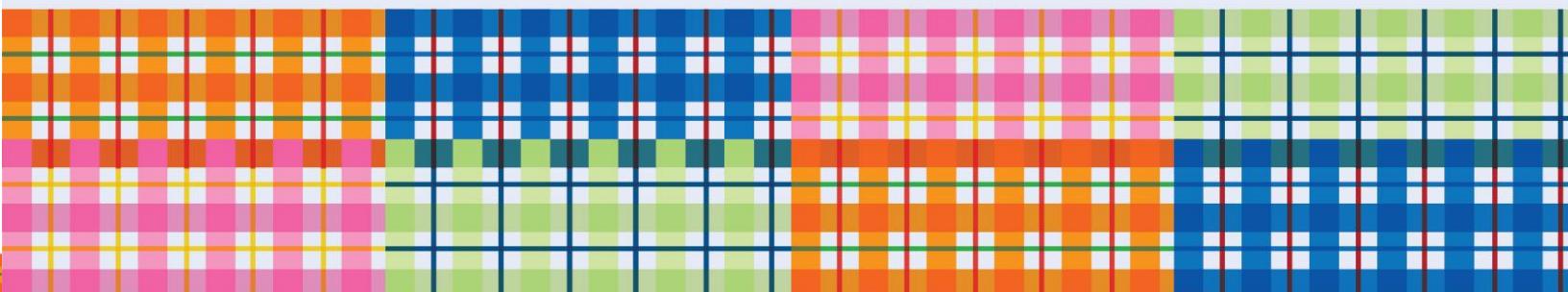
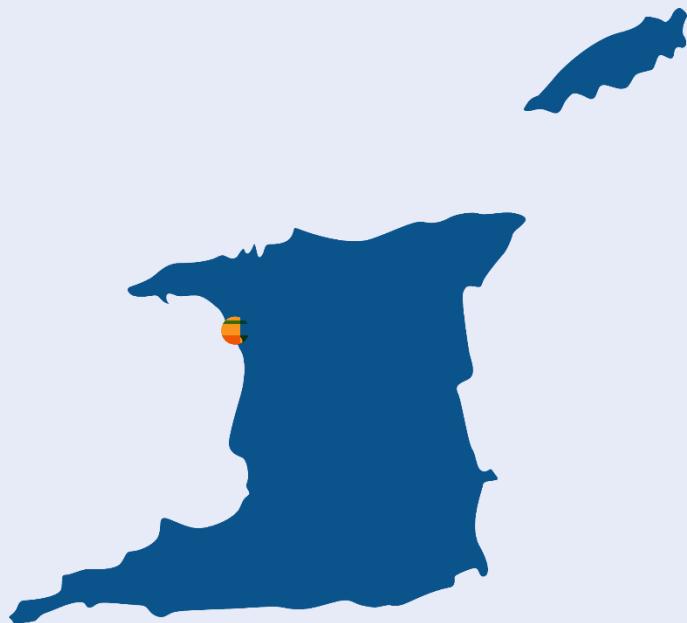


Roadmap 2023-2025

Regional Platform to Fast-Track the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in the Caribbean



REGIONAL PLATFORM TO FAST-TRACK THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION (UNCAC) IN THE CARIBBEAN

ROADMAP 2023-2025

Adopted in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 11 October 2023

Introduction

Concerned about the seriousness of problems and threats posed by corruption to the stability and security of societies, undermining the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003. Since then, the UNCAC has reached near-universal recognition, and is considered a unique tool for developing a comprehensive response to a global problem.

The international community has acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in SDG 16, that tackling corruption is vital to sustaining economic stability and growth, maintaining societal security, protecting human rights, reducing poverty, preserving the environment and fighting organized crime. This approach is also echoed in regional initiatives, including the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC), adopted in 1996 under the aegis of the Organization of American States (OAS), as well as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Crime and Security Strategy adopted in 2013, which considers corruption as an immediate significant threat to the Region's security and sustainable development.

The delegations of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana (observer), Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago gathered in Port of Spain on 9-11 October 2023, on the occasion of the Conference to Launch the Regional Platform to Fast-Track the Implementation of the UNCAC in the Caribbean. The delegations recognized that detecting gaps with respect to international standards is a necessary step for countries to assess their implementation, including successes and challenges, and identify reform opportunities. As emphasized in the Political Declaration adopted in June 2021 by the UN General Assembly at its first special session on corruption, the effective implementation of UNCAC requires action by state actors in cooperation with other non-state stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society and the general public.

With a view to contributing to these efforts, over the past few years, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been supporting the establishment of regional platforms to fast-track UNCAC implementation. The regional platform approach is catalytic, as it seeks to identify gaps in existing anti-corruption efforts and to coordinate and leverage the work of technical assistance providers while promoting better regional coordination and collaboration. Based on the success demonstrated

worldwide, the regional platforms approach has been recognized by the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC with the adoption of Resolution 9/4 in December 2021.

This Conference highlighted the need to strengthen and promote regional cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the UNCAC, as well as the IACAC. Delegations also stressed the importance of ensuring that national laws are in conformity with the relevant requirements of the UNCAC and address the recommendations emanating from the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism and the Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the IACAC (MESICIC), applicable to the priority areas identified in this Roadmap.

This is reflected in the Roadmap presented here below, which will guide anti-corruption efforts in the region in the three years to come. Delegations emphasized the need to ensure the availability of adequate resources by participating States, to further the implementation of this Roadmap.

THEMATIC AREA 1 – STRONGER ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Objective 1: Promote and intensify anti-corruption awareness.

Activity 1.1: Implement continuous anti-corruption educational outreach programmes, workshops and campaigns utilizing all forms of media, for relevant stakeholders, such as the public and private sectors, civil society, academia, youth and media.

Activity 1.2: Develop, strengthen, and implement appropriate curriculums to instill principles of good governance, namely transparency, accountability, integrity and anti-corruption, for all educational levels (primary, secondary, tertiary).

Activity 1.3: Develop, strengthen and implement continuous anti-corruption education and training for public officials and public officers.

Activity 1.4: Establish and reinforce mechanisms to facilitate general access to anti-corruption resources in an efficient manner, using information technology.

Objective 2: Strengthen institutional frameworks, using a multi-stakeholder approach, to develop comprehensive policies to address corruption.

Activity 2.1: Develop, strengthen and implement comprehensive national anti-corruption policies, using a multi-stakeholder approach.

Activity 2.2: Establish and strengthen independent national anti-corruption bodies, in a manner sufficient to ensure continuity, with an overarching responsibility for the coordination and implementation of national anti-corruption policies.

Activity 2.3: Develop and implement tools and methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of national anti-corruption policies.

Activity 2.4: Develop and implement inter-agency mechanisms for cooperation and coordination, including the use of electronic systems for the sharing of data and information amongst anti-corruption mandate holders and stakeholders.

Activity 2.5: Recognizing their independence, develop and implement measures to ensure transparency and accountability of national anti-corruption bodies, such as annual reporting to parliament.

Objective 3: Develop and strengthen institutional integrity systems.

Activity 3.1: Develop, communicate and disseminate enforceable codes of conduct for public officials and public officers.

Activity 3.2: Strengthen asset declaration systems, including compliance, verification and management, using information technology, as appropriate.

Activity 3.3: Establish and strengthen comprehensive recruitment and selection criteria and promote open and transparent recruitment practices and processes.

Activity 3.4: Conduct ongoing integrity awareness training for public officials and public officers, inclusive of training on asset declarations, conflict of interest and gift-handling procedures, including gift registries.

Activity 3.5: Establish and strengthen policies which regulate the receipt of gifts by public officials and public officers.

THEMATIC AREA 2 – TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND PROBITY IN BUSINESS

Objective 1: Strengthen the capacities of public procurement entities.

Activity 1.1: Design and implement training programmes for public officials involved in public procurement procedures that include topics related to sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive procurement, free from discrimination.

Activity 1.2: Develop and implement strategies to facilitate the exchange of good practices through regional training programmes for public officials and public officers involved in public procurement.

Activity 1.3: Establish alliances with academia and international organizations to encourage the development of career paths in public procurement and associated topics.

Activity 1.4: Enhance the efficacy of public procurement offices and functions by providing the necessary resources, defining clear job descriptions, competency frameworks for procurement personnel and any other relevant measures.

Objective 2: Develop and strengthen legal frameworks and public policies aimed at promoting efficiency, transparency, competition and objective criteria in public procurement.

Activity 2.1: Develop, strengthen and implement public procurement laws and policies to incorporate mechanisms that enhance efficiency, transparency, competition, objective criteria, accountability, sustainability and youth empowerment, when appropriate, in procurement processes.

Activity 2.2: Develop and disseminate codes of conduct, handbooks or instruments specifically tailored to procurement officials and suppliers.

Activity 2.3: Define and implement strategies to promote the active participation of the private sector and civil society in the consolidation of good practices and standards on efficient and transparent public procurement.

Activity 2.4: Identify existing gaps in public procurement legal frameworks and draft new legislation or propose amendments to address them, in accordance with best practices in transparency, accountability and efficiency.

Activity 2.5: Take measures to support the active participation and involvement of the private sector, banks and other financial institutions in the development of national anti-corruption policies.

Activity 2.6: Develop and implement strategies to strengthen transparency, accountability and integrity in emerging and existing businesses and SMEs.

Objective 3: Promote the widespread digitization and utilization of cutting-edge technologies to significantly enhance transparency and efficiency in public procurement systems and business processes.

Activity 3.1: Develop and implement supplier registries and comprehensive e-procurement systems to streamline the entire procurement process, from requisition to contract management.

Activity 3.2 : Facilitate, through the use of technology and digital platforms, the access of the general public to key procurement processes and statistics.

Activity 3.3: Develop methodologies, platforms and technical tools that allow for the relevant public authorities to identify red flags and exchange information with regard to public procurement processes.

Activity 3.4: Promote the adoption and implementation of electronic single windows for business processes, facilitating seamless access to integrated information encompassing customs, tax requirements, licensing procedures and transparent disclosure of beneficial ownership records, with a strong emphasis on supporting private sector efficiency and compliance.

THEMATIC AREA 3 – REPORTING CHANNELS AND WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTION

Objective 1: Ensure effective protections for whistle-blowers.

Activity 1.1: Establish effective legislative frameworks that protect whistle-blowers acting in good faith and on reasonable grounds, their relatives, where applicable, and other stakeholders who report corruption from any unjustified treatment.

Activity 1.2: Identify and mitigate the risks and barriers in accessing existing channels to report acts of corruption and inappropriate conduct, in particular by vulnerable groups.

Activity 1.3: Create and maintain secure, effective and confidential reporting channels, including, where applicable, through the submission of anonymous reports.

Activity 1.4: Provide training to relevant stakeholders, public officials and public officers on measures to protect whistle-blowers, including measures to preserve confidentiality.

Activity 1.5: Educate the public on effective reporting of acts of corruption and improper conduct.

Objective 2: Promote regional and international cooperation to establish a comprehensive whistle-blower framework.

Activity 2.1: Encourage regional and international cooperation to develop and share best practices on whistle-blower legal, institutional and procedural frameworks.

Activity 2.2: Develop and adopt regional guidelines to standardize principles and practices on whistle-blowers, including on reporting and protection.

Activity 2.3: Consider establishing a regional programme for whistle-blowers and witnesses, as well as their relatives, other persons close to them and other relevant stakeholders.

Activity 2.4: Consider engaging with relevant regional bodies to support the coordination of whistle-blower protection, including avenues for reporting and investigation.

THEMATIC AREA 4 – INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Objective 1: Strengthen national cooperation and capacity-building to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of corruption and money laundering.

Activity 1.1: Review and strengthen measures and systems to improve inter-agency cooperation at the national level in the investigation and prosecution of corruption and money laundering, including legislative mandates and MoUs.

Activity 1.2: Establish or utilize forums to facilitate informal, effective and continuous inter-agency cooperation.

Activity 1.3: Develop collaborative training opportunities for relevant institutions towards strengthening the investigation and prosecution of corruption and money laundering.

Activity 1.4: Continuously train judicial officers, prosecutors and investigators in emerging corruption and money laundering trends, modalities, techniques and typologies.

Activity 1.5: Establish specialized units or task forces, as appropriate, which are adequately staffed and resourced, to investigate and prosecute complex corruption and money laundering cases.

Activity 1.6: Take measures to ensure that specialized bodies are adequately insulated from outside interference and remain protected in their independence to effectively investigate and prosecute corruption and money laundering cases.

Activity 1.7: Consider the establishment of specialized courts or appointment of designated judicial officers to facilitate the efficient adjudication of corruption and money laundering cases.

Activity 1.8: Develop systems and procedures to strengthen secure data collection, analysis and sharing, with the utilization of appropriate technological tools.

Activity 1.9: Conduct periodic reviews of existing investigation and prosecution tools and frameworks to ensure consistency and conformity with emerging practices and trends in countering corruption and money laundering.

Objective 2: Enhance international and regional cooperation.

Activity 2.1: Promote and capitalize on the use of platforms, such as the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for the Caribbean (ARIN-CARIB) and the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS), to facilitate direct dialogue between regional and international counterparts.

Activity 2.2: Promote and adopt mechanisms and systems for consultation and collaboration geared towards harmonization of legislation necessary to enhance regional and international cooperation.

Activity 2.3: Educate anti-corruption and anti-money laundering practitioners on mechanisms for regional and international cooperation.

Activity 2.4: Develop regional joint trainings and exercises to ensure minimum standards among practitioners and to allow for the exchange of best practices on investigation and prosecution of complex corruption and money laundering cases.

Activity 2.5: Plan and execute joint operations, as necessary and permissible, to facilitate the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption and money laundering cases.

Activity 2.6: Engage with regional entities and international bodies to facilitate training and other joint initiatives.