entry form

Question	Guidance / Response
1. Name of initiative	Official name of the Collective Action initiative
2. Year of establishment	When did your initiative formally begin its activities?
3. Expected duration	For example: 5 years, or open-ended.
4. Host or facilitating organisation(s)	Which organisation(s) host or facilitate the initiative? Does the initiative have its own legal identity or secretariat?
5. Headquarter location	Country where the host organisation(s) and/or secretariat is based.
6. Scope of operations	Is the initiative national, international (involving more than one country) or global (i.e. applicable everywhere) in scope? Please specify which country or countries it covers.
7. Industries involved	Which industry sectors are engaged in the initiative? For example: finance, energy, infrastructure. If the initiative is not industry-specific, indicate multi-industry.

Question	Guidance / Response
8. Mission focus	Which mission level best describes your initiative's main purpose: ▪ Environment-level (influencing national or international policies, institutional frameworks) ▪ Community-level (building integrity across a business sector or industry network) ▪ Organisational/Individual-level (changing practices within a small group of companies or group of individuals)
9. Main goals	What are the initiative's specific goals? Please describe the concrete changes or outcomes it aims to achieve.
10. Main activities and outputs	What activities does the initiative carry out to achieve its goals? For example: training, codes of conduct, dialogue platforms, monitoring tools. Include links to any tools, publications or resources where available.
11. Stakeholder groups involved	Which stakeholder groups actively participate in the initiative? ▪ Private sector (business entities) ▪ Business or professional associations (e.g. industry associations, Chambers of Commerce) ▪ Public sector (e.g. national anti-corruption agencies, government authorities) ▪ Civil society (local, national or international NGOs) ▪ Academia (e.g. universities, research institutions) ▪ Media ▪ Youth ▪ Other (please specify)

Question	Guidance / Response
12. Nature of stakeholder involvement	Describe how key stakeholders are involved in the initiative. For example: as active members, supporters, funders, or beneficiaries of outputs.
13. Funding sources or business model	How is the initiative funded? Did it receive initial funding or start-up support? If so, from whom (e.g. donors, business associations, multilateral organisations)? Are there ongoing membership contributions or fees for specific services?
14. Website and key documents	Provide a website link and any relevant documents or publications that help explain your initiative.
15. Main contact person	Name: Title: Organisation: Email: The Basel Institute reserves the right to remove or decline initiatives from the database if they do not meet the specific criteria.