Public, private and beyond

To continue sharing knowledge and expertise in today’s changing environment, the OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum was transformed into a series of webinars with speakers from the public, private and civil society sectors.

The three webinars took place on 13, 20 and 22 May 2020, and reunited over 3000 participants from all over the world, covering all sectors.

Watch the recordings of the webinars and learn more about the OECD’s work on anti-corruption & integrity at https://oe.cd/gacifweb.
Anti-corruption and integrity: safeguards for a resilient COVID-19 response and recovery – 13 May

This first webinar in the OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum series focused on mitigating the corruption risks emerging in the COVID-19 response and recovery. As governments are obliged to make quick decisions and implement drastic measures to protect communities at risk and limit the socio-economic consequences, the unprecedented economic and fiscal measures represent a stress test for the resilience of public integrity and anti-corruption systems, in particular in the nexus between public and private sectors.

Panellists reflected on the challenges related to public procurement, law enforcement and the design and delivery of economic stimulus packages.

“Countries with robust integrity and anti-corruption systems are already proving to be more effective in dealing with the crisis.”

Drago Kos, Chair of the OECD Working Group on Bribery

Moreover, the panellists shared good practices of transparency and good governance in the COVID-19 response, and debated the opportunities of innovation and digitalisation in the fight against corruption. Consensus emerged on the need to strengthen accountability, audit and control frameworks in all government and business operations, the crucial role and protection of whistleblowers and the importance of ensuring a pluralistic media landscape.

The interactive debate also highlighted the role of international organisations in supporting countries and businesses in upholding integrity, anti-corruption and compliance standards in the crisis response, both in the short and long term.

65% of the webinar’s participants thought governments and businesses were not doing enough to mitigate corruption risks in the COVID-19 response, according to the interactive poll.
The second webinar discussed the new OECD Public Integrity Handbook, which offers concrete guidance on how to effectively implement a public integrity strategy, looking at all thirteen elements outlined in the OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity. The Handbook is complemented by the new OECD Public Integrity Maturity Models.

While governments’ actions are central to public policy, they also have far-reaching implications for business and civil society. Upholding trust, access to information, accountability, enforcement and compliance should be common responsibilities across all sectors of society. Panellists agreed that these are essential components of a robust culture of integrity, which is key to building and maintaining strong institutions and partnerships. Integrity is a long-term vision, not a box-checking exercise.

The Handbook resonated with panellists’ efforts to implement systems where clear responsibilities, evidence-based strategies and norms are key.

The Maturity Models provide a measurement for bodies to assess their integrity system.

“The [Handbook] is a collective expertise…it leaves enough room to decide what suits best for situations in your country.”

Silvia Spaeth, Co-Chair of the OECD Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials

Left to right, from top: Silvia Spaeth, Detective Chief Inspector, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany, and Co-Chair of the OECD Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials; Callie Zorzi, Group Manager, Integrity, Performance and Employment Policy, Australian Public Service Commission, Australia; Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair, Transparency International; János Bertók, Acting Director, OECD Directorate for Public Governance Committee

OECD Public Integrity Handbook

The OECD Public Integrity Handbook provides guidance to government, business and civil society on implementing the OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity. The Handbook clarifies what the Recommendation’s thirteen principles mean in practice and identifies challenges in implementing them.

Visit oe.cd/integrityhandbook
Emergency measures to protect whistleblowers and promote reporting during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond – 22 May

The third webinar discussed how restrictions to the freedom of expression and inadequate whistleblower protections have had a chilling effect on reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whistleblowers can contribute to early detection of integrity breaches, corruption or fraud, which, in the context of the crisis, may have prevented danger to public health and safety. Panellists advocated national legal frameworks to allow reporting directly to the public in cases of danger to public health or safety.

Panellists also stressed the need to promote an open organisational culture across the public and private sectors, as a legal framework for whistleblower protection cannot alone create a safe environment if potential reporters are not actively empowered and protected.

“Whistleblowing is an act of conscience! When there is risk of harm to the public, public disclosures must be protected.”

Tom Devine, Legal Director, Government Accountability Project

The use of technology as a tool to provide more accessible and efficient reporting was discussed, as governments and companies have implemented COVID-19 specific hotlines, and journalists are increasingly using the Internet and social media platforms as a response to the reduced access to information. Experts also agreed on the need to consider financial protection for COVID-19 whistleblowers.

The discussion and outcomes of the webinar will feed into the forthcoming OECD policy response paper on protecting whistleblowers during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Left to right, from top: Lisette van Eenennaam, ABB Chief Integrity Officer & Head of Legal Operations; Elin Baklid-Kunz, medical coding compliance expert and healthcare whistleblower; Mathilde Mesnard, Deputy Director of the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs of the OECD; Tom Devine, Legal Director, Government Accountability Project; Inese Kuske, State Chancellery, Latvia; Khadija Sharife, Africa Editor, Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and Administrator of the Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF)

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Many thanks to our partner: