OUR ACTION TO STRENGTHEN BUSINESS INTEGRITY
At the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), we recognize the vital role of the private sector in strengthening integrity and fostering a clean business environment. While companies have much to lose from corruption, they also have considerable leverage to stop it. By engaging companies in the global effort to strengthen business integrity, UNODC contributes to levelling the playing field for global business and reducing risks that endanger the value and reputation of companies.

Our projects on business integrity provide opportunities for collaboration with other companies and stakeholders, including academia, civil society, the public sector and youth. By joining our activities, your company can demonstrate its commitment to business integrity and enhance its capacity for compliance and reputation among customers, investors and other stakeholders. Furthermore, it can contribute to projects that advocate for legal frameworks based on the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and promote ethical behaviour among business partners, investors, third parties and other stakeholders. At UNODC, we are committed to supporting your company’s journey towards a more ethical and responsible business.

As guardian of UNCAC, the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, UNODC recognizes the vital role of the private sector in the fight against corruption and in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, especially target 16.5: “To substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.” We encourage your company to develop comprehensive policies and programmes to address these issues, and to collaborate with peers, governments, academia, civil society and youth to promote integrity, ethical behaviour and sustainable development. By doing so, your business can meet its environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) standards and play a crucial role in fostering a more transparent and accountable global economy.
WHY SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS INVEST IN BUSINESS INTEGRITY?

Business integrity is crucial as it establishes trust in the business for customers, investors, third parties and other stakeholders, reduces risks associated with unethical behaviour and improves long-term financial performance. By prioritizing ethical behaviour and responsible business practices, your company can:

» comply with legal requirements
» build trust and a positive reputation
» manage corruption risks effectively
» boost employee retention and engagement
» gain a competitive advantage and attract new business opportunities

HOW CAN YOUR BUSINESS INCREASE ITS INTEGRITY?

To actively pursue and uphold business integrity, your company can adopt robust ethical policies and practices that develop and promote compliance, accountability, and responsible behaviour on three levels: internal, external, and collective.

Examples of actions your company can take to build trust and credibility include:

» developing a code of conduct for employees and business partners
» providing regular training on anti-corruption laws and your company’s integrity programme
» implementing strong internal controls
» encouraging reporting through a secure communication channel and protecting whistle-blowing
» engaging with business partners and other stakeholders on business integrity
» publicly reporting on your anti-corruption efforts through the United Nations Global Compact

Our training materials, knowledge products and tools are designed to evaluate and improve your integrity practices and provide opportunities to jointly counter corruption with other companies and stakeholders. Discover the UNODC Business Integrity Portal with tools and resources for strengthening business integrity.
UNODC BUSINESS INTEGRITY PROJECTS

UNODC business integrity projects aim to enhance global knowledge and promote public-private dialogue and collective action for business integrity. Aligned with UNCAC, the work of UNODC on business integrity aims to:

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<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encourage countries to advance legislative reforms on business integrity.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Enhance governments’ knowledge of legal frameworks and practices that prevent and counter corruption, in collaboration with the private sector.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Improve communication and promote collaborative action between governments and companies, which is essential in creating an environment that fosters investment, economic growth and sustainable development.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Provide guidance to companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on adopting and implementing compliance programmes, through which they can mitigate corruption risks.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Equip future business leaders with ethical mindsets at the outset of their careers in the private sector.</td>
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We currently support measures to strengthen business integrity in 17 countries worldwide. We also organize global activities where private practitioners share their good practices on business integrity.

» We help businesses to foster a culture of integrity in their companies by developing localized on-the-job training for business representatives. In Mexico, Myanmar and Pakistan, UNODC piloted the highly successful “Leading with integrity” module, which uses an experiential learning approach and is in high demand from businesses.

» We develop tools together with the private sector to allow companies to identify, evaluate and mitigate potential corruption risks in business operations. For example, in Myanmar and in the Middle East and North Africa region, UNODC developed an online corruption risk assessment tool to help companies assess corruption risks and adopt mitigating measures.

» To facilitate hands-on peer-to-peer learning on business integrity, UNODC organizes a Global Webinar Series on Business Integrity in collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact. Private sector practitioners share good practices, exchange current challenges and discuss effective approaches in business integrity.

» To promote integrity in the private sector among future generations of private sector employees, over 38,000 university students in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan have been taught using the UNODC Module Series on Integrity, Ethics, and Anti-Corruption, and 124 guest lectures have been delivered by private sector practitioners on business integrity.

Learn more about our projects and initiatives by scanning the code below and visiting the UNODC Business Integrity Portal, a platform for collaboration and offering free resources and tools to support your company in fostering a culture of business integrity.
As the United Nations entity leading the fight against corruption, UNODC also serves as the guardian of the Tenth Principle of the UN Global Compact (UNGC), which states that “businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery”. UNODC collaborates with the United Nations Global Compact to support global efforts promoting ethical business practices and countering corruption in line with UNCAC. The UN Global Compact is an initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General that brings together over 23,000 businesses from more than 160 countries. This makes it the world’s largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative, through which companies are called upon to join forces with governments, UN agencies and civil society to create a more transparent and accountable global economy.

By bringing together companies to take collective action against corruption and safeguard the integrity of their business, UNODC and the UN Global Compact jointly support businesses to mitigate risks that threaten their reputation and value. We bring together businesses confronted with transparency challenges, which therefore have an interest in taking concrete steps to turn anti-corruption commitments into action and champion business integrity.

“At the global level, UNODC collaborates closely with the UN Global Compact on activities and approaches to promote business integrity and prevent corruption in the private sector. This synergy aligns with the Tenth Principle of the UN Global Compact, through which participants commit to work against corruption in all forms, including extortion and bribery, and address it proactively.”

Sanda Ojiambo,
Assistant Secretary-General and CEO of the UN Global Compact

“To make significant progress, companies must address business integrity throughout their operations and supply chains, and in all their interactions with governments as well as with business partners.”

Ghada Waly,
Director-General of the UN Office in Vienna and Executive Director of UNODC
SUCCESS STORIES: HOW UNODC PROJECTS ON BUSINESS INTEGRITY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGE

Overall goal: To strengthen business integrity in accordance with the relevant provisions of UNCAC

Objective: Encourage countries to advance legislative reforms

IMPROVING BUSINESS PRACTICES IN UZBEKISTAN

In recent years, UNODC has played a crucial role in helping Uzbekistan take significant steps to prevent corruption and promote transparency and ethical behaviour in the private sector. We have provided training and educational resources on integrity and ethics to national authorities and private companies. A total of 150 public servants and civil society representatives have undergone training in Uzbekistan to conduct anti-corruption screenings of legislation, and 26 trainers have been trained to instruct experts in this field. We have also carried out a survey to determine the circumstances under which corruption occurs during interactions with public authorities. One of the primary beneficiaries of the project has been the Office of the Business Ombudsman. Since 2021, the Office has participated in UNODC trainings on anti-corruption screenings of legislation, using sociological methods to identify corruption risks in regulatory frameworks, and preparing effective policy documents for tackling corruption risks.

An important achievement has been creating a sustainable platform for dialogue with entrepreneurs, government agencies and other interested parties on how to improve the country’s business environment. In November 2022, the project launched the Direct Dialogue on Corruption, providing SMEs with the opportunity to raise issues and concerns about ineffective regulations, inappropriate conduct by public agencies or corrupt practices in direct dialogue with the heads of the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Office of the Business Ombudsman. The Direct Dialogue brings the actual burden of corruption faced by businesses to the attention of policymakers.
Objective: Increase governments’ knowledge of legal frameworks and practices to prevent and counter corruption in and with the private sector

REDUCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION BY STRENGTHENING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

In 2015, UNODC started a project, ‘On the Level’, which has reduced opportunities for corruption by facilitating public-private sector dialogue and has significantly contributed to improving anti-corruption legislation in Colombia by strengthening the legal framework on business integrity and companies’ standards regarding transparency. A working group was established by the project with both public and private sector representatives, and an expert committee was formed to review the national anti-corruption framework, which included Law 16/1778 on corporate liability. At the end of the project, 23 of 43 recommendations made by the expert committee were adopted by national legislature. A nationwide network of 166 business trainers was established to promote anti-corruption policies in large companies and their supply chains. More than 1,840 participants, including compliance officers, prosecutors, auditors, private sector executives and public servants, were trained on Law 16/1778. Scan the code below to learn more about our activities in Colombia.

Objective: Improve communication among the public sector, the private sector, civil society and academia by providing a common venue for further interaction, dialogue and knowledge-sharing

YOUTH STRENGTHENING INTEGRITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: THE SUCCESS OF THE CODING4INTEGRITY HACKATHONS

UNODC has organized several Coding4Integrity hackathons in which students and young software developers are empowered to design and build technological solutions to address real-life challenges related to the promotion of integrity. The participants, usually aged between 18 and 35, test their skills as they are mentored by a broad network of experienced professionals from the fields of technology, anti-corruption and industry. UNODC implements this initiative together with partners from the private and public sectors, as well as civil society and academia. Follow the link or scan the code below to watch a video about our hackathon in March 2023 in Mexico, in which young coders came up with a tech-based prototype solution to help detect counterfeit medicine.

Objective: Increase governments’ knowledge of legal frameworks and practices to prevent and counter corruption in and with the private sector

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Objective: Provide guidance to companies and SMEs on adopting or implementing anti-corruption systems

ADVANCING COMPLIANCE PROGRAMMES FOR SMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

SMEs often face challenges in establishing the robust compliance programmes and processes required by multinational companies. In the Middle East and North Africa region, an SME that strived to become a supplier for a multinational corporation, but was unable to meet the relevant requirements, decided to participate in one of the corruption risk assessment training sessions provided by UNODC. Due to the training, the company gained a better understanding of the corruption risks it faced, including those specific to its operations, related to the use of cash payments and frequent interactions with the public sector. As a result, the company learned how to mitigate these risks and developed a comprehensive compliance programme that satisfied all requirements to become a supplier for a large multinational organization. This achievement highlights the vital role that SMEs can play in mitigating corruption risks and underscores the efficacy of UNODC’s efforts to prevent corruption in the private sector.

Objective: Equip future business leaders with ethical mindsets at the start of their careers in the private sector

EQUIPPING FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS WITH ETHICAL MINDSETS IN PAKISTAN

In recent years, businesses in Pakistan have taken important steps to strengthen integrity, establishing codes of conduct and developing policies to address integrity risks. However, corruption remains a significant issue. Recognizing the need to focus on young leaders to effectively promote ethical behaviour and business integrity, UNODC has partnered with university lecturers and business practitioners to teach more than 20,000 university students using the UNODC Module Series on Integrity, Ethics, and Anti-Corruption. By studying these concepts, students significantly enhanced their ethical decision-making: the number of ethical responses students gave to ethical dilemmas nearly doubled after they had taken the modules. These results demonstrate the importance of integrating ethics trainings into higher education. In addition, through interacting with industry leaders and learning from ethical role models, students are better equipped to navigate the ethical challenges they will face in their careers.
OUR ACTION TO STRENGTHEN BUSINESS INTEGRITY

Thanks to our participation in the Global Action for Business Integrity project, a sustainable platform for constructive dialogue was formed with entrepreneurs, government agencies, and other interested parties to improve the field of business integrity. Since we started to hold joint events with UNODC, the level of competence of employees in effectively analysing data obtained from appeals, complaints, and proposals of entrepreneurs has increased. Additionally, a productive exchange of ideas and knowledge has been established: "Business integrity is the foundation for achieving an ethical and responsible organization culture that helps to promote fair competition, good reputation and long-term sustainable growth.

WHAT BENEFICIARIES HAVE SAID

"Business integrity is the foundation for achieving an ethical and responsible organization culture that helps to promote fair competition, good reputation and long-term sustainable growth.

"I greatly value the practical approach of UNODC in translating our desires to do business with integrity into realistic business procedures.

"Our journey to a corruption-free existence began at a UNODC workshop, and we are determined to propagate the fruits of this endeavour throughout our society, fostering the fight against corruption while nurturing transparency and integrity.

"As a company we acknowledge our responsibility in creating a society free from corruption. Our participation in the UNODC modules, trainings and webinar has given us a relevant opportunity to make students and society aware of anti-bribery issues and to empower them to forge a future built on fairness and trust.

"At XM we recognize integrity as a fundamental value of our actions, which contributes to building trust. We value the opportunity to participate in the UNODC business integrity project in Colombia and be part of collective action in the energy sector, which allows companies to work together to strengthen their standards regarding transparency.

"Maria Nohemi Arboleda Arango, CEO XM S.A. E.S.P. Colombia

"Loreto Ramos, Ethics, Risk & Compliance Head, Novartis, Mexico

"Ghaleb AlTayeb, Legal Advisor, Sudanese Chambers of Industries Association

"Than Htaik Lwin, Group CEO, Proven Group of Companies, Myanmar

"Joseph Hannah, Director, Owner, Dancing Bean, Egypt

"Jamshid Urunov, Deputy Business Ombudsman, Commissioner’s Office for the Protection of Rights and Legitimate Interests of Entrepreneurs, Uzbekistan
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