



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Building Institutions, Escaping Development Traps

[Anti-Corruption Agencies: Tactics for Holding Off Potent Adversaries](#)

First developed by Singapore and Hong Kong in the mid-twentieth century, anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) have emerged in dozens of countries since the 2005 United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Combining investigative (and sometimes prosecutory) powers with preventive and educational activities, these agencies have achieved varying levels of success in their efforts to reduce abuse of public power for private benefit.

ACAs frequently encounter opposition from powerful antagonists who benefit from existing corruption. These antagonists often seek to neutralize the agencies by weakening their credibility, legal power, or operations. In the face of these challenges, agency leaders must decide whether to pursue high-level investigations and bold reforms---risking pushback and dissolution---or focus on less controversial efforts that could draw criticism of timidity and bias.

A [new cross-cutting report by ISS](#) explores strategies that ACA leaders in eight emerging democracies---[Botswana](#), [Croatia](#), [Ghana](#), [Indonesia](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Mauritius](#), and [Slovenia](#)---have used to escape this "spoiler trap." The ACAs in these countries have operated for at least a decade and are still in existence. They faced powerful opposition that threatened their capacity. However, they earned high levels of public trust, increased the intake of public corruption complaints, conducted high-visibility investigations, achieved high conviction rates in investigated cases, secured favorable coverage in independent media, and were considered by experts to perform well relative to peer agencies.

Drawing from ISS [interviews and case studies](#), the ISS report describes how the agencies protected themselves from pushback by recruiting allies, instituting internal controls to bolster transparency and accountability, and pursuing low-visibility preventive efforts.

Featured Interviews

In recent interviews with ISS, [Graham Stockwell](#) and [Bertrand de Speville](#) describe their experiences establishing and leading successful anti-corruption agencies. Both were high-level leaders of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in Hong Kong. Stockwell also created and led the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime while de Speville recently penned *Overcoming Corruption: The Essentials*.

[Stockwell](#) focuses on his experiences in Botswana and the process of creating a new agency, including legislative advocacy, office set up, and recruitment.

[De Speville](#) details the critical components of successful anti-corruption agencies. He also stresses the need for a single institution to coordinate investigations of allegations of corruption, prevent corruption from occurring, and educate the general public about how to eliminate corruption.

Share Your Feedback

The ISS web repository is an idea bank that enables

Anti-Corruption Resources

The following organizations provide resources to national governments, anti-corruption agencies, international organizations, researchers, and others interested in fighting public corruption.

[The U4 Center](#) is an anti-corruption research institute serving partner agencies in eight countries.

[The World Bank's Anti-Corruption Authorities Portal](#) functions as a platform for sharing ideas and experiences between anti-corruption agencies, practitioners, and international actors.

[The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Anti-Corruption Network](#) engages national governments, anti-corruption authorities, civil society, the business sector, and international organizations and financial institutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Improving Government Accountability and Leading Reform

[Innovations for Successful Societies](#) (ISS) helps public servants, policy makers, and scholars share institution-building strategies that work in especially challenging contexts. Interview-based case studies facilitate these exchanges and provide a basis for scholarly research.

To date, ISS has published [117 case studies](#) and [370 interviews](#), all of which are available for free on a [web repository](#). Governments use the materials to learn from each other, inspire discussion in their ranks, and recall the steps they took to implement a reform. Universities and training programs use the case studies in the classroom to engage students in the operational and strategic aspects of public sector reform.

scholars and practitioners to evaluate the pros and cons of reform strategies and to weigh the effects of context. ISS invites feedback on its cases, including suggestions of additional topics and questions to be considered, corrections, and how case studies are being used:

iss@princeton.edu.

Where ISS Has Worked

Africa: Botswana, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

Asia & Pacific: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

Europe & Central Asia: Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Georgia, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Slovenia

The Americas: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, United States

Middle East & North Africa: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco

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