



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Anti-Corruption Hub for Southeast Asia

NEWSLETTER

January – June 2024

The platform for Southeast Asia was first launched in 2017. In February 2024, it was time to revisit the commitments countries made and identify reform needs for further progress. New Regional Roadmap was adopted charting the way forward. We have also supported the establishment of a new network – Journalists Against Corruption (JAC) – to ensure the journalists are equipped with knowledge and tools to investigate corruption.

From upholding business integrity in the palm oil industry to empowering women in anti-corruption, this newsletter offers an insight into the latest strides in combatting corruption in Southeast Asia.

This newsletter is publicly shared with colleagues and partners of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Anti-Corruption Hub for Southeast Asia.

Highlights

- Charting the way forward: New Regional Roadmap to Fast-Track the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in Southeast Asia (2024-2027)
- Uniting journalists and civil society organizations in the fight against corruption
- Anti-corruption champion in focus: Philippine Anti-Corruption Justice Mendoza-Arcega - “Women judges continuously endeavor for empowerment”
- Upholding electoral integrity in Indonesia
- 2nd Anti-Corruption Innovations Conference 2024
- Beneficial ownership transparency
- Business integrity
- Countries advance UNCAC implementation
- New publications
- Upcoming activities

News and updates

Charting the way forward: New Regional Roadmap to Fast-Track the Implementation of UNCAC in Southeast Asia (2024-2027)

Countries agreed upon the Regional Roadmap to guide their work to accelerate UNCAC implementation at the Regional Conference in February 2024. The priorities include:

- Strengthen institutions to prevent and combat corruption;
- Enhance public procurement and greater beneficial transparency;
- Greater facilitation of asset recovery;
- Cross-cutting themes: international cooperation and peer learning; human rights and gender equality; the use of technology and data; and the role of non-State actors.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Uniting Journalists and Civil Society Organizations in our Fight against Corruption

A whole-of-society approach is required to successfully prevent and address corruption. However, across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, there are worrying signs that civic space is shrinking. In discussion with and the support of key non-State actors, UNODC supported the establishment of the [Journalists Against Corruption \(JAC\) Network](#) and [Southeast Asian Anti-Corruption Network for civil society organizations \(SEA-ACN\)](#).

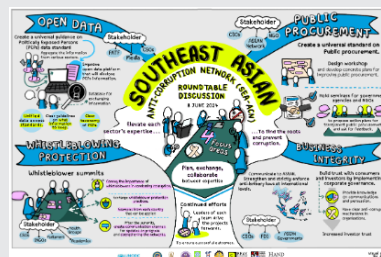
JAC and SEA-ACN joined the 21st International Anti-Corruption Conference in Lithuania (Read more [here](#))



JAC and SEA-ACN learned about beneficial ownership through training organized by UNODC and Open Ownership.



SEA-ACN members gathered from across the region in June 2024 for a roundtable discussion on key topics.



Anti-corruption champion in focus: Philippine Anti-Corruption Justice Mendoza-Arcega - “Women judges continuously endeavor for empowerment”

In the quest for a fair and equitable society, addressing gender stereotypes in the judiciary is crucial. “Avoiding stereotypes in the judiciary is still challenging,” says Philippines Justice Mendoza-Arcega. “Shifting the paradigm on gender norms is difficult considering that the centuries old patriarchal culture is embedded in us. Anyone in the judiciary, even judges, can be victims of gender stereotypes. Likewise, women judges continuously endeavour for empowerment.”

[LEARN MORE](#)



UNODC supports transparency in Indonesia’s presidential election

In the lead up to Indonesia’s presidential election, UNODC worked with civil society organizations, women and youth communities, communities of people with disabilities and university students to stand against corruption, notably money politics and vote-buying.

“The empowerment of communities to fight money politics is important to ensure democracy produces leaders with integrity”, said Nurhasanah, a member of Suara Perempuan (Voice of Women) in North Sulawesi.



Second International Conference on Anti-Corruption Innovations in Southeast Asia

UNODC partnered with the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Thailand and others to bring more than 400 participants from anti-corruption agencies, private sector, civil society and media together to exchange knowledge and innovative strategies in the fight against corruption.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Beneficial ownership transparency

Beneficial ownership transparency can be a key tool in preventing the misuse of corporate vehicles to conceal the proceeds of corruption and other illicit gains. Identifying beneficial owners of accounts and transactions is also a cornerstone for any robust anti-money laundering preventive framework.

[Learn more](#) about the implementation of beneficial ownership transparency in Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in our new report.

The Philippines

UNODC has been working with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Philippines on beneficial ownership transparency. After three years of cooperation, the country is largely complying with Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) [Recommendation 24](#) on beneficial ownership standards.

Indonesia

[In a collaboration with Open Ownership](#), UNODC is supporting the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to strengthen the verification system of Indonesia's beneficial ownership register with the implementation of the beneficial ownership data standard.



Business integrity

Corruption in the private sector may involve, for example, fraud, bribery and embezzlement. These corrupt acts not only undermine economic development, market competition, consumer welfare and equitable opportunities, but also constitute a business risk and can distort markets.

Indonesia

UNODC has been working with private companies and local governments in Kalimantan to increase business integrity in the palm oil industry, and to address environmental damage in the land-based sector.



Malaysia

Malaysia is part of [UNODC's Global Action for Business Integrity](#) Project addressing gaps and opportunities in corporate criminal liability and improving integrity pacts in public procurement.



Countries Accelerate UNCAC implementation

Lao PDR

In May 2024, government agencies collectively reviewed Lao PDR's recommendations as part of the Implementation Review Mechanism of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This led to the identification of areas that the Government wishes to prioritize going forward and its announcement to develop a National Anti-Corruption Strategy.



Malaysia

UNODC has been supporting the State of Sawarak on strengthening its anti-corruption measures, including through the training for Certified Integrity Officers in statutory bodies, State-owned enterprises and private companies.



Mongolia

Mongolian civil society, media and government agencies gathered to strengthen the whole-of-society approach to addressing corruption in March.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Thailand

UNODC supported Bangkok Metropolitan Administration with its corruption risk assessment, focusing on high-level infrastructure projects.



Viet Nam

Since 2022, UNODC had been supporting Viet Nam on the development of the Law on Government Inspectorate until it was approved on 14 November 2022. Subsequently, UNODC has been supporting the implementation of the Law, including its draft Circular on Conducting Inspections in the Hoa Binh and Khanh Hoa Provinces.

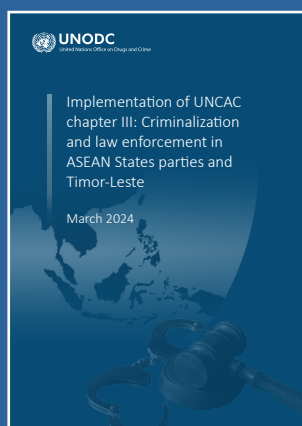


Partnerships

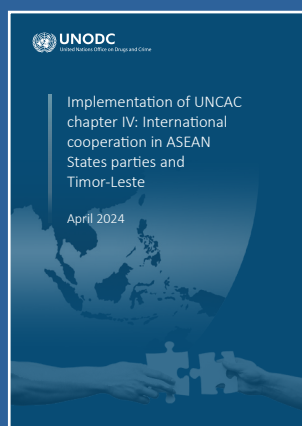
Partnerships are key in the fight against corruption. UNODC continues to engage in various anti-corruption discussions including:

- The Korean Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission’s Training Course for International Anti-Corruption Practitioners from five countries in April in Seoul;
- Regional Meeting on Illicit Finance in support of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime in April in Singapore;
- The Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering’s co-chairs’ priorities: Online Technical Seminar on Grand Corruption in May;
- The Thailand Institute of Justice’s Training on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for Southeast Asia (T4SEA), focused on governance and integrity, for nine countries in June in Bangkok;
- UNODC’s Waste and Anti-Corruption Technical Seminar for Southeast Asian countries in June in Bangkok;
- Sessions on “Sovereignty for Sale: Special Economic Zones (SEZs), scam operations, casinos, human trafficking” and “Watching the Watchtower: Harnessing the Power of Collective Action” at the International Anti-Corruption Conference in June in Lithuania.

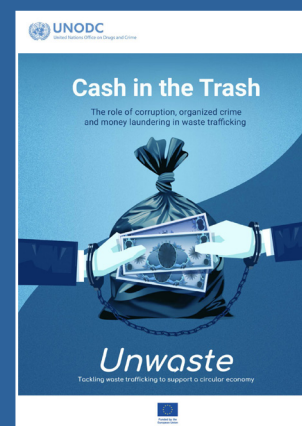
New publications



[Implementation of UNCAC chapter III: Criminalization and law enforcement in ASEAN States parties and Timor-Leste](#)



[Implementation of UNCAC chapter IV: International cooperation in ASEAN States parties and Timor-Leste](#)



[Cash in the Trash: The role of corruption, organized crime and money laundering in waste trafficking](#)

Upcoming events and activities

- Regional Peer Exchange: Advancing Anti-Corruption in Southeast Asia through Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Jakarta, Indonesia, August 2024
 - Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) in Beijing, China, September 2024
 - Regional Dialogues on Human Rights and Anti-Corruption, and on Corruption and Gender in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 2024
 - Support to Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Pillar IV on Anti-Corruption and Tax Transparency:
 - Foreign Bribery Workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 2024;
 - Public Procurement Workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 2024;
 - Asset Recovery Workshop in Hanoi, Viet Nam, November 2024
 - ASEAN Parties Against Corruption (ASEAN-PAC) Capacity-Building Workshop in Bali, Indonesia, November 2024
 - Upcoming publications on select topics, including:
 - Right to information in ASEAN, Mongolia and Timor-Leste;
 - The implementation of non-conviction-based forfeiture in ASEAN, Mongolia and Timor-Leste;
 - Liability of legal persons: implementation under UNCAC in ASEAN, with Malaysia as a case study;
 - Corruption and human rights in ASEAN and Timor-Leste: areas of overlap and progress based on UNCAC and UN human rights normative standards;
 - Gender and corruption in ASEAN, Timor-Leste and Mongolia: intersections, insights, and progress.
-

With Special Thanks to UNODC's Donors

