

Open Government Partnership: Anti-Corruption

Corruption is the **abuse of entrusted power for private gain**. Corruption harms everyone by taking tax dollars from needed public services and projects. For OGP members, fighting corruption is essential to transparent, responsive, and inclusive government. **Corrupt practices impact millions of people worldwide, as tax dollars meant for vital public goods and services disappear**. Low-income individuals and families and under-represented minorities are most negatively affected. Corruption also adversely impacts the business environment. Evidence shows that transparent governments improve business efficiency and spur economic and investment opportunities.¹

Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis.²

OGP governments are leading the fight against corruption. They are innovating new solutions and ensuring compliance with international norms. OGP countries were among the earliest adopters of policies to advance beneficial ownership transparency and open contracting standards.

I. Potential Thematic Priorities

1. POLITICAL INTEGRITY

Political integrity is exercising political power consistently in the public interest, independent from private interests, and ***not using power to maintain the office holder's own wealth and position***³.

Political integrity requires the following:

- *The process to elect, appoint or select those who hold power is free from the undue influence of vested interests;*
- *All stakeholders have inclusive, open and meaningful opportunities to equally influence decision-making;*
- *Political decisions and power holders are subject to public scrutiny and institutional checks;*
- *Political decisions and power holders face consequences for using power for private gain.*

Providing for transparency in the funding of campaigns, political parties, and democratic politics is an essential accountability mechanism for democratic government and is a growing focus area in OGP. Money is a necessary and growing component in modern competitive elections. However, it provokes distrust and cynicism among the electorate, and can be a tool for corruption by those with resources. A lack of information on how much money circulates in and around elections, where resources are coming from and how they are spent

¹ For more information see OGP <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/anti-corruption/>

² For more information see Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption#>

³ Definition from Transparency International and more information on political integrity available from <https://www.transparency.org/en/our-priorities/political-integrity#>

makes it harder for the electorate to make informed decisions. It also facilitates corruption and erodes citizen trust in political institutions.⁴

Increasing political finance transparency is necessary in order to⁵:

- *Prevent an 'arms race' in election spending;*
- *Level the political and electoral playing field;*
- *Keep illicit and criminal money out of politics and elections;*
- *Promote the political participation of women and other marginalized groups;*
- *Incentivize compliance with political finance regulations.*

2. BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY

A beneficial owner is the real person who ultimately owns, controls or benefits from a company or trust fund and the income it generates.

Beneficial ownership secrecy occurs when 'anonymous companies' or a 'nominee' as the registered legal owner of the asset or company different to those who actually profit from the company or trust fund⁶. **The use of 'anonymous companies' or a 'nominee' is often used to hide corruption, including bribery and money laundering.** Therefore, beneficial ownership secrecy facilitates illicit financial flows from criminal activities and promotes tax evasion⁷.

Complex and opaque corporate structures set up across different jurisdictions make it easy to hide the beneficial owner, especially when anonymous companies or nominees are used in their place and part of the structure is in a secret jurisdiction. **Mandatory public registers of beneficial ownership for trust funds and companies establishes transparency and traceability of the transfer of money making it more difficult for companies and individuals to benefit from corruption and crime.**

3. OPEN CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT⁸

Countries provide goods, services, and critical infrastructure to their citizens through government contracts worth trillions of dollars every year making public procurement and contracting one of government's most significant activities, and one of its greatest corruption risks.

Open contracting is a suite of complementary policies that improve transparency, participation and accountability in the procurement process. It therefore helps governments to combat corruption and increase integrity. Open contracting also helps governments to understand and improve their financial positions as buyers, create fairer and more accessible markets, and collaborate with civil society to monitor public services more effectively. Through open contracting, information on government contracts is published in an open and timely manner, enabling citizens to become more engaged in tracking public expenditures.

⁴ For more information see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/elections-political-finance/>

⁵ For more information see <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/political-finance-transparency.pdf>

⁶ For more information see <https://www.transparency.org/en/corruptionary/beneficial-ownership-secrecy>

⁷ For more information see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Beneficial-Ownership-Fact-Sheet-May-2019.pdf>

⁸ For more information see https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/Rec_on_Open_Contracting_for_OGP_action_plans_-_FINAL.pdf

II. OGP Recommendations

POLITICAL INTEGRITY⁹

- **Establish a mandatory public register of meetings between lobbyists and public officials.**
- Establish clear and realistic goals.
- **Create open, equitable, and responsive channels for public consultation.**
- Engage all stakeholders.
- **Introduce mandatory codes of conduct for both officials and lobbyists** and ensure there are appropriate sanctions in place for non-compliance.
- **Target political equity measures to promote the participation** and representation of women and politically marginalized groups, including campaign finance reforms and minimum standards for participation.
- **Consider international standards¹⁰:** Global standards related to political financing are emerging to regulate private spending, provide access to public funding, and make information on political financing transparent and accessible.
 - [*The United Nations Convention against Corruption*](#) outlines the basic concept of political finance transparency¹¹
 - [*The Venice Commission*](#) for guidelines on financing political parties and election campaigns¹²
 - [*The Council of Europe's*](#) 2003 recommendation on 'common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and election campaigns'¹³

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY¹⁴

- **Strengthen disclosure requirements** by reinforcing underlying legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Create and publish a central, open register (in open data format) of the beneficial owners of all registered corporate entities and arrangements**, including foundations, partnerships and trusts. Registers must be fully searchable, regularly updated and contain all historical changes in ownership. Establishing a public register ensures that all bodies – including law enforcement agencies, tax authorities and civic organisations from domestic and foreign jurisdictions – have free, immediate access to information.
- **Implement the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard to ensure disclosure meets global norms.** Implementing the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard is a simple way of ensuring beneficial ownership data is published in a structure and format that facilitates cross-jurisdictional analysis. This allows data to be linked and compared transnationally, which is crucial for achieving accountability.

⁹ For more information see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/elections-political-finance/>

¹⁰ For more information see <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/political-finance-transparency.pdf>

¹¹ Article 7.3 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption whereby states should "consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures . . . to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties"

¹² Includes: (i) how to allocate public funding; (ii) who should be banned from providing private donations; (iii) how to enhance the transparency of private financing, including requirements on public annual accounts

¹³ Guidance on useful political transparency considerations, including publically available, up to date accounts and record of political donations

¹⁴ For more information see https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/Rec_on_Lobbying_for_OGP_action_plans_-_FINAL.pdf

- **Verify registered informants** such as through public registries that include steps to confirm the accuracy of the information submitted.
- **Engage citizens to monitor and report improprieties**, including enabling citizens to actively use ownership data to uncover networks of corruption and creating channels that deepen accountability, such as through legal investigations and informal citizen reporting
- Expand beneficial ownership work to **other asset classes, especially trusts**
- **Build strong verification systems** by creating measures to confirm the identity of the individual who registers company information and crosscheck data to ensure that information submitted is plausible.

OPEN CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT

- **Collect higher-quality contracting data that is timely**, complete and in a machine-readable format.
- **Train people on how to utilize contracting data for impact** and include citizen feedback loops.
- **Collect and share gender-disaggregated data on procurement bids.**
- Look for opportunities to **expand the public procurement market to women-owned suppliers** who currently receive less than 1% of public contracts globally.
- **Engage with stakeholders in health, infrastructure, extractive and other sectors.**

III. Facilitating Public Participation in Anti-Corruption

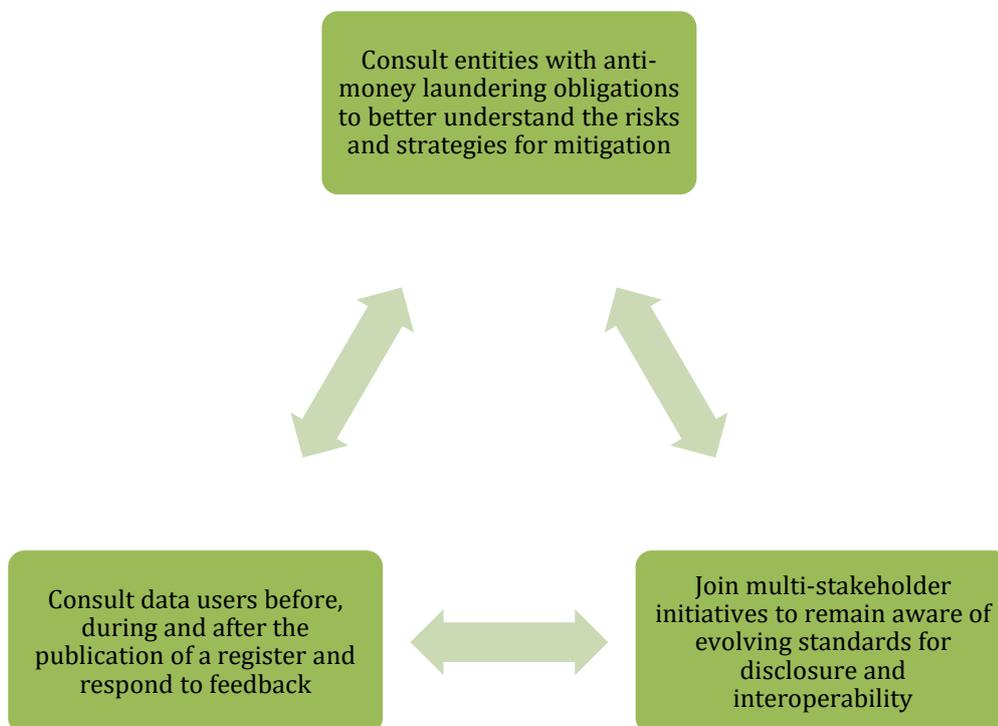
POLITICAL INTEGRITY¹⁵

Implement a formal, transparent process for public consultation	Process applied in the formulation and evaluation of policy, which ensures that all parties can submit documents and attend public meetings
Stakeholder participate in developing regulation	Consult and engage stakeholders in the development of the regulatory framework
Facilitate public scrutiny of political action	Consult and work with stakeholders who use transparency data for investigations – before, during and after publication – to ensure they have the informational resources for effective scrutiny.
Respond publicly to consultations	Demonstrate and publish how stakeholder submissions were considered
“Decision-making footprint” or “legislative footprint”	Publish the results of all interactions between government and third parties during the policymaking process
Cap political contributions at a maximum level	Ensure that wealthy individuals or entities, such as banks and technology companies, are not disproportionately influential over party policy positions to prevent marginalisation of

¹⁵ For more information see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/elections-political-finance/> and <https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/Rec on Political Integrity for OGP action plans - FINAL.pdf>

	donations made by ordinary citizens.
Increase political finance transparency	Prevent donations from anonymous, illicit and foreign sources

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY¹⁶



OPEN CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT¹⁷

Consult data users before, during and after the publication of procurement data and responding to feedback	Non-government stakeholders are often best placed to identify valuable data and flag mistakes or oversights.
Generate mechanisms for independent monitoring	Grant civil society the right to access documents and data, monitor processes and report on outcomes. The World Bank cites integrity pacts and procurement monitoring among the policy options.
Engage the communities, social groups and professional associations most affected by public procurement decisions	Engage these stakeholders at all stages of the process, including the planning and pre-tendering phases, to ensure greater alignment between public procurement processes and the public interest.

¹⁶ For more information see <https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/Rec on Beneficial Ownership Transparency for OGP action plans - FINAL.pdf>

¹⁷ For more information see <https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/Rec on Open Contracting for OGP action plans - FINAL.pdf>

V. Examples of Anti-Corruption Ideas from Other Countries:

POLITICAL INTEGRITY

Implementation of the Law on Whistle-Blower Protection and Raising the Awareness for Whistle-Blowing

[NORTH MACEDONIA](#) (2016-2018 Action Plan)

The implementation of the Law requires establishing and building a system for protection when reporting through which the persons dare to report illegal, prohibited or punitive action and they can perform such report without the fear of any consequences upon their security, job position or welfare of their close ones.

Civil Servant Training Modules

[BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA](#) (2019-2021 Action Plan)

Creating and distributing a survey that will be compulsory for civil servants employed in BiH institutions in order to determine the state of the personal integrity of civil servants. Based on the conducted survey, analysis is to be made of the existing state of integrity in the civil service. The Agency, in cooperation with NGO INFOHOUSE, initiates activities on the development of online education aimed at improving the knowledge of civil servants regarding the drafting of integrity plans in institutions in BiH as well as on the issue of strengthening ethics and professional integrity. Creation as well as the publication of online modules on the official site of the Agency.

Improving Access to Information on Expending Public Resources and Contents of Relevant Registers

[CROATIA](#) (2012-2013 Action Plan)

Improving access to information on expending public resources and contents of relevant registers and implementation of acts on political activity and campaign financing.

Introduction of the Public Officials' Asset Declarations Monitoring System

[GEORGIA](#) (2016-2018 Action Plan)

Introduction of the public officials' asset declarations monitoring system; In compliance with the Law of Georgia on Conflict of Interest and Corruption in Public Service, starting from 2017, the Civil Service Bureau will conduct monitoring of the asset declarations of public officials. Monitoring shall be conducted annually by an independent committee based on obvious and objective criteria, also for the declarations randomly selected by the electronic system. Prior to the civil service reform, this issue was not regulated by the law. There was no tool to audit the economic interest and property data disclosed by public officials. Monitoring of the public officials' asset declarations aims to improve accountability of public officials and prevent corruptive offences.

Platform for Citizen Involvement in Elections

[COLOMBIA](#) (2019-2021 Action Plan)

The commitment intends to consolidate Nariño Decide as a mechanism for citizen participation recognized at the territorial level that can influence the construction of strategic development agendas as well as being an actor for citizen oversight of public management. The Alliance seeks to qualify the electoral debate to guarantee access to information and knowledge of government programs in such a way that citizens exercise an informed, responsible and programmatic vote. The development of this commitment is structured in three moments:

1. Meetings for citizen pacts
2. Public forums
3. The subscription and signing of the citizen pacts

Strengthening Transparency in the Electoral Process

[GUATEMALA \(2018-2020 Action Plan\)](#)

Disclosure and publication of relevant information to make the electoral process transparent, promoting accountability, participation and social auditing by implementing an education and information campaign, as well as actions of cultural relevance with historically excluded populations, promoting accountability, citizen participation and social auditing.

Strengthening Mechanisms for Publishing Information on Electoral Process to Citizens

[GUATEMALA \(2018-2020 Action Plan\)](#)

Communicate and disseminate analysis documents through open data that allow improve the mechanisms for publishing information on the electoral process to citizens. Disseminate information in open data on the electoral process to strengthen existing publication mechanisms and at the same time encourage participation through analysis and citizen proposals.

Mandatory Public Register of Meetings between Lobbyists and Public Officials

[MADRID, SPAIN \(2018\)](#)

Public online registry where lobbyists must disclose any meetings with members of the City Council.

Regulation of Lobbying

[IRELAND \(2014-2016 Action Plan\)](#)

Public registry of lobbyists and an advisory group, ultimately increasing citizen access to information and improving accountability in the policy-making process.

Implementation and Monitoring of Lobbying Law

[CHILE \(2014-2016 Action Plan\)](#)

Law No. 20,730, which regulates lobbying activity and actions that represent particular interests before the authorities and officials, was published in the Official Gazette on March 8, 2014. The objective of this commitment is to prepare the regulations and carry out training to the officials responsible for its implementation and to the taxpayers required by law.

Strengthening Women Participation in the Political Decision Making Process at the Local Level

[SRI LANKA \(2016-2018 Action Plan\)](#)

The government committed to implementing and maintaining a 25% mandatory quota for women within local governments, dramatically increasing women's representation in local elected office.

Register of Government Decision-Making

[FINLAND \(2019-2023 Action Plan\)](#)

The transparency register will offer citizens information on the parties that seek to influence decision-making. Decision-makers will be provided more in-depth information on the roles of the parties that seek to influence them. The register will help lobbyists to provide more information about their lobbying and influencing activities in an increasingly open manner.

Asset Disclosure on a Single Web Portal

[UKRAINE \(2014-2015 Action Plan\)](#)

The creation of a unified web-portal of civil servants' declarations of income, property and expenditures for their public-domain disclosure.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY

Open and Public Beneficial Owners Registry

[ARMENIA](#)

Armenia will pass legislation requiring companies to publish information on their real owners in a national registry. Once this information becomes public, civil society and government agencies will be able to more easily detect and prevent corruption.

Co-Creating a Beneficial Ownership Register Policy

[CHILE \(2018\)](#)

Chile committed to collaborating with public institutions and civil society organizations to co-create a proposal for a centralized beneficial ownership register. The government will perform an initial analysis, looking at similar policies adopted in the United Kingdom and the European Union. The final policy will give particular focus to companies that do business with the state or receive state subsidies.

Registry of Beneficial Owners of Foreign Companies

[UNITED KINGDOM](#)

According to the National Crime Agency, as much as \$120 billion a year is laundered through the City of London alone. In response, the UK government introduced a public register of beneficial owners of British companies to increase transparency around who really owns, controls, and benefits from companies.

Using Open Data to Prevent Corruption

[COSTA RICA \(2019-2021 Action Plan\)](#)

1. Co-creation of an open data publication protocol against corruption, which will be based on the “Open Guide: using Open Data to combat corruption” published by the International Open Data Charter. This guide contains the list of the 30 databases that are a priority for the fight against corruption with their respective attributes, including budgets, contracts, declarations of assets and interests, beneficial owners, political financing, whistleblower protection, health, extractive industries and lobbying. This co-creation would be carried out with citizens, public officials of the institutions involved,
2. Publication of this open data on a unified platform that allows free downloading and includes user-friendly visualization interfaces, as well as access to all relevant regulations in plain language. This platform will be regularly consulted with its main users (journalists, academics, students, civil society organizations) to ensure that it responds to their needs and interests.
3. Opening of new or improved mechanisms and channels for the control of the management of public funds and the reporting of acts of corruption that take advantage of and link with open data. These new mechanisms and channels will be designed based on citizen consultations, in which they will seek to collect their opinions regarding existing channels and how these can be improved to respond more adequately to citizen needs. These mechanisms and channels will be widely disseminated and promoted.
4. Holding workshops with journalists, community and civil society organizations and the private sector to expand their knowledge of the rules of probity and the fight against corruption, the channels and means they have to monitor and report and methodologies to analyse and use the new information and data published for monitoring corruption.
5. Open spaces with computer scientists, experts, entrepreneurs and journalists for the co-creation of technological solutions from the released data (hackathons, data expeditions, innovation contests, etc.) that can be used by community organizations and interested citizens to supervise, monitor and report possible acts of corruption based on certain areas or issues of importance in their communities.

Register of Beneficial Owners

[ITALY](#) (2019)

Aims at providing transparency on beneficial owners, to counter money laundering and prevent corruption. This action is implemented through the adoption of technical standards and implementing regulations and through the establishment of a consistently updated register. The commitment looks to maintain data already included in the section and updating them each time ownership changes. Actions are designed to be proportional to the purpose (maximum transparency without imposing too many bureaucratic burdens on the obliged entities).

Establish Beneficial Ownership Registry

[NIGERIA](#) (2019-2021 Action Plan)

The establishment of a public register of beneficial owners of corporate entities will enable the relevant authorities mandated to curb corruption, identify natural persons who directly or indirectly own, control or enjoy the benefits of the corporate entity.

Beneficial Ownership

[LATVIA](#) (2017-2019 Action Plan)

Promote transparency on companies operating in Latvian:

- Improve and diversify ER information provided by the issuing services, improving the issuance of channels, ER's Web site and online search capabilities by promoting ER registers recording made more efficient use and ensuring public access to them;
- Commercial availability of information to ensure a European e-Justice portal;
- To improve information on the beneficial ownership registration and the availability of effective regulatory enactments.

Beneficial Ownership Verification System

[UKRAINE](#) (2016-2018 Action Plan)

Aims to improve the mechanism for verifying information about ultimate beneficial owners of companies. More specifically, this commitment would update the software for the Unified State Register of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs and Community Groups (hereinafter the United State Register). Doing so would enable better search functions and display the relations among legal entities and their founders (participants), ultimate beneficial owners (controllers)—including ultimate beneficial owners (controllers) of the founder—and heads of legal entities.

Collaboratively Build a Policy Proposal on Creating a Record of Real Owners

[CHILE](#) (2018-2020 Action Plan)

Collaboratively build, together with various actors, a policy proposal on the creation of a centralized registry of natural persons who are final owners (final beneficiaries) of companies in Chile and evaluate their transparency, especially for companies that do business with the State or that they receive state subsidies to comply with the recommendations of the GAFI and OECD on the matter.

OPEN CONTRACTING AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Open Procurement to Increase Competition

[FRANCE \(2016\)](#)

France requires municipalities to provide free access to data regarding public contracts through the addition of an open data clause in public contracts to increase the transparency of calls for procurement. All municipalities must now provide free access to data regarding public contracts and up-to-date information on the buyer and the details of the contract during the contract's implementation. The information must remain publicly available for five years after the execution of the contract.

Further Implementation of the Open Contracting Data Standard

[NIGERIA \(2018-2020 Action Plan\)](#)

Nigeria has committed to adopting open contracting standards to enhance transparency, accountability and citizen engagement in public procurement. The government is prioritizing critical ministries including Power, Transportation, Works, Agriculture, Health, Education, Niger Delta, Environment, and Solid Minerals.

More Transparent and Accessible Government Contracts

[KENYA \(2016\)](#)

The Elgeyo Marakwet committed to expanding open contracting in response to citizen concerns regarding the execution of contracts. The county will standardize project design and reporting documents, publish regular reports on awarded contracts and project implementation, and create an online tool to enable public monitoring throughout the contract cycle. Now, Elgeyo Marakwet seeks to expand procurement opportunities for youth, women, and people with disabilities and publish data on the gender of government contractees.

Empowering Citizen Watchdogs

[UKRAINE](#)

Ukraine launched DoZorro, a public procurement monitoring platform that enables citizens to submit feedback, including alerts of possible irregularities and violations. More than 700,000 users have flagged nearly 74,000 concerns, of which 20,000 were found to relate to actual violations.

***** ADDITIONAL IDEAS RELATED TO COVID-19 *****

POLITICAL INTEGRITY¹⁸ WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

For more information on whistle-blower protections during COVID-19 see:

- [Open letter from civil society partners for increased whistle-blower protections and transparency within governments' COVID-19 responses](#)
- [The Government Accountability Project](#)
- [The RECORD Project](#)

¹⁸ For more information on political integrity during COVID-19 see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/a-guide-to-open-government-and-the-coronavirus-whistleblower-protection-scientific-integrity/>

- [Transparency International for EU Directive on Whistle-blower Protection](#)
- [Transparency International's Best Practice Guide for Whistleblowing Legislation](#)

Encourage, Protect and Raise Awareness of Whistle-blower Duties and Protections
[IRELAND](#) (2014-2016 Action Plan)

Encourage, protect and raise awareness of whistle-blower duties and protections.

Protect Against Conflicts of Interest
[FRANCE](#) (2015-2017 Action Plan)

Introduce legal provisions to protect against conflicts of interest.

Anonymous Whistle-blower Portals for Justice System Employees
[DENMARK](#) (2019-2021 Action Plan)

The commitment involves setting up whistle-blower schemes in the prosecutions service, the police, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), the prison service and the Ministry of Justice department. Employees of the authorities involved can use the schemes. The scheme can also be used by partners with whom the authorities are engaged in a more on-going or formalised collaboration, and their employees. Information can be reported about serious issues that are of importance to how the authorities perform their tasks. As a rule, information can be reported via an electronic whistle-blower portal, where it will also be possible to communicate with whistle-blowers who do not wish to reveal their identity.

Protect Against Conflicts of Interest
[CZECH REPUBLIC](#) (2018-2020 Action Plan)

The objective is to support a change in the perception of whistle-blowers, to enhance appreciation of their social role, and at the same time, to inspire whistle-blowers themselves not to be afraid to draw attention to illegal activity, to give them knowledge of what protection is available to them and of whom they can turn to in case of need. As part of the implementation of this commitment, the legislative development of the draft directive of the European Parliament and Council on the protection of persons reporting on breaches of Union law will be reflected, among other things, as will the course of the legislative process for the draft national legislation on the protection of whistle-blowers in the Czech Republic.

OPEN CONTRACTING AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

COVID-19 Data-Driven Monitoring of Facemask Prices

[UKRAINE](#)

The Open Contracting Partnership is monitoring government data, focusing on price gouging for facemasks.

Transparency COVID-19 Emergency Procurement Procedures

[COLOMBIA, PARAGUAY, UKRAINE](#)

Examples of transparent government responses to COVID-19 emergency procurements.

Public Healthcare Service Delivery

[KENYA](#) (2018-2020 Action Plan)

Involve the public in tracking medical drug supply chains.

Citizen Committees to Control Racket in Public Administration

[BURKINA FASO](#) (2017-2019 Action Plan)

Establish citizen committees to monitor racketeering in health provision.

Transparent Procurement Process for Healthcare

[MONGOLIA](#) (2019-2021 Action Plan)

Involve CSOs in procurement and tender evaluation processes.

Deepening the Openness and Transparency of Information Related to Procurement and Contracting of PAMI

[ARGENTINA](#) (2017-2019 Action Plan)

Open up information on purchases of medical supplies and contracts entered into by the National Institute of Social Services for Pensioners and Retirees.

Commitment to Open Contracting Data Standard

[UNITED KINGDOM](#) (2017-2019 Action Plan)

Clear commitments to improving quality, timeliness and relevance of its public procurement data and publishing it in the Open Contracting Data Standard.