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**Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of
Implementation of the United Nations Convention
against Corruption**

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present document contains an overview of the performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, including updated information on the conduct of country reviews during the first and second review cycles of the Mechanism.

* [CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its decision 5/1, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption decided that the Implementation Review Group should begin promptly to collect, with the support of the Secretariat, and discuss relevant information in order to facilitate the assessment of performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in accordance with paragraph 48 of the terms of reference for the Mechanism, following the completion of the first cycle. The Conference also decided that the Implementation Review Group should include in its future sessions an agenda item allowing for the discussion of such information and further decided that the Group, in the collection of such information, shall take into account future requirements for follow-up in accordance with paragraphs 40 and 41 of the terms of reference.

II. Organization and conduct of country reviews during the first review cycle and the first, second and third years of the second review cycle

A. Time frames established for the implementation review process

2. The first cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism started in 2010, following the adoption of Conference resolution 3/1, entitled “Review Mechanism”. The second cycle of the Mechanism was launched at the sixth session of the Conference of the States Parties, held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 2 to 6 November 2015, through the adoption by the Conference of resolution 6/1, on the continuation of the review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

3. Despite the early scheduling of the reviews, delays were identified in the performance and progress of the second review cycle. Information on the specific elements of the process that have led to delays in the second cycle was included in the documentation made available to the Implementation Review Group at its ninth session.¹

4. According to the guidelines for governmental experts and the secretariat in the conduct of country reviews, the State party under review should submit the self-assessment checklist within two months of being informed of the beginning of the conduct of the country review, and the full review should take no longer than six months to complete.² The learning process of the Implementation Review Mechanism has shown that country reviews have never been completed within the requisite six months. There are a number of reasons for this, including delayed submissions of self-assessment checklists by States parties under review and of desk reviews by reviewing States parties, translation requirements, scheduling difficulties for the country visits and delays in the submission of additional information following the country visit.

¹ See [CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/2](#) and [CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/3](#).

² The commencement of the reviews is the date when, in accordance with paragraph 12 of the guidelines for governmental experts and the secretariat in the conduct of country reviews, the secretariat officially informs the State party under review and the reviewing States parties of the date of the beginning of the conduct of the country review.

B. Statistical overview

5. The data provided below show the progress achieved in the conduct of the country reviews during (a) the first cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism; and (b) the first, second and third years of the second cycle of the Mechanism.

6. During the first cycle, 184 States parties were to be reviewed.³ At the time of writing, 181 responses to the self-assessment checklist had been received and 172 direct dialogues had been held (159 country visits and 13 joint meetings).⁴ Furthermore, 168 executive summaries and 150 country review reports had been completed and 82 States parties had made their full country review report available on the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

7. During the first year of the second cycle, 29 States parties were to be reviewed. At the time of writing, 27 responses to the self-assessment checklist had been received and 20 country visits and one joint meeting had been held.

8. During the second year of the second cycle, 48 States parties were to be reviewed. At the time of writing, 39 responses to the self-assessment checklist had been received and 22 country visits and one joint meeting had been held.⁵

9. During the third year of the second cycle, 36 States parties were to be reviewed. At the time of writing, 11 responses to the self-assessment checklist had been received and no country visits had been held.

10. Of the 150 country reviews completed to date under the first cycle, 82 States made their full country review reports available on the UNODC website. In relation to the second cycle, six of the seven States parties for which the country reviews had been completed had made their full country review reports available on the UNODC website.

C. Drawing of lots

11. In accordance with paragraph 14 of the terms of reference of the Implementation Review Mechanism, the States parties participating in the review process in a given year of a review cycle are selected by a drawing of lots at the beginning of each cycle. Paragraph 19 of the terms of reference provides that the selection of the reviewing States parties shall be carried out by the drawing of lots at the beginning of each year of the cycle, with the understanding that States parties shall not undertake mutual reviews.

1. First review cycle

12. In accordance with these provisions, the reviewing States parties for the fourth year of the first cycle of the Mechanism were selected through a drawing of lots held at the fourth session of the Implementation Review Group. Sixty-two country reviews began on 1 July 2013, and further drawings of lots were held to select the reviewing States parties for the States parties that had ratified or acceded to the Convention thereafter. Those additional drawings of lots took place at the resumed fourth, fifth, resumed fifth, sixth, resumed sixth, seventh, resumed seventh, eighth and resumed eighth, ninth and the first resumed ninth sessions of the Group. At the time of writing, 81 States were under review in the fourth year.⁶

³ At the start of the first cycle in 2010, there were 144 States parties to the Convention.

⁴ Two States parties had not opted to conduct either a country visit or a joint meeting.

⁵ During the review of one State party under the second cycle, both a country visit and a joint meeting were held.

⁶ Other States may have become parties to the Convention by the time of the tenth session of the Group.

2. Second review cycle

13. In its resolution 6/1, the Conference requested the Group to proceed, at the beginning of its seventh session, with the selection of reviewed and reviewing States parties for the second review cycle by the drawing of lots in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 19 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism. The Conference also requested the Group to hold intersessional meetings open to all States parties for the purpose of the drawing of lots in accordance with paragraph 19 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism and without prejudice to the right of a State party to request that the drawing of lots be repeated at the Group's subsequent intersessional meeting or regular session.

14. At an intersessional meeting, held on 17 June 2016 in Vienna, the drawing of lots was conducted for the scheduling of the country reviews in the second cycle, which was organized as follows: year one – 29 States; year two – 48 States; year three – 36 States; year four – 35 States; and year five – 29 States.⁷

15. At the same time, the reviewing States parties for the first year of the second cycle of the Mechanism were selected through a drawing of lots at an intersessional meeting of the Implementation Review Group. Accordingly, 29 reviews began on 4 July 2016 and redraws were carried out at the request of States parties under review at the resumed seventh session of the Group.

16. Similarly, the reviewing States parties for the second year of the second cycle were selected through a drawing of lots at an intersessional meeting of the Group, and the 48 country reviews due to take place during that year started on 25 July 2017. Redraws were carried out at the request of States parties under review at the resumed eighth session of the Group.

17. Additionally, the reviewing States parties for the third year of the second cycle were selected through a drawing of lots at an intersessional meeting of the Group, and the 36 country reviews due to take place during that year started on 29 June 2018. Redraws were carried out at the request of States parties under review at the first and second resumed sessions of the Group.

D. Schedule and conduct of country reviews

18. In its resolution 4/1, the Conference of the States Parties endorsed the guidelines for governmental experts and the secretariat in the conduct of country reviews, which had been finalized by the Implementation Review Group. The guidelines set out indicative timelines for country reviews in order to ensure the consistency and efficiency of the review process. The purpose of the present subsection is to provide updated information on the schedule of country reviews conducted from the first to the fourth year of the first cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism and on the country reviews conducted from the first to the third years of the second review cycle.

Initial steps of country reviews

1. Appointment of a focal point to coordinate the participation of a State party under review

19. In accordance with paragraph 17 of the terms of reference and paragraph 13 of the guidelines, a State party under review is to appoint a focal point or focal points to coordinate its participation in the review within three weeks of officially being informed of the beginning of the conduct of the country review, and is to inform the secretariat accordingly. However, late nominations of focal points have caused considerable delays in country reviews in the past. In its resolution 4/1, the

⁷ Since the initial drawing of lots held in June 2016, some States have either volunteered to advance their reviews or deferred from a previous year of the second cycle, thus bringing the number of States under review in year four to 37 and in year five, to 34.

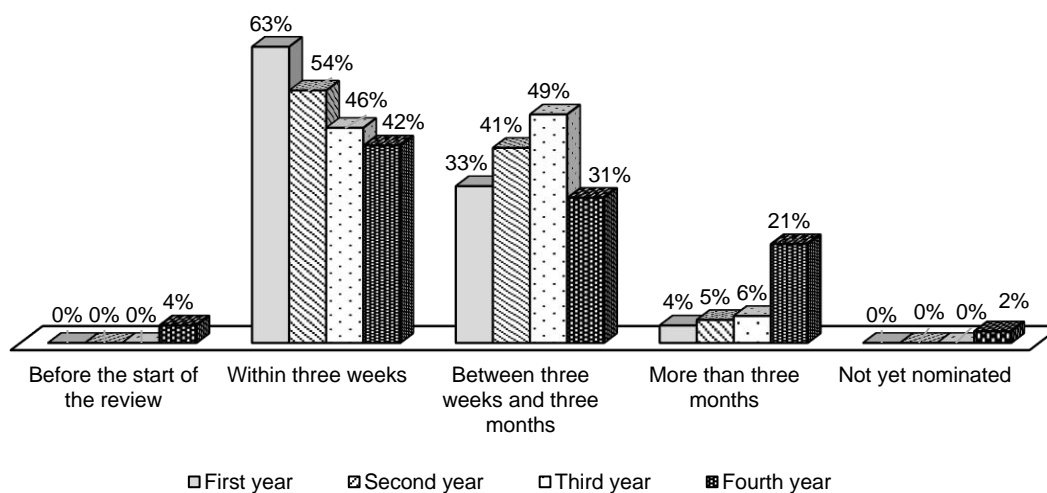
Conference urged States parties under review to ensure the timely nomination of their focal points in accordance with the guidelines.

First review cycle

20. At the time of writing, two States under review in the fourth year had not yet officially nominated the focal point (see figure I), with over 20 per cent of the focal points nominated only after more than three months, and several States parties having changed their focal points during the course of the review, which resulted in further delays.

Figure I

First cycle: time taken to nominate focal points



Second review cycle

21. All States under review in the first and second years and 33 of the 36 States under review in the third year of the second cycle nominated their focal points (see figure II).

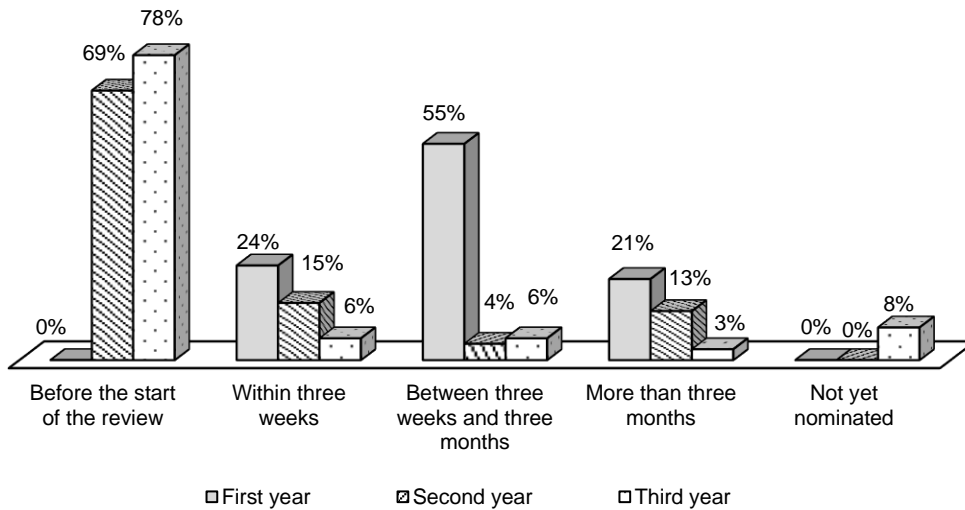
22. In the first year of the second cycle, most States nominated their focal points within three months of being officially informed of the start of the review.

23. In the second year of the second cycle, the vast majority of focal points (69 per cent) were nominated prior to the start of the review.

24. In the third year of the second cycle, 28 of the 36 States under review in that year (78 per cent) had already nominated their focal points prior to the start of that year.

25. It is likely that these early nominations were due to the offer of early training courses targeting the focal points of States whose reviews were upcoming. The advance nomination of focal points is of paramount importance, in particular because it is essential in facilitating the preparation of the review and the drafting of the responses to the self-assessment checklist.

Figure II
First, second and third years of the second cycle: time taken to nominate focal points



2. Communication of contact details of governmental experts by reviewing States parties and organization of the initial teleconference

26. Paragraph 16 of the guidelines provides that a telephone conference or videoconference should be held within one month of the State party under review officially being informed of the beginning of the conduct of the country review. The teleconference involves the State party under review, the reviewing States parties and the secretariat staff assigned to the country review. With a view to organizing the initial teleconference, the secretariat requests reviewing States parties to designate contact persons among their governmental experts and to communicate the contact details of those persons to the secretariat.

27. In most reviews, the organization of the initial teleconference continues to be subject to delays as a result of, inter alia, the late communication of the contact details of governmental experts or changes in reviewing experts after the beginning of the review. In some cases, the teleconference was delayed because of redraws of reviewing States parties. Where feasible, the secretariat continued to arrange introductions on the margins of the sessions of the Implementation Review Group and the Conference of the States Parties. Where time differences between the States did not allow for direct contact, teleconferences were replaced by an exchange of emails.

28. At the time of writing, 28 first teleconferences had been held for the 29 reviews in the first year of the second cycle.⁸

29. For the second year of the second cycle, at the time of writing, 39 first teleconferences or equivalent contacts had taken place for the 48 reviews in that year.⁹ For the third year, 13 first teleconferences had taken place for the 36 reviews in that year. However, several reviewing States had not yet designated their reviewing experts, thus delaying the first teleconference.

⁸ One State party under review in the first year of the second cycle waived the organization of a teleconference.

⁹ One State party under review in the second year of the second cycle waived the organization of a teleconference.

3. Self-assessment checklists

30. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the guidelines, the State party under review is to provide the secretariat with its response to the comprehensive self-assessment checklist within two months of being officially informed of the beginning of the conduct of the review. Analysis conducted by the secretariat to date, which has been made available to the Group at its previous sessions, shows that the submission of the checklist has remained an essential cornerstone of the review process and marks the point in time when the country review can start in earnest. As such, any delay in the submission of the checklist inevitably resulted in the delay of the country review as a whole.

31. Figure III below shows an overview of the time frames associated with the country reviews conducted in years one to four of the first review cycle, while figure IV shows an overview of the time frames associated with the country reviews for the second review cycle in the first, second and third years.

Figure III

Overview of time frames for the submission self-assessment checklists by States under review in years one to four of the first review cycle (months)

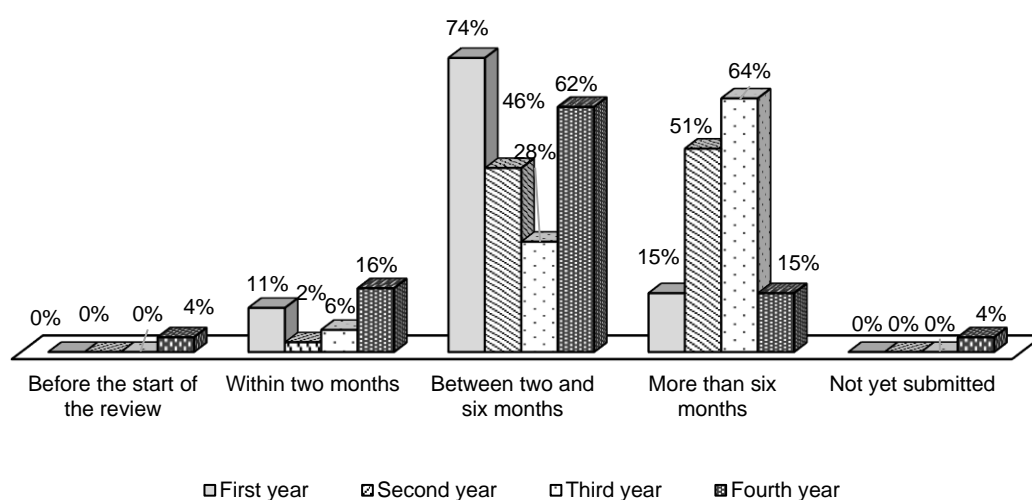
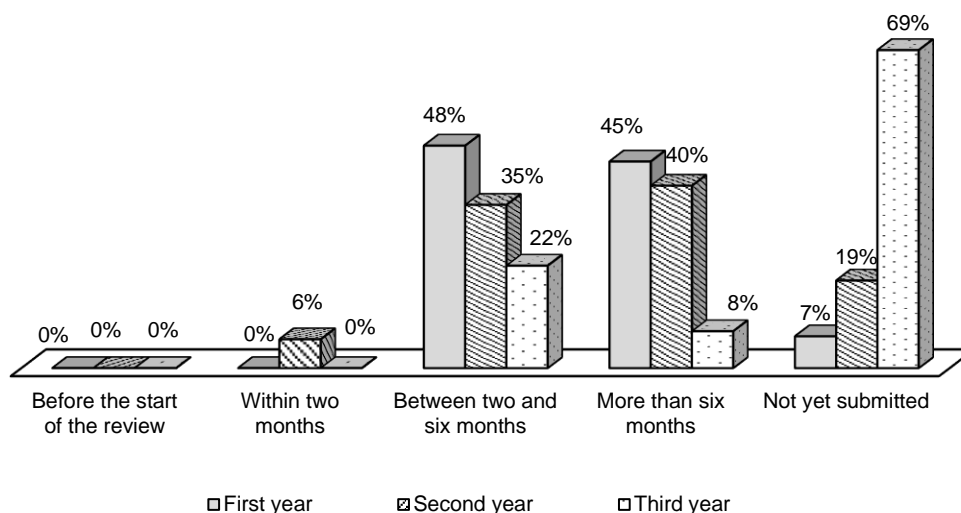


Figure IV

Overview of time frames for the submission self-assessment checklists by States under review in years one, two and three of the second review cycle (months)



32. A comparison of the information displayed in figures III and IV shows the continued significant delays in the time required by States for the submission of their responses to the self-assessment checklists, despite the fact that the States under review were regularly informed by the secretariat about the status of their reviews. While in year one of the second cycle, almost half of the States parties under review submitted their self-assessment checklists within six months of the start of the review, in year three only 22 per cent submitted their self-assessment checklists within the six-month period, and an alarming 69 per cent of States had not yet submitted their self-assessment checklists at the time of writing, i.e., in most cases, eight months after the starting date of the review.

4. Desk review

First review cycle

33. In accordance with paragraph 21 of the guidelines, governmental experts are to submit to the secretariat the outcome of the desk review within one month after receiving the response to the comprehensive self-assessment checklist and any supplementary information provided by the State party under review. For the fourth year of the first cycle, a small number of desk reviews of the responses to the self-assessment checklist were pending at the time of writing, in part because of late submissions of information and translation difficulties.¹⁰

Second review cycle

34. At the time of writing, a number of desk reviews of the responses to the self-assessment checklist for years one and two of the second cycle, were still ongoing, due to, inter alia, the late submission of the responses to the self-assessment checklist, the time required for the translation of checklists in reviews where more than one language was used, and the time taken to review the checklists.

5. Further means of direct dialogue

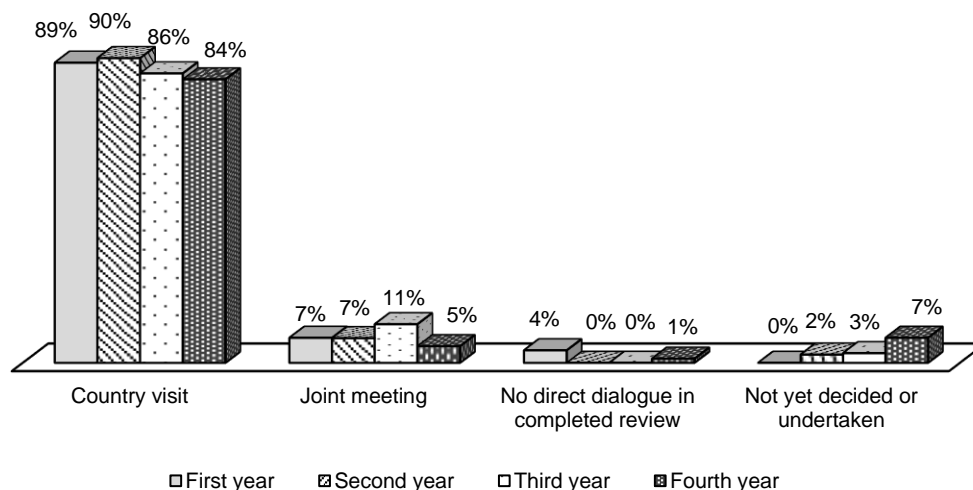
35. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the guidelines and paragraph 29 of the terms of reference, if requested by the State party under review, the desk review is to be complemented by any further means of direct dialogue, such as a country visit or a joint meeting at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

First review cycle

36. At the time of writing, of 184 countries under review, 172 countries had already availed themselves of further means of direct dialogue in the form of either a country visit or a joint meeting. For the 27 States parties under review in the first year, 24 country visits and 2 joint meetings took place. For the 41 States parties under review in the second year, 37 country visits and 3 joint meetings took place. For the 35 States parties under review in the third year, 30 country visits and 4 joint meetings took place. For 81 States under review in the fourth year, 68 country visits and 4 joint meetings took place (see figure V). A number of States had agreed to further means of direct dialogue, and such dialogues were in various stages of planning. In other reviews, no decision had been taken yet.¹⁰ Among the completed first cycle reviews, only two States parties had not opted for either a country visit or a joint meeting.

¹⁰ This is mostly, though not exclusively, the case for States that ratified or acceded to the Convention in 2017 or 2018.

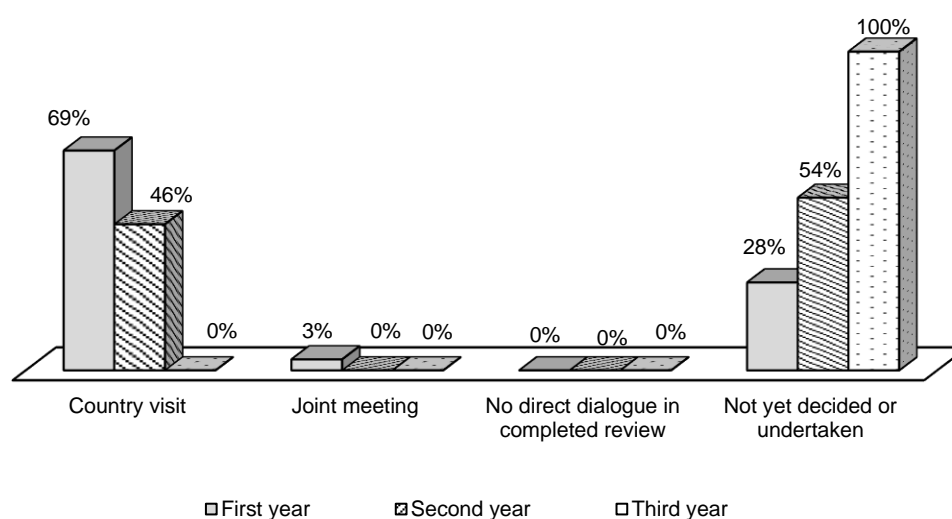
Figure V
First review cycle: further means of direct dialogue between countries undertaken as part of a country review



Second review cycle

37. At the time of writing, of 29 States parties under review in the first year of the second cycle, 20 States parties had hosted a country visit as a further means of direct dialogue, and one had opted for a joint meeting in Vienna. Of 48 States parties under review in the second year of the second cycle, 22 States parties had hosted a country visit. In addition, during the review of one of those States parties, both a country visit and a joint meeting were held. No country visits had been held in the third year yet. At the time of writing, several other country visits for years one to three of the second cycle were in the process of being scheduled (see figure VI).¹¹

Figure VI
First three years of the second review cycle: further means of direct dialogue between countries undertaken as part of a country review



6. Preparation of the agenda for further means of direct dialogue

38. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the guidelines, a country visit is to be planned and organized by the State party under review. Focal points draft the agenda and submit it to the reviewers and the secretariat prior to the visit.

¹¹ In the second year of the second cycle, for the review of one State party, both a country visit and a joint meeting were held; the joint meeting has not been reflected in the graph.

7. Engagement with other stakeholders during country visits

First review cycle

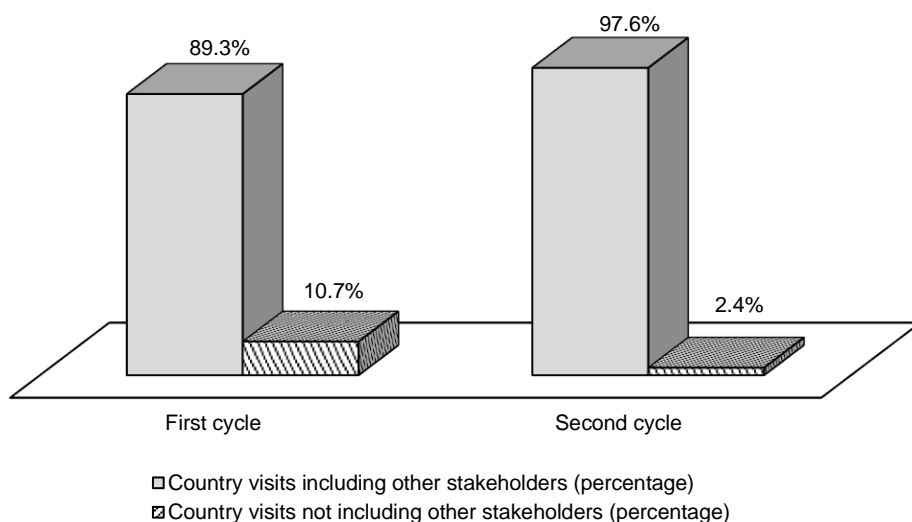
39. Of the country visits conducted during the first cycle, 89 per cent included meetings with other stakeholders (see figure VII), in accordance with paragraph 30 of the terms of reference. In some cases, those meetings took the form of panels that included representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia, trade associations and other national stakeholders. In other cases, States included national stakeholders such as representatives of academia, civil society and the private sector in the committees set up to coordinate and oversee the review process.

Second review cycle

40. At the time of writing, almost all the country visits (97.6 per cent) conducted in the first and second years of the second cycle had included meetings with other stakeholders, in accordance with paragraph 30 of the terms of reference (see figure VII).

Figure VII

Engagement with stakeholders during country visits, per review cycle



8. Outcome of the country review process, publication of the country review report and review languages

41. In accordance with paragraph 33 of the terms of reference and paragraph 30 of the guidelines, the reviewing governmental experts are to prepare a country review report and an executive summary of that report, in close cooperation and coordination with the State party under review and assisted by the secretariat. Successes, good practices and challenges should be identified in the report, and the report should contain observations on the implementation of the Convention. Where appropriate, technical assistance needs for the purpose of improving the implementation of the Convention should also be identified in the report.

First review cycle

42. A total of 168 executive summaries and 150 country reports had been completed at the time of writing; of those, 27 executive summaries had been completed and made available to the Implementation Review Group for the reviews in the first year. For the second year, 40 executive summaries had been completed and made available to the Group. For the third year, 34 executive summaries had been completed and made available to the Group. For the fourth year, 67 executive summaries had been completed and made available and several more were being finalized.

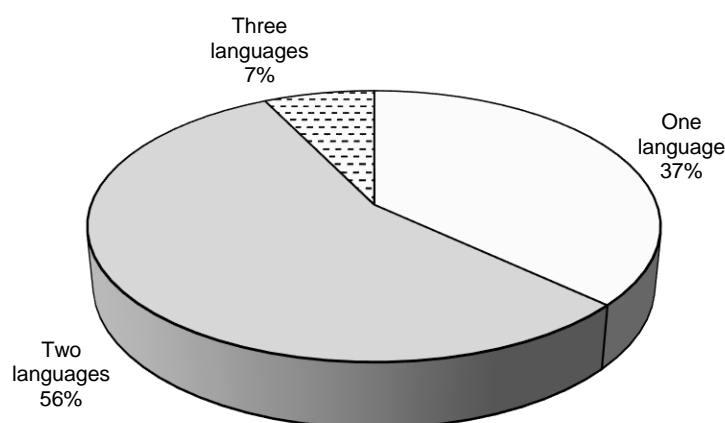
43. To date, 150 country reviews for the first cycle have been completed, with 34 country reviews being in various stages of finalization. It should be noted that, although the full reviews have not yet been completed, 17 executive summaries in relation to those 34 country reviews have nonetheless been completed.

44. The executive summaries of the country review reports have been posted online on the page with documentation of the Implementation Review Group and on the country profile page (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/country-profile/index.html). At the time of writing, 82 country review reports for the first cycle had been published on the UNODC website at the request of the States parties. Depending on the language and the number of annexes, the length of the reports ranged from approximately 100 pages to over 500 pages.¹²

45. While in some cases governmental experts agreed to conduct the review in a language other than their preferred one, most reviews were conducted in more than one official language of the United Nations. Of 184 reviews, 66 were carried out in one official language, 100 were carried out in two official languages and 13 were carried out in three official languages. In five cases, the decision on which language or languages were to be used had not yet been taken (see figure VIII).

Figure VIII

First review cycle: number of official languages of the United Nations used in the country review



Note: This figure does not include country reviews for which a decision on the language or languages to be used has not yet been taken.

Second review cycle

46. At the time of writing, for the first year of the second cycle, 16 executive summaries and 7 country review reports had been completed, while for the second year of the second cycle, four executive summaries and no country review reports had been completed, in part because of the delays incurred in the submission of the responses to the self-assessment checklist and the organization of the country visits.

47. In the first year of the second review cycle, 10 reviews were carried out in one official language of the United Nations, 15 in two official languages and 3 in three official languages. For one review, the decision on the language of the review was still pending.

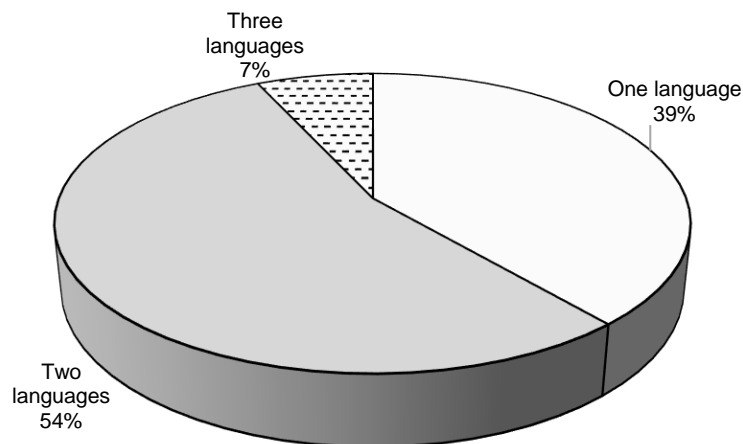
48. In the second year of the second review cycle, 15 reviews were carried out in one official language of the United Nations, 23 in two official languages and 4 in three official languages. For six reviews, the decision on the language of the review had not yet been taken.

¹² For more details of the translation costs, see [CAC/COSP/IRG/2016/3](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/COSP/IRG/2016/3).

49. In the third year of the second review cycle, 15 reviews were carried out in one official language of the United Nations and 17 in two official languages. For four reviews, the decision on the language of the review had not yet been taken (see figure IX).

Figure IX

First, second and third years of the second review cycle: number of official languages of the United Nations used in the country review



Note: This figure does not include country reviews for which a decision on the language or languages to be used has not yet been taken.

E. Training courses for focal points and governmental experts participating in the Implementation Review Mechanism

50. In accordance with paragraph 32 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism, and paragraph 11 of the guidelines for governmental experts and the secretariat in the conduct of country reviews, the secretariat organizes periodic training courses for focal points and governmental experts participating in the reviews. These training courses familiarize the focal points and experts with the guidelines in order to increase their capacity to participate in the review process.

First review cycle

51. To date, over 1,800 experts have been trained in the framework of the first review cycle, thus contributing to the creation of a global community of anti-corruption experts. National training courses and ad hoc assistance were provided to more than 40 States, and since June 2013, seven regional training courses have been organized.

Second review cycle

52. As of March 2019, 7 regional training sessions and 10 global training sessions had been organized for the second review cycle. In particular, training sessions were being organized back-to-back with sessions of the Implementation Review Group to save costs for both the States parties under review and the secretariat. In addition, targeted assistance was available to States parties under review in support of their reviews, in particular assistance provided by UNODC to States as regards the completion of their responses to the self-assessment checklists.

53. At the time of writing the present report, over 1,200 focal points and governmental experts had been trained, including over 700 focal points and governmental experts who had participated in the regional and global training sessions for the second review cycle.

III. Analysis of the functioning of the Mechanism and the way forward¹³

A. Continued delays in the finalization of country reviews

54. As early as at the fifth session of the Conference of the States Parties, the secretariat highlighted how the review of implementation of chapter II of the Convention, in being “very far-reaching” was “also likely to require national consultations among many departments and agencies.”¹⁴ It was anticipated that such consultations could lead to delays, in particular as regards the collection of sufficient information to ensure a meaningful analysis for the reviews. A comparison of the time required by States parties to submit their self-assessment checklists during the first and second cycles shows further delays in the submission by States of the self-assessment checklists in the second cycle, despite the fact that the second cycle should have benefited from the experience and insights gained during the first cycle.

55. The secretariat has continued to make efforts to alert States parties about anticipated delays even before the reviews commenced. To that end, training courses were organized for focal points and governmental experts prior to years two and three of the second cycle. The early training of focal points prior to the commencement of the country review resulted in the nomination of the majority of focal points prior to the starting dates of the country reviews.

56. The States parties under review in the second cycle have frequently cited chapter II of the Convention, on preventive measures, as the cause of delays in the submission of the self-assessment checklists. The need for consultations with a considerable number of stakeholders, in particular in federal or multijurisdictional States, has further complicated matters as information and inputs have frequently been sought at both the state and federal levels.

57. The continued delays in the submission by the States under review of the self-assessment checklist remains of concern to the secretariat. Ten months after the commencement of the third year of the second cycle, only 11 of the States parties under review in that year have submitted their self-assessment checklists, while, at the same time 9 States parties under review in the second year of the second cycle, which started in July 2017, are yet to submit their self-assessment checklists.

58. The secretariat also observed that a number of States that were acting as reviewing States parties in years one and two had since come under review themselves in years two and three, or vice versa, creating an increased workload for all involved. The spillover of these delays into subsequent years of the second cycle has already started to have a negative impact on the capacity of States, as well as the secretariat, in carrying out both the delayed reviews and the subsequent year’s reviews at the same time.

The way forward

59. While it is too soon to compare in a comprehensive manner the different steps in the country reviews for the first and second cycles, given the delays experienced in the submission of the self-assessment checklists, there is reason for serious concern with regard to the duration of the individual country reviews in the second cycle and the resulting overall duration of the cycle.

60. The secretariat will continue monitoring the overall progress in submissions of the self-assessment checklists and the completion of reviews and keep the Group informed of the performance of the Mechanism in its second cycle.

¹³ Most of the information included in this chapter has been made available in [CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/2](#) and [CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.13](#).

¹⁴ See [CAC/COSP/2013/14](#).

61. The Group may wish to consider ways to encourage all States parties to redouble their efforts to prevent any further delays, which put at risk the good performance of the Mechanism.

B. Impact of the Mechanism on measures taken by States at the national level

62. When the Implementation Review Mechanism was launched, it was difficult to foresee how this new, unique global peer review mechanism would influence States parties' anti-corruption efforts and affect the effective implementation of the Convention. Certain statistical assumptions were made at that time, which formed the basis for the Mechanism's work during the first cycle. Those assumptions related to, among other things, the increase in the number of States parties, States wishing to welcome country visits as part of their reviews and their desire to participate in training courses offered for the conduct of reviews. Similarly, from a substantive perspective, it was not clear what impact the Mechanism would have on domestic, regional and international anti-corruption efforts. It is now safe to say that the impact of the Mechanism has exceeded expectations in every aspect.

63. To provide a few concrete examples of how the Mechanism has exceeded expectations: in 2009, the assumption was that 160 States would become party to the Convention during the duration of the first cycle. The Convention to date has reached a membership of 186 parties. Expectations in 2009 were that 50 per cent of countries would opt for a country visit as a further means of direct dialogue. This expectation has been exceeded by far, with 92 per cent of countries welcoming a country visit and another 7 per cent opting for a joint meeting, the latter being chosen mostly for reasons of security. Another area where the Mechanism by far exceeded expectations has been the training of governmental experts and focal points. At the outset, it was anticipated that for the duration of the first cycle a total of 160 governmental experts and focal points would be trained. However, due to the interest in this training, a global pool of 1,800 anti-corruption practitioners has been created through the training courses organized and carried out by the secretariat on the Convention and the Implementation Review Mechanism in the framework of the first cycle, with many more joining this network of anti-corruption practitioners in the course of the second cycle. The Mechanism has thus created a global community of practitioners in the prevention and control of corruption that continues to grow.

64. Improved coordination and cooperation are other areas where the Mechanism has had concrete results in many States parties. The role of the reviews in improving institutional structures and cooperation at the national level has been highlighted, as has been the positive impact of the reviews on strengthening international cooperation capacities, both at the domestic level and vis-à-vis other States parties.

65. The Mechanism established, in many areas, benchmarks against which anti-corruption progress can be measured. Based on information collected in 2017, 74 per cent of States parties found that the peer reviews had helped identify gaps and shortcomings in their domestic frameworks and systems for fighting corruption and had an overall positive impact on their national efforts to fight corruption.

66. In terms of the Mechanism's role in triggering concrete anti-corruption measures, based on the same information collected from States parties in 2017, as previously reported, 86 per cent of States parties have carried out reforms to bring their legislation in line with the requirements of the Convention under chapters III and IV. Fifty-eight per cent of States reported taking measures related to chapters II and V, either as a direct outcome of the first or in preparation of the second implementation review cycle.

67. The secretariat will continue to gather information from States on a voluntary basis on measures taken after the completion of the reviews, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of this information for the next session of the Conference.

68. In the meantime, the following are examples of measures taken by States, as well as international and regional organizations, in areas which were identified in the reviews as priority areas, based on the number of recommendations made and technical assistance needs identified.

C. The Mechanism as a trigger for change: measures taken as an outcome of the reviews

69. As described in previous documents prepared by the Secretariat, the country reviews have triggered legislative and institutional amendments in a large number of States, in order to fully implement the Convention and address the implementation gaps identified in the course of the reviews.

70. Based on information provided by States on measures taken after the completion of their first cycle reviews in response to gaps identified in fully implementing chapters III and IV of the Convention, the protection of witnesses and reporting persons, the financial investigative capacities of domestic authorities and international cooperation are areas where particular efforts have been undertaken to address a large number of identified implementation gaps following the reviews.

71. Articles 32, 33 and 37 of the Convention, on witness protection and the protection of reporting persons, were among the most common articles for which recommendations were issued in the first review cycle. While the criminal law of most States contained some general provisions for witness protection, gaps in the implementation of provisions for the protection of reporting persons were more prevalent. At the same time, States indicated needs for technical assistance in fully implementing those provisions. Through the reviews and follow-up assistance, it became clear that States did not always clearly differentiate between witness protection and the protection of reporting persons.

72. In the responses received by States parties on measures taken after the completion of the reviews, many States reported having addressed such gaps by means of new or amended regulations and laws to enhance reporting and to protect reporting persons, and by establishing new institutions mandated to implement those measures.

73. Several States outlined how a number of measures had been taken as a consequence of their reviews, including directly linking legislative amendments to the recommendations received through the review. One State outlined how, subsequent to the conclusion of the review, the Ministry of Justice had established an inter-institutional working group tasked with mapping legislation and practices related to whistle-blowing, identifying potential problems and proposing ways forward. A few States reported on measures taken in relation to the protection of reporting persons which were implemented together with measures introducing the liability of legal persons. In this context, a number of States also reported on creating obligations for the private sector to establish systems that allow for the reporting of wrongdoing and the protection of reporting persons.

74. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council took note of the impact of the country reviews and, in its resolution 2018/12, encouraged governments at all levels to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice through, inter alia, public education, as well as standardized procedures and guidance, building on the findings of the Implementation Review Mechanism and the exchange of good practices in corruption prevention, including on whistle-blowing systems and procedures.

75. The strengthening of the financial investigative capacities of the various national specialized authorities was another area where, due to the challenges identified in the reviews, a large number of technical assistance needs were noted.

These challenges were often cross-cutting and had an impact on the implementation of articles 23, 31, 36 and 38 of the Convention.

76. When reporting on measures taken after the review, States indicated that they had addressed those recommendations through inter-institutional cooperation. Such efforts included joint training sessions for the investigative staff of different institutions.

77. Several States mentioned how efforts to enhance their investigative skills and national systems had also been directly linked to international investigations and cooperation efforts. One State noted that by broadening the powers of the financial intelligence unit to request additional information from reporting entities it had also ensured that such powers could be equally applied when requests from foreign financial intelligence units were received. Another State had highlighted how, in order to boost its capacity to investigate international corruption cases, a new central bribery and corruption unit had been established within its national crime agency to bring together resources from within the agency as well as other authorities. One State, however, reported that it was still unable to ensure systematic access to the indictments and judgments resulting from its investigations.

78. The articles of chapter IV of the Convention on international cooperation consistently gave rise to the largest number of recommendations and technical assistance needs identified throughout the first cycle. Many States reported on the adoption of international cooperation laws, while others noted that they had incorporated provisions on international cooperation in other laws, such as a civil procedure code or anti-money-laundering legislation. Some States highlighted how they had continued to conclude bilateral agreements in order to address recommendations received during the country reviews. Other States noted that they had subscribed to a number of regional agreements so as to expand their international cooperation capabilities. One State that had received the recommendation to consider adopting detailed, specific legislation on international cooperation, noted that after carrying that consideration, the State had deemed it not to be necessary to adopt such legislation and instead preferred to apply the Convention directly.

79. As was the case in the area of criminalization and law enforcement, the prevalence of common challenges and technical assistance needs resulted in a range of regional initiatives so as to respond to these needs.

80. In August 2018, UNODC organized a regional training on financial investigations and links to money-laundering for Sri Lanka and Maldives, held in Colombo. Also in August 2018, UNODC conducted a subregional meeting on trade-based money-laundering in conjunction with the Financial Analysis Unit of Panama (UAF) and Caribbean, Bermuda and Latin America Crime Stoppers, for 26 law enforcement officials of Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Peru, held in Panama City. Another example of activities undertaken by UNODC is the facilitation of a regional workshop on international cooperation in criminal and financial investigations of corruption crimes and links to money-laundering for six countries in South Asia, held in New Delhi in November 2018.
