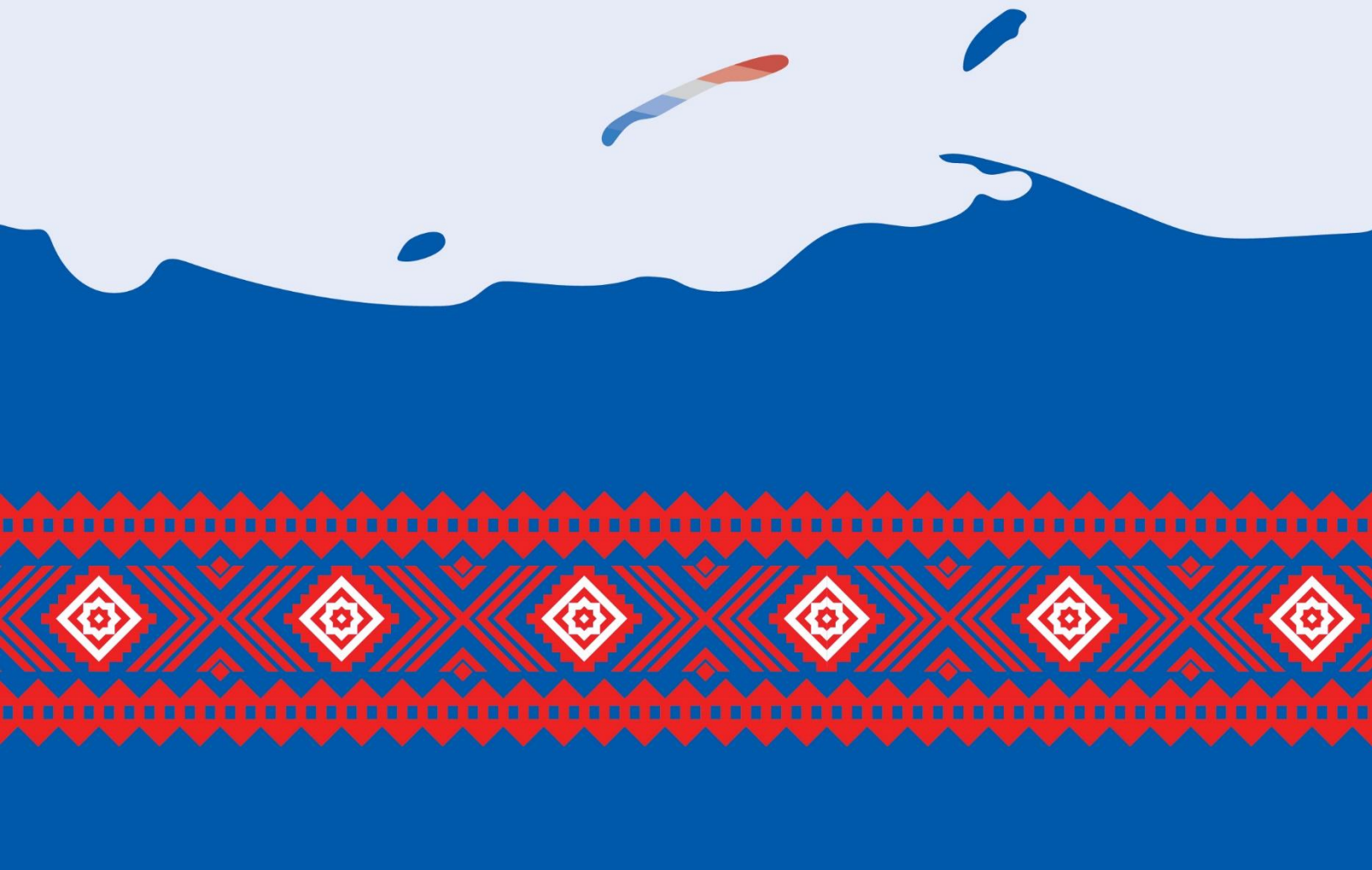


## LAUNCH CONFERENCE

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

## Roadmap 2023-2025



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

## ROADMAP 2023-2025

Adopted in Roatán, Honduras, on 27 April 2023

### Introduction

The international community has recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in the 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.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) represents a globally accepted framework, with most of its provisions being binding, making it a unique tool for a worldwide response to a global problem. The UNCAC approach is also echoed in initiatives at the regional level, such as the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC).

The delegations of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, gathered at the Launch Conference of the Regional Platform to Fast-Track the Implementation of UNCAC in Central America, recognize that the identification of areas of opportunity concerning the international standards of reference is a necessary step for countries to assess their performance, including successes and challenges, and identify reform needs to further advance their effective implementation. As emphasized in the Political Declaration adopted in June 2021 by the UN General Assembly at its first special session on corruption, this implementation requires action by state actors in cooperation with other non-state stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, and the general public.

UNODC supports the establishment of regional platforms to accelerate the implementation of UNCAC, which seek to both identify areas of opportunity in existing efforts and to coordinate and leverage the work of technical assistance providers, while promoting better regional coordination and collaboration. Based on the success demonstrated in different parts of the world, the regional platforms approach has been recognized by the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC with the adoption of Resolution 9/4 in December 2021.

From this Launching Conference, the general principle of strengthening and promoting regional cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the UNCAC, as well as the IACAC, emerged. In this regard, emphasis was placed on the need to improve the regulatory frameworks by bringing them in line with international commitments, based on the recommendations formulated within the framework of the review mechanisms of these conventions.

This agenda of commitments is structured in five thematic areas, with objectives and activities defined for each one of them. The agenda also contemplates **cross-cutting elements** such as that anti-corruption policies must protect, promote, respect, and guarantee the human rights of all persons, groups and collectivities that belong to society, under the principles of equality, non-discrimination, priority protection for vulnerable groups and mainstreaming of the gender perspective. Likewise, it also includes in a cross-cutting manner the opportunity offered by new technologies and new means of communication to foster transparency, access to information and accountability, and therefore the promotion of their use.

## **SUBJECT AREA I: SYSTEMS OF INTEGRITY**

### **Objective 1: Advance in the construction of national integrity systems to strengthen the countries' institutional frameworks.**

Activity 1.1. Build integrity strategies, including at the national level, based on prior assessments and/or adopt anti-corruption policies.

Activity 1.2. Monitor the implementation and impact of anti-corruption strategies and policies.

Activity 1.3. Create national and regional mechanisms for systems of integrity with multi-sectoral participation to coordinate anti-corruption efforts.

Activity 1.4. Implement mechanisms for the identification, evaluation, and national management of corruption risks in all fields and with all sectors, including at the regional level.

### **Objective 2 Implement mechanisms for cooperation and exchange of information on corruption risk management at the regional level.**

Activity 2.1. Develop an IT platform that generates early warnings of corruption risks and cases at the regional level.

Activity 2.2. Promote the exchange of good practices in corruption risk management.

Activity 2.3. Create a permanent regional working group to facilitate the implementation of corrective actions in the fight against corruption.

### **Objective 3 Strengthen the culture of regional integrity.**

Activity 3.1. Conduct integrity awareness workshops for public officials and citizens.

Activity 3.2. Develop skills and competencies of public officials in integrity through continuous training.

Activity 3.3. Establish alliances between the public sector, civil society organizations, academia, the media, professional associations, unions, and private sector labor unions to promote integrity and transparency.

Activity 3.4. Strengthen mechanisms for access to public information in a timely, clear, and understandable manner using information technologies.

Activity 3.5. Promote the exchange of good practices to build a culture of integrity in children and youth in the education system.

## **THEMATIC AREA II: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

### **Objective 1: Strengthen transparency and integrity in public procurement systems.**

Activity 1.1. Promote strategies to adequately manage cases of conflicts of interest in public contracting, including prevention, detection, control, and sanction.

Activity 1.2. Ensure the publication of information generated during all stages of public procurement in open data format to guarantee the public's right to access information.

Activity 1.3. Strengthen the technical and ethical skills of public officials involved in public procurement processes.

### **Objective 2: Strengthen the regulatory and institutional framework and technological infrastructure of public procurement systems.**

Activity 2.1. Strengthen the regulatory and institutional framework that promotes mechanisms for transparency, integrity, competition, oversight, sustainable development, and a gender focus, as well as the use of information and communication technologies to modernize public procurement processes.

Activity 2.2. Modernize the technological infrastructure of public procurement systems to promote transparency, competition, and public integrity.

### **Objective 3: Promote strategies and incentives that allow for the collaboration of the private sector in the prevention and fight against corruption, within the framework of public contracting.**

Activity 3.1. Generate incentives in the form of differential criteria in public contracting processes, for those State suppliers that implement anti-corruption measures from the private sector perspective.

Activity 3.2. Design mechanisms that allow the administration to consider the performance of its suppliers for future public procurement processes.

Activity 3.3. Encourage free competition practices in the private sector to avoid collusive actions in public procurement processes.

### **THEMATIC AREA III: PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

#### **Objective 1: Encourage the generation and implementation of integrity and compliance policies in the private sector.**

Activity 1.1 Design, formalize, and disseminate training programmes for private companies on integrity and regulatory compliance that use technological platforms and integrate a perspective based on gender and human rights.

Activity 1.2 Encourage agreements with private enterprises and trade associations to promote certification in international anti-bribery, anti-corruption, business ethics, and gender equality standards, the adoption of good integrity practices, and the implementation of compliance programmes.

Activity 1.3 Agree upon and implement incentive and recognition mechanisms, as well as communicate the benefits for private companies of adopting integrity and compliance programmes, offering support to micro, small, and medium-sized companies.

Activity 1.4 Promote spaces for dialogue and exchange of experiences and best practices at the national and regional levels between the public and private sectors, academia, professional associations, and citizens regarding regulatory compliance, control and regulation mechanisms, typologies, risk management, and collective actions.

Activity 1.5 Develop or strengthen mechanisms for measuring compliance in the private sector, based on collaboration between the public and private sectors, academia, professional associations, and citizens.

#### **Objective 2: Establish and ensure the application of liability of legal persons for acts of corruption.**

Activity 2.1 Adopt or strengthen legal frameworks to establish the liability of legal persons for acts of corruption, without prejudice to the liability of individuals.

Activity 2.2 Design and implement awareness-raising and training campaigns on the liability of legal persons for acts of corruption, particularly aimed at private companies.

Activity 2.3 Generate research and assessments, including at the regional level, and promote the exchange of international and regional best practices on the situation regarding the liability of legal persons for acts of corruption in each country.

#### **Objective 3: Promote due diligence and beneficial ownership identification.**

Activity 3.1 Adopt or strengthen legal frameworks and guidelines for the identification and access to information on beneficial ownership by oversight and investigation entities, ensuring compliance with international best practices.

Activity 3.2 Establish registries and accounting systems for the identification and access to information on beneficial ownership by oversight and investigation entities.

Activity 3.3 Promote the exchange of information at the regional level on beneficial ownership, using information technologies to explore the possibility of creating a regional IT platform.

Activity 3.4 Promote the exchange of experiences and best practices at the regional level on due diligence on an ongoing basis.

## **THEMATIC AREA IV: CORRUPTION REPORTING AND WHISTLE-BLOWER AND WITNESS PROTECTION**

### **Objective 1: Adopt measures to encourage and strengthen the receipt of effective and good-faith reports.**

Activity 1.1. Strengthen the institutional and legal framework of the bodies or entities responsible for processing, investigating, and punishing corruption, guaranteeing their independence and impartiality, in line with the legal system of each of the member states.

Activity 1.2. Generate clear reporting procedures for citizens, raise awareness, and disseminate them to facilitate reporting, using accessible, inclusive, and secure communication technologies.

Activity 1.3. Provide the bodies responsible for processing the reports with the appropriate and duly trained personnel and other resources necessary for this purpose.

Activity 1.4 Coordinate with other organizations, civil society, professional associations, academia, and related sectors to provide training and raise awareness to promote the effectiveness of citizen reporting as a mechanism to detect and combat corruption.

Activity 1.5. Evaluate the definition and incorporation of criteria for the improvement or adoption of incentives for individuals who report in good faith.

### **Objective 2: Ensure comprehensive protection mechanisms through appropriate measures to protect whistle-blowers and witnesses.**

Activity 2.1. Implement measures that provide comprehensive and timely protection procedures to whistle-blowers and witnesses against any unjustified treatment that includes retaliation in the workplace, personal integrity, or others, applicable to both public officials and individuals.

Activity 2.2. Develop suitable protocols following the laws of each member state for the protection of whistle-blowers and witnesses that respond to the nature of the specific risks arising because of whistle-blowing.

Activity 2.3. Adopt measures to guarantee the confidentiality of the whistle-blower's identity and establish sanctions for public officials who fail to comply with their duty to guarantee the secrecy or confidentiality of the process and the identity of whistle-blowers, making use of the improvements provided by technological tools.

Activity 2.4. Strengthen and promote regional agreements to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers and witnesses through the exchange of information and the strengthening of coordination between national mechanisms to protect whistle-blowers and witnesses.

## **THEMATIC AREA V: INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CORRUPTION CASES**

### **Objective 1: Strengthen investigative and prosecutorial capacities in the management of complex corruption cases to reduce impunity.**

Activity 1.1. Strengthen the regulatory framework in line with the recommendations of the UNCAC review mechanism and of the MESICIC.

Activity 1.2 Encourage parallel financial investigations and the use of special investigative techniques in complex corruption cases.

Activity 1.3. Design and implement guidelines and protocols for complex corruption cases.

Activity 1.4. Generate continuous training processes in anti-corruption matters for judicial administration officials.

Activity 1.5. Achieve the use of state-of-the-art technologies or modernization, with the appropriate security safeguards, to improve the results of the investigation processes in complex cases.

### **Objective 2: Promote international judicial cooperation to obtain effective results in the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases.**

Activity 2.1. Improve the regional legal framework for anti-corruption efforts to facilitate coordination, exchange of information, and joint investigative activities.

Activity 2.2. Promote international judicial cooperation mechanisms, through the use of networks and the creation of joint investigation teams.

Activity 2.3. Modernize information systems for the exchange of information in mutual legal assistance cases.

Activity 2.4. Establish inter-institutional mechanisms for international judicial cooperation to coordinate anti-corruption efforts.

### **Objective 3: Strengthen regional coordination for the investigation, recovery, and return of assets derived from acts of corruption.**

Activity 3.1. Review legal frameworks to enhance capacities for asset tracing, seizure, recovery, and return.

Activity 3.2. Strengthen asset recovery and administration entities with regard to specialized management and accountability.

Activity 3.3. Design investigation methodologies and build databases for asset management and evidence preservation.

Activity 3.4. Promote parallel financial investigations for the investigation and recovery of assets for corruption crimes in the region.