

8 August 2023

English only

**Open-ended intergovernmental expert
meeting to enhance international
cooperation under the United Nations
Convention against Corruption**

Vienna, 4–8 September 2023

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of chapter IV of the United Nations
Convention against Corruption: lessons learned,
good practices and challenges**

**Promoting the use of information and communications
technologies for the implementation of the Convention**

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present report contains a compilation and analysis of the information gathered from the States parties in response to a note verbale sent by the secretariat on good practices and challenges with respect to the use of information and communication technologies for the purpose of international cooperation and asset recovery in the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

* [CAC/COSP/EG.1/2023/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolutions 9/3, entitled “Follow-up to the Abu Dhabi declaration on enhancing collaboration between the supreme audit institutions and anti-corruption bodies to more effectively prevent and fight corruption, and the use of information and communications technologies”, the Conference of the States Parties requested the Open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the Convention and other relevant subsidiary bodies to include, as a topic for discussion at their future meetings, how to promote the use of information and communications technologies for the implementation of the Convention. In paragraph 19 of the same resolution, the Conference requested the secretariat to continue collecting, analysing and disseminating information on good practices in the development, access and use of information and communications technologies in preventing and combating corruption, taking into account existing technical expertise in the United Nations system, and also requested the secretariat to report on such efforts to the relevant subsidiary bodies.¹

2. Moreover, in paragraph 6 of resolution 9/5, entitled “Enhancing international anti-corruption law enforcement cooperation”, States parties invited the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to consult with, among others, Member States, including their anti-corruption authorities with relevant expertise, as appropriate, to inform its proposed development of the online one-stop hub of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) to provide a forum for cooperation, which may include a secure platform for confidential communication among Network members, and to keep States parties apprised of its progress in this regard.

3. The present conference room paper has been prepared on the basis of information reported by States parties in response to note verbale CU 2023/187(A)/DTA/CEB/CSS of 1 June 2023 in which the secretariat requested information on the use of information and communication technologies for the purpose of international cooperation and asset recovery. A total of 50 institutions from 39 States submitted information as at 21 July 2023. Additional information collected through the Implementation Review Mechanism of the Convention and technical assistance delivery have also been used in order to allow for a more comprehensive analysis. With the agreement of the countries concerned, the full text of the submissions is made available on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) website.²

4. The purpose of the present conference room paper is to provide an analysis of the information to identify trends, challenges and good practices on the use of information and communication technologies for the purpose of international cooperation and asset recovery. Moreover, this conference room paper will also contain conclusions and recommendations to enhance the use of information and communication technologies for the mentioned purposes.

II. Measures adopted by States to use information and communication technologies to ensure full compliance with the Convention

5. Information and communication technologies are a useful tool to enhance international cooperation among States. They provide reliable means of communication, data storage, information analysis, case management and research. Technology can be used both for formal and informal cooperation and, inter alia, help reducing processing times, enhancing the quality of the information provided and

¹ Additional information on the use of information and communication technologies for the implementation of the Convention can be found in document [CAC/COSP/WG.4/2022/2](#).

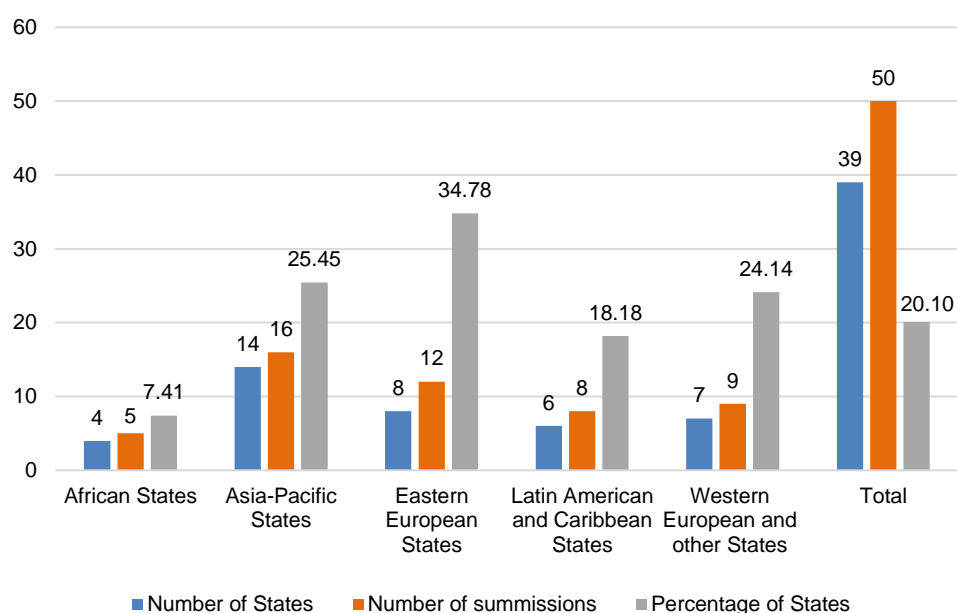
² Available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/EM-InternationalCooperation/session12.html.

increasing the number of processed requests. Therefore, the use of such technologies contributes to the efficient and swift provision of assistance.

6. Figure 1 depicts the number of States that provided responses to the questionnaire and the number of questionnaires received. The difference between these two numbers is due to the fact that in some instances different institutions of the same State party provided responses.

Figure 1

Number and percentage of States which submitted a response and number of responses received by regional group and in total

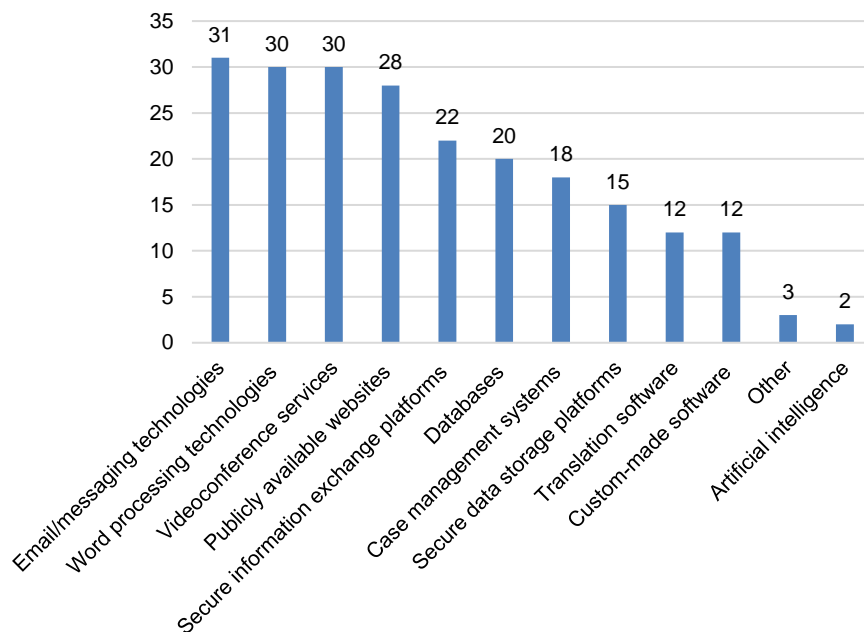


A. Types of information and communication technologies used for international cooperation and asset recovery

7. The vast majority of States parties which replied to the questionnaire reported on the use of more basic technologies such as email, word processing technologies and publicly available websites. More advanced or newly developed technologies such as secure data storage platforms, custom-made software for management and execution of requests or case management systems were not as widely used. Moreover, only two States parties reported on the use of artificial intelligence. Given the challenges reported by States parties in the use of technologies for international cooperation,³ the fact that these technologies are more resource-consuming could be a likely reason for such disparity.

³ See section C entitled “Challenges in the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation and asset recovery and measures to overcome them”.

Figure 2
Number of States which reported using technologies, by type



8. States parties also reported on the specific information and communication technologies that they found to be useful in the context of international cooperation. Several States mentioned different technologies for the secure exchange of information, evidence and mutual legal assistance documents such as the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) or the e-Evidence Digital Exchange System developed by the European Commission. The use of electronic signatures and digital certification of documents was also noted by one State party as a tool to ensure that evidence and other documents had full evidentiary value. In addition, some States parties mentioned technologies developed by international cooperation networks and organizations such as the Egmont Secure Web and GlobE Network SCP.⁴

9. The rapid access to relevant and reliable information was also an important aspect for States parties. The majority of the States parties which provided information on this topic reported on the use of technologies such as the Europol Platform for Experts which facilitated the sharing of best practices, documents, innovation, knowledge and non-personal data on crime; publicly available websites from international institutions such as the Council of Europe; and public and restricted websites developed by States parties with useful information.

10. Whether it is for the purposes of collecting information to issue a mutual legal assistance request, increasing the efficiency of the response to such requests or swiftly identifying the correct recipient authority, States highlighted the usefulness of registries which contain information on, inter alia, real estate, beneficial ownership and contact information of counterparts and competent authorities. In this regard, States specifically mentioned the Online Directory of Competent National Authorities developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Criminal Information System and the development of a number of national registries.

11. Case management systems were also mentioned by some States parties. Moldova has developed an Information System called “WEB Document” aimed at managing the requests for evidence and other documents. The system also generated

⁴ For additional information on the use of GlobE SCP, please see section E entitled “Online one-stop hub of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network)”, and [GlobE SCP Brochure](#).

statistics and analytical data on requests such as, inter alia, types of documents, times elapsed, timelines for the execution of requests, authorities and persons involved in the case. Moldova also had an e-case system which contained scanned and electronic versions of mutual legal assistance requests, documents for extradition and other relevant information.

12. Finally, some States parties underscored the need to enhance the capacity and knowledge of public officials in charge of mutual legal assistance and highlighted the importance of online capacity-building tools. In this regard, Madagascar noted the usefulness of educational online platforms such as the Global e-learning of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and ARINSA e-learning.

13. Even though requesting and requested States often did not share the same language, only one third of States parties reported using translation software for the purposes of international cooperation.

14. Some States also provided information on custom-made software developed to facilitate international cooperation. Singapore reported on a software that assessed whether the requirements in its national mutual legal assistance legislation were met. Moreover, Australia, Brazil and Saudi Arabia noted the use of a custom-made software and databases for the management of incoming and outgoing requests for extradition and mutual assistance in criminal matters.

15. In general, States parties providing information on their custom-made software were not in a position to make them available to other States. In this regard, one State party specifically referred to the harmful effects that sharing the software could have on ongoing investigations and on the different investigative techniques used. The same conclusion was found in the analysis of the information submitted in response to the previous note verbale sent on the use of software programmes for international cooperation. In that report, it was noted that all States that used software programmes did so for all areas of international cooperation, including extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. However, those stand-alone programmes were not part of a more comprehensive case management system (e.g. for the criminal justice system as a whole) and almost all States indicated that the software solutions they used were custom-built applications. For this reason, most countries responded that they were not prepared to make them available to other States parties or thought that this would be impractical because of the amount of adaptation required.⁵

B. Impact of the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation and asset recovery

16. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the information and communication technologies used by States parties could provide valuable information on the strengths and weaknesses of the systems in place. Given the advantages of using technology for international cooperation and asset recovery, States could assess the necessity to implement new technologies when the ones in place are outdated or do not meet States' needs.

17. Nevertheless, only 9 out of the 39 States parties which provided information had evaluated the effectiveness of using information and communication technologies for international cooperation and in the fight against corruption. In some cases, the evaluation was carried out based on information and statistics provided by the custom-made software for international cooperation. In those cases, States parties had considered the usefulness of statistics on the analysis of the performance of newly implemented technologies and had decided to include that functionality while

⁵ The conference room paper entitled "Responses received from States parties with regard to existing software programmes for case management systems in the field of international cooperation" is available at www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/EMInternationalCooperation/6-7November2017/V1707498e.pdf.

developing them. Moreover, States parties reported on both quantitative and qualitative indicators used to evaluate the effectiveness of the technologies used. The number of incoming and outgoing requests, the average of days needed to reply to requests and the quality of request were among those indicators.

18. Even though the number of States parties that evaluated the technologies was limited, almost all of those noted the positive outcome of their assessments. Moreover, States that noted the absence of formal evaluation mechanisms also recognized the benefits of using information and communication technologies in the field of international cooperation. In general, States noted that the use of information and communication technologies had streamlined the work processes and improved the quality of incoming and outgoing requests. Brazil also noted that the implementation of information and communication technologies had allowed for a better management of requests.

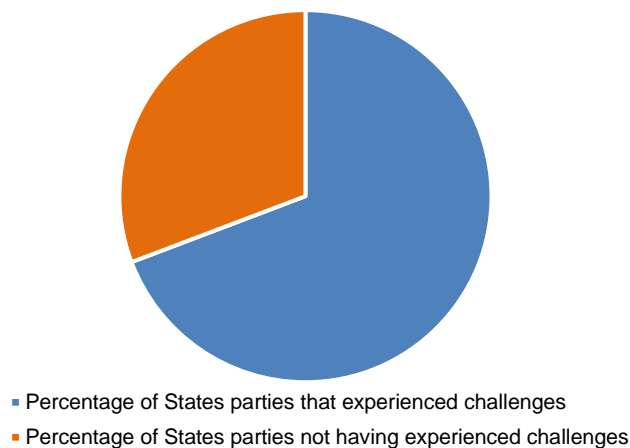
C. Challenges in the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation and asset recovery and measures to overcome them

19. Information and communication technologies enable the direct contact among authorities, strengthening and facilitating international cooperation and expediting the processing of corruption cases. Nevertheless, States parties identified challenges to the implementation and use of those technologies. Among others, States noted the lack of resources, capacity or training, technical barriers (e.g. poor connection, unstable network, outdated technology, etc.), legal obstacles to the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation, reluctance from foreign counterparts to use information and communication technologies and lack of security and confidentiality of sensitive information (personal data protection).

20. The majority of States parties indicated having experienced challenges or limitations while one third of them did not experience challenges in the use of information and communication technologies for the purposes of international cooperation.

Figure 3

Percentage of States which experienced challenges and which did not experience challenges on the use of information and communication technologies for the purposes of international cooperation



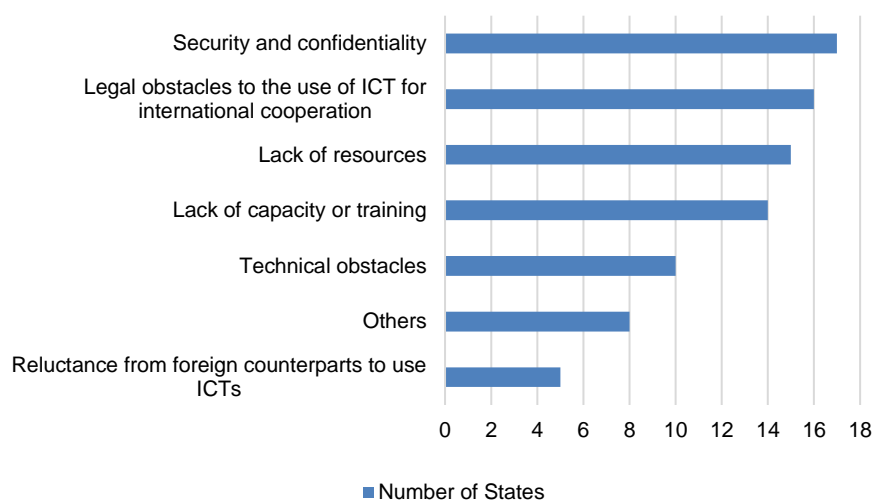
21. With regards to legal obstacles on the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation, the legal framework in several States parties did not provide for the use of informally obtained information as evidence in court. Any information intended to be used in court proceedings had to be obtained through formal means of mutual legal assistance. The General Prosecutor's Office of one State reported that, despite not having performed a specific evaluation of

challenges or limitations of using information and communication technologies in the context of international cooperation, lack of regulation of the common standards for electronic signatures in international treaties, different standards for admissibility of evidence and in particular, electronic evidence, and different data protection standards, could be some of the general challenges or limitations in using information and communication technologies. Other States parties referred to the lack of uniform international standards and norms and the lack of transparency on the location of information, particularly regarding open-source information. Other challenges were related to using information and communication technologies during the process of informal cooperation; for example, certain types of intelligence could not be transmitted via information and communication technologies channels due to concerns such as data protection or the confidential nature of the information. One State party noted that limitations on the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation may be necessary and appropriate in the context of obligations that may exist in certain countries regarding data protection, information-sharing, as well as procedural fairness and fair trial considerations.

22. Another important gap identified was the security and confidentiality of sensitive information through the use of unsecured and open emails. Regarding the use of unsecured email, one State party noted that some jurisdictions did not have the resources to establish and maintain secure government email servers. Personal data protection was the most important challenge for the States parties that replied to the questionnaire.

Figure 4

Challenges in the use of ICTs for international cooperation, by number of States



23. The lack of resources was another common challenge in the responses provided, as investing in information and communication technologies or modern technology to promote international cooperation requires substantial funds. The lack of adequate training opportunities for the civil servants in charge of managing international cooperation requests was also mentioned as an obstacle. In this regard, some States parties had developed training programmes for the public service that raised awareness about the different technologies available, as well as programmes that built skills among public officials on the use of information and communication technologies to strengthen and facilitate international cooperation. The Public Prosecutor's Office of one State party indicated that communication and sharing experiences on international cooperation was essential.

24. Technical obstacles were also underscored. Connectivity problems or the use of outdated technologies were mentioned as obstacles to effective cooperation. On the other hand, as a result of the development of new information and communication technologies, the overabundance of business software or information exchange platforms was reported as causing interoperability problems linked to the security and

confidentiality of sensitive information (protection of personal data) which, combined with legal obstacles, accentuated the reluctance of certain States parties to use information and communication technologies.

25. One State referred to the potential for international cooperation in the fight against corruption to be undermined by the politicized and unfair actions that limited certain States' access to information and communication technologies.

26. Regarding the ways to overcome the challenges related to the transmission of requests for international legal cooperation and the proceedings carried out using information and communication technologies and their evidentiary value, one State party referred to the Treaty on the Electronic Transmission of Requests for International Legal Cooperation between Central Authorities.⁶ Other States reported on measures taken by central authorities to facilitate the exchange of requests using information and communication technologies. Finally, another State party noted that its Attorney General's Office was implementing a project to enhance the investigation of complex cases of corruption of public servants, and the identification of assets abroad to address illicit enrichment and corruption.

27. The security and confidentiality of sensitive information transmitted through information and communication technologies are not ensured unless both the requesting and the requested parties have adequate protocols and cybersecurity measures in place. To overcome this challenge, one State party continuously reviewed its cybersecurity policies and updated the software and hardware to ensure compliance with international cybersecurity standards. In addition, technical obstacles such as poor connectivity were identified as challenges, particularly considering that Internet connectivity is key to ICT usage. To overcome these difficulties, the Information and Communications Technology Department (ICTD) of one State provided assistance to those affected by weak Internet connection.

28. A higher level of security could also be applied to purpose-built web-platforms. One State party reported that measures were taken to apply security protocols fit for the law enforcement environment and noted that a greater use of hosting sites with appropriate two-factor authentication, rather than the use of generic servers, could be beneficial. This State noted that a particular benefit of using hosting sites with two-factor authentication, in relation to facilitating international cooperation in the law enforcement space, would be to allow information to be accessible only to people with particular codes to access them. This would be particularly useful when information is exchanged and restricted on a need-to-know-basis. In this framework, the State noted that the hosting site used by the Asset Recovery Network of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (RRAG), facilitated the exchange of information between the international contact points that form the Network.

29. The legal framework of some countries did not allow the use of information obtained through informal international cooperation as evidence in court. In the same vein, the General Comptroller's Office of one State party reported that some States parties to the Convention required the submission of cooperation requests to be done through physical means, limiting the use of information and communication technologies. Moreover, some States noted that their domestic legislation required that documents had to be provided in hard copy rather than electronically and must carry a signature or original seal from the court or other issuing authority in the requesting country. The implementation of such legislation could result in delays in processing mutual legal assistance requests. Measures undertaken by the State parties in this regard included the proactive engagement with international counterparts to better understand the different procedural requirements that exist within different legal systems.

⁶ The Treaty on the Electronic Transmission of Requests for International Legal Cooperation between Central Authorities, also known as the Treaty of Medellin, entered into force on 9 May 2022.

30. Regarding the views by States parties of the type of information and communication technologies which would help improve their ability to cooperate with other States in the fight against corruption, reference was made to the development of explanatory notes on access to information (for example, registers, court documents, and other databases), requirements for cooperation requests (e.g. mutual legal assistance country guidelines), and the legal/judiciary systems.

31. The level of complexity and the amount of functionalities of the systems used to enhance international cooperation varied greatly. While some States parties used basic case registration systems, others were using full-fledged case management systems which also generated statistics. States suggested the use of Data Sharing and Collection Tools which included secure file-sharing platforms, cloud-based document management systems, and collaborative workspaces. These technologies would allow for the sharing of information, exchanging of best practices, and coordination of efforts in real time among central authorities. States parties also mentioned Digital Databases and Information Systems which could improve information management and exchanges between States. These systems could store relevant data, such as financial records, asset declarations, and investigative reports, while allowing for the easy access and analysis of information by multiple States. One State noted that leveraging data analytics and artificial intelligence technologies could help in the identification of patterns, anomalies, and potential cases of corruption, and advanced data analysis techniques could help identify connections between individuals, transactions, and entities across different jurisdictions. These technologies could support collaborative investigations and intelligence-sharing among States.

32. Moreover, one State noted that a secure and reliable instant messaging platform could be used by national anti-corruption law enforcement officials to consult on anti-corruption case strategies and assist in advancing formal cooperation such as extradition. In this context, two States indicated that the GlobE One Stop Hub could be very useful for sharing intelligence regarding corruption between police authorities in different member States and to transfer the results of the requested investigative measures (e.g. large amount of electronic evidence). Reference was also made to other knowledge management portals such as the Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (TRACK), the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) and goAML (Anti-Money-Laundering System). States indicated that such online platforms facilitated quick cooperation and collaboration in the fight against corruption.

33. One respondent from the Western European and other States Group indicated that all requests for mutual legal assistance that it handled (incoming and outgoing) had to go through the Justice Department, with the exception of those sent or received from European Union member States where European Investigation Orders could be sent by the anti-corruption unit directly to a competent prosecutor or judge.

34. One State noted that one of the key factors in effective international cooperation was the communication between requesting and requested States, particularly with regard to the safe receipt of the request and their expedited execution, and referred to the lack of response by requested States for years. That same State noted that, despite the use of different tools to expedite the requests, it was not always possible to calculate the amount of time needed to respond to incoming requests.

35. Other States parties referred to the importance of fostering inter-institutional cooperation. In this regard, a joint information and communication system to exchange data, including figures and statistics, on mutual legal assistance requests, extradition, transfer of proceedings, transfer of convicted persons and recognition of foreign conviction judgments between national authorities was suggested to improve such cooperation and help to monitor the status of the request in real time. Moreover, the need to coordinate the databases held by different institutions was also highlighted.

36. States agreed that sharing best practices on the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation and asset recovery would contribute to the strategic allocation of resources and efficacy of service delivery.

37. While some States considered that the use of information and communications technologies had facilitated the reporting on international cooperation and allowed for their timely follow-up, others considered that they had no impact on the quality of the content of the responses to requests for international cooperation.

D. Good practices on the use of information and communication technologies for international cooperation

38. Many States highlighted the importance of sharing information in a secure and timely manner and reported the increased use of information and communication technologies and e-systems to more effectively and efficiently address issues raised in the context of the review of the implementation of the Convention, such as the need to prioritize the use of case-management systems.

39. States parties also referred to the simplification of administrative procedures through the use of information technology to improve the timeliness and efficiency of international cooperation in corruption cases. Examples included the engagement of anti-corruption authorities in informal cooperation via various channels such as by phone, official email and videoconference to identify the appropriate counterpart, understand the availability in the counterpart's jurisdiction, seek clarifications on legal or technical requirements for forthcoming formal mutual legal assistance and transmit any information that is not subject to confidentiality.

40. Singapore reported on the online publication of asset recovery guidelines which were a step-by-step guide specifically for States requesting assistance from Singapore in recovering proceeds of crime, including offences under the Convention, and which included tools such as template request forms and checklists. Where mutual legal assistance requests did not meet the legal requirements or the information is unclear, the case officers worked with the requesting State party to remedy these shortcomings and, for complex cases and where it might be useful for the requesting State party, the case officers made themselves available for consultations, whether via face-to-face meetings or video or telephone conferences. Moreover, Kuwait also reported on the use of videoconference calls between anti-corruption agencies.

41. The existence of reporting hotlines, online platforms for reporting and sharing information among national authorities, and a series of electronic asset declaration systems were also mentioned by States. The latter was considered of particular importance for ensuring a proper asset verification mechanism and for fighting illicit enrichment.

42. Several States parties also referred to existing channels of communication between law enforcement agencies and to platforms for the exchange of confidential information. Inter alia, States mentioned the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-agency Network (CARIN), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the Europol Secure Information Exchange Network Application (Siena), the European Union's Schengen Information System (SIS II), the Secure Web operated by the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, and the I-24/7 network of INTERPOL.

43. Some States also mentioned the creation of central registers for beneficial owners and enhanced beneficial ownership transparency through public registers. These registers could be accessed electronically by law enforcement authorities without a court order and were, therefore, an effective measure to avoid unnecessary delays in accessing bank information, which would help with the implementation of article 40 of the Convention on bank secrecy.

44. In the framework of the implementation review mechanism, information and communication technology was also shown to be instrumental in facilitating

international cooperation. For example, the electronic register cited above also served to address a recommendation on article 46 on mutual legal assistance. By allowing law enforcement authorities to easily access information electronically without a court order, mutual legal assistance could be provided more efficiently. In the same framework, several States also reported adopting information systems that systematically compiled statistical data and information on extradition and mutual legal assistance cases with a view to facilitating the monitoring and tracking of such cases and assessing the effectiveness of implementation with regard to, among other things, the duration of mutual legal assistance and extradition proceedings. These measures underscored the cross-cutting nature of the use of information technology, as such tools could be leveraged in many different areas to better implement the Convention.

45. States parties also noted the increasing importance of information and communication technologies in the context of sharing good practices. E-learning platforms on anti-corruption had also been developed in States parties.

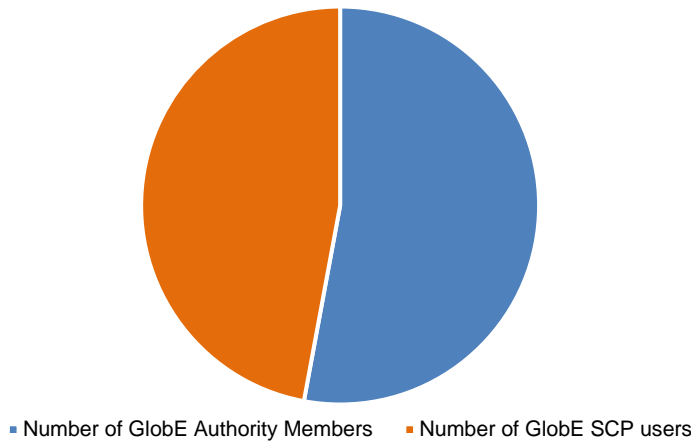
46. The importance of ensuring simplified, streamlined access to government services was emphasized by a number of countries which referred to the use of information and communication technologies as a key tool in ensuring the transparency of their anti-corruption bodies and central authorities. A trend identified in the submissions by States was the use of information and communication technologies to not only provide information on public services, but also to interact with the users and to provide actual services to users and researchers on international cooperation matters. States referred to information and communication technology tools in the context of making information easily available for operational purposes in relation to international cooperation. Examples ranged from the creation of a dedicated section on the website of the public prosecutor's office of one State, where all relevant acts and international instruments on mutual legal assistance were made available, to the use of online platforms as a means of exchanging information and enhancing cooperation.

E. The Online One-Stop Hub of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network)

47. The GlobE Secure Communication Platform (SCP) was introduced in June 2022 as a first step towards the development of the One-Stop Hub (OSH). A year after its launch, there were 129 registered users on the platform. GlobE SCP enables secure, direct, and timely exchange of information, including (i) information obtained via informal cooperation, e.g. information gathered via non-coercive measures or information that is publicly available, (ii) information before and in support of formal mutual legal assistance, and (iii) information to facilitate parallel and/or joint investigations.

48. Nine of the States parties that replied to the note verbale reported having registered as users of Globe SCP. The vast majority of them considered that the platform was useful for international cooperation based on their experience.

Figure 5
Members of GlobE and users of GlobE Secure Communication Platform as of 21 July 2023



49. GlobE SCP was identified as a useful tool for collaboration on cases, as it contributes significantly to building connections between GlobE practitioners. The majority of responding States parties considered the secure and independent messaging system provided by GlobE SCP to be significantly more effective than those of other networks which rely on email for communication, allowing for direct contact to competent authorities. The most useful features identified by States parties were the possibility to communicate by instant messaging, the group chat, the file transfer capabilities and the existence of an address book of various institutions in different countries as well as the end-to-end encryption of all messages and shared files. GlobE members also praised the possibility of being able to directly and informally communicate with the Secretariat and other counterparts.

50. According to the GlobE secretariat's consultation with users through a series of structured interviews from May to June 2023, GlobE SCP is generally used for establishing the initial contact with counterparts, which is then followed up over other channels. Therefore, GlobE SCP was considered complementary to emails and in-person meetings, while playing a significant role in fostering connections among GlobE practitioners. Moreover, it was recognized as a valuable collaboration tool for successful case progress and information-sharing. Respondents appreciated the ability for swift communication with the GlobE secretariat and its feature of receiving updates via Broadcasts. While it was considered user-friendly and efficient by the majority of users, some features remained underutilized (QR verification of contacts), or difficult to access (directory of contacts). A number of operational, procedural and technical issues needed to be resolved to enable better utilization of GlobE SCP, including but not limited to lack of response from counterparts, preference to other communication channels, need for more contact points per member authority, and the need to contact authorities not presently on GlobE SCP.

51. One State party from the Western European and other States indicated that the GlobE Online One-Stop Hub, which is currently under development, could also be useful for the transfer of the outcome of requested investigative measures (e.g. large amount of electronic evidence). However, that State noted that such use would require a technical solution with a very high level of security and in accordance with the rules in the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

III. Conclusions and observations

52. The information provided by reporting States and summarized in the present background paper clearly demonstrates an increasingly wide use of information and communications technologies and an expansion on the scope of information and communications technologies that are used to implement the relevant articles of the

Convention more effectively. However, given the limited number of submissions received, it was not possible to provide a more comprehensive assessment. Most of the measures reported were practical, technologically oriented and did not require legislative reform. However, they required a regular upgrading of the technologies used by the public administration. Broader acceptance of the use of information and communications technologies, including for the electronic transmission and receipt of requests for assistance would likely assist States parties to cooperate with foreign counterparts in a more expeditious manner.

53. Read in conjunction with document [CAC/COSP/IRG/2016/8](#), which was submitted to the Implementation Review Group at its Seventh session and which contained an analysis of good practices and challenges on the implementation of chapter IV of the Convention,⁷ and taking into account the technical assistance needs emerging from country reviews conducted under the first cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention, it could be concluded that while progress has been made by a number of States parties in the use of information and communications technologies in the implementation of the Convention, a lack of efficient technological tools remains a prevalent challenge in the implementation of chapter IV of the Convention.

54. Therefore, a need to reinforce efforts to use information and communication technologies in the context of international cooperation to effectively prevent corruption was noted. Moreover, the regular evaluation of the effectiveness of such technologies was proven effective to assess the need to implement new technologies.

55. Based on the responses, challenges in the use of information and communications technologies that could be contributing to the digital divide were identified.⁸ In overcoming such challenges, factors such as differing levels of computer literacy, the availability of technology and infrastructure, including computers, software and mobile telephones, and Internet penetration must be taken into account.

56. Responses also noted the need to optimize existing tools such as GlobE SCP and dedicate adequate resources to the use of advanced information and communication technologies. This could contribute to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the international assistance provided and to strengthen the exchange of information on how States parties use information and communication technologies to achieve better implementation of the Convention.

57. The secretariat will continue its efforts to gather information on good practices to promote the use of information and communications technologies to achieve better implementation of the Convention, in particular in the context of responding to needs identified in both cycles of the Implementation Review Mechanism. To this end, the secretariat wishes to highlight the importance of States parties continuing to provide information on the use of information and communications technologies to effectively implement the Convention.

⁷ Available at www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/ImplementationReviewGroup/20-24June2016/V1602477e.pdf.

⁸ The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled “Our Common Agenda” noted that “Too many people are also being excluded from the opportunities and benefits of technology and transitioning economies, facing a bleak future if we do not act fast” and that “The Internet has provided access to information for billions, thereby fostering collaboration, connection and sustainable development. It is a global public good that should benefit everyone, everywhere”.