

Seeing New Opportunities:

How global actors can better support
anticorruption reformers

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All errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

1. Executive Summary

Certain political moments create new possibilities for progress on anticorruption: we call these moments “windows of opportunity.” The actions needed to pass reforms and combat corruption during a window will be highly contingent on the political context and history of how the window opened. In-country reformers, whether in government or civil society, are best placed to navigate those dynamics. However, as many international organizations might aim to help them in those moments, it is useful to have an understanding of the types of support—learning-related and otherwise—in-country reformers might need.

This research draws on three primary case studies and multiple secondary examples to identify:	For full details:	For snapshots:
	<i>See the case studies in this report’s annexes</i>	<i>See “Case study snapshots” (page 20)</i>
Needs reformers have	See “Reformer needs” (page 23)	
Support they can access	See “Global support” (page 34)	See table 1 on next page (page 5)
Gaps between those two	See “Gaps analysis” (page 56)	
We then follow these with recommendations	See “Recommendations” (page 62)	See table 2 in this section (page 6)

Needs, support, and gaps are categorized across a framework of: technical knowledge, political strategy, ecosystem capacity, and general organizational capacity. However, our recommendations are more cross-cutting.

As described in the methodology section (page 18), the main goal of our recommendations is not to directly inform the decisions reformers make when faced with windows, but rather to inform the choices donors and other suppliers make in how they support reformers, including in preparation for potential windows and during windows as they arise. The recommendations can be incorporated into existing support in a piecemeal fashion; or they can be approached in a more holistic re-imagining of the support infrastructure. The latter pathway is higher risk but higher reward and could be developed further through a co-design process that builds on this research.

Table 1: Snapshot of Reformer Needs, Supplier Provision, and Gaps

	Reformer needs	Supplier provision	Gaps
Technical knowledge	<p>Forensic finance, data analytics</p> <p>Agencies' management to (re) build safeguards</p> <p>Local legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes</p>	<p>Standardized, off-the-shelf technical knowledge is commonly supplied, but unevenly across technical areas</p>	<p>Brokerage and translation of publicly available, in timely, fit-for accessibility technical knowledge</p> <p>Support to local provision of highly specialized legislative, regulatory, and administrative knowledge</p>
Political strategy	<p>Talking politics and strategy with other reformers</p> <p>Setting new goals and transitioning strategies</p> <p>Framing and communicating reform goals to targeted audiences</p>	<p>Political/strategic analysis is done for suppliers' own purposes and only occasionally shared</p> <p>Limited, informal support for reform prioritization and change management</p> <p>Increasing attention on fit-for-purpose framings</p>	<p>Shared spaces to enable shared political analysis, contextual understandings, and informed actions</p> <p>Capacity building and support on change management</p> <p>Branding/narratives/messaging to address the risks of authoritarian/populist hijacking of the anticorruption agenda and shifting geopolitical conditions</p>
Ecosystem capacity	<p>Personal relationships among reformers for multiple purposes (including self- and mutual-care)</p> <p>Developing and managing a leadership pipeline</p> <p>Defending against smears and navigating disinformation attacks</p>	<p>Forms of support: connecting diverse groups of local reformers; connecting specific subsets of local actors; connecting local reformers to external actors; and coordinating support suppliers</p> <p>Functions of support: channeling technical support, funding, partnerships; sharing political intelligence and shaping strategy; building leadership capacity; and supporting self-/mutual-care, solidarity, risk management</p>	<p>Infrastructure for trust-building and self-/mutual-care</p> <p>Developing and managing leadership pipelines</p> <p>Mitigating the risks from disinformation-related attacks</p> <p>Support organizations, coalitions, and ecosystems in making and implementing joint strategic decisions on narratives and disinformation attacks</p>

	Reformer needs	Supplier provision	Gaps
General organizational capacity	<div>Consistent funding</div> <div>Flexible allocation of human resources and supplemental bandwidth</div> <div>Security against physical, legal, psychosocial, and digital threats</div>	<div>Underinvestment in core support, with most suppliers investing in priority projects, approaches, and specific geographies</div> <div>Varying degrees of flexibility, adaptive management; underinvestment in organizational risk mitigation strategies</div> <div>Some support for legal, physical, digital security, though disconnected from the anticorruption field</div>	<div>Funding consistency across time to enable the survival of organizations so that they are there when the window opens</div> <div>In-kind supplemental bandwidth and greater room for maneuver within plans</div> <div>Consistent support (legal assessment and advice) and tailored connection to global suppliers in the security field on a need-to-need basis</div>

Recommendations in Brief

These recommendations are described in detail in the full report, along with risks and implementation considerations (see “Recommendations” on page 62). This section includes the summary paragraph on each recommendation for easy reference.

Table 2: Recommendations At-a-Glance

Multi-country: Ongoing support infrastructure to be ready for windows
<div>1. Create knowledge brokering capacity to help reformers navigate existing technical guidance</div> <div>2. Support and diversify cross-national networks of reformers who may see future windows</div> <div>3. Improve the way organizations talk about anticorruption by investing in fit-for-context narratives, messaging, and branding support</div> <div>4. Support infrastructure organizations focused on disinformation and connect them with the anticorruption sector, going beyond addressing misinformation and fact-checking</div> <div>5. Invest in, facilitate, and raise the visibility of networks of scholars that convene and train in the Global South</div>

Country-specific: Status quo period support in high-potential countries

6. Tailor ongoing support infrastructure (recommendations 1-5) to be ready for windows in high-potential countries
7. Build and support in-country networks of reformers during status quo periods
8. Identify potential bottlenecks to reform—such as leadership pipelines, legislation drafting, or shared analysis—that can be addressed before a window opens

Country-specific: Support during trigger and window phases

9. Support reformers in accessing in-country expertise on navigating highly localized legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes
10. Incorporate collaborative spaces into all forms of support, convening reformers so they can share analysis and form common understandings
11. Identify opportunities to support coaching and mentorship for key civil society reform leaders as windows open
12. Provide funding for digital, physical, and psychosocial security; help reformers find support providers to advise them
13. Explore the use of parallel, matching, or joint funding mechanisms across multiple donors to encourage sharing intelligence and building common political analysis
14. Consider alternatives to traditional suppliers in order to find the best match between reformer needs and supplier approaches.

Country-specific: Support during tapering phase

15. Conduct further study on how to support reformers in the tapering phase

Multi-country: Ongoing support infrastructure to be ready for windows

1. **Create knowledge brokering capacity to help reformers navigate existing technical guidance:** With reformers turning mostly to their (limited) informal networks or specialist-support providers focused on particular technical solutions, there is a gap in general support to navigate the large amount of publicly available technical knowledge. A combination of three different models targeted to different audiences could be explored to address this: retaining standing external knowledge brokerage and translation capacity; setting up an in-house team of knowledge translators at a donor or other support provider agency; and keeping a roster of knowledge translators and consultants who could be ready to be hired when windows open.
2. **Support and diversify cross-national networks of reformers who may see future windows:** Providing spaces for learning and building trust will ensure reformers already have relationships with support providers and reformers in other countries when the windows open. Investments might be made in regular support for learning spaces and stakeholders that informally play critical learning and support functions, or by investing in new, networked cohorts of reformers and a forward-looking infrastructure to support them.

3. **Improve the way organizations talk about anticorruption by investing in fit-for-context narratives, messaging, and branding support:** This could have outsized impact by helping reformers navigate populist/authoritarian attempts to frame corruption and manage popular expectations about how (and how fast) change happens. This can happen across three vectors: by improving the way big, sector-anchoring organizations (like the World Bank or Transparency International) frame anticorruption in messaging and advocacy/marketing; by ensuring there is an infrastructure of narrative and messaging experts to be tapped by in-country reformers when windows open; and finally, by supporting reformers to share tips from practical experience amongst each other.
4. **Support infrastructure organizations focused on disinformation and connect them with the anticorruption sector, going beyond addressing misinformation and fact-checking:** These organizations should understand the logic of disinformation campaigns that attack reformers, and be ready to provide direct advice and support to civil society and other reformers when windows open. This support is different from existing work on misinformation, which typically supports media outlets or journalists in efforts such as fact-checking. For disinformation involving manipulated narratives and propaganda attacks on reformers, very little exists to help civil society activists or anticorruption officials understand how to respond.
5. **Invest in, facilitate, and raise the visibility of networks of scholars that convene and train in the Global South:** In many countries, university professors are trusted sources of advice and referrals, as well as neutral conveners who can facilitate relationships among stakeholders. Despite this potential, local scholars and universities are overlooked and underutilized as entry points for support during windows, partly due to lack of funding and support for their work during the status quo phase.

Country-specific: Status quo period support in high-potential countries

6. **Tailor ongoing support infrastructure (recommendations 1-5) to be ready for windows in high-potential countries:** The above recommendations create support infrastructure across multiple countries that may experience windows in the future. Support providers working in or supporting a country with a high potential for a window can tailor those recommendations to their specific country context.
7. **Build and support in-country networks of reformers during status quo periods, so they are ready when the windows open:** These networks should ideally bring together diverse groups of local actors, supporting connections across the political spectrum among civil society, media, government, the private sector, professional associations and more. Connections will be useful when a window opens, especially as actors need to take on roles that they have not taken before (e.g., civil society actors taking positions in government or seeking to support government insiders). The crux of these networks are the personal relationships built over time.

8. **Identify potential bottlenecks to reform—such as leadership pipelines, legislation drafting, or shared analysis—that can be addressed before a window opens:** As windows evolve rapidly, reformers must move quickly to seize the opportunity before spoilers block change or the windows taper. To the extent that reformers and support providers can identify potential bottlenecks before a window opens, they can jointly prepare to address those needs.

Country-specific: Support during trigger and window phases

9. **Support reformers in accessing in-country expertise on navigating highly localized legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes:** Pivoting to working on the “inside”—within governments or legislatures—during windows often leaves reformers scrambling to learn how to move legislation through the parliamentary process, or how to influence the regulatory and administrative structures that are crucial to implementing anticorruption measures. This is primarily about process knowledge (not technical expertise on the substance of the reforms), making it highly localized to the country’s political and administrative context. Reformers can access this local expertise either by bringing former government/political insiders onto their teams, or by hiring or partnering (potentially pro bono) with lawyers or lobbyists. Either way, donors and other support providers should ensure this need is on the radar of reformers early in windows and that funds are available to hire this expertise as needed.
10. **Incorporate collaborative spaces into all forms of support, convening reformers so they can share analysis and form common understandings:** These efforts should be carried out during trigger periods and early during open windows, and can build on the universities and networks referenced above (in recommendations 5 and 7). Such convenings and spaces need not be explicitly designed for shared analysis and may be better convened for information exchange or shared action, understanding that shared analysis will result. Including a broad range of reform actors can help build connections among unlikely partners (e.g., student groups, trade unions, and business associations); even if they do not all fully agree, the convening space can reduce the likelihood of reform groups miscommunicating or working at cross purposes and can help identify emerging spaces and trends that might not have been on others’ radar. Lastly, these spaces can also support self-/mutual-care if built intentionally for that purpose.
11. **Identify opportunities to support coaching and mentorship for key civil society reform leaders as windows open:** These relationships can be encouraged informally or formalized. They can be focused either on short-term/problem-oriented support (coaching) or on longer-term leadership development (mentoring), depending on the reform leaders’ needs and preferences. The key is to provide civil society leaders with space to discuss the challenges of setting goals and transitioning strategies and with a trusted partner who can ask tough questions and give informed advice.

12. **Provide funding for digital, physical, and psychosocial security, and help reformers find support providers to advise them:** Although this support is key during trigger and open window phases, these attacks also happen during the tapering phase. This could be addressed by connecting reformers with consultants, infrastructure organizations, global suppliers specialized in security issues, and/or human rights protection programs. Extra funding for legal advice and protection might be needed when attacks occur.
13. **Explore the use of parallel, matching, or joint funding mechanisms across multiple donors to encourage sharing intelligence and building common political analysis:** These funding approaches seek a middle ground between full coordination (which places a heavy burden on both donors and grantees) and no coordination (which risks missed opportunities and even conflicting strategies). Shared funding mechanisms provide space to identify gaps that different donors might be better placed to address, with light-touch coordination and explicit learning (e.g., through evaluations). This helps to overcome the inefficiencies created by “siloe coordination”: a tendency to coordinate only within small subsets of assistance providers.
14. **Donors should consider alternatives to traditional suppliers in order to find the best match between reformer needs and supplier approaches:** Working through the major anticorruption support providers can be the easiest option from the donor perspective, but, from the reformer perspective, this practice might channel support based on what looks like luck: either supporting those reformers who happen to be connected to global networks, or supporting on issues that are global but not necessarily local priorities. Channeling through traditional suppliers can introduce biases and inefficiencies in reformers’ strategies, making it harder for them to work on the needs and opportunities that are most important from a local perspective. Broadening the network of suppliers and taking a more ecosystem-based outlook can mitigate some of these risks. Support may be better provided through cross-national networks, potentially composed of windows veterans or scholars from the Global South (as described in recommendations 2, 11, and 5), rather than centralized NGOs, global think tanks, universities, contractors, and Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs).

Country-specific: Support during tapering phase

15. **Conduct further study on how to support reformers in the tapering phase:** When windows taper and close, countries return to a status quo phase that is likely different from the one that gave birth to the window. The recommendations focused on infrastructure and preparation (1-8) should gain new salience after a country has experienced a window. This study asked reformers about their experiences of prior windows, but the tapering and return to status quo were at the edge of our scope. Further study and discussion on tapering could explore some of the issues raised by reformers in this study.

2. List of acronyms

ACREC	Anticorruption Research and Education Center (Ukraine)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANTAC	Anticorruption Action Center (Ukraine)
APEC ACTWG	Asia-Pacific Economic Forum Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Working Group
ARINSA	Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CABRI	Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative
CAF	Andean Development Corporation
CICIACS	Commission of Investigation of Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Apparatus (Guatemala)
CICIG	Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala
CIDE	Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economica (Mexico)
CIPE	Center for International Private enterprise
CoST	Construction Sector Transparency Initiative
CSO	Civil society organization
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EAAACA	East African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ERDB	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
FGV	Fundação Getulio Vargas (Brazil)
FOI	Freedom of Information
FpTS	Fund for Transparent Slovakia
FSRB	FATF-Style Regional Body
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (Liberia)

GIFT	Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
IACA	International Anticorruption Academy
IACC	International Anti-Corruption Conference
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IBP	International Budget Partnership
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organization
INLUCC	Instance Nationale de Lutte Contre la Corruption (Tunisia)
INTOSAI	International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
MOBIN	MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network
NABU	National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine
NaUKMA	National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Ukraine)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRGI	Natural Resources Governance Institute
OAS	Organization of America States
OCCRP	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
OCP	Open Contracting Partnership
ODC	Open Data Charter
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership

OLACEFS	Organización Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Entidades Fiscalizadoras Superiores
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PERL	Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn
PPLAFF	Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa
PSAM	Public Service Accountability Monitor
PTF	Partnership for Transparency Fund
REAL	Red Anticorrupción Latinoamericana
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SOE	State-owned enterprise
STAAC	Strengthening Action Against Corruption (Ghana)
T/AI	Transparency and Accountability Initiative
TI	Transparency International
UCC	United Against Corruption Campaign
UDESC	University of the State of Santa Catarina (Brazil)
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WEF-PACI	World Economic Forum – Partnering Against Corruption Initiative

3. Introduction: Why “windows”?

Comedians have a saying: timing is everything. The same is true in political reform and social change. A campaign launched in the wrong season or a demand made at the wrong time can fall flat. At the right moment, new opportunities open up, though positive outcomes are still not guaranteed.

This research focuses on a particular type of political moment—periods when heightened attention to corruption makes anticorruption reforms more likely—and the reformers both inside and outside of government who try to take advantage of those moments. We are interested in what reformers need in those moments to succeed, as well as how those needs are met (or not) by various support organizations. We started with the assumption that learning needs, including conditions and spaces for learning, are a key component of external support. Our objective is to improve how those support organizations help reformers succeed in those moments.

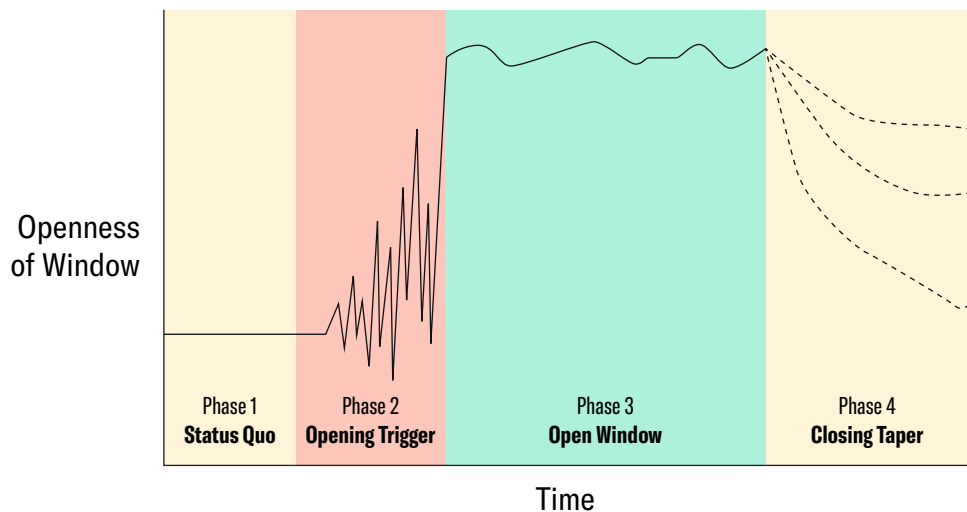
We call these moments “windows of opportunity” (or just “windows”) for anticorruption reform. The term intuitively resonates with most people who do reform work but also has various connotations and so warrants a more precise definition to clarify the scope of our research.

We define windows as:

- **Potential “critical junctures”¹ or turning points:** Windows are opportunities for political reorientation, the founding of new institutions, and setting new trajectories for change—or not.
- **Malleable, but with constraints:** Following an historical-institutionalism approach, some critical junctures may give actors “considerable discretion,” while, in others, “the presumed choice appears deeply embedded in antecedent conditions.”² In other words, windows do not occur in a vacuum and understanding events and developments in the past is critical to understanding a window’s potential.
- **High-risk:** While reformers can use windows to make progress, regressive forces may capitalize on the specter of corruption for their own agendas.
- **Time-bound:** Windows are triggered by some combination of events, and may open over a period of time, rather than immediately. Once open, windows do not last forever; they are temporary shifts in political possibilities—not permanent ones. Windows may close before reforms have been fully implemented, due to the asymmetry of power between coalitions of reformers and spoilers of the system.³

This definition of windows informs a four-phase model to better understand their complexity. (See diagram, below.)

Four Phases of a Window of Opportunity



Status quo	Opening trigger	Open window	Closing taper
Period of relative stability that frames the potential for reform and reformer needs. Support provided in this phase can enable better responses in later phases.	Period of uncertainty during which a window may be opening. This may be a short period for a fast-onset window that is unexpected (by both external actors and by in-country reformers) as in the wake of a corruption scandal breaking, ⁴ sudden protests embracing anticorruption as an issue, ⁵ or a surprise election result. Alternatively, this may be a longer period in a slow-onset window that emerges from institutional developments, as bureaucrats build institutional infrastructure, as anticorruption networks gain traction in a context of endemic/repetitive scandals, or as a contested election or other political transition approaches. ⁶	Core period during which a window is open, a critical juncture (as described above) may exist, and rapid action is key.	Windows close as memory of the opening trigger fades in political discourse, as political capital is spent on reforms, as cynicism about the lack of change sets in, or as a better state of affairs has been partially achieved. Reform processes are not unidirectional, and even when reforms are adopted, “blocking coalitions” ⁷ seek to prevent further progress, act to close the window, and reverse its effects.

Expanding on the Framework

The idea of windows anchors our conceptual framework. We also emphasize human agency—in particular, the agency of in-country reformers across government, civil society, media, academia, business, and other sectors to effect change. While geopolitical forces and the actions of external reformers certainly influence outcomes, the primary determinant of what is achieved during a window is the actions of in-country actors.

Spelling out our full framework:

During **windows of opportunity**, in-country reformers have various **needs** as they advance reforms. International and regional organizations try to meet these needs with **support**, but where they do not meet these needs, there are **gaps**.

Even as we introduce this framework, we should include a number of caveats—many of which were noted by reformers and support providers we interviewed for this project.

Looking beyond the window: While this research focuses on open windows, the status quo period should not be glossed over. Reformers' actions and the support they receive during this period set the stage for how they navigate the trigger and open window phases. Though the overall framework resonated with most interviewees, some thought the focus on “triggers” and the “window” diverted from the longer-term perspective needed to prepare for, respond to, and even build beyond a window as it closes. This is an important perspective, and many of our resulting recommendations suggest ongoing activities outside of windows.

However, a vast amount of literature already focuses on corruption and anticorruption efforts during status quo periods. Levels of corruption are usually perceived to be stable across time.⁸ Corruption is perceived as a structural phenomenon or as a social norm, where none of the players have sufficient incentives for change.⁹ Our focus on windows should complement—not replace—attention paid to other moments.

Blurred lines between phases: Our case analysis demonstrates that these phases overlap, and different actors may have different opinions on when a given phase starts. An event that looks like a trigger for a window to one actor may look like an accelerant for an opening already underway to another. A fast-onset trigger may lead to a very brief window that is not seized, which looks to some like a continuation of the status quo. On the tapering side, reformers may aim to not only take advantage of a window but also to keep it open as long as possible, with some holding onto hope about a continued opening even as others grow cynical.

Despite different perspectives on the transition moments, interviewees largely agreed that the framework is useful and that reformers' needs shift with each phase.

Micro-windows: Interviewees often spoke of multiple windows, and especially of “micro-windows”—referring either to small openings falling outside a big window, or to the specific opportunities for progress within the big window. This framing is a useful reminder that there are more opportunities than external actors may see. In cases with a history of collaboration between reformers and support providers, and more nuanced contextual knowledge, donors and support providers find it easier to match reformer needs.

Beyond anticorruption: As defined above, windows need not create opportunities specifically for anticorruption reforms. For example, environmental catastrophes or other crises might open windows on other issues. At the same time, the triggering event for an anticorruption window may be less directly related to corruption, as in the case of a financial crisis, accession to or compliance with international organizations, or a massive increase in public spending—as we are seeing with the COVID-19 pandemic. For many anticorruption reformers consulted for this study, corruption triggers open windows that potentially shape and/or renegotiate broader democratic governance and open societies rather than “narrow” anticorruption agendas.

4. Methodology

This project aims to understand how anticorruption reformers can be better supported as they attempt to navigate windows of opportunity. Though reformers in any given context make many strategic and tactical decisions during windows, our focus is not on informing or assessing those decisions. Although our cases provide some illustrations, those decisions are highly context specific and beyond the scope of this study. Rather, our focus is on what support providers at various levels can do to help reformers make those decisions.

Our research followed a mixed-methods approach: a literature/desk review informed the development of a conceptual framework and case country selection, followed by semi-structured field interviews for two of our country case studies, virtual interviews for the third (due to COVID travel restrictions), and virtual interviews with support providers and secondary country examples (purposive sampling). The cases, focused on the analysis of reformers needs, were synthesized and triangulated against the support provision to conduct an analysis of support gaps. Recommendations were determined based on these gaps.

The team also drew on decades of experience researching, advising, and navigating windows with different types of stakeholders around the world to design the project, interpret the data, identify priority patterns, and suggest recommendations that could inform ongoing thinking and conversations about support during anticorruption windows among target audiences identified by the Open Society Foundations. An advisory group (see “Acknowledgements” on page 3) provided comments from inception to conclusion.

Country Case Studies

Our case selection was designed to provide a diversity of “windows” and reformer experiences for this study, in order to enable a synthesis of common reformer needs across windows. Key factors informing the selection included: the diversity of opening triggers, level of domestic support infrastructure for reformers, role of geopolitics in the window, and level of socioeconomic development.

We selected the following windows as our primary case studies:

- **Guatemala**, following the announcement of corruption investigations into President Otto Pérez Molina and others in early 2015;
- **Slovakia**, following the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová in February 2018; and
- **South Africa**, following President Jacob Zuma’s resignation and Cyril Ramaphosa’s election in February 2018.

Data from these primary case studies was supplemented with data on secondary examples of windows, drawn from support provider interviews, secondary sources, and a limited number of calls with reformers in those secondary countries. References to other cases have enabled cross-checking synthesis of reformer needs and testing whether support gaps exist beyond the primary cases. Research was conducted from January–September 2020, leaving open the possibility that further political developments (either window openings or taperings) could not be incorporated in the findings.

Support Providers

We interviewed 22 support providers in organizations focused on anticorruption and related issues and reviewed documents related to the work of their organizations and others. Interviewees were selected to capture the diversity of the field, including those with global perspectives as well as regional and country-specific experience, and also covering the range of anticorruption work (as outlined in UNCAC: prevention, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance, and information exchange). Data from interviews was triangulated and complemented with an intentional sample of publicly available documentation (strategies, websites, reports, and evaluations).

Gaps Analysis and Recommendations

Our gaps analysis compares reformers' needs with the support provided by global and regional actors and looks for mismatches between the two. The recommendations then aim to ensure the needs identified in those gaps are met, drawing from practices identified through the research and the research team's professional experience.

COVID-19 Adjustments

This project's research was underway when the COVID-19 pandemic led to global travel restrictions and constrained the responsiveness of potential interviewees. This necessitated virtual research on one of our case studies and extended our overall research timeline. Although it is outside this study's scope to assess how the pandemic has impacted opportunities for anticorruption work, we re-contacted prior interviewees to gather and incorporate insights on how their political context has evolved since our field work.

5. Case study snapshots

Full details of each of these windows are described in this report’s annexes.

Guatemala

Summary of Window

The window opened in early 2015 when the Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) announced corruption investigations into President Otto Pérez Molina and others, leading to an outbreak of demonstrations, the president’s resignation, and election of President Jimmy Morales. However, reformers came to see Morales’ anticorruption rhetoric as a campaign strategy rather than a real commitment. Some demonstration leaders formed a new political party (Movimiento Semilla) and a new movement, which later gave birth to a think tank (#JusticiaYa, Instituto 25A). The window closed around mid-2017 when the CICIG released investigations into Morales and others on illicit funding in the 2015 election, and the executive branch and important private sector figures started a lobby campaign to weaken the U.S. government’s support for CICIG.

Key Reformer Needs During the Window

Reformers in government and political parties noted lack of expertise and bandwidth in drafting laws or advancing judicial proceedings. Navigating the system (administratively and politically) was a challenge. Reformers needed space to connect with one another, to talk politics/strategy, to set goals, and to craft messaging; connections were especially difficult between government and civil society. Online smear campaigns, SLAPPs, libel suits, aggressive disinformation campaigns, and fake news were challenges that reformers were unsure how to deal with. Organizationally, raising funds, renewing leadership, and fostering trust were challenges for new political parties, civil society organizations, grassroots movements, and independent media.

Gaps and Lessons

Reformers found support for many needs, but could have used more support for informal convenings, setting political strategy, navigating legislative/administrative processes, and responding to defamation campaigns and digital threats. More regular and flexible financing was also an unmet need from status quo through to tapering phases. Lessons emerged around the need to tackle communications and anticorruption framing strategically, without necessarily focusing on a prosecutorial/personalized response, as well as preventing the agenda from being associated with a particular political faction and narrative. Judicial observatories to prevent all acts of harassment and the criminalization of human rights defenders and anticorruption reformers in Guatemala also emerged as a crucial gap.

Slovakia

Summary of Window

The window began opening in February 2018 when investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová were murdered. With the murders seen as a product of state capture and systemic corruption, the anticorruption civic movement “For a Decent Slovakia” gained traction, leading to the largest non-violent protest rallies since 1989. This quickly led to the resignation of Prime Minister Fico and election losses for his Smer-SD party—after activists eyed elections as key to shaping the quality of democratic governance and many newcomers entered the electoral arena. In the meantime, the country adopted preventative and law-enforcement reforms. Following the March 2020 parliamentary elections, reformers are divided on whether the window remains open.

Key Reformer Needs During the Window

Many reformers changed career paths (from private sector and civil society to parties or public sector), creating identity and mission challenges for CSOs that aimed to be non-partisan. These transitions created leadership and human resource problems, while CSOs were also stretching to tap into macro and micro windows. Shifting strategies and tactics was a related challenge in this moment, with newcomers in the political arena having to quickly reinvent their identities and skillsets and CSOs needing to build new capacities while avoiding cooptation (or the perception thereof). Finally, reformers faced smear campaigns and mis/disinformation attacks.

Gaps and Lessons

Prior investments in the anticorruption sector paid off when the window opened, but some overlooked needs related to political strategy and leadership gaps became more acute. The gap in support for developing a mission-driven pipeline of leadership within the political arena is a critical challenge, linking the anticorruption space to other open-society agendas.

Technical knowledge was not an acute need; when needs arose, they could be met easily, often through existing networks of reformers. These networks also enabled shared analysis and division of labor among social movements and organized civil society. However, shifting goals, strategies, and narratives remained a challenge. The relationship between civil society and political parties is a salient, overlooked area for work. Core funding, consistent from status quo through to tapering, remained a need for reformers in and outside of government.

South Africa

Summary of Window

The window opened in February 2018 as investigations and mobilizations in state capture led to the resignation of President Jacob Zuma and the election of Cyril Ramaphosa. The new administration quickly moved to replace cabinet ministers, executives of state-owned businesses, and others seen as being compromised. However, the changes never met the high expectations for reform and faced pushback from Zuma’s allies within the government and ANC. There have been no successful prosecutions, and legislative reforms have been relatively minor; a judicial commission of inquiry (the Zondo Commission) has been underway since 2018 without an interim report yet.

Key Reformer Needs During the Window

SOEs were a major focus for in-government reformers, but while fraud detection and asset recovery moved forward, administrative rebuilding and restructuring needs went unaddressed. The prosecuting authority has also struggled in the face of having had its capacity gutted during the Zuma years. Outside of government, civil society faced perennial challenges around coordination and funding, while trying to shift from a strategy of outside mobilization to inside pressure. Many also pointed to a need to move from a focus on prosecutions to larger, structural reforms.

Gaps and Lessons

In-government reformers were able to meet many of their needs through the domestic private sector and a limited amount of international support (which brings a risk of political backlash). On the civil society side, gaps in the ecosystem of actors had resulted from decreased international support for anticorruption, human rights, governance, and related issues as South Africa “graduated” in economic status; domestic philanthropy has not yet increased to fill those gaps. Collaborative space for joint analysis and strategy setting was also seen as a need.

6. Reformer needs

Our focus on human agency puts a specific set of actors at the center of our analysis: reformers both inside and outside government who actively advance anticorruption changes during windows of opportunity. These reformers include elected officials, bureaucrats, political leaders, civil society leaders, activists, academics, journalists, and others. If a window of opportunity is to result in real changes, it will be due to the efforts of these reformers.

Our analysis does not prioritize among these groups but rather recognizes that reforms result from the combination of their efforts, even when they do not work in explicit collaboration. Though we did not explicitly bring a gender lens, our findings show the important role played by women reformers—both inside and outside the government—in leading and making change during anticorruption windows. Similarly, we did not prioritize youth inclusion in our analysis, but our research points to the role of generational dynamics in responding to windows, especially as urban youth and, in some cases, mid-career professionals mobilize in the streets. More importantly, as time goes by, younger generations of reformers more naturally occupy decision-making spaces in judiciaries and attorney general offices, congresses, civil service, political parties, and civil society organizations.

We have aimed to understand what these reformers need to make change through case studies of three windows: see the “Case study snapshots” (page 20) for the brief version of each, and the annexes for full details. Beyond these primary cases, we expand on our understanding of reformer needs through examples from other contexts, to illustrate how different strategies work across settings and to cross-check reformers’ assumptions.

Looking across case studies, several common themes about reformer needs emerge. We looked at these by phase of the window (see “Introduction: Why “windows”?” on page 14) and grouped needs in four categories:

- **technical knowledge** specific to anticorruption, such as expertise in drafting laws, judicial proceedings, or forensic finance;
- **political strategy**, including talking politics and strategy with other reformers, setting goals, and crafting communications;
- **ecosystem capacity**, including relationships, networks, trust, learning, camaraderie, mutual care, and leadership, as well as defending against smears and navigating disinformation attacks; and
- **general organizational capacity** of individual organizations, ranging from consistent funding, flexible allocation of human resources, and supplemental bandwidth to provide psychosocial support and security against digital, physical, and legal threats.

We carry these same four categories across our analyses of global support (section 7 on page 34) and gaps (section 8 on page 56).

Technical Knowledge Needs Identified Across Case Studies

Corruption is a systemic problem and anticorruption a complex area of work, with hundreds of possible entry points, approaches, and associated technical knowledge needs. In the past 30 years, the production and availability of technical diagnostics, knowledge, and skill sets has grown dramatically in the sector. Hence, reformers' remaining needs for technical knowledge to address concrete problems have changed: needs are often highly specialized in the areas most salient to the window, while effective implementation remains a cross-cutting challenge. Reformers often need to complement their general technical knowledge with local expertise on legislative and regulatory processes.

Specialized technical areas identified across the case studies:

Expertise in forensic finance to advance investigations and data analytics to understand patterns of corruption

Applies to: In-government reformers, journalists, civil society organizations, others

Phases: Pre-window, opening trigger, open window

What it is: To trace, investigate, prosecute, and recover assets, reformers in South Africa, journalists in Slovakia, CSOs in Georgia, and prosecutors in Brazil, and other countries have found themselves navigating the convoluted multi-jurisdictional structures that enabled corruption and hid its proceedings. In select countries, reformers are experimenting with big data analytics in order to better direct investigative and preventive resources where the risks are greatest. These tasks require highly specialized, often cross-jurisdictional, technical know-how; technical infrastructures, beyond the control of individual reformers; and access to appropriate hardware and software.

Expertise in concrete agencies' management to investigate and (re)build safeguards

Applies to: In-government reformers, bureaucrats, political leaders, and civil society organizations

Phases: Status quo, opening trigger, open window

What it is: The capacities of the administrative state can be undermined by long periods of corrupt administration, especially under the sort of "state capture" seen in South Africa, Guatemala, Slovakia, and elsewhere around the world.¹⁰ Facing this challenge, reformers with limited bandwidth need to combine general management and administrative capabilities with the sectoral expertise to investigate corruption and (re)build safeguards. This combination of demands arises at a range of specific bodies within the public sector:

from agencies in charge of distributing agricultural or art subsidies to state-owned enterprises in markets as diverse as electricity or transportation. In the case of state-owned enterprises, the task is further complicated by the need for knowledge about their specific governance, legal, and regulatory frameworks.

Expertise in local legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes

Applies to: Civil society organizations and newcomers to the public sector

Phases: Status quo, opening trigger, open window

What it is: The lack of knowledge of regulatory and administrative law and processes means that it is hard “to know how to deal with the monster from within” and advance reforms, as a Guatemalan reformer put it (see case study page 78). Reformers need procedural know-how to ensure that reforms can be adopted and be consistent with the workings of the administrative state and legislative process, so that proposals and, critically, implementing rules and regulations and guidance can be turned into official policy when the window is open, despite highly contingent processes. Reformers in Brazil, Argentina, and Slovakia were able to tap into micro and macro windows and obtained wins (e.g., 2013 Anticorruption Legal Reforms, Una Corte para la Democracia, and Beneficial Ownership, respectively) because they had done this kind of homework before windows opened. In Ukraine, funding for legislative drafting processes during the status quo phase helped reformers move at speed. Preventative steps often need to be taken to ensure these reforms can be effectively resourced and staffed as well as sustained in accountability and revision bodies as well as courts. In some countries, these capacities are available to spoilers but not to reformers because they are too costly (Guatemala, Slovakia) or because civil society lacks the necessary relationships (South Africa). In others, it is plausible to mobilize these capacities through pro-bono or other arrangements (Brazil). In Chile, after the Engel Commission produced a report on government corruption in 2015 with recommendations, the lack of people with the right qualifications, skills, and experience to codify those recommendations into bills and regulations in accordance with the country’s laws became a “significant bottleneck.”¹¹

Political strategy needs identified across case studies

Political strategy can include a broad set of issues, but our analysis points to a small, consistent set of needs. Described in detail below, these political strategy needs overlap with the other categories of needs described in this research—e.g., the first need involves how groups of reformers relate, similar to an ecosystem capacity need—but we classify these as strategy needs because they directly shape how reformers set and attempt to achieve their political goals as a window evolves.¹²

Political strategy needs identified across the case studies:

Talking politics and strategy with other reformers

Applies to: Civil society reformers and reformers in government

Phases: All phases

What it is: The scale and multiple dimensions of windows of opportunity often require that civil society actors work toward shared objectives, whether they do so through coordinated projects or parallel efforts of distributed action. Similarly, within the state, the distribution of anticorruption competencies across multiple public bodies, each with partly overlapping competencies, means that reform requires synergies and coordinated strategies.

Facing these dynamics, the need described by reformers in both civil society and government was for opportunities to talk politics and strategy with peers in order to reach a shared understanding and analysis of their political contexts, the problems they face, and the objectives and activities of other reformers. They did not describe a need for general information sharing or a unified strategy, but something in between: the space, trust, and incentives to engage in honest dialogue that can pave the way for shared understanding and timely action.

In Guatemala and South Africa, reformers have underscored this need as an important one; having it unmet undermined the speed and effectiveness of their response. In Slovakia, actors made proactive, long-term investments to build trust, relationships, and spaces for information sharing that enabled them to pull in the same direction, despite not explicitly sharing a strategy.

In Chile, stakeholders in the Presidential Advisory Council against Conflicts of Interest, Influence Peddling, and Corruption were able to reach actionable agreements about public policy, while avoiding general diagnostics about the state of affairs or causes of corruption, which could risk stalling action with “analysis paralysis.”¹³ The work of the Anti-Corruption Observatory, established in 2015 by Chilean civil society organizations, was crucial in the process of denunciation, critical proposal, and accompaniment from the organized citizenry to the reform initiatives and proposals inspired by the diagnosis and recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Council. By convening and bringing together the media, decision makers, opinion leaders, and citizens in general, the Observatory promoted an open and informed discussion platform that improved the quality and relevance of the adopted reforms.

On the public sector side, in Brazil, the complex public accountability system was becoming stronger before the Lava Jato investigations started in 2014. Over two decades of regular formal and informal exchanges enabled champions across the state apparatus at the local, state, and federal levels to gradually develop joint understanding and trust.¹⁴ Spaces of coordination paid off when the window opened: Organizations that had historically worked in parallel or were at odds were able to exchange information, carry out more than 4,000 investigations, and work together on regulatory proposals and a revamped Anti-Corruption and Money Laundering Strategy to mitigate corruption risks.

Setting new goals and transitioning strategies as windows open

Applies to: Civil society reformers and newcomers to politics and the public sector

Phases: Open window

What it is: Civil society activists need to shift their goals and approaches in response to the marked shift in political possibilities that defines an open window. They may struggle to make this shift for a variety of reasons. For example, actors may find that “outsider” advocacy strategies and broad priorities were effective ahead of the trigger, but that the open window calls for more nuanced negotiation over solutions.¹⁵ A civil society organization’s sense of identity—as outsiders working to hold government to account—might make it harder for it to engage in the internal administrative or legislative processes that are the locus of change under an incoming reform administration. Identity and capacity issues also affect many civil society groups’ meaningful and effective engagement in multi-stakeholder coordination spaces supported by international actors during windows.¹⁶ While the “macro” window may be a new president, multiple simultaneous “micro” windows for change require prioritization and understanding of government processes, sectors, sub-national dynamics, or (in the case of South Africa) party politics—all of which may be outside civil society’s traditional scope. In Guatemala and Slovakia, the emergence of new political parties and leadership who are (or claim) to be “outsiders to the party system,” including many from civil society, created numerous normative, strategic, renewing trust, and tactical dilemmas that activists and civil society organizations struggled to navigate. When activists and civil society reformers enter partisan politics and public institutions to effect change, they have similar political strategic needs.

Framing and communicating reform goals to target audiences in context

Applies to: Civil society and in-government reformers and politicians

Phases: Opening trigger and open window

What it is: As windows opened in all the case studies, a focus on prosecuting wrongdoers permeated both the media and popular narratives and also occupied significant attention from in-government reformers. While the prosecutions have not always succeeded, the public-communications challenge for many reformers was not “proving” that corruption is “bad” or underlies public life, but rather, turning public focus on individual culprits or saviors into progress on complex preventative reforms, such as limiting presidential power in South Africa. In Slovakia, President Zuzana Čaputová’s rule of law and anticorruption messaging explicitly addresses some of these challenges by conveying that, while trust in institutions is low and problems are systemic, change requires embracing, protecting, and transforming institutions that should work in the public interest rather than rejecting them.¹⁷

In Slovakia, messaging was strategically done by individuals outside formal civil society organizations to mobilize support, including journalists, candidates to elected office, and social movement leaders, underscoring the importance of social mediators and influencers. In Tunisia, I-Watch, a non-governmental group created to show that young people could be change agents beyond street protests, learned to target messages through

social mediation by “trusted” actors, an approach also adopted by the Guerrilla Movement in Georgia. These actors helped reformers effectively target key audiences (e.g., volunteers who become friends through joint action validate messaging to peers, other organizations who “vouch” for their messaging, or more generally they use the “Arabic Phone”—“someone who knows someone who referred”—as a mechanism to validate messaging). However, reformers often lack support to leverage these intermediaries and relationships.¹⁸ In Brazil, prosecutors received training to communicate outside the courtroom, but their engagement in social media is controversial in and outside the country.¹⁹

When triggers and awareness of corruption are manipulated by conservative, anti-democratic, and/or anti-human rights forces, a phenomenon linked to populism in Slovakia, the United States, Italy, Brazil, Hungary, Turkey, and beyond,²⁰ civil society actors face the additional challenge of effectively messaging and advocating that anticorruption reforms be progressive/democratic/human rights-affirming. In many windows, such as Guatemala, effective messaging can be further complicated when anticorruption becomes polarized and/or situated in ideological, social class, and power divides between reformers and society as a whole.²¹ In some countries, such as Guatemala, Peru, and many Central and Eastern Europe countries, foreign policy and shifting geopolitical dynamics permeate the battle for the anticorruption narrative. Disinformation attacks undermine the efficacy of reformers’ narratives and communications strategies. As windows taper, reformers often struggle with balancing the need to point to what still remains to be done and, in so doing, fueling disillusionment or apathy, playing to spoilers of the system and further closing the window.²²

Ecosystem capacity needs identified across cases

In this category, we identify needs that are relational and affect multiple reformers at once. They include investments in sectoral infrastructure that facilitate the meeting of other needs, as well as public goods that mitigate collective risks.

Ecosystem capacity needs identified across the case studies:

Personal relationships among reformers for multiple purposes (including self- and mutual-care)

Applies to: Civil society reformers, journalists, political leaders, civil servants, and others

Phases: All phases, but earlier is better

What it is: Personal relationships can help reformers bridge their organizational boundaries, contributing to a range of outcomes that support their work; trust-building enables information exchange, contributing to access to technical knowledge, better informed political strategy, and practical advice, among other capacities (in both formal and informal ways).²³ Across case studies, civil society members pointed to the value of the opportunity to meet in informal settings with peers and other stakeholders as well as through regular formal convenings, with the benefits flowing beyond the convenings’ stated purposes. Reformers were also adamant about a less tangible outcome

of these personal relationships: supporting self- and-mutual-care in ways that counter burnout and disillusionment.

For example, in South Africa and Guatemala, personal relationships among civil society actors were created during collaborations that preceded the recent window (such as the 2009 fight on the Secrecy Bill in South Africa, or during the human rights violation trials in Guatemala) and furthered during the window via formal structures like a civil society working group coordinating submissions to the Zondo commission or informal gatherings prior to the public protests. Also, in Guatemala, journalists pointed to the value of joint consortium projects that connected different media groups (such as the still ongoing initiative Guatemala Leaks which created synergies between *Plaza Pública*, *Ojo con mi Pisto*, *Ocote*, *El intercambio*, and *Poder*) and other initiatives, such as Open Society fellow gatherings that allowed young political leaders to connect informally with tech-savvy CSOs, journalists, and human right activists.

Developing and managing a leadership pipeline

Applies to: Civil society reformers, political parties, bureaucracies

Phases: All phases, but with different needs within each phase

What it is: Windows create new demands for leadership and cadres in different parts of the ecosystem. For example, younger prosecutors, often lacking the incentives, ethos, and ties of their predecessors, took leading roles in the windows opened by Lava Jato in Peru and Brazil,²⁴ potentially inspiring law students to imagine mission-driven career paths. Also, windows create openings for anticorruption candidates for elected offices, as well as within bureaucracies and political parties. Civil society reformers in all case studies noted challenges related to developing and advancing leaders to meet these demands, which strain the leadership pipeline.

Civil society organizations and the private sector often provide human resources to fill spaces but then are left on their own to manage brain drain and the perception of conflicts of interests stemming from “revolving doors” (as in Slovakia, Argentina, Georgia). There seem to be few examples of explicit efforts to renew partisan cadres and strategically equip them with substantive and procedural knowledge for their new roles, and/or connections to local and international suppliers. This narrative was strong as activist Zuzana Čaputová became president of Slovakia, giving an important symbolic win and hope to anticorruption reformers in civil society, as well as when a newer generation of politicians entered local politics and opened “micro” windows (see case study on page 88). This is neither a unique Slovak phenomenon, nor a new one: in the 1990s and early 2000s, Peruvian civil society was ready to take on the spaces opened by implosion of the Fujimori Government, while Argentinean civil society was caught off guard and unable to fill the power vacuum in 2001 crisis.²⁵

More recently, in Ukraine’s 2019 parliamentary elections, new candidates included many activists who had been trying to take advantage of the window opened by the Maidan revolution, such as the founder of an anticorruption organization, two board members of ANTAC, and a former executive director of TI Ukraine.²⁶ Brazil’s “United

Against Corruption” campaign (see “Managing narrative risks in Brazil’s United Against Corruption Campaign” on page 58) provides another example of an effort by anticorruption reformers and others to change the profile of those running for office. Finally, Georgian policy makers overcame human capacity constraints in public institutions by recruiting people with private sector experience and international qualifications to join government at all levels. An off-budget fund—financed partly from Open Society, the UNDP, and voluntary contributions by companies and private businesspeople—helped provide performance bonuses to key staff as an incentive to join the public sector, prevent corruption, and increase their qualifications (an interesting example is the renewal of cadres in the police sector).²⁷

Leaders of new social movements that “emerge” during windows, as well as those that try to participate in electoral politics through innovative structures, often need to quickly develop a broader toolkit and networks to advance the anticorruption agenda (as in Guatemala, Mexico, Slovakia, Tunisia). Generational dynamics—whether “older” cadres retiring or unable to find ways to work with “younger” needs, or window moments inspiring younger generations to pursue mission-driven career paths—further complicate these dynamics (as seen in South Africa, Slovakia, Brazil). While these needs became most acute during the open window phase, this points to a need to build a robust pipeline/ecosystem of leaders prior to an opening. It also points to an important tension that haunted reformers in all cases, but is rarely addressed as it relates to windows and beyond: the complex, often overlooked relationship between anticorruption civil society organizations and political parties (see also “Building power by connecting elite civil society to the policy arena” on page 49).

As windows taper and close, the challenge is different: how to reabsorb into the ecosystem reformers in the public sector that have developed capacities but no longer have space (Guatemala, United States, Argentina). A related consequence is ensuring that the career paths of these actors do not discourage others, especially younger generations, from mission-driven career paths.

Defending against smears and navigating disinformation attacks

Applies to: Civil society reformers, journalists, and public officials

Phases: All phases, with prioritization of opening window and window tapering

What it is: Many civil society organizations operate in environments with extensive misinformation and disinformation attacks on reformers, including Slovakia and Guatemala, as well as other countries. Some of these are fueled by a combination of large-scale attacks on the internet, botnets, and offline messaging. The attacks can target the legitimacy of the cause (e.g., by weaponizing corruption), the actors’ standing in society (e.g., by dismissing reformers as foreign agents in an era of growing nationalism and isolationism), their tools (e.g., by creating an environment that is dismissive of evidence-based decision-making), or other vectors. These attacks often have transnational dimensions.

These attacks are not unique to anticorruption groups, but in new windows, smear campaigns have become a major challenge and consume significant bandwidth from reformers. Civil society reformers, organizations, journalists, and public officials under attack usually deal with deliberately misleading or biased information, manipulated narratives, or facts and propaganda. They lack adequate advice and funding for making key decisions about whether and how to monitor, manage, defend against, and counter malicious attacks in social media, which includes defining organizational and coalition or field-wide strategies when attacks are on the ecosystem. Work on anticorruption narratives and communications strategies is not well coordinated with work on disinformation attacks, leading to potentially contradictory recommendations regarding framing, offense, and defense, among others.²⁸ Inattention to the human dimension of bot attacks—which affect people’s lives and livelihoods (see Guatemala case on page 78)—deepens problems in weak architectures for protecting individual reformers from attacks generally, as well as self- and mutual-care.

General organizational capacity needs identified across cases

In this category, we identify needs related to the operational capacity of civil society groups and organizations, independent media groups, and reformers in government. Many of these needs are similar to ecosystem capacity needs (prior section); we have included needs in this category if they are more focused on individual organizational capacities, rather than relational capacities.

General organizational capacity needs identified across the case studies:

Consistent funding

Applies to: Civil society reformers, government reformers, and journalists

Phases: All phases, with prioritization of status quo and tapering phases

What it is: Reformers in all sectors are often under-resourced for the magnitude of the task at hand. Shrinking funding has been a challenge for Slovak, Peruvian, and South African civil society organizations, as these countries moved up the development ladder and saw a corresponding decrease in global funding for issues like human rights and anticorruption. This can leave reformers unable to take advantage of a trigger and following window because they are struggling for organizational survival. Systematic under-budgeting and limited capacity for anticorruption and other public agencies, such as INLUCC in Tunisia, or efforts to undermine budgets and human resources of other agencies as the window begins to taper (or forcing such tapering) are also challenges.

The resulting decrease in capacity shows up as holes in the local ecosystem—making this also a need for networks and ecosystem capacity: e.g., if the organization previously supplying whistleblower support has to stop operating, others may struggle to quickly fill that gap.

Flexible allocation of human resources and supplemental bandwidth

Applies to: Civil society reformers, government reformers

Phases: All phases, with prioritization of opening trigger and open window phases

What it is: Windows demand that reformers step up action, beyond operational capacities in “normal times.” These are moments when more needs to be done to tap into the opportunity, as well as to rapidly monitor and address risks and fluctuations.

Flexible allocation of human and other resources was critical during the opening trigger phases in Guatemala and South Africa, as activists changed approaches in periods of uncertainty. Organizations that receive foreign funding often need help responding to these demands, especially when their operating capacity is not flexible but tied to specific projects. Projectized funding, especially projects working under bilateral and EU grantmaking rules, undermined the capacity of some civil society organizations in Guatemala and Slovakia during the trigger phases (see case studies page 78 and page 88, respectively). In some cases, reformers were able to negotiate quick revisions to project documents and “flexibilize” project support (Guatemala, Honduras, as well as in Liberia during the GEMAP) due to a closer in-country relationship with support providers.²⁹ A related, organizational challenge for these groups is that they lack adaptive management capacities to respond to and navigate more flexible systems.

Often, however, flexibility is not sufficient to address the ubiquitous “bandwidth” and skill sets gap. Reformers often need to tap into volunteers and pro bono support, hire short-term consultants, or request in-kind support from suppliers’ own staff.³⁰

Security against physical, legal, and digital threats

Applies to: Civil society reformers, journalists, activists, and public officials (especially those in charge of investigations)

Phases: All phases with prioritization of opening window and window tapering phases

What it is: Reformers in all cases report having faced physical, legal, and digital threats, and actions are not uncommon. They include a journalist murder and threats to others in Slovakia, the murder of a prosecutor in Mongolia, an arson against a civil society activist in Ukraine, criminal investigations against reformers in Central America, strategic lawsuits against public participation and libel suits in Guatemala, and allegations against journalists and investigators elsewhere. Digital attacks have compromised personal and organizational data and social media accounts and stolen public profiles; and botnet attacks have been common all around the world.

Many of these attacks are also attacks on the mental health and will of reformers and providing “demonstration effects” for others—with attacks often growing as spoilers of the system seek to stop a window from really opening or force the “tapering” of the window. In Guatemala, civil society activists and reformers called attacks a “public death” in the civic space.³¹ A journalist in Central America stopped writing about certain corruption scandal cases due to concerns over death threats.³² Many anticorruption prosecutors consider leaving or leave their positions to save their lives, physical and mental health, and family relationships.

There are apparent needs from these situations: beefing up the security of the buildings reformers work and live in and, more generally, self-defense training, and changing life routines. Reformers often require savvy legal teams to prevent problems and to defend them. Sometimes they need protection programs: at home, if possible, and abroad, if not. These needs also have indirect consequences on organizations' core funding needs, bandwidth, and mental health—as the team's resources and attention need to be focused to address these needs.

7. Global support

Below we synthesize the key takeaways from the “supply-side” across the four categories used to describe reformer needs. Some important points are needed to contextualize the analysis. First, capacities under the **same label can mean very different things to different suppliers**. We discuss these overlaps and variations in context.

Second, **function rather than form** guides this analysis of supply. Specific activities and modalities—e.g., study trips, financial support, data, research, or providing training, coaching, or mentoring³³—can play different functions and be used to support different capacities during a window. For example, training may serve a mainly technical function, but UNDP’s work on codes of conduct compliance in Vietnam uses training (including development of materials and training of trainers) to build momentum with key stakeholders.³⁴ For others, including PSAM and partners in the SADC region, training is also a mechanism of systems convening, relationship building, and brokering collective action across different types of stakeholders.³⁵

Third, to make a functional assessment, it helps to look at the support offered as part of the broader set of **assumptions and approaches in which the interventions are embedded**. For instance, the impulse to follow trigger moments with an influx of new analysis and major funding seems to be based on an assumption that change follows a shock or “big bang” reform model.³⁶ In contrast, actors who think that work from the status quo period should be continued during a window, and that new support should be channeled into “traditional” (pre-window) organizational structures, tend to assume a more gradual/incremental model is at work.³⁷ The decision point is not just support modality or objective, but also thinking on how change happens.

Fourth, and related, different uses and understandings of the function and relative value of specific types of interventions are associated with **values attached to different forms of expertise and learning**. Suppliers’ models can include different mixes of: an expert-driven model through which experts impart their subject-matter knowledge; a model in which there is value for expert knowledge, but that knowledge is strongly mediated and brokered;³⁸ an iterative model³⁹ where learning by doing is what will inform and be informed by technical knowledge; and/or an indirect strategy focusing on other reforms.⁴⁰ Within a large institution, such as The World Bank, all of these approaches coexist.

Technical knowledge support from global and regional providers

Many support providers offer some form of technical knowledge: it was the most common form of external support discussed in interviews. Much of this support is **standardized, off-the-shelf diagnostics and guidance**—not tailored to country context, let alone the specific dynamics of the open window—and **not equally available across all technical areas**.

Technical knowledge support takes a variety of forms, including access to “best practices” and case studies, research and evidence, long and short-term diagnostics, external experts and implementers, formal training, and learning-by-doing approaches around specific anticorruption issues.

Two illustrative examples:

- *The World Bank’s Initiative on Global Standards and Monitoring* focuses on issues where a global perspective and learning about the value of global consistency might be relevant.⁴¹ These and other ready-made diagnostics, such as those produced by international convention review mechanisms are often incorporated in quick diagnostics to identify responses to macro and micro-windows by multilateral and international organizations (e.g., Argentina, East Asia).
- *OCCRP* supports journalists in its network to access technical and legal knowledge in other countries for complex investigations of international corruption. The network had supported Ján Kuciak’s work in Slovakia and was able to mobilize additional support after his murder opened a window to further investigate political capture in the country (see case study, page 88).

That a great deal of support is off-the-shelf presents trade-offs that suppliers assess differently. Some value rapid, if imperfect, diagnostics prepared during the status quo phase. When a trigger opens a window in a particular case, these existing diagnostics help suppliers and reformers to work quickly from the same baseline, potentially facilitating explicit or implicit coordination that was impossible in earlier eras. Other suppliers believe that the costs of standardization are high, either because guidance is not sufficiently tailored to the specific window’s trigger and context or reformer needs, and/or because they have incentives to produce new content to satisfy their principals, as the window opens.

The supply of operational technical knowledge is uneven across technical areas. Though international anticorruption conventions provide a broad menu of action incorporated into national laws, further specified by technical secretariats and review mechanisms, more is available in specialized themes that are priorities for international funders or other actors than in other areas. The table below (“Table 3: Issue areas with greater or lesser technical guidance readily available” on page 36) provides a (non-exhaustive) list of technical areas with greater or lesser guidance available, and who provides it, within the anticorruption field.

The distribution in this table helps illustrate the challenges that a given reformer may have when accessing knowledge. In some areas, guidance and case studies with good practices are available, but sometimes this knowledge is confusing as many actors are “crowding” the space. This seems to be the case for windows in some East Asian countries where many suppliers are simultaneously focusing and producing technical guidance on contracting.⁴² Other issues lack much available support. (Though in some of these areas support exists beyond the anticorruption field—e.g., civic space.)

Table 3: Issue areas with greater or lesser technical guidance readily available

Issue area	Support providers
Areas with higher levels of support provision	
Open contracting and procurement	UNODC, UNDP, OCP, Hivos, World Bank, ERDB, IADB, TI, European Commission, The B Team, OECD, CoST, FCDO, ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative
Illicit financial flows, money laundering, beneficial ownership	Financial Action Task Force and FSRBs, OECD, IMF, The World Bank, IADB, Moneyval, TI, FCDO, Open Ownership, The B Team, Tax Justice Network, OGP, G20, EITI, Luminate, APEC ACTWG
Business integrity and compliance	FCDO, Basel Institute, B20, The B team, UN Global Compact, TI, CIPE, UNDP, Alliance for Integrity, ASEAN, ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative, MOBIN, International Bar Association- Anticorruption Committee and a host of private suppliers
Open government, open data, government technology, big data analytics	OGP and civic tech community, Global Integrity, TI, World Bank, GIZ; OECD; UNDP, GovLab, CAF; IDRC, ODC, FCDO, Global Integrity, WEF-PACI
Mutual legal assistance and asset recovery	FCDO, ARINSA, CARIN, Basel Institute, UNODC, Star Initiative, TI, Group of International Financial Centre Supervisors, ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative, International Bar Association- Anticorruption Committee
Law enforcement and judiciary	UNODC, FCDO, Star Initiative, U4, global and regional professional and expert networks, Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative, GRECO

Access to information	FOI researcher / practitioner networks, U4, The World Bank, OGP, IADB, Access Info, RTI, Article 19
Natural resource governance	Targeting Natural Resource Corruption Programme, Leveraging Transparency to Reduce to Corruption in the Natural Resource Industries project, World Bank, EITI, NRGI, IADB, TI, U4, Curbing Corruption
Public financial management	World Bank, IMF, GIFT, IBP, IADB, IMF, GIZ, CABRI, PSAM
Areas with lower levels of support provision	
Conflicts of interests and asset disclosures	The World Bank, IADB, OECD, G20, GRECO, APEC ACTWG
Investigative journalism techniques	OCCRP, Red Palta, ABRAJI
Anticorruption agencies and Supreme Audit Institutions	UNODC, USAID, U4, UNDP, INTOSAI, OLACEFS, World Bank, IADB, GIZ
Money in politics	TI, IDEA, The World Bank
Civic space	CIVICUS, Pulsante, ICNL, OGP, Protection International
Whistleblower protection	TI, GRECO, MESICIC, PPLAFF, EAAACA
Social accountability	GPSA, UNDP, U4, PTF
State-owned enterprises	G-20, OECD, IADB, World Bank, CAF, IMF
Health	U4, TI - Health Initiative, WHO, UNDP, Global Integrity, Curbing Corruption
Infrastructure	COsT, IADB, TI, IMF, G20, The World Bank, ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative

Other times, technical knowledge is available but only accessible to local reformers when they have know-how of international “good practice” to navigate, curate, and translate technical knowledge to their context and/or have the support of international suppliers to do so. As in other fields, rather than the passive availability and transfer of information, a key difference across countries is the existence of individuals and organizations that actively engage in identifying,

filtering, interpreting, adapting, conceptualizing, and communicating the evidence to reformers.⁴³ This variation in access to knowledge seems to be a characteristic of the ecosystem of networks and relationships in which technical knowledge is embedded, rather than related to technical knowledge itself (see “Channeling technical support, funding, and partnerships” on page 51 for more).

Where technical knowledge is lacking, suppliers have shown an ability to quickly turn around diagnostics and guidance: the corruption risks associated with COVID-19 response are a prime example. A non-exhaustive list of offers includes: guidance and policy briefs (UNDP, GRECO, World Bank, OCP, U4), technical assistance for risk management (UNDP, IADB, World Bank, European Commission, UNDP), databases of practices (Global Integrity, OGP), knowledge exchanges (Network of Public Integrity of Latin America and the Caribbean OECD-IADB, PSAM, OGP, OCP, OSCE, World Bank, CIPE), rapid evidence summaries (GSCRC). In some cases, suppliers have been able to quickly deploy resources to support the implementation of technical knowledge such as the COVID-19 Module of the Investment Map by the IADB’s Transparency Fund, with in kind support from Microsoft, in Paraguay and other Latin American countries.⁴⁴ Similarly, within a month of the port of Beirut explosion in August 2020, the World Bank, UN, and EU had produced a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, including anticorruption recommendations.⁴⁵

While there is little evidence that investments in crowded areas are more needed or effective than in others⁴⁶, this unbalanced supply seems to contribute to agenda setting at the country level.⁴⁷ Bilateral funding adds a further bias by privileging expertise from its home country, either directly or indirectly through the organizations supported, over contextual fit.⁴⁸ Finally, language can be a barrier to accessing and using publicly available anticorruption guidance, which has been especially prominent during windows in some East Asian countries.⁴⁹

Beyond making technical knowledge publicly available, many suppliers add value in other ways, including through curation, brokerage, and translation. See box for examples of knowledge brokering and translation support. Provided the right connections, all of these have been/are available to reformers during “macro” and “micro” windows, including in Slovakia, Ukraine, Peru, Colombia, Afghanistan, among others.

Examples of knowledge brokering and translation services

- Bilateral development agencies and foreign ministries have pooled funds to create and support the U4 research center, instead of having an in-house cadre of researchers. In addition to its publications and online trainings, U4 offers “premium services” through a rapid response help desk, including to broker knowledge during windows that are prioritized by those partners. It can provide tailored responses to questions within 10 days.⁵⁰
- OCP similarly runs an issue-specific “help desk.”⁵¹
- TI runs a help desk for its chapters (an evaluation of TI discusses the potential of help desks and knowledge brokering, but it warns that the global secretariat has not sufficiently prioritized contextual knowledge and local reformers needs).⁵²
- The International Center for Asset Recovery provides face-to-face and e-learning modules as well as specialized case advice through experts in their headquarters or by embedding experts over longer periods of time.⁵³
- The OECD uses “twinning” of experts across countries—an approach similar to bilateral secondments.⁵⁴
- IACA provides technical training, access to high-level peer exchange, and an alumni network in more than 160 countries.
- Global Integrity provides knowledge translation among other services, including through the Anticorruption Evidence Program.
- DFID (now FCDO) has a secondment program which enables researchers to work part-time with its teams—another example focused on translators for specific suppliers.
- Other institutions, such as the IADB or the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, acquire “translation” capacities by including window veterans to be part of the anticorruption teams that work with reformers.

Whatever the modality, technical knowledge can be delivered in a non-judgmental way that seeks dialogue with governments, or in a pressure-based, advocacy approach that focuses more on optimal prescriptions and normative arguments. In either form, the added value is not only the technical content. Further value can include helping to quickly navigate the complexity of the agenda and supplier ecosystem, or validation or quality assurance of local reformers’ plans (as in various OECD research and consultancies, such as the open government assessment required by the Government of Argentina in 2018-19 and conducted by the OECD⁵⁵). Tailored technical knowledge, conveyed by key external suppliers, such as multi-lateral banks, can also be used to create spaces for policy dialogue and build trust for taking diagnostics to tailored in-country action.⁵⁶

Many suppliers of technical knowledge consider these “add-ons” and technical credibility critical to their value proposition and may refrain from engagement during windows when they consider that they are being only called to lend credibility with unclear chances for reforms.⁵⁷

Political strategy support from global and regional providers

Many global organizations working on anticorruption describe themselves as providing some form of political strategy support. However, “politics” and “political strategy support” carry quite different meanings for various organizations, such that the supply of specific types of political support may be thinner than the general commitment to “working politically” might suggest.

The various takes on the importance of politics run a range, with each support provider thinking about political strategy and support within the boundaries of their own theories of action and positions within the ecosystem. A few examples include: high-level political will, small “p” political processes, and political innovations.

Informed by these general approaches to politics, support providers’ political strategy work serves three major functions: political analysis; reform prioritization and change management; and support for advocacy, messaging, and branding.

A (non-exhaustive) list of approaches to supporting political work

High-level political will	<p>An evaluation of USAID anticorruption programming recommended securing high-level “political will” as a critical pre-condition for effectiveness⁵⁸—an insight that informs calls for rapid diplomatic and funding responses to windows.⁵⁹ The same insight underlies efforts that rely on diplomatic missions in the UK’s cross-government strategy, from high-level summits to the deployment of embassies and High Commissions, the efforts of OGP,⁶⁰ or select World Bank Country Offices⁶¹ to create political channels through which various actors can advance reforms.</p>
Small “p” political process	<p>The Development Leadership Program, which informs a range of anticorruption research and programming, recommends focusing on the small “p” political processes that support or undermine reforms, including the dynamics of legislative maneuvering and lobbying regulatory bodies.⁶² A new World Bank (2020) global report collating lessons from anticorruption reforms, including during macro windows in Chile, Ukraine, Romania, Nigeria, and Malaysia and “micro” windows in Andhra Pradesh or Madagascar, gives significant attention to the small “p” processes of policy implementation, wherein reformers navigate factors such as inter-agency boundaries, lack of capacities to meet ambitious reform goals, organizational cultures, and sector/market specifics.</p> <p>In terms of support, the small “p” politics approach focuses on non-linear aspects of reforms, and so is better supported through exchanges between windows veterans and reformers during a window that facilitates sharing tricks of the trade and lessons. For example, many judges and prosecutors have relied on insights from veterans of Italy’s Mani Pulite investigations; many of those focused on asset declarations and conflicts of interests have learned from the post-Watergate veterans from the USA and the post-Menem veterans in Argentina; the architects of Slovenia’s Commission for the Prevention of Corruption have informed government reformers around Europe; and many working on asset recovery continue to rely on veterans of the Fujimori/Montesinos case in Peru.</p> <p>The focus on small “p” politics is also better aligned with structured capacity building approaches from organizations like Global Integrity, which takes an accompaniment approach to supporting reformers as they think politically about their interventions, through cycles of trial, learning, and adaptation.⁶³ The GPSA’s implementation support has similar goals, though with different tools.⁶⁴</p>
Political innovation	<p>A third version of working politically supports reformers to re-imagine and propose alternative types of politics, including in anticorruption. The case of Guatemala in the annex, for example, illustrates the support for political innovation provided by Asuntos del Sur, the Avina Foundation, and other suppliers to Latin American reformers. The Engine Room and Latin American civil society organizations experimented with a related regional approach to innovation for anticorruption, focused on technology, advocacy, and inclusive participation.⁶⁵</p>

Political analysis: conducted for suppliers' own use, and only occasionally shared

Many suppliers conduct some form of political analysis. Some suppliers prioritize formal political economy analysis and/or analysis of deep structures of corruption and political capture, though many rely on faster, informal analysis during windows. This is done partially to identify which institutional and thematic entry points are ripe for action in a given context, as well as for risk management, e.g., to avoid supporting anticorruption efforts that cover for political revenge or that undermine human rights, development, or other goals. Starting potentially during an “opening trigger” phase, and updated throughout, this analysis helps an organization decide whether and how to engage in a window. For instance, some suppliers analyze the opportunities and risks associated with the role of international actors as part of their political analysis (see “Hybrid commissions and the role of foreign experts” on page 43).

However, these analyses are frequently neither shared nor disclosed in a timely fashion. They may be shared with trusted partners through backchannels, or under co-funding and/or coordination mechanisms (e.g., donor mapping, coordination, or roundtables), which mitigate reputational risks. But political analyses do not necessarily extend to shared processes of creating joint understandings of the window among in-country reformers or creating the conditions for joint understandings. The latter include suppliers investing in ongoing formal and informal activities that nurture trust and incentivize shared understandings (e.g., the Fund for Transparent Slovakia, as described in “Supporting Slovakia’s in-country reformer networks” on page 61; MacArthur Foundation’s support to cohorts of grantees in Nigeria; FCDO-funded STAAC in Ghana) or brokering ad hoc activities in response to a window (e.g., U4, CIPE). For example, reformers in Slovakia valued the possibility to play football or regularly attend conferences with other like-minded people; in Brazil, they valued the role of study trips as trust-building mechanisms that paved the way to improving relationships.⁶⁶ The World Bank and other development partners took advantage of a window and supported a structured, brokered collective action approach which enabled different, sector-focused actors to build relationships and trust as well as advance concrete reforms in the Dominican Republic.⁶⁷

Hybrid commissions and the role of foreign experts

In many anticorruption windows, local reformers and/or suppliers have experimented with approaches that put foreigners front and center. While many advocates believe that change should be locally driven, many domestic civil society groups and reformers champion and rely on the legitimacy derived from having an institutional framework anchored in multilateral donor support and, in some cases, champion external conditionalities such as those that might be imposed by the IMF, World Bank, European Union, or US government.

One form this takes is through the creation of and support to hybrid commissions, such as the CICIG in Guatemala, or the OAS with the MACCIH in Honduras. These raise crucial issues around sovereignty, relationships with local reformers, institutional legitimacy, and how each commission responded to the concerns of their member states (particularly the USA).⁶⁸ Similarly, in cases such as Ukraine, local reformers have welcomed, strategized for, and demanded foreign pressure on their own country.⁶⁹

However, many believe that the strategy of reliance on donor governments and foreign experts to address internal gaps is not sustainable in the long term and could lead to the neglect of needed reforms to domestic institutions or lack of capacity at the local level.⁷⁰ While the specifics of these dynamics is beyond the scope of this study, these issues often are part of windows-related political analysis. A more nuanced and collaborative analysis of their role and scope of work could serve to mitigate risks upfront.

Reform prioritization and change management in windows: less common form of support

Many suppliers agree that action demands prioritization and focusing on concrete problems;; as mentioned above, there are a broad range of potential technical entry points in the anticorruption agenda. The tension between focusing on ending impunity in the short-term versus long-term systemic reforms—or balancing both—has been the subject of much academic debate. Some have also put forward a dichotomy between corruption prosecution and corruption control/prevention through legal enforcement.⁷¹ Yet, only three suppliers interviewed mentioned providing support to some form of prioritization of reforms or change management from a political strategy perspective (as opposed to in the form of a technocratic assessment of reform needs). This includes support from the OCP to partners so that they can link short- and long-term goals. The IADB maps possible reforms and works with reformers to prioritize mixes of reforms that are relevant for a window, while mitigating the risks of seeding failure via pushing for overambitious reforms. Prioritization and associated support for strategic and tactical decision-making

is made more critical as reformers face high expectations and limited resources: e.g., Lavo Jato has led to over 800 cases in Peru—an impossible number to monitor.⁷²

Another capacity requiring support is the ability to shift approaches as the phases of the window change. The 2012-2013 “Passion and Politics Lab” of the Global Leadership Academy provided a space to explore how change agents in different positions and sectors could address topics for which they had been protesting in the streets during the Arab Spring. The approach seems to have been instrumental to the leadership of Tunisian organization I-Watch. Change facilitation skills helped I-Watch’s founders develop the abilities “to put themselves in other’s shoes,” so they could handle dissent more efficiently and fruitfully and ultimately work through challenges and conflicts that might have blocked the institutionalization of a network of volunteers and the implementation of projects since then.⁷³

Capacity building for shifting approaches is an issue often considered in the support of the GPSA as it has helped civil society groups used to being outside tap into micro windows by working with champions in government and World Bank teams.⁷⁴ Beyond the anticorruption space, the Tony Blair Institute includes some of these issues as part of its strategic and practical support for governance leaders. In Slovakia, government reformers resorted to a local management university for this kind of support.

Anecdotal evidence suggests this form of support is more often provided informally, in response to demand or as part of on-going dialogue and, at times, adaptive management systems,⁷⁵ rather than as a formal support activity.⁷⁶ In the case of the CIPE Rapid Response project, CIPE positions itself as “a bridge between the immediate opportunity and that longer term process, often supported by large donors.”⁷⁷ However, the plausibility of this proposition varies in practice from country to country, with new technical assessments of the window apparently turning into narrow projects in some cases. Recent CIPE efforts in Sudan, for example, launched the Sudan Anticorruption Resource Center (SARC), partnering with a local university to organize, convene, and support locally driven anticorruption reforms. On the other hand, efforts in Lebanon and Ecuador might be too narrowly focused on the access to the OGP, prioritizing quick open washing reforms over locally driven ecosystem and general capacity building efforts.

Support for change management is available beyond the anticorruption space, including mentorship arrangements⁷⁸ or coaching.⁷⁹ In *ad hoc* cases, reformers may hire management coaches, consultants, or advisors⁸⁰ or rely on informal networks for mentoring and advice. In the social accountability space, the GPSA’s combined financial and nonfinancial support has a track-record of helping civil society organizations develop strategic and adaptive capacities and transition from outsiders to players in the inside game, while protecting their autonomy from governments and the World Bank.⁸¹

Advocacy, messaging, and branding: increasing attention on fit-for-purpose framings

At the tactical level, support providers like the World Bank, OCP, or OGP produce marketable stories that spotlight successes on select issues, which can help reformers to be “shovel ready” during the status quo phase, create momentum for specific reforms during the trigger phase, or sustain momentum for specific changes during the open and tapering phases of the window, when competing priorities emerge. Many of these stories hope to target specific audiences within “client”/“partner” governments and benefit from the relationships and legitimacy of the provider vis-a-vis such target audiences.⁸² Other actors focus on different audiences. For instance, UNODC produces education campaigns;⁸³ the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative is funding public information and education campaigns on whistleblowing customized to specific cultural and social aspects of six countries in the Western Balkans and Moldova; in Nigeria, MacArthur supports films and drama; and DFID, among others, supported programming targeted at youth in Tunisia.⁸⁴

At the strategic level, there seems to be a transition among actors that have long contributed to anticorruption advocacy, messaging and branding, especially in civil society. First, there is growing research into, if not acknowledgement of, the shortcomings and unintended consequences of common messaging and traditional advocacy approaches, including their limited effectiveness in creating change,⁸⁵ while potentially fueling citizen apathy and disillusionment over time.⁸⁶ Some suppliers are increasingly excited by positive campaigning, as exemplified by the Accountability Lab’s Integrity Idol approach⁸⁷ and lessons from messaging in Ukraine.⁸⁸ This interest parallels increasing investments in research collaborations and use of behavioral economics (MIT Gov/Lab, IADB, World Bank, MacArthur, ideas42), user-centered design (e.g. Mobilisation Lab), and focusing on shifting social norms. Topos Partnership, with the support of the Open Society Foundations, is currently working on a project to reimagine and apply effective public narratives that disclose corruption but at the same time cultivate civic participation, action, and hope. Insights from the United States include putting “pro-public” laws and institutions front and center, with the goal of inoculating the public against pessimism and partisanship, and shifting the focus away from individual politicians and politics.⁸⁹

Second, much of the advocacy, messaging, and branding associated with the “good governance” agenda has been focused on the power of measurement and universal “best practices;” the assumptions behind these approaches have been challenged—including by leading proponents of the approaches.⁹⁰

Finally, normative and geopolitical assumptions that may have influenced the effectiveness of anticorruption campaigns in the past as the anticorruption regime

grew may no longer hold.⁹¹ One example: states’ efforts to undermine the norms of the international anticorruption regime from within the regime. Another example: the recent explosion of disinformation attacks targeting anticorruption agendas sometimes interacts with broader efforts to promote polarization, affect elections, and undermine democracy—in effect, weaponizing anticorruption narratives to manipulate societies’ politics, values, and beliefs.⁹² These attacks often emerge from complex relationships between foreign states and transnational non-state actors, but they may also underscore the effectiveness of cross-national sharing and lesson-learning of playbooks among the pro-authoritarian, illiberal, and kleptocracy club.⁹³

Ecosystem capacity support from global and regional providers

Relational ecosystem capacities create the infrastructure for many other forms of supply provision. Back-channel communication, joint strategies, and pooled funding can go some way to channeling fit-for-purpose technical, political, and organizational capacities and stretching resources during windows. Many suppliers and reformers noted that investments in relational ecosystem capacities are undervalued in programing to support anticorruption reformers—some believe that they are relatively less prevalent and valued in support strategies today, especially for civil society reformers.

Support for building networks and ecosystem capacity takes four different forms and, through these, serves four functions.

Table 4: Forms and functions of ecosystem capacity support

Forms of ecosystem capacity support	Functions served by the various forms
Connecting diverse groups of local actors	Channeling technical support, funding, and partnerships
Connecting specific subsets of local actors	Sharing political intelligence and shaping strategy
Connecting local reformers to external actors	Building leadership capacity
Coordinating support suppliers	Supporting self-/mutual-care, solidarity, and risk mitigation

As with political strategy support, the range of support approaches may suggest that supply is more ubiquitous than it is. However, networks and ecosystem support depends heavily on suppliers’ relationships with the context (level of embeddedness, organizational/personal histories, resourcing, etc.) so supply remains ad hoc, with ecosystem infrastructure and individual capacities stretched thin during windows.

Forms of support

Connecting diverse groups of local reformers happens through activities like U4's in-country workshops, which are tailored to their bilateral donor and foreign affairs ministry partners and local counterparts and bring together donors, government representatives, and academics. U4 runs these in eight to nine countries each year, selected by demand based on donor member priorities and staff expertise.⁹⁴ During the past decade, they have held more than 60 workshops in both status quo window phases and in countries facing macro and micro windows (e.g., Afghanistan, Somalia). Multilateral organizations are also well placed to convene collective action processes, and, in so doing, play a valuable function for bilateral and other suppliers. Multilaterals' ability to play this role varies across countries, with reformers and suppliers assessing differently the role of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and ERDB, as well as other types of institutions such as the UN or OECD. The UNDP East Asia hub plays an important role in the region as does the IADB in Latin America.⁹⁵ In many instances, donors piggy-back on sub-groups of development partners' regular country-dialogue and country coordination mechanisms.⁹⁶

In these cases, the perceived trustworthiness and neutrality of the convening actor matters greatly. INGOs can face challenges in this role when perceived to be "on one side." Contractors and intermediaries' competitive nature can introduce unintended dynamics, limiting incentives to share information or coordinate with others.⁹⁷ Whether a foreign government can play this role depends on bilateral relationships. Specialized "neutral" organizations, such as Partners for Democratic Change, are well positioned to support processes by building capacities for negotiation and consensus-building, rather than through substantive direction.

For these reasons, many reformers and suppliers see domestic universities as country-relevant, respected institutions and promising but under-utilized conveners. For example, the School of Law of the FGV in Rio de Janeiro played a critical role in supporting the development of legislative measures proposed by the UCC campaign in Brazil (see "Managing narrative risks in Brazil's United Against Corruption Campaign" on page 58), including helping to mobilize and review content produced by hundreds of technical experts such as pro-bono lawyers on different sides of reform proposals. The Programa Interdisciplinario de Rendición de Cuentas (PIRC) /Red por la Rendición de Cuentas in Mexico housed at CIDE in Mexico worked through multi-stakeholder partnerships but has turned its focus to partnering with other universities as the political context for the anticorruption agenda changed.⁹⁸ The American University in Lebanon is an important partner in the recent window that resulted from the explosion in the Beirut Port. In Sudan, the University of Khartoum is also playing a similar role due to the recent efforts made by CIPE.

These institutions also play a key role in developing a pipeline of qualified human resources and making networks and the ecosystem denser, thus enabling them to effectively play a convening role for those actors. In Brazil, at the subnational level, the public administration school of UDESC is a "hub" of a growing network of actors in the anticorruption ecosystem in the state, complementing other initiatives such as the network of agencies with control and anticorruption functions. UDESC convenes an annual good practices prize awarded by a committee of multiple stakeholders in the state's accountability ecosystem, enabling

these actors to learn about what is happening in the state as well as develop trust with each other. UDESC's public administration program has trained many current and future public and elected officials who request the university to step in as a facilitator, provide advice, knowledge brokering, and translation, including as micro windows open.

Similarly, the Ukraine's ACREC recently partnered with NaUKMA to offer a degree in corruption studies for students and a certificate for stakeholders who need to know more about the project to do their job (e.g., civil servants, business executives) with great demand—which triggered interest from representatives of non-governmental organizations and universities from Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, as well as some debate among international experts about how to tailor the curricula and structure such courses.⁹⁹ In Slovakia, a reformer mentioned that local think tanks are missing an opportunity to provide regular training for new generations focused on anticorruption and related issues, as the Institute for Economic and Social Studies provides on its economic agenda.¹⁰⁰ These institutions bring potential advisory and research capacities, though they are less prominent, connected, and resourced in international anticorruption work than their counterparts in the Global North.¹⁰¹

Connecting specific subsets of local actors is usually about enhancing collaboration. For example, USAID's "Global Anti-Corruption Consortium" helps investigative journalists and civil society organizations work together so investigations connect to advocacy.¹⁰² On the government side, inter-agency mechanisms for implementing UNCAC or other conventions can be entry points to support coordination.

Support for coordination between elite civil society and grassroots organizations or movements is also a subject of significant interest among global suppliers (including Global Integrity, GPSA, and T/AI). Conversely, the links between the anticorruption and democratization/democratic support/anti-authoritarian agendas are less in vogue, with less global conversation and articulation of how to connect support between elite civil society and political parties, among other actors. See box ("Building power by connecting elite civil society to the policy arena" on page 49) for more.

Building power by connecting elite civil society to the policy arena

In recent years, many global suppliers have highlighted the limits of elite civil society organizations in building the muscles needed to tap into windows and advance reforms. Inspired by social movements, including the Arab Spring, many have turned their focus to grassroots efforts. A great deal of attention has gone into understanding how to support these groups while doing no harm.

How to tap into the potential of people's power while navigating the natural informality and fluidity of these movements is a key challenge. Some argue that the demobilization of grassroots movements disempowers reformers, as happened in Armenia after the Velvet Revolution, and that support to preempt the demobilization and sustain people power is the way forward. Bellows identified two ways in which reformers around the world, with suppliers' support, are trying to overcome the shortcomings of the perceived gap, including in preparation for and during windows.¹⁰³ The first is building hybrid anticorruption organizations, with both policy and organizing capacity (e.g., the efforts of #JusticiaYa in Guatemala with the creation of the Instituto 25A). The second route is building coalitions between groups focused on anticorruption policy and groups with existing organizing capacity, such as human rights groups.

However, some reformers in Slovakia and elsewhere have argued there are risks in preempting the natural fluidity of social movements through formalization of coordinated action with non-governmental groups. The "For a Decent Slovakia" movement explicitly avoided formal connections to organized civil society to avoid attacks and backlashes; they found that informal, behind-the-scenes communication sufficed. Others highlighted that demobilization after electoral success gives space to dynamics outside the street and is a "natural course of action" that puts the spotlight on political parties, governments, and public sector institutions across different levels of government. In problematizing where mission-driven political actors come from and what skills sets they need, rather than forcing attention on fluid social movements, the Slovak window suggests these actors may be an important missing piece in many international strategies to empower agents willing to nudge, take advantage of, and sustain anticorruption windows.

Experiences from other windows (discussed in the section "Developing and managing a leadership pipeline" on page 29) suggest this nexus between anticorruption civil society groups and broader efforts to renew and strengthen political parties and democratic politics deserves greater attention from suppliers.¹⁰⁴

Connecting local reformers and external actors is generally shaped by personal histories, education, and existing networks. For example, a reformer facing a window often reaches out to an expert who was their professor or taught in their alma mater in a past setting. Relationships are built through channels that combine knowledge and trust in regular interactions, such as public diplomacy programs and training courses. Halyna Yanchenko, an activist who went from participating in the Maidan protests to serving as deputy chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Anti-Corruption Policy, has explained that her experience studying in the United States was formative.¹⁰⁵

Multi-stakeholder initiatives, epistemic communities, and international anticorruption conventions' peer-review mechanisms also are important sources of informal connections. A government reformer in Slovakia sought to bring to his team individuals with connections to the OECD, GRECO, and the EU, as a way to facilitate access to knowledge in his team. Networks of expertise are important to devise policies and programs, but they are critical to solve complex cases.¹⁰⁶ Thematic international and regional conferences and convenings can also build networks but access is costly and often restricted. Common language can be a key facilitator, as in Spanish-speaking Latin American anticorruption networks; in contrast, cross-national anticorruption networks are less robust in East Asia, with its linguistic diversity.¹⁰⁷

Examples of support that try to build local-to-external networks include: the U.S. International Visitor Leadership Programs; IACA; and specialized courses for younger generations, like TI's training programs for future leaders, the OpenGov Fellowship of the OAS, and Towards Transparency's Youth Camps in Vietnam.¹⁰⁸ U4 identified about a dozen networks of anticorruption authorities, but found limited information about those networks. The EAAACA is an example of a regional association "with seemingly strong ownership by its members and a practical regional outlook," including to facilitate learning.¹⁰⁹

Coordinating support suppliers: There are coordination efforts targeted at connecting local reformers and external reformers while ensuring the latter coordinate among themselves. Globally, efforts to address these issues include OECD/DAC GovNet's Anti-Corruption Task Team (ACTT), the UN-System (anchored in UNODC and UNCAC), the CIPE Rapid Response Community of Practice, pooled funds and Trust Funds (IADB's Transparency Fund), and multi-stakeholder platforms (EITI, OGP, GIFT). Each of these efforts attracts different groups of suppliers.

Regionally, networks to support cross-country coordination of intermediary suppliers with a focus on types of actors and/or issues exist in Latin America (e.g., Abrelatam for Data, REAL for think tanks, Palta for journalists), across sub-regions in Europe and the European Union, and in Africa. Locally, CIPE's Rapid Response approach, building on its experience in The Gambia, is to act as brokers of people on the ground and large funders (including inter-agency coordination for some bilateral suppliers such as the United States and the United Kingdom¹¹⁰) In other countries that role can be played by other intermediary organizations or multilateral and international (governmental, non-governmental, and multi-stakeholder) organizations with country offices or networks on the ground. These efforts are often key during triggers and open windows, but that is also often when supplier coordination falls by the wayside.¹¹¹ Supplier coordination is often lacking among intermediaries/contractors/grantees receiving funds from a single

portfolio unless the donor invests resources to sequence support and/or create conditions to coordinate assumptions and actions.¹¹²

Functions of support

Channeling technical support, funding, and partnerships shapes the opportunities available to in-country reformers. For example, OGP exposes reformers to different types and varieties of actors and potential partners than working with the OECD, GRECO, or U4 would. The MacArthur Foundation's work supporting the incoming Buhari administration stemmed from a relationship with the incoming vice president, who had previously worked with a MacArthur grantee.¹¹³ In different types of windows, for specific reformers, some of these networks could be a better fit than others. From the reformer perspective, such networks bring an element of luck to the options they face. From the supply side, such networks may be less ad hoc. They reflect priorities, preferences, and biases built into organizational goals, standard operating procedures, strategies, portfolios, and long-term partnerships.¹¹⁴ It's unclear whether many suppliers consider local fit when highlighting (in practice, often "selecting") what technical support is easily available to reformers and what is off their radar screen.

Sharing political intelligence and shaping strategy also happen through formal and informal networks, often those that are built with other ends in mind. Networks and relationships are critical to understanding whether many suppliers will engage in a window, as they tend to be reluctant to "parachute" into unknown territory.

For both of these functions—channeling support, funding, and partnerships, as well as sharing political intelligence and shaping strategy—certain trusted connectors may play key roles during windows. Individuals or organizations who can broker coordinated action provide "premium services" to reformers and suppliers alike (though often without a formal role or specific compensation for their knowledge and relationships). They help identify entry points and partners for advancing reforms, and help others see the resources and capacities available for change.¹¹⁵ For example, the CIPE Rapid Response project relies on its networks to do initial vetting. The open-government community enabled the OCP to identify and build relationships with reformers in Malaysia before the post-1MDB window fully opened so advocates could set reform goals and be ready when the moment came.¹¹⁶

Building leadership capacity could happen through building networks and training, but an explicit focus on this aspect of the infrastructure is uncommon among anticorruption suppliers. Some individual funders support coaching programs,¹¹⁷ leadership transitions, or human resource management for *individual* organizations. However, as noted by a recent mapping of the UK's approach to anticorruption and illicit financing, the strategy to mobilize and sustain the human resources needed to implement support strategies deserves additional attention.¹¹⁸

Exceptions worth mentioning include the "Capacity-Strengthening of Local Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Ukraine" project launched in 2019 by ACREC NaUKMA, which provides mentoring support, weekly calls, training, and networking opportunities for 20

local CSOs.¹¹⁹ Another important aspect of leadership development in the anticorruption space is ad hoc voluntary support for reformers. In Latin America, for example, mentorship relationships between professors and students and former supervisors and new leaders have seen many reformers through windows.¹²⁰

Cross-nationally, informal, ad hoc mechanisms on the sidelines of GRECO, OECD working groups, and other regional anticorruption networks have also helped many reformers develop leadership capacities. Fellowship and twinning schemes that embed experienced reformers from different countries have been used in government capacity-building programs, such as the EU accession process, but do not seem to be broadly available to civil society reformers during anticorruption windows.

In the social accountability space, there are "boutique" programs that provide these services: the GPSA's capacity-building advisors play a well-regarded role of "critical friends" to implementing partners; PSAM's Regional Learning Program's team also provides mentorship to partners during status quo phases that can be stepped up during windows. These secretariats provide such services despite being underfunded for the task of consistent facilitation by well-paid advisors bringing the right combination of skill sets and, ideally, face-to-face meetings for building trust and enabling rapid, responsive support. This can be a bottleneck for scaling the provision.

Outside the anticorruption space, the Tony Blair Institute supports government reformers' management capacities and strategic thinking through mentors for progressive reformers embedded in governments.¹²¹ The closest match to an ecosystem approach is the investments in networks and movements to build capacities of leaders committed to the renewal of democratic politics in Brazil, which was instrumental for the UCC campaign and follow-up collaboration with federal legislators and sub-national governments, universities, and civil society groups (see "Managing narrative risks in Brazil's United Against Corruption Campaign" on page 58).

In some contexts, academic programs provide a pipeline to develop specialized, networked leadership that spans civil society, political parties, bureaucrats, and national and subnational work. In other cases, suppliers can create incentives to ensure the pipeline is inclusive of underrepresented populations¹²² and balances the experience and assets of older generations with innovation from younger ones.

Finally, **supporting self-/mutual-care, solidarity, and risk management** through common platforms and networks is critical, especially during the opening trigger and open windows phases. Activists facing the pressures and pace of these high-intensity periods suffer from burnout, leading to physical and mental illness.¹²³ Peer relationships and camaraderie are important sources of self- and mutual-care as well as the solidarity that sustains mission-driven actors and communities. Relationships nurtured before a window or early in an opening can help perform this function.

The Corruption Hunters Network, supported by NORAD in 2005 and then by the World Bank, was informed by these needs: it involved hand-selected individual members receiving moral as well as technical support through practice-oriented discussions under Chatham House Rules.¹²⁴ The closed-door, informal nature of the network makes it hard to link its work to concrete windows although collections of practical recommendations

and tricks-of-the-trade on highly relevant issues during windows (e.g., managing hostile court environments) disseminated via outlets such as U4 or large anticorruption events for over a decade suggest plausible value.¹²⁵ Beyond the anticorruption windows space, the Open Heroines' activities, born as an informal network on the sidelines of an OGP summit in Mexico, have put the spotlight on special attention that might be necessary to provide women-to-women support in the field, especially in the Global South.¹²⁶

General organizational capacity support from global and regional providers

General organizational capacity support usually takes the form of funding, technical assistance on organizational challenges (as opposed to anticorruption issues), and capacity building programs (for governments, in particular).

There are multiple challenges associated with this support. First, **resources are limited** and scarce for the scope and scale of the anticorruption sector, with U.S. anticorruption programming at \$115 million annually and no significant, rapid financing earmarked for anticorruption windows (greater rapid funding is available for conflict-related windows, e.g., through USAID's OTI).¹²⁷ Our research suggests that this lack of support during windows is linked to assumptions and tacit knowledge about how change happens, including assessments of the intended and unintended consequences of rapid response in the past. It is not about support providers not thinking about quick action response or unreasonable risk aversion, but it is partly about a broader understanding and evaluation of the trade-offs that these sorts of actions have caused in the past.

Instead, most suppliers provide resources that they deem relevant during different moments of the window, pointing to the significant risks of doing harm that an alternative approach could have. During the early phases of the window, most suppliers consider that non-financial factors, especially political ones, have greater salience and importance for reformers' decision-making and behavior. These suppliers mobilize staff time and funding to increase reformers' bandwidth and address critical needs by hiring consultants or directly funding activities, such as support for physical and legal security or diplomacy and public relations capacities to solidify the window.¹²⁸ When new funding is provided to local actors, it is mainly to open up space for action by local reformers and often a relatively small amount can make a significant difference in the short-term (if appropriately targeted). For instance, €25,000 from OCCRP made a significant difference for Slovakia's investigative journalism during the window.¹²⁹ In Guatemala, a small Open Society grant enabled *Ojo con Mi Pisto* to provide investigative and editorial support to journalists around the country while reporting about local and regional candidates' misuse of public funds.¹³⁰

When the window moves away from the “trigger” phase, which is often a rapid moment, more suppliers might consider putting in larger sums of money to address longer-term reforms in priority countries. Consider, for example, the scope and diversity of anticorruption portfolios of suppliers active after triggers in Afghanistan, Tunisia, Iraq, Ukraine, Nigeria, Guatemala, and, on a different scale, Chile or Paraguay. This includes those operations born out of or catalyzed by targeted insider/political engagement,¹³¹ as well as the regular programming work that needs to be done before a window opens.¹³² These reforms become part of the “normal” portfolio of projects, rather than earmarked as a “windows” project, but, as explained before, this variation is only partly tied to organizational structures.

To be sure, the **provision of support is not equal**. Few suppliers invest in organizations through core support, with most suppliers investing in priority projects and approaches. Also, the scarcity of supply has incentivized many suppliers to prioritize geographies creating different challenges in different settings. For instance, in “priority” countries, windfalls of resources create coordination challenges, among other unintended consequences, while in other countries possible windows might remain underfunded because suppliers resist adding new countries to their strategic priorities’ list (e.g., Latin American countries during Lava Jato) or parachuting into a new territory (e.g., Malaysia) because investments in the past do not suffice to ensure the survival and sustainability of organizations that are ready to respond to a trigger whenever it happens.

Second, and related, support for organizations has a varying degree of **flexibility**. Most donors, historically, provide funding for long-term projects/regular programming with clear guidelines and timelines, leaving little space for maneuvering during windows. In some occasions, donors are willing, on a case-by-case basis, to introduce flexibility during windows, or, in the case of FCDO, are introducing adaptive management in their regular programming. The COVID-19 pandemic forced suppliers to introduce still more flexibilities. In all cases, the transition can create challenges when local groups lack the capacity to navigate flexibilities and persistent formal and informal rigidities in the systems (e.g., procurement processes, administrative burdens for reformers, or perceptions about expected reporting).

Finally, the nature of anticorruption programming calls for investment in organizational, **risk-mitigation strategies**. Many suppliers have policies, guidelines, budgets, and systems to monitor and address their staff security risks (e.g., Travel Risk Assessments, Foreign Travel Advice, Security Management systems, training, etc.). Some also assess and mitigate litigation risks (e.g., by commissioning legal advice or preparing pre-emptive defenses and procedures),

and communication and IT teams and contractors and PR firms might mitigate digital security and public relationships risks. Many of these safety measures are considered and established prior to engaging in a window. The same does not always apply to the measures required for or the supply provided to local partners, consultants, and contractors.

There is also a group of support-provider organizations with expertise providing **digital security support** (e.g., digital security awareness and upskilling), including in the civil society (CIVICUS,¹³³ Asuntos del Sur,¹³⁴ Engine Room,¹³⁵ Accessnow, Totem, and Techsoup), government, and private markets. This support often has limited connection to anticorruption work during windows—an ecosystem problem that is also relevant for legal and physical security support. Sometimes, especially in critical situations, foundations, foreign embassies, and other suppliers can mobilize quickly and address gaps by hiring contractors to address shortfalls, especially in terms of security (physical and digital). Reformers often mobilize international support via suppliers and organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, when attacks to reformers seriously affect the respect for human rights. In Guatemala and Central America, WOLA has helped protect the security of reformers through their citizen-security program and advocated for political asylum for those who faced unfair prosecutions or political persecutions. Other organizations, such as Human Right Watch, also provide protection to activists or reformers whose work is connected to the defense of human rights, though no targeted program concerns anticorruption.

With a more holistic approach, Protection International also assists human rights organizations and grassroots groups to devise collective and preventive risk management strategies, including digital security assistance and helping build “protection networks” for psychosocial support. The work of organizations such as the Digital Forensic Research Lab at the Atlantic Council to expose disinformation and build digital resilience could assist here, but is not clearly articulated into most anticorruption strategies during windows,¹³⁶ with existing efforts limited to fact-checking misinformation. Beyond anticorruption, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue provides advice on responses to online harms from state and non-state networks and produces research to identify, map, and analyze online disinformation operations, including toolkits for civil society groups. Other organizations like the Seattle Foundation and CIVICUS provide resilience or solidarity funding for critical or challenging situations.

8. Gaps analysis

Our gaps analysis compares reformer needs with the support provided by global/regional actors and looks for mismatches between the two. We describe the gaps identified here while saving our recommendations for how to fill those gaps for the following section.

Technical knowledge support gaps

Though this research pointed to a few highly specialized technical areas where reformers seem to need more support (forensic finance and SOEs where salient, but different areas may be in other windows), the gap stems more from a mismatch in how support is provided, rather than from the technical content of the support available.¹³⁷

Most supply takes the form of off-the-shelf guidance. Even when guidance exists to meet a technical need, reformers may find themselves unable to access, interpret, or adapt that guidance for their context. Much global research remains hard to operationalize and act on. Sometimes support providers can help reformers navigate the existing guidance, but the offers are either too general (e.g., via “help desks”) or targeted in donor and global advocates-favored priority partners, issues, approaches, and geographies.

The major gap that exists is not in the existence of technical knowledge, but in timely, fit-for accessibility to in-country reformers, which often requires skill sets beyond analytical capacity and technical knowledge such as prior-relationships with reformers or the political savvy to engage stakeholders and help overcome challenges to evidence uptake.¹³⁸

A further gap exists in the supply of local, highly specialized legislative, regulatory, and administrative knowledge. In-country expertise exists in many countries, especially those at the development and educational capacity levels featured in this research. However, that expertise may be clustered in universities, law firms, and accounting firms, only partially accessible to in-government reformers. Funders can help reformers by alerting them to this need, including by investing in regulatory drafting ahead of a window, supporting network building with actors that may provide these services pro bono, or unlocking this in-country expertise by paying local suppliers' fees.

Political strategy support gaps

The major strategy gap is the mismatch between civil society reformers' needs for shared understandings and political analysis, and suppliers' tendency to conduct rapid analysis for their own use, while underinvesting in spaces and conditions

that foster the conditions for formal and informal trust building and dialogue on political strategic issues and contextual understandings (see the discussion about the ecosystem below). The emphasis on contextual understandings means prioritizing small “p” political analysis that can help reformers navigate the different phases of the window, rather than on imagining innovative possibilities.

To see this gap more clearly, recall what reformers need from political analysis: not an objective or definitive analysis, but rather spaces for relationship and trust building that are conducive to the development of shared understandings that start from—but also go beyond—sharing information about what different civil society organizations, grassroots and professional association leaders, and other stakeholders, are seeing across the system and how they are each responding. This shared understanding can support complementary action, even when it does not extend as far as a shared or unified strategy (which, in some cases, may be detrimental to working adaptively).

On change management, including prioritization, setting new goals, and transitioning strategies/tactics, suppliers could provide funding or help outsource individual coaches or consultants. There is little support freely available and most of it is informal. There is a particular gap in helping civil society activists rethink their role and organizational identity—for example in seeing if and how they can transition from being outside agitators to influencing the inside game, whether as part of civil society or by entering politics or the public sector.

Finally, on framing and communicating reform goals, the challenge seems to be the quality of support to narratives, branding, and messaging, rather than the quantity. This may reflect a lack of or shifting consensus about the best narrative/messaging approaches. In contrast to increasing alignment on the technical approaches needed, the anticorruption field has more diversity in thinking about messaging, especially in light of the wins from years of agenda-setting advocacy and the risks posed by authoritarian/populist hijacking of the anticorruption agenda and shifting geopolitical conditions.

There also seems to be relatively little support for practical aspects of communication strategies (such as those discussed in “Managing narrative risks in Brazil’s United Against Corruption Campaign” on page 58), or linking these macro-systemic shifts in norms and narratives to the growing focus on concrete user and micro-behavioral economics. Support for narratives, communication, and branding rarely holistically helps organizations, coalitions, and ecosystems make strategic decisions given disinformation attacks. Finally, there is also little attention to social mediation, i.e., how individuals mutually construct interpretations of the macro context and concrete situation with the help of friends, family, and peers in their immediate context.¹³⁹

Managing narrative risks in Brazil's United Against Corruption Campaign

In 2018, TI-Brazil (TI-BR), with five other non-governmental organizations and the support of 95 partners, launched the United Against Corruption (UCC) campaign. The goal was to influence the political debate so that new laws and rules are adopted to prevent, fight, and punish corruption. The campaign proposed a detailed legislation package of 70 Measures Against Corruption, informed by hundreds of Brazilian experts. Their challenge: pivoting from a focus on corrupt individuals and their criminalization to the ongoing development of a complex web of institutions.

By the October 2018 elections, the campaign had the commitment of 599 political candidates to the Federal Congress (the campaign's main target). Only 45 were elected, but the group would later expand to over 200 deputies and senators from 20 parties across the political spectrum. This group launched a parliamentary caucus focused on ethics and anticorruption, advancing bills based on the campaigns' proposals. Campaign organizers have become an informal help desk to these legislators.

A focus on concrete mechanisms to mobilize target audiences, such as congressional candidates, was important to the campaign. The campaign paid attention to user incentives and quickly learned that movements to renew politics and local civic organizations across Brazil, rather than political parties, would be instrumental to get candidates' attention and support.

UCC was launched during an election year when the presidency and Congress were up for grabs, in the context of the Lava Jato investigation. The window was open: corruption scandals, prosecutions, and judicial and legislative decisions had been in the spotlight for several years. Anticorruption was a key issue in a polarized political environment, as a major presidential candidate was prevented from running after his conviction as part of Lava Jato.

The campaign had to respond to the political mood and polarization in the country. UCC paid close attention to the ways in which its messaging, tone, and actions might be construed by different groups. Certain messages could excite specific segments of society and exclude others, undermining the campaign's credibility. Other risks included: favoring one side or party over another; capture (or perception of capture); or becoming a tool to justify positions opposed to fundamental values defended by campaigners, such as human rights and democracy. (Similar challenges have faced advocates in other windows, including Slovakia.)

UCC invested time and resources to monitor, prioritize, and mitigate these risks. For example, when right-wing supporters "spontaneously" reached out to the campaign, the organizers went to great lengths to attract people and organizations with alternative viewpoints. While Brazil did not see the same challenges as Guatemala, where the anticorruption agenda is more closely aligned with the left than the right, the challenges of managing risks in a polarized environment are similar.

Reform groups need the time, space, and capacity to proactively manage and balance such difficulties. They need reflection spaces and sounding boards to prioritize risks, plan, and take quick action. However, risk management around these macro issues receives less attention than complementary behavioral economics insights and user-centered design techniques.

Source: Guerzovich and Schommer (2020).

Ecosystem capacity support gaps

This research points to three main support gaps: a) infrastructures for trust-building and self-/mutual-care, b) developing and managing leadership pipelines, and c) mitigating the risks of misinformation and disinformation attacks. All of these reflect needs cited by many civil society reformers across case studies and across all phases of the window, but are especially critical early on in a window.

The first two needs are partially met through support provided for other purposes. For example, training sessions or coalition strategy meetings provide space for trust-building for referrals and future joint-action, build personal networks for self-/mutual-care, help navigate technical knowledge, and offer leadership opportunities. However, these needs are met only as by-products of the gathering's primary purposes, which suggests that they may not be met optimally. The Fund for Transparent Slovakia provides an alternative approach (see “Supporting Slovakia’s in-country reformer networks” on page 61 for more). An informal approach to networking and bonding through convening was also valued by Guatemalan reformers. In South Africa, a civil society working group on the Zondo commission provided some space for this. (See case studies in the annex for more).

On the third need, the ecosystem for and discourse around anticorruption reform in many contexts is under attack from smear campaigns; targeted disinformation onslaughts; and distortive, deceptive media that amplifies these attacks. While some groups beyond the anticorruption space work on issues like platform accountability, digital forensics, or monetization of “fake news” sites, we have not been able to identify strategies that help reformers collectively counter and/or mitigate the risks stemming from these attacks locally or internationally. Raising awareness of these challenges is a first but insufficient step, as reformers need to make strategic technological and communication decisions on whether and how to most effectively act on these issues. We identified some thinking about these problems¹⁴⁰ but could not find networks or spaces that allow reformers to regularly exchange strategic and practical advice for dealing with similar attacks around the world, including how they interact with communications support for advocacy. Investments in fact-checking organizations and networks to address misinformation, such as those of Luminate or Open Society, tackle a different challenge than the advice and support that organizations such as OSIFE and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue are piloting to support local groups working on climate change.

Finally, a key systemic issue shaping the supply market is what we call “siloe coordination”—meaning coordination across small subsets of global suppliers. For example, shared organizational characteristics mean that bilaterals find it easier to coordinate with each other,¹⁴¹ and they might be further assisted by organizations like U4. In the case of Afghanistan in 2017, U4 conducted a workshop on behalf of bilaterals that included Attorney General Mohammad Farid Hamidi, whose recent

designation had created a window;¹⁴² in Somalia, a similar workshop was held prior to the establishment of the National Anticorruption Commission.¹⁴³ Multilaterals may find it easier to coordinate with each other and with the IMF, while philanthropy and supporters of civil society may find it easier to find common ground with each other. Groups that meet through regular coordination mechanisms, for example through international convention review mechanisms or multi-stakeholder initiatives, are also more likely to coordinate with each other.

Often what seems to be missing is coordination across these “silos.” Siloed coordination can coexist with uncoordinated oversupply on “hot” issues (e.g., contracting and open data) and capacities (e.g., technical, technology), as well as systematic supply gaps in others. The infrastructure for coordination is a challenge during windows at country-level, but it is also a key obstacle to mobilize useful support from outside. Locally, part of the challenge is that it takes time to build the trust required for information sharing and coordination. Incentives and willingness to pay the transaction costs are in short supply during the status quo phase while time is in short supply during the trigger and open window phases.

General organizational capacity support gaps

Our research, including the sequenced conceptualization of the different phases in the window, suggests that during the “trigger” phase (a moment requiring rapid action) many reformers and suppliers consider that significant amounts of funding is not always or unconditionally the most pressing need. They often value other resources (Informal and in-kind investments in political strategy and networking) that make limited amounts of money last longer, for instance, by providing in-kind supplemental bandwidth or greater room for maneuver within plans. To be sure, in many places, these limited sums of money are not always available. In others, they cannot go further because the local infrastructure is weak or non-existent.

Still in other cases, the nature of the relationship (or lack thereof) between local reformers and support providers can bring funding along with risks. Our research also suggests that there are types of funding that may create more conditions/hoops for reformers than they need during a window. Provided the right conditions, reformers prefer consistent and flexible funding—including to survive during the status quo phase which can create the pressure and/or capacity to quickly address the demands of the trigger phase or to reopen a window as it is tapering. Funding consistency and funding flexibility (or some of its functions, such as supplemental bandwidth) are different needs and can be addressed through different means—as discussed above.

Lastly, the disconnected and inconsistent nature of support for managing physical, digital, and legal threats puts additional strains on organizational resources, in addition to individual costs. Holistic approaches, such as the one provided by Protection International to human right activists, targeted at anticorruption reformers during windows might also be considered.

Supporting Slovakia's in-country reformer networks

The “Fund for Transparent Slovakia” (FpTS) is a small initiative to fight systemic corruption in Slovakia by strengthening the capacity of the watchdog and anticorruption civil society groups. The fund consists of an endowment to which companies that operate in Slovakia contribute annually—with businesses preferring a pooled fund administered by a trusted, knowledgeable intermediary over the reputational issues, transaction costs, and dilemmas associated in a direct funding relationship with civil society groups in the anticorruption space. Two foreign foundations have matched contributions from corporate funders. Between 2013 and 2018, the FpTS supported 34 strategic grants of EUR 590,350—a very modest investment that does not cover all needs.

Conceived at a moment when the ecosystem of anticorruption and watchdog civil society organizations was at risk of disappearing, the fund has a hybrid strategy: it mixes institutional support and support for projects. A 2018 evaluation concluded that the FpTS has had an effective adaptive approach to supporting the ecosystem. In its initial years, the fund focused on institutional support of the ecosystem and capacity building of individual organizations. Its actions may have stabilized the sector and rescued some civil society organizations from organizational and staff collapse in a context of limited investment in civil society infrastructure. Later, the FpTS moved its focus to building up the coalition potential of the sector (though joint projects did not work well) and to providing more support to specific projects, including some that would be too risky for other funders. These investments during the status quo phase were a pre-condition for action during the trigger and open window phases.

To date, the support strategy has been designed by the FpTS' administrator through an informal ongoing dialogue and takes into account the needs of anticorruption groups, especially the five established, reputable, and relatively professional groups, that have received grants in at least five out of six calls for proposals. The evaluation recommended to also incorporate insights from third-party research and MEL.

An important issue identified by the evaluation is that much of the FpTS administrators' staff, responsible for fund's value-add beyond direct grants, was not covered by its administrative costs. These resources can be important to ensure that grant recipients, corporate funders, and other actors regularly meet, interact, learn from each other, build trust, keep abreast of developments in the ecosystem, and tap into those relationships—whether they develop a shared agenda or they agree to disagree on specific approaches, issues, and strategies.¹⁴⁴

The historical value addition of the FpTS, as an “old” reform window tapered and turned into the status quo phase prior to the 2018 window, is important. However, it is also fair to note that the FpTS governance and administration structure seems to have been slow to adapt and respond to the trigger and open windows phase. For example, plans to focus the call for proposals on certain issues did not pivot despite developments in the country. One of the reasons was to mitigate the risks that corporate funders and the FpTS would be perceived as playing political favorites—a challenge often associated with external actors' lack of flexibility. The difficulty in attracting new corporate funders and growing the fund may have reinforced this position.

Sources: Ucen (2008), complemented with interviews with local suppliers and non-governmental actors.

9. Recommendations

Our recommendations are aimed toward donors and support providers at the global, regional, and national levels who are best positioned to help meet reformers' needs before and during windows of opportunity. They draw from practices identified through the research, including practices from related fields that could be applicable within anticorruption work, and the research team's professional experience. The resulting recommendations extend beyond the obvious steps of filling gaps where support does not meet needs, with the most promising actions cutting across the four categories of needs that framed our analysis.

Throughout these recommendations, **our bias is toward supporting the agency of in-country reformers**. Concretely, that means several of the recommendations aim to expand reformer networks, so they are better positioned to navigate political changes and access whatever support they may need, including technical assistance, strategic advice, and self-/mutual-care through camaraderie and personal support. See the “at-a-glance” table below, and further detail on each of these on the following pages.

The importance of reformers' networks leads us to also consider **the other side of the equation: supplier networks and the ecosystem of support**.

While the recommendations below provide a set of specific actions that existing suppliers can pick and choose from, early feedback on our recommendations suggests the potential for a more holistic approach that brings several of these recommendations together in a larger effort to re-shape the ecosystem of support.

For example: the cross-national networks of reformers (recommendation 2) and of southern-based scholars (5) can be sources of capacity to help reformers navigate existing technical guidance (1), get support on narratives and messaging (3) as well as disinformation (4), and receive coaching and mentorship (11). Cross-national networks could also naturally connect with in-country networks (7), which can provide in-country expertise on legislative or regulatory processes (9).

Table 5: Recommendations at-a-glance

Multi-country: Ongoing support infrastructure to be ready for windows

1. Create knowledge brokering capacity to help reformers navigate existing technical guidance.
2. Support and diversify cross-national networks of reformers who may see future windows.
3. Improve the way organizations talk about anticorruption by investing in fit-for-context narratives, messaging, and branding support.
4. Support infrastructure organizations focused on disinformation and connect them with the anticorruption sector, going beyond addressing misinformation and fact-checking.
5. Invest in, facilitate, and raise the visibility of networks of scholars that convene and train in the Global South.

Country-specific: Status quo period support in high-potential countries

6. Tailor ongoing support infrastructure (recommendations #1-5) to be ready for windows in high-potential countries.
7. Build and support in-country networks of reformers during status quo periods.
8. Identify potential bottlenecks to reform—such as leadership pipelines, legislation drafting, or shared analysis—that can be addressed before a window opens.

Country-specific: Support during trigger and window phases

9. Support reformers in accessing in-country expertise on navigating highly localized legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes.
10. Incorporate collaborative spaces into all forms of support, convening reformers so they can share analysis and form common understandings.
11. Identify opportunities to support coaching and mentorship for key civil society reform leaders as windows open.
12. Provide funding for digital, physical, and psychosocial security, and help reformers find support providers to advise them.
13. Explore the use of parallel, matching, or joint funding mechanisms across multiple donors to encourage sharing intelligence and building common political analysis.
14. Donors should consider alternatives to traditional suppliers in order to find the best match between reformer needs and supplier approaches.

Country-specific: Support during tapering phase

15. Conduct further study on how to support reformers in the tapering phase.

Another relevant, cross-cutting insight is that for many anticorruption reformers in places like Slovakia, Guatemala, and South Africa, their windows went beyond anticorruption. Reformers simultaneously deal with broader themes like democratization and authoritarian tensions. Anticorruption funders and suppliers who are interested in supporting these reformers should consider how to, at a minimum, learn from those areas of work to avoid duplicating efforts, working at cross-purposes, or reinventing the wheel on issues that have been the subject of others' thinking and experimentation (e.g., limits of best practice approaches, unequal North-South supply, relationships between civil society and political parties). Ideally, support strategies would be better articulated as the proliferation and salience of anticorruption windows has important implications for these broader areas of work.

Given the considerations above, these recommendations provide two broad pathways forward:

1. An incremental, piecemeal approach wherein existing support providers select specific new support activities from the list below; or
2. A more holistic approach that re-imagines the current supply infrastructure and stands up a new set of hubs, networks, and perhaps even organizations.

The second pathway—higher risk but higher reward in terms of capitalizing on windows as potentially transformative moments—could be the focus of a co-design process among interested funders and partners, building on this report's findings. Unlike this study, a co-creation process could go deeper on the factors shaping and constraining suppliers with an eye toward transforming the complex ecosystem that has to act under conditions of uncertainty. It is critical that supply voices that are closer to reformers and reformers' needs be included in the design of strategies and funding in order to address asymmetries of power.

A final, related caveat: these recommendations are designed for contexts that—like our case studies—have basic levels of civil society, media, and democratic infrastructure. Absent that basic level, initial investments in those capacities may be more fruitful than these windows-oriented recommendations.

Multi-country: Ongoing support infrastructure to be ready for windows

1. **Create knowledge brokering capacity to help reformers navigate existing technical guidance:** With reformers turning mostly to their (limited) informal networks or specialist support providers focused on particular technical solutions, there is a gap in general support to navigate the large amount of publicly available technical knowledge. Brokering and translating knowledge remains a “premium service” that few can pay for and only some can access in a timely manner through

informal networks. To assist reformers, we propose exploring a combination of three different models targeted to different audiences: retaining standing external knowledge brokerage and translation capacity; setting up an in-house team of knowledge translators at a donor or other support provider agency; and keeping a roster of knowledge translators and consultants who could be ready to be hired when windows open. These three options are likely to be contingent on organizational mission, contracting rules, and budgets as well as an assumption of how frequent windows of opportunity are.

Knowledge brokering and translation capacities can be more effective when the translators have ongoing relationships with reformers, enabling timely provision and uptake of technical knowledge. This suggests permanent structures and dedicated staff may be ideal. However, informal networks can also provide adequate support. Either way, translators need communication and soft skills in addition to the technical and analytical abilities often prioritized by research institutions because translation is partially a political task: it requires prioritizing what technical knowledge is conveyed to whom and navigating the opportunities and constraints of the window alongside the complex supply of technical knowledge.

Window veterans are underutilized as translators of technical and other forms of knowledge—although they have played this role through informal and formal networks. The mix of highly specialized technical competence with more practical, strategic, actionable experience, along with the credibility and reputation that come from having gone through this process at home, can be instrumental for fulfilling this role. The empathy that stems from learning from predecessors, now peers, enables co-creation rather than dictation of solutions to complex problems. These considerations are also relevant for identifying coaches and mentors, as discussed in recommendation 11, which suggests that operationalization of an approach to implement these two recommendations might be advanced jointly.

Risks and implementation considerations: To avoid the risk of reproducing more knowledge without tailoring it to a specific context or reformers needs, careful attention should be paid to the profile of the selected experts and who they are going to be interacting with (donors, CSO, government reformer, etc.). The mix of skills needed to identify, filter, interpret, adapt/contextualize, and communicate evidence to and within donor agencies is not necessarily the same one that will be valued by reformers on the ground. Funders should acknowledge and address how their different goals (e.g., race to the top advocacy, priority global and local partners, principal's needs and priorities) may unintentionally broaden the gaps between supply and reformers' needs. While both sets of actors are important in the ecosystem and all needs are legitimate, local reformers deserve increased attention.

The examples of knowledge brokering and translation services available in the market (see “Technical knowledge support from global and regional providers” on page 35) are largely northern-based, suggesting that, as in other fields, it may be important to addressing asymmetries in resourcing, capacity building, and power between suppliers in the traditional center of the anticorruption supply and the periphery. There

are many reasons for taking this challenge seriously, including the growing stock of experience of Global South reformers in recent decades (see recommendation 5). Diverse contextual realities, languages, and professional tracks suggest that funders should consider whether central secretariats or other models of provision, such as a decentralized nodes to sub-sets of reformers that are loosely coordinated, remunerated, and empowered by a hub are better suited to address reformers needs (also see recommendation 11).

Another challenge is that window veterans, especially those who have left the public sector, often lack space to continue engaging in anticorruption work. Taking advantage of their experience requires finding ways to reabsorb them into the ecosystem, potentially through employment at international organizations and academic institutions, or through fellowship schemes whereby they reflect on their time in government and undertake projects that advance policy ideas and insert their unique perspectives about making change during windows into the public dialogue. A similar model is used by the Open Society Foundations' Leadership in Government Fellowship Program in the United States.

2. **Support and diversify cross-national networks of reformers who may see future windows:**

Providing spaces for learning and building trust will ensure reformers already have relationships with support providers and reformers in other countries when windows open. Investments might be made in regular support for learning spaces and stakeholders that informally play critical learning and support functions (e.g., windows veterans, connectors that provide premium services); or by investing in new, networked cohorts of reformers (which include windows veterans as well) and a forward-looking infrastructure to support them. This approach acknowledges that informal, trust-based relationships are spaces to convey knowledge rapidly as well as help address self- and mutual-care issues. These networks need not exist solely to prepare reformers for windows—likely an impractical objective—but rather investments in new and existing networks should complement efforts to build a more resilient ecosystem, by managing “siloe coordination” and its effects (e.g., allocation of support by “luck,” see discussion of siloe coordination on page 59). Some potential channels:

- *Informal anticorruption networks:* e.g., investing in cross-national projects that bring together “window veterans” and other anticorruption champions, creating regional or global “benches” of possible knowledge translators (recommendation 1), coaches/mentors and advisors to surge reformers' capacities during triggers and later phases of windows (recommendation 11). These projects do not necessarily need to be connected with the topic of windows, but they would profit from the mixed profile of windows veterans, with the younger generations as well as inside/outside government reformers. Other actions could include funding the “premium services” provided by connectors that can broker multiple networks and currently provide insights voluntarily.
- *Leveraging existing networks:* e.g., funding facilitated “safe-space” side-meetings to anticorruption and related convenings (e.g., IACC, OECD Integrity Forum,

UNCAC Conferences, OGP Summits) to compare and share experiences on critical window-related issues for which there currently is little or no space for exchanges (e.g., psychosocial and mutual care during windows, risk and change management, political strategy and anticorruption narratives, etc.).

- *Building new and expanding existing networks:* use existing and/or new intensive training programs and invest in study visits to and from countries that have experienced windows, secondments, and fellowships (including for conferences) to help build within and cross-country relationships among different stakeholders and individuals with diverse backgrounds (candidates for office, staffers, civil servants, civil society, journalists, private sector, and grassroots leaders from across the ideological spectrum). In many contexts, it might be useful to look further afield and connect the anticorruption agenda into work led by suppliers focused on democratic transitions and pre-empting democratic reversals and their partners.

Risks and implementation considerations: This is a medium-term strategy, as it is impossible to know which reformers will face future windows. By the time the triggers happen, it can be too late to build relationships and trust to channel critical support. Investments in infrastructure and pipelines of networked reformers require leadership from funders with longer-term horizons and interest in caring for the ecosystem, rather than those focused on short-term results and existing advocacy goals, portfolios, and relationships. That said some of the options presented above are less risky and can be built into existing portfolios. Also, recommendations targeted at national level (recommendation 6) as well as donors and partners with in-country operations can help curate rosters of individuals with potential—much like the United States International Visitors and similar bilateral programs. Another aspect to take into consideration are the difficulties that the monitoring and evaluation of informal networks could entail, and the fact that those networks that have sufficient funding to afford a permanent and dedicated staff have a better chance of lasting over time. However, whereas formalized networks with a permanent secretariat proved to be more successful when joint capacity building is the goal, when it comes to peer learning and joint collaboration, regularity and building trust have been cited as the most relevant aspect.¹⁴⁵

Many funders shy away from the financial and transaction costs associated with nurturing relationships, but these costs are already being paid in an ad hoc and voluntary basis by the many effective informal connectors and networks. A design process that surfaces these experiences and value addition could inform the design of a support network that avoids being yet another international process that is not attractive to busy reformers. Other design issues include: whether to anchor supply in the north or south; whether to focus on north-south, south-south, and/or regional and linguistic clusters; whether to deliver support through a centralized provider or by distributing provision. See also recommendations 1, 5, 9, and 11.

3. **Improve the way organizations talk about anticorruption by investing in fit-for-context narratives, messaging, and branding support.** This could have outsized impact by helping reformers navigate populist/authoritarian attempts to

frame corruption and manage popular expectations about how (and how fast) change happens. This can happen across three vectors: first, improving the way big, sector-anchoring organizations (like Transparency International or the World Bank) frame anticorruption in messaging and advocacy/marketing and, in so doing, informing others' approaches and practices; second, by ensuring there is an infrastructure of narrative and messaging experts (including consultants and consulting firms) with experience on anticorruption who can support in-country reformers when windows open; and, finally, supporting reformers in sharing tricks-of-the-trade and reflecting on practical approaches to managing the risks of messaging during windows when the anticorruption agenda is contested and the public mood and geopolitical conditions get in the way.

Further examples: See section on “Framing and communicating reform goals to target audiences in context” (page 27) for examples from Tunisia and Georgia.

Risks and implementation considerations: There is a small risk of creating standardized, context-free anticorruption messaging. This can be mitigated by supporting organizations with a user-centered ethos and enabling (through introductions and funding) in-country reformers to engage them as service providers. The greater risk is that suppliers and academics focus on more sophisticated techniques to design and evaluate tactics to target specific individuals and audiences (e.g., work around micro-targeting, user-centered design, and behavioral economics), leaving reformers on their own to manage the macro aspects of messaging that are central to building narratives and campaigning during windows. Suppliers should support reformers in allocating resources, creating space, and having learning opportunities so that the latter, like the UCC campaigners in Brazil (see box on page 58), can better manage the risks associated with the rapidly shifting and contentious public mood and relationships in which targeted, sophisticated anticorruption messaging is embedded.

Finally, where relevant, donors should complement communications and advocacy support with support to monitor and manage disinformation attacks, especially where anticorruption narratives and digital spaces are being used to polarize society, undermine elections, and democracy (see recommendation 4). As with many of these recommendations, this support should be offered with sensitivity to the way external funding can be weaponized in a narrative to undermine the legitimacy of reformers.

4. **Support infrastructure organizations focused on disinformation and connect them with the anticorruption sector, going beyond addressing misinformation and fact-checking.** These organizations should understand the logic of disinformation campaigns that attack reformers and be ready to provide direct advice and support to civil society and other reformers when windows open. These attacks can happen in social media; through strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs); or lawsuits or other disciplinary measures brought in retaliation for reformers' work. This support is different from existing work on misinformation, which typically supports media outlets or journalists in efforts such as fact-checking. For disinformation involving manipulated narratives and propaganda attacks on reformers,

very little exists to help civil society activists or anticorruption officials understand how to respond. This is particularly challenging when disinformation operations affect the ecosystem as a whole, such as when anticorruption messaging is at the core of efforts to deepen polarization and undermine democracy and elections.

Support for digital upskilling and awareness raising currently available to many anticorruption groups is potentially a first step, but insufficient to help organizations make critical decisions about their disinformation (technology and digital) strategies or ensure that these strategies address synergies and discordances with communications, framing, and narrative strategies (as described in recommendation 3).

Programs to provide coaching or strategy support from disinformation experts do not seem to exist for affected anticorruption reformers, though they are emerging in other areas of work. Though supply organizations do not need to be focused on anticorruption in particular—especially when cross-cutting attacks also seek to discredit or threaten open societies, elections, and democratic discourse—donors could take steps to help their partners identify these critical issues, invest in organizational or ecosystem capacities, source support from the market, and/or build partnerships and coalitions with suppliers to help them adequately prepare for and respond to online harms. In many instances, this advisory role may need to be complemented with public relations, digital forensics, research, and legal support as well as funding for secretariats to facilitate joint actions across different organizations, among others.

Risks and implementation considerations: One risk identified during this study is to conflate support for addressing misinformation environments with support for addressing growing disinformation attacks and their consequences. For example, fact-checking and support for evidenced-based advocacy are distinct from rapid response for reformers suffering targeted attacks in social media and in disciplinary bodies and courts, as noted in the case of Slovak CSOs.

Donors need to first ensure that expert advisors exist; this is an area that may require field-building work to create a pipeline of experts and networks of support organizations (consulting firms, nonprofits, or academic institutes). Anticorruption donors may need to partner with donors focused on disinformation in other issue areas to identify rosters of suppliers that can address these needs, whether locally, regionally, or internationally.

As the ecosystem of support grows, reformers may need extra donor funding to access it and to make use of its tools and approaches. In some, but not all windows, anticorruption suppliers may consider how to team up with others in supporting pan-societal observatories or platforms focused on online manipulations across issue areas which can implement a full-blown disinformation strategy (e.g., building a pooled detection capacity; following the money and the information; research; advocacy and coalition building; service provision; and capacity building).¹⁴⁶

5. **Invest in, facilitate, and raise the visibility of networks of scholars that convene and train in the Global South.** There are a growing number of university-based researchers working on anticorruption and related fields who are sought after by reformers during windows. In many countries, university professors have trained and/or engaged reformers across the ecosystem, including across different generations of reformers. They are trusted sources of advice and referrals, helping to fill human resource needs in government and civil society. They are also neutral conveners who can facilitate relationships among stakeholders. When they are missing, as in the case of Guatemala, reformers navigating windows may find it harder to build empathy and shared understanding with other stakeholders. Despite this potential, local scholars and universities are overlooked and underutilized as entry points for support during windows, partly due to lack of funding and support for their work during the status quo phase.

Greater investments and connections to the global supply market would ensure that southern-based scholars are able to quickly step in during the trigger and open phases. Northern-anchored research institutions that have “legitimacy,” funding, and visibility in the supply market are not as well suited to perform this function.

In addition to enabling better response to windows in specific countries, investments in southern research networks will add to global understanding of windows and anticorruption. As windows open, those researchers closest to the events are arguably better able to make sense of the tacit knowledge available in their ecosystem and contribute what is being learned to the theories and assumptions underpinning global anticorruption strategies and resulting programming. While a research agenda led through a small number of northern-based institutions may have been the only plausible option in the past, recent growth in the anticorruption sector suggests this is no longer the case today.

Relevant examples: See examples of southern universities that convene, train, and research under “Ecosystem capacity support from global and regional providers” on page 46.

Risks and implementation considerations: There is a risk of producing research without clear connections to needs during a window, which might be mitigated by prioritizing researchers that play more than one role (train/mentor, convene or engage in “extension” activities, and research). Another risk in networking southern researchers with the current northern networks is that the latter’s research questions overtake and define the scope of work. Additional steps, such as making the work of southern researchers visible to donors and prioritizing them for funding, will legitimize these suppliers in the global knowledge and research market.

Country-specific: Status quo period support in high-potential countries

6. **Tailor ongoing support infrastructure (recommendations 1-5) to be ready for windows in high-potential countries.** The above recommendations create support infrastructure across multiple countries that may experience windows in the future. Support providers working in or supporting a country with a high potential for a window can tailor those recommendations to their specific country context. For example, tailoring recommendation 3 by investing in domestic narrative, messaging, and branding capacity can better prepare reformers to find that support locally rather than through international support providers.

Risks and implementation considerations: See recommendations 1 through 5.

7. **Build and support in-country networks of reformers during status quo periods,** so they are ready when the windows open. These networks should ideally bring together diverse groups of local actors, supporting connections across civil society, media, government, private sector, professional associations and more, across the political spectrum. Some examples of activities that require funding, bandwidth, and potentially skilled facilitators, include: regular, private meetings convened by a donor or honest broker; trust-building social activities; and including different types of stakeholders in advisory boards and award committees.

Activities to build relationships among subsets of key actors—such as the networks and suppliers that focus on supporting elected officials and candidates to office across political parties (e.g., networks and suppliers within the democracy transition and strengthening sector, grassroots organizations, or professional associations)—can also be instrumental even if their core agenda is not anticorruption. Connections built will be useful when a window opens, especially as actors need to take on roles that they have not taken before (e.g., civil society actors taking positions in government or seeking to support government insiders). The crux of these networks are the personal relationships built over time.

Risks and implementation considerations: The major risk of this recommendation is the potential for backlash if a foreign donor is seen as funding a political network. This can be mitigated by co-funding with local foundations and partnering with relatively apolitical institutions, such as universities. Another risk is to create additional formal structures for coordination, where many exist (e.g., country dialogue platforms, anticorruption coordination mechanisms for the implementation of international norms, OGP action plan processes), rather than complementing those formal processes with informal activities to support relationship building. Donors and their agendas have pull that, in the short term, can help address collective action problems by convening actors (e.g., MacArthur in Nigeria). However, donors need not be the convening actors: the convener could be another support provider, an anchor CSO, or an academic institute (see recommendation 5). Donors taking on this role should consider potential mismatches between reformer and supplier interests (as explored under recommendation 14) and address competing needs in their own agendas and

plausible conflicts of interests with reformers. There is a risk that capacity-building and network-building exercises deepen competitive dynamics among civil society groups fueled by international resources, as well as dilemmas associated with civil society groups shifting roles during a window,¹⁴⁷ so special attention is needed to ensure that design and implementation is focused on the ecosystem of joint spaces and capacities, rather than individual favorites. These activities require funding to avoid further stretching organizational capacities, but funding may signal a “first among equals” which can defeat the purpose of the activity. Neutral secretariats can help mitigate this risk.

8. Identify potential bottlenecks to reform—such as leadership pipelines, legislation drafting, or shared analysis—that can be addressed before a window opens. As windows evolve rapidly, reformers must move quickly to seize the opportunity before spoilers block change or the windows taper. To the extent that reformers and support providers can identify potential bottlenecks before a window opens, they can jointly prepare to address those needs. A few specific ways this can be done include:

- *Drafting legislation or regulations:* Having context-tailored proposals ready can enable reformers to make progress quickly. (See “Expertise in local legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes” section on page 25 for more on these needs.)
- *Building leadership pipelines:* Windows create opportunities for new leaders to step into different decision-making spaces, including entering electoral and party politics. Providing development opportunities to current and future reform leaders through fellowships, support to academic programs (also see recommendation 5), and other modalities can ensure the pipeline is robust when the moment arrives.
- *Share political analyses across reformers:* Finally, suppliers who invest in understanding and planning for future windows should ensure that this kind of analysis is shared with reformers, including through the networks described in recommendation 7.

Example: Law firm TaylorWessing provided pro-bono services in the drafting of Slovakia’s Beneficial Ownership regulation before a micro window opened in 2017 when the minister of justice, an able politician, steered the adoption of the reform through the system; advocacy and research from civil society groups was complementary.¹⁴⁸

Risks and implementation considerations: The major risk of this recommendation is that this advance work, like many other projects in the anticorruption field, becomes a standalone deliverable dissociated from political processes and windows. Another challenge is to fail to engage lessons from past programming, including in other areas of work. By way of example, many Latin American reformers faced challenges associated with the transition to and from civil society and the public sector in the 1990s and early 2000s, not unlike those faced by Slovaks and others today. At the time, the Ford Foundation supported reflection processes among peers across the region.¹⁴⁹

Country-specific: Support during trigger and window phases

While support must always be tailored to the country context and reformer needs, we highlight here the broad support gaps that suppliers and reformers should consider in the wake of a potential trigger. In some cases, funders will be able to begin this support during the status quo period or sustain it after tapering, but greater support is likely to be needed during trigger and open window phases.

9. **Support reformers in accessing in-country expertise on navigating highly localized legislative, regulatory, and administrative processes.** Pivoting to working with governments or legislatures during windows often leaves reformers scrambling to learn the “inside game”: how to move legislation through the parliamentary process or how to influence the regulatory and administrative structures that are crucial to implementing anticorruption measures. As this is primarily about *process* knowledge (not technical expertise on the *substance* of the reforms), it is highly localized to the country’s political and administrative context; this need cannot be met by international experts. Reformers can access this expertise either by bringing former government/political insiders onto their teams, or by hiring or partnering (potentially pro bono) with lawyers or lobbyists. Either way, donors and other support providers should ensure this need is on the radar of reformers early in windows and that they have funds available to hire this expertise as needed.

Example: Foreign embassies and governments hired law firms to support reformers in post-communist countries during EU accession processes, including in Slovakia.¹⁵⁰

Risks and implementation considerations: This expertise should be directly accessible by reformers to actively support their work, rather than being hired by donors to inform a political economy analysis or overall strategy. While donors should encourage and provide funding that can be used to hire this expertise, there is always a risk of over-incentivizing something not appropriate for the organization in question. For example, some organizations may already have this expertise in-house; other organizations may be better placed to continue playing an outside pressure role and leaving the inside work to partners. In addition, donors should consider the local supply market’s incentive structure (e.g., legal firms’ business interests, individual suppliers’ embeddedness in reform networks, corporate engagement in politicized agendas, etc.) as short-term funding may not be commercially attractive on its own.

10. **Incorporate collaborative spaces into all forms of support, convening reformers so they can share analysis and form common understandings.** These efforts should be carried out during trigger periods and early during open windows, and can build on the universities and networks referenced above (in recommendations 5 and 7). Such convenings and spaces need not be explicitly designed for shared analysis, and may be better convened for information exchange or shared action, understanding that shared analysis will result. Including a broad range of reform actors can help build connections among unlikely partners (e.g., student groups, trade unions, and business associations); even if they do not all fully agree, the convening space can reduce the likelihood of reform groups miscommunicating or working at

cross purposes and can help identify emerging spaces and trends that might not have been on others' radar screen. Lastly, these spaces can also support self-/mutual-care if built intentionally for that purpose.

Relevant examples: See sections on “Political strategy needs identified across case studies” (page 25) and “Ecosystem capacity needs identified across cases” (page 28).

Risks and implementation considerations: As with the recommendation on building in-country networks (7), the risk of political backlash can be mitigated through careful partnerships. Another risk is that funders' need to inform their own actions distort conveners' incentives, turning plausible means such as political economy analysis and other diagnostics into ends that do not serve reformers' needs. Funders should pay greater attention to these issues and the incentives they are setting, explicitly or implicitly.

11. Identify opportunities to support coaching and mentorship for key civil society reform leaders as windows open. These relationships can be encouraged informally or formalized. They can be focused either on short-term/problem-oriented support (coaching) or on longer-term leadership development (mentoring), depending on the reform leaders' needs and preferences. The key is to provide civil society leaders with space to discuss the challenges of setting goals and transitioning strategies, with a trusted partner who can ask tough questions and give informed advice. Support for coaching and mentoring can be stepped up at the national, regional, and global levels.

Potential models, along with relevant examples, include:

- *Informal matching at the national or regional level*, where language and other context factors may make for good fits. (e.g., activists in For a Decent Slovakia received informal advice from veterans of the Velvet Revolution and the Mečiar years)
- *Fellowships for veteran reformers*, where they are hosted by an organization and get space to reflect, connect with others, and share what they have learned. (This would also facilitate their inclusion in the cross-national networks from recommendation 2.)
- *University-based coaching/mentoring*, like that seen in the work of ACREC-NaUKMA with local CSOs in Ukraine. It is worth noting that coaching and mentoring requires a set of skills and experiences that are not always correlated with academic credentials. A hybrid approach is seen in Latin America, where many professors temporarily venture out of academia into reformer roles and engage in “extension” work with practitioners. (This model connects with recommendation 5 on southern-based scholar networks.)
- *Global roster of coaches and mentors*, ready to be hired when windows open. Such a roster can and should include veteran reformers.
- *International secretariat with in-house capacity*, where a set of professionals (potentially veterans of windows) are on staff and ready to support reformers. A similar model is used by some suppliers in the social accountability and state

capacity-building spaces. For example, the participatory budgeting-focused “Rising Stars Mentorship Program,” housed at the People Powered Hub, offers free coaching from experienced implementers and leaders to implementors and advocates.¹⁵¹ A secretariat could also implement recommendation 1 on technical guidance and could support the cross-national networks described in recommendation 2.

- *A network of hubs* that, much like a secretariat, provide access to professionals and windows veterans ready to support reformers. A central hub would empower and provide support (financial and otherwise) to the network of hubs that specialize regionally, professionally, linguistically, or otherwise. (A hub could also implement recommendation 1 on technical guidance and could support the cross-national networks described in recommendation 2).

For details on these and other examples, see the discussion on “Building leadership capacity” under ecosystem support, page 51.

Risks and implementation considerations: The major risk with this recommendation is a bad fit between coach/coachee or mentor/mentee. To mitigate this, ideal coaches and mentors would have a prior relationship with the leaders (e.g., through the cross-national or in-country networks mentioned above in recommendations 2 and 7 or local universities, as noted in recommendation 5). Ensuring the coach/mentor has some independence from the civil society organization’s donors would help to support a trusting and confidential relationship with the coachee/mentee. Finally, it may be important to take specific actions to ensure that coach/mentor relationships address specific challenges faced by coachees/mentees that are part of traditionally marginalized groups, such as women.

12. **Provide funding for digital, physical, and psychosocial security, and help reformers find support providers to advise them.** Although this support is key during trigger and open window phases, these attacks also happen during the tapering phase. This could be dealt with by connecting reformers with consultants, infrastructure organizations, global suppliers specialized in security issues, and/or human rights protection programs. Extra funding for legal advice and protection might be needed when attacks occur.

Risks and implementation considerations: Fear and trust play a big role when reformers face digital, physical, psychosocial, and security attacks. Therefore, it is important that mutual care and trust relationships have been built beforehand and reformers know whom to call and trust when these attacks happen. Holistic approaches are valued the most for civil society and grassroots reformers (as described in the sections on “Ecosystem capacity support gaps” on page 59 and “General organizational capacity support gaps” on page 60). A potential separate pipeline of support provision for government reformers could also be considered.

13. Explore the use of parallel, matching, or joint funding mechanisms across multiple donors to encourage sharing intelligence and building common political analysis. These funding approaches seek a middle ground between full coordination (which places a heavy burden on both donors and grantees) and no coordination (which risks missed opportunities and even conflicting strategies). Shared funding mechanisms provide space to identify gaps that different donors might be better placed to address, with light-touch coordination and explicit learning (e.g., through evaluations). This helps to overcome the inefficiencies created by “siloed coordination”: a tendency to coordinate only within small subsets of assistance providers (described further on page 59).

Shared funding mechanisms include:

- *Parallel funding*: supporting related efforts (e.g., one donor funding investigative journalists while another supports civil society advocacy based on their reporting);
- *Joint funding*: multiple donors funding the same organization(s);
- *Matching funding*: similar to joint funding, but typically involving a single donor committing funding contingent on the grantee raising matching funds from another source; and,
- *Pooled funding*: multiple donors contributing funding and co-designing a funding mechanism that is then managed by a single donor.

Example: The IADB’s Transparency Fund has multiple options to enable coordination with other suppliers: pooled funding (e.g., Norway), parallel funds (e.g., The Betty and Gordon Moore Foundation), or in-kind support (e.g., Microsoft).

Risks and implementation considerations: While these funding mechanisms aim to avoid the burdens of a large, shared strategy, they can still have high transaction costs when actors do not know each other or have various approaches, mandates, or operational procedures. Smaller, sequential investments to address the problems of sharing intelligence and common political analysis can be a good introductory approach. These kinds of investments also seem critical for donors using their convening power to bring together stakeholders (see recommendation 10), and minimizing the risks that reformers will be pulled in many different and potentially contradictory directions (also see recommendation 14). A related risk is that donors’ procurement policies or formal requirements for coordination, such as sharing a monitoring and evaluation matrix, are perceived as insurmountable barriers rather than addressed pragmatically.

14. Donors should consider alternatives to traditional suppliers in order to find the best match between reformer needs and supplier approaches. Donors committed to supporting reformers rarely have a single priority; they may seek to simultaneously support reformers, advance a priority issue within the anticorruption agenda or beyond, and open spaces for action for long-term international partners and contractors.

Working through the major anticorruption support providers can be the easiest option from the donor perspective, but from the reformer perspective, this practice might channel support based on what looks like luck: either supporting those reformers who happen to be connected to global networks (as explored in the section “Channeling technical support, funding, and partnerships” on page 51), or supporting on issues that are global but not necessarily local priorities (see “Table 3: Issue areas with greater or lesser technical guidance readily available” on page 36). Channeling through traditional suppliers can introduce biases and inefficiencies in reformers’ strategies, making it harder for them to work on the needs and opportunities that are most important from a local perspective.

Broadening the network of suppliers and taking a more ecosystem-based outlook can mitigate some of these risks. Support may be better provided through cross-national networks, potentially composed of window veterans or scholars from the Global South (as described in recommendations 2, 11, and 5), rather than centralized NGOs, global think tanks, universities, contractors, and MSIs.

Risks and implementation considerations: It is not realistic to assume that suppliers will go into a window with a single objective in mind. Operational realities, conflicts of interests, trade-offs, and risks have to be managed, communicated, and addressed, rather than ignored.

Country-specific: Support during tapering phase

15. Conduct further study on how to support reformers in the tapering phase.

When windows taper and close, countries return to a status quo phase that is likely different from the one that gave birth to the window. The recommendations focused on infrastructure and preparation (1-8) should gain new salience after a country has experienced a window. This study asked reformers about their experiences of prior windows, but the tapering and return to status quo were at the edge of our scope. Further study and discussion on tapering could explore some of the issues raised by reformers in this study, including: How to defend wins? How to navigate reformers’ disillusionment—including with international partners who turn away? How to navigate public disillusionment? How to maintain infrastructure in a period of declining investment? How to reabsorb into the ecosystem the capacities of reformers in the public sector who have developed capacities but no longer have space to operate?

Annex: Guatemala Case Study

Summary of the window

Guatemala's window opened at the beginning of 2015, when the Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), together with the attorney general's office announced multiple corruption investigations involving high-ranking officials, including former President Otto Pérez Molina and former Vice-President Roxana Baldetti. These investigations triggered the largest multi-sectoral demonstrations in the history of the country, known as the "Guatemalan spring," leading to Pérez Molina's resignation in September 2015.

Under the slogan "neither corrupt, nor a thief," Jimmy Morales, a political outsider with questionable ties to the military, was elected in October 2015. Morales was affiliated with the Frente de Convergencia Nacional Party, composed of ex-military personnel from the Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala, but was best known for his comedy show ("Moralejas") which ran for 14 years.¹⁵² Once in office, he implemented a series of transparency reforms in the areas of public contracting and election financing. However, the window for change started tapering as a result of two factors: a) the release of CICIG's investigation implicating Morales and the traditional elite in an illicit funding operation during the 2015 elections, and b) a lobbying campaign initiated by the national traditional elite pressuring the U.S. Congress, during the Trump Administration, to withdraw support to the CICIG.

From 2008 until 2019, the CICIG embodied the fight against corruption in Guatemala. Between 2008 and 2010, the CICIG had presented four packages of anticorruption proposals for legislative and constitutional reforms to Guatemala's Congress, which approved several measures to increase the Office of the Public Prosecutor's investigative and trial capacity (including high-risk courts, plea bargaining for collaborating suspects, asset forfeitures, strengthening organized crime norms, and an illegal enrichment law). These measures helped advance anticorruption investigations, especially starting in 2015, when the Commissioner Iván Velásquez took over the CICIG and started working in close collaboration with the Attorney General Thelma Aldana.¹⁵³

Despite CICIG's key role, it is also important to understand the broad and diverse coalition of reformers who supported anticorruption efforts and investigations. This coalition included a group of human rights defenders that had launched a campaign in early 2002 aimed at persuading the government to establish a body to investigate the activities of clandestine groups; that body would later become the CICIG. The coalition also included a more flexible and horizontal core group of students and citizens who were strongly disenchanted with representative politics

but saw an opportunity to “change things”¹⁵⁴ through calls-to-action on social media platforms.

In the first few years after the CICIG was established, state capture and media concentration continued to be the norm. Civil society gradually started to articulate anticorruption platforms, combining human rights framing with socio-economic, cultural, and gender-based demands. However, CSOs and social mobilization were still “shaped by the legacies of a restrictive civic space and the historical marginalization of the indigenous population.”¹⁵⁵ As late as 2014, the year before large-scale demonstrations triggered Pérez Molina’s resignation, Congress issued Decree Number 08-2014 limiting the right of assembly and demonstration, which was largely condemned by international human rights movements and the World Organization Against Torture, among other organizations.

The window fully opened at the beginning of 2015, when Aldana’s office and the CICIG (led by Iván Velásquez) released an investigation that revealed a multi-million-dollar kickback scheme in Guatemala’s customs agency. The scandal involved high-ranking officials, including the private secretary of former Vice President Roxana Baldetti, who was later arrested.¹⁵⁶ In May 2015, another scandal involving the Social Security Institute of Guatemala implicated both Baldetti and Pérez Molina. Immediately after these scandals broke, citizens started gathering in Guatemala City’s central square each Saturday, using social media platforms and the hashtag #RenunciaYa (“resign now”). In 2015, more than 100,000 Guatemalans in 140 municipalities participated in such mobilizations. The interplay of digital media (investigative digital journalism, such as Plaza Pública and other blogs and social media posts) with traditional media (newspapers and radio) mobilized a range of groups, such as indigenous rights organizations, businessmen, and peasants.¹⁵⁷

These demonstrations were described as the largest protests in Guatemala’s history,¹⁵⁸ and the first of their kind in terms of bringing diverse groups of people together—particularly notable was the participation of young people. A diversity of actors and cross-sectoral alliances participated in these demonstrations, including students from public and private universities, labor unions, businessmen, and peasants.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, protestors were supported by international actors, ranging from the CICIG to the United States Embassy.¹⁶⁰ Social media helped amplify citizens’ demands and there was also a massive general strike from the Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF)—the largest and most powerful employers’ association in Guatemala.

These factors helped the window open quickly, with citizens and CSOs demanding a change of government and implementation of anticorruption reforms. For CSO reformers (coming more from the human rights spectrum, who were already facing social media attacks and smear campaigns), the years from 2015 to 2018 were the period when “corruption finally got intertwined with impunity.”¹⁶¹

This case outlines reformers’ needs and the support they received through four phases of the window:

- **A pre-window status quo (1996–2013)** with two clear phases: from 1996 to 2007 (starting with the peace accords of 1996 through the establishment of CICIG), and from 2007 to 2013 (when the CICIG incorporated the fight against corruption into its agenda).
- **Opening trigger phase (2013–2015):** from when Commissioner Iván Velásquez took over the CICIG in 2013 until the release of investigations into high-ranking officials at the beginning of 2015.
- **Open window (2015–2017):** From the beginning of 2015 (with the release of CICIG investigations, the outbreak of public demonstrations, the resignation of President Pérez Molina, and reforms carried out by President Morales) until approximately mid-2017 (when the CICIG released illicit funding investigations about Morales and the Commissioner was declared persona non grata).
- **Tapering/closing window (2017–present) phase:** with an important key moment in 2019 when the CICIG closed its offices.

Needs and support in each phase

Pre-window status quo: 1996–2013

The human rights movement played an important role in shaping how CSOs and activists in Guatemala would later call for anticorruption reforms. A few years after the 1996 peace accords ended years of civil war, a new wave of attacks against human rights defenders led to calls to establish a body to investigate the activities of clandestine groups and forces. The government of Guatemala asked the United Nations Department of Political Affairs for assistance in developing a mechanism to help the state investigate and prosecute its political and human rights crimes. The Commission of Investigation of Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Apparatus (CICIACS) was established in 2004. However, after some backlash, in 2007 the government and the UN negotiated a version of CICIACS without sovereignty-encroaching independent prosecutorial capacity, transforming the CICIACS into the CICIG.¹⁶²

From its establishment in 2007 until approximately 2013, the CICIG focused on its ultimate mandate: mapping criminal networks and describing organized criminal structures. However, as investigations moved forward, the links with human rights violations and corruption became more evident. During this period, the map of anticorruption reformers started to build up. Human rights defenders and CSOs slowly shifted their agendas to incorporate the fight against corruption. New transparency-oriented as well as tech-savvy CSOs also started to play a major role in Guatemala's civic space. Although the overall media landscape was (and still is) concentrated and captured by various elite interests, new independent media groups were founded during the public hearings against the military leaders who had participated in human rights violations. These included *Plaza Pública*, founded in 2011 as an initiative from students of the Rafael Landívar University. Independent media and investigative journalists helped to amplify the public hearings, proceedings, and investigations; later, during the opening trigger phase, they would also release and become involved in anticorruption investigations.

The CICIG's work went through many stages—mainly influenced by its different front leaders, “the commissioners”—but one of the key moments that catalyzed reform and led to the opening triggering phase was when the second Commissioner Dall’Anese resigned and Iván Velásquez took over in 2013.

During this period, the major needs of these diverse reformers were: a) protection against smears, misinformation campaigns, and threats (both physical and digital); b) joint strategic analysis to help them know when, how, and whether to respond to smear and misinformation campaigns, and; c) relationship and networks, such as connecting with other reformers or getting to know different actors (e.g., coordination functioned well among different human rights CSOs but was more difficult across different types of actors, such as between human rights CSOs and transparency organizations, or independent media, for example).

Opening trigger phase: 2013–2015

This phase started when Iván Velásquez took over leadership of the CICIG and investigations revealed high-level officials' corruption practices, including a multi-million-dollar kickback scheme in the customs agency, and a scandal involving the Social Security Institute of Guatemala, among others.

When these scandals broke, different CSOs, activists, and government reformers started to organize informal meetings to coordinate joint actions. However, as everything evolved quickly, many reformers felt they were “reacting more than acting”. Although many actors had known each other for a long time (in particular, human rights organizations), some were relatively new (grassroots activists, independent journalists, and even government reformers). Trust, leadership, and communication strategies were difficult to build on such short notice.

In this context of new grassroots actors, a diverse group of six university students without any political experience started a call-to-action for citizens to gather in Guatemala City's central square each Saturday asking for the president to resign.¹⁶³ Using the hashtag #RenunciaYa—which would later become the #JusticiaYa initiative coordinated by Gabriel Wer, and the think tank “Instituto 25A”—these public demonstrations were the largest in the history of the country.

Needs varied among the different groups in this period, but in general, all reformers (CSOs, independent media, government, and grassroots activists) mentioned a lack of leadership and difficulties in setting up goals and strategies during the demonstrations. These challenges led to Iván Velásquez being the main speaker and leader of the fight against corruption. Under Velásquez's leadership, the CICIG raised its profile, achieving a positive and popular status in the country. Its confrontational style during the opening trigger and tapering phases focused on prosecutions and attempts to transform the justice system and busted the traditional elite's grip on power, but also contributed to its own downfall. Some groups described this as a problem, noting that the CICIG did not read the situation from a strategic point of view. Some CSO members, journalists, and activists also mentioned the CICIG prioritized high-impact cases, “tackling all corruption structures at once” instead of pursuing gradual wins. As explained by reformers, this strategy neglected the Guatemalan elite's power, while failing to align with the different aims and objectives of the whole spectrum of organizations.

Another challenge related to general organizational capacity, and, in particular, programming and financial management. In general, CSOs reported difficulty balancing the projects that already had donor funding with the flexibility and bandwidth needed to respond to the evolving situation. The need to find more flexibility during critical junctures and/or having a more flexible allocation of resources to maneuver situations of uncertainty was mentioned by different reformers (especially human rights and transparency CSOs). There were also very strong criticisms of some donors, such as USAID, whose structured programming objectives with specific deliverables restricted CSO response capacity in a changing environment. Reformers mentioned the need to include more iteration capacity in their projects. Other donors, such as Open Society and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, were mentioned as providing more flexibility and closer support through their in-country/regional office representatives.

Open window: beginning 2015–2017

Following the “Guatemalan spring,” the Guatemalan Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing impeachment proceedings for the president, and Pérez Molina submitted his resignation in September 2015. With Morales' election in February 2016, the window was clearly open. However, expectations were mixed, as Morales' connections to the military and ties with the traditional elite were not promising signs to most reformers. Efforts to launch electoral and judiciary reform were not successful, due to tactical disagreements among the government coalition participants and the opposition of the United States.¹⁶⁴ For reformers, it was clear that the anticorruption discourse had been only part of a campaign strategy and narrative, rather than a real aim of Morales' cabinet.

When the window opened, new reformers outside and inside the government came into play: for example, the Movimiento Semilla, a political party created after the demonstrations that led to Pérez Molina's resignation. Most of its leaders had been protesting during the Guatemala spring, and some were also connected to the human rights movement, including Lucrecia Hernández Mack, daughter of Myrna Mack (who was murdered by the military in 1990) and niece of Helen Mack (the founder and leader of Foundation Myrna Mack). Lucrecia was part of Morales' cabinet as the minister of health, but resigned in 2017 when the president ordered the expulsion of Commissioner Iván Velásquez.

Reformers' needs during this period included the following:

- **Technical knowledge specific to anticorruption** was mentioned by reformers in government and other political party leaders. Some of them referred to the lack of expertise and bandwidth in drafting laws or advancing judicial proceedings. Others expressed that they needed “younger people to know how to deal with the monster from within,” referring in particular to a lack of knowledge on administrative law.
- **Political strategy**, including talking about politics, analyzing power, setting goals, and crafting communications/messaging, was mentioned as an important need. One government reformer said these times felt “like playing football in the best league without having a uniform.” Political party leaders said it was hard for them to know the tricks to get “little wins in the system” or find different courses of action when small windows appeared.
- On **ecosystem capacity**, navigating and managing risks, as well as knowing when to respond to fake news or smear campaigns (particularly on Twitter), was mentioned again during this phase. Reformers referred to the lack of academic and think tank research on the topic, as well as the lack of information on the functioning of “net centers.”¹⁶⁵ Tech-savvy CSOs and journalists mentioned a need for donor support to study these topics.
- **Networks, peer relationships and camaraderie** were also mentioned as big needs by different types of reformers. They described a need for spaces to connect with other reformers, as they sometimes felt there was a lack of empathy across different groups (e.g., CSOs with political parties, and vice-versa). Government reformers said it had been very difficult to coordinate actions with CSOs who were quickly disappointed with the complexities of government processes. On the other side, CSOs struggled to coordinate with political parties while maintaining their own independence. In general, all actors expressed that having more networking convenings would have been useful to foster exchanges and coordinate strategies. Moreover, all actors preferred informal over formal networking and bonding strategies (e.g., using different projects, consortiums, or topics as an “excuse” for them to meet and advance on the fight against corruption). Exchange workshops to share lessons among different countries were also seen as a need, and mentioned some initiatives going in this direction which had been useful (e.g., consortium initiatives such as Guateleaks, funded by HIVOS).

- On **general organizational capacity**, the program management and funding needs described in the prior phase continued while the window was open. The challenges were particularly acute for new political parties or movements that lacked funds to compete with traditional parties, and for independent media that lost sponsors' support after publishing anticorruption investigations involving the private sector. Other important needs were the renewal of cadres and leadership, the risks of engaging in partisan politics, and attracting younger generations to the topic of corruption, all mentioned by CSOs, reformers in government, and grassroots activists. Leaders of a new political party received support to participate in some projects around political leadership, but were seen as too focused on "political innovation" rather than current communication needs and strategic tools. Some reformers also participated in the Friedrich Ebert political formation strategy, as well as Oxfam and Open Society encounters, which helped them establish connections with reformers in different countries. Finally, in the case of independent media, reaching broader audiences and rural areas was a challenge; one opportunity such media would like to explore, if funding allowed, is podcasting.

Closing window: mid-2017 onwards

When this research took place in early 2020, all interviewees agreed that the window had closed, either when Iván Velásquez was declared *persona non grata* and the U.S. lobby actions took place, or when Iván Velásquez and Thelma Aldana started a more confrontational discourse with the government, while focusing on anticorruption prosecutions.

However, despite the big window closing, a CSO representative and an important prosecutor in Guatemala also described a more recent "micro-window" to reform the Constitution and change the selection procedure to appoint judges. This "micro-window" followed the release of a corruption investigation led by the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity (FECI). A CSO activist also mentioned supporting a related project and stated that frequent communication with the regional Open Society office helped them to reorient and design strategies to be able to make use of "micro-windows."

Reformer challenges and needs increased after Iván Velásquez was expelled from the country and the CICIG closed its offices in 2019. The most important ones were:

- **Support against legal, digital, and physical security threats:** all interviewees reported at least one threat event, with some having to leave the country, or quit or change jobs. Independent journalists explained they would have to stop publishing specific judicial content due to the lack of protection they were facing. All reformers reported the ongoing damage of smear campaigns and net center online attacks, particularly on Twitter. However, the most important challenge during this new tapering period has been the judicial harassment of activists, reformers, and judges. For example, one of the most important prosecutors in charge of the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity in Guatemala (Fiscalía Especializada Contra la Impunidad (FECI)—the body that led anticorruption investigations with Thelma Aldana while the window was open) is currently facing a corruption accusation for

alleged irregularities in the collaboration agreements in the Odebrecht case.¹⁶⁶ Also, the President of UDEFEGUA is facing a criminal complaint made by the president of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ), which accuses the president of theft, diversion, or suppression of correspondence with specific aggravating circumstances and influence peddling.¹⁶⁷ Some reformers felt they were facing these threats in silos, trying to find solutions “on their own;” where there was some donor support, it seemed to target specific groups (e.g., just prosecutors or human rights defenders).

- On **political strategy needs**, the CICIG’s departure left a lack of understanding and knowledge of what the whole anticorruption sector was doing. Once again, without clear leadership or common objectives, reformers take a more reactive rather than proactive approach.
- Concerning **ecosystem capacity (including relationships and networks)**, self-care networks and bonding were lacking. Activists feel “alone” and left behind, and even mentioned they felt “used” by international agendas (e.g., some reformers mentioned that U.S.-based donors and the UN recommended they go to the police when they faced an attack, which they thought demonstrated a clear lack of understanding of how corruption permeates all the structures of the state). When and whom to call when their life was threatened and how to proceed, taking into account the institutional context of state capture, was seen as a challenge that they would like to share and talk more about among themselves.

Support gaps and lessons

Overall, reformers both inside and outside the government found support for many of their needs. In particular, with respect to their most important needs such as physical security, journalists, CSOs, and human right defenders all mentioned the support Open Society gave in reaching out to them, hearing their concrete needs, and addressing those needs or connecting them with other support providers. Reformers who had to leave the country due to political persecution or smear campaigns felt supported by different international initiatives, such as WOLA or The Dialogue, which gave them public visibility and provided legal advice in critical moments. Smaller actions, like financing to install a secured door or a security system in the offices of independent media and CSOs, were also highly valued. With respect to networking and bonding, despite the Open Society and Friedrich Ebert Foundation initiatives mentioned, reformers generally thought there was room for improvement, including, in particular, by incentivizing more informal convenings and consortium projects.

Concerning protecting themselves against smears, disinformation campaigns, and legal prosecutions, reformers found UDEFEGUA’s project very useful¹⁶⁸ although the project only targeted prosecutors and human rights defenders. Activists and journalists also mentioned that Canada provided extra bandwidth funding in this area.

As we have seen, reformers also faced unmet needs, mainly concerning political strategy, technical knowledge, networking and bonding, general organizational capacity (financing and flexibility), and security support to digital threats. To meet some of these needs, reformers within the government and journalists mostly turned for economic support to a new generation of businessmen and private sector entities not connected to Guatemala's traditional elite. Independent media is exploring new business models and economic plans that are not dependent on traditional sponsors. CSOs are also trying to reframe the way they structure projects, and value donors that have provided more flexible funding and project structures. The need for a collaborative space for joint analysis, setting joint priorities and strategies, and coordination was mentioned as critical, particularly by the younger generation of grassroots movements, new political parties, independent media, and tech-savvy organizations.

One general lesson was the need to build stronger leadership during key moments, and also to make use of each small window of opportunity rather than just taking advantage of the evident windows and trying "to catch the big fish." The international community was an active supporter in the prosecution of high-level cases, and reformers inside the CICIG and the prosecutor's office thought that there was no other way to do it (even expressing that if they had been offered advice on political strategy they would not have received it). However, civil society organizations, human right activists, journalists, and younger reformers were somewhat critical and thought a more thorough political and strategic analysis would have been useful to prioritize the wins and keep the window opened.

Another emergent point was the challenge of tackling corruption without necessarily prioritizing a prosecutorial and personalized framework, which particularly refers to how to strategically frame and communicate anticorruption. This is a common challenge in countries such as Guatemala or Brazil, where the anticorruption discourse is easily hijacked and polarized during electoral campaigns and demonstrations. Unlike Brazil and other cases, in Guatemala, demonstrators who used the anticorruption rhetoric in the first cycle of demonstrations included progressive civil society groups and human rights movements, such as the indigenous and peasants' rights group, Comité de Desarrollo Campesino (CODECA), as well as more conservative groups with religious, anti-abortion, or anti-LGTBQ rights agendas. However, during the government of Morales, anticorruption became exclusively associated with the political left. In the words of reformers, some help to "make the anticorruption agenda sexier" and "a strategy to let people know that corruption is not an agenda from the right or the left" would be useful before, during, and after the window opens.¹⁶⁹

Overall, another big challenge for support providers has been the importance of not only ramping up during the window but also providing more continuous support and fostering closer and more flexible relationships between donors and reformers, as well as among reformers themselves. These ongoing relationships can help reformers figure out how to keep windows open and make the most of micro-windows, even when they do not fit into our conceptual characterization of windows (change of government, corruption scandals, the release of investigations, etc.). Initiatives to create trust and leadership among the reformers also appear to be key, and these are better built before a critical juncture arises. Many reformers mentioned the value of brokering informal encounters to create networks and understand each other's interests, which could help them coordinate better and know whom to contact, how, and for what during windows. Beyond fostering solidarity, these encounters help in the development and exchange of capacities, including knowing which organization has expertise in which field (so potential collaborations can be quickly formed when the moment comes) or what types of knowledge and technical capacity left behind by the CICIG can support reformers' needs.¹⁷⁰

A final crucial gap is seen in the lack of ecosystem support to prevent all acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, and the pattern of misuse of criminal law and criminalization against human rights defenders and anticorruption reformers. Also, in the context of recent attempts to pass laws restricting civic space, there has been an urgent technical need to know how to respond to these ecosystem setbacks and how to increase CSO transparency and accountability to avoid government accusations in this area. Possible alliances or consortiums between networks of CSOs that have been working on this issue for a longer time could be of great help. Last but not least, disinformation and fake news seem to be affecting the whole ecosystem of activists and reformers, who have not found any donor or support provider covering this field besides fact-checking organizations.

Annex: Slovakia Case Study

Summary of the window

In February 2018, investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová were murdered. For external observers, the murders were a “watershed moment” for Slovakia and its politics.¹⁷¹ The murders created a “historical moment” and triggered a significant series of actions and reactions, compared to previous scandals and societal mobilizations.

After the trigger, the anticorruption civic movement “For a Decent Slovakia” gained traction, and the country saw the largest non-violent protest rallies since 1989. The moment helped to renew solidarity and nurture trust, prompting more diverse coalitions. Journalists and media outlets invested in investigative journalism to continue Kuciak’s work.¹⁷²

Many Slovak anticorruption reformers reconsidered their position in the ecosystem and, in some cases, changed career paths to be better placed to support change. In this process, anticorruption was often part of a broader “public interest” agenda rather than a standalone, narrow interest.

For two years, there were unprecedented anticorruption “wins,” including symbolic ones. The murders were successfully presented as a political issue—the product of state capture and systemic corruption. Messaging fed public outcry long after the initial shock.¹⁷³

First, activists focused on the quality of the criminal investigation. Then, they called for the resignation of Prime Minister Fico, who had governed Slovakia for 10 out of the previous 12 years. Fico resigned in March 2018, and activists eyed elections as a driver of longer-term change.¹⁷⁴

Corruption—now framed as a broad political problem rather than a narrow technical one—became a key issue in a string of polarized elections between 2018 and 2020. Fico’s party, Smer-SD, lost presidential, municipal, European, and parliamentary elections. New candidates and parties took power.

Executives in national and subnational governments also adopted administrative and legislative anticorruption measures.¹⁷⁵ The Supreme Audit Office (NKÚ) and the Public Procurement Office (ÚVO) began to carry out their mandates with greater independence from the political elite.¹⁷⁶ Thirteen long-term judges have been charged with corruption and abuse of power. Constitutional Court Judges appointed in 2019 largely lacked their predecessors’ political connections, but also lacked their experience. There have been major changes in the police hierarchy. Marián Kočner, an oligarch accused and acquitted by the court of first instance of ordering the Kuciak’s assassination,¹⁷⁷ has been designated as a sanctioned person

under the U.S.’s Magnitsky Act (which authorizes the U.S. government to impose economic sanctions and deny entry into the U.S. to any foreign person identified as engaging in human rights abuses or corruption).¹⁷⁸

However, Slovaks interviewed for this study are more cautious about the causal significance of the “trigger.” Many are adamant that the murder was an accelerator rather than the sole determining factor for bringing about change—reform efforts were underway prior to the killings.

As of September 2020, reformers were also uncertain and/or had divergent views about whether the window was still open or closed and whether the long-term effects of the window will be positive, negative, or neutral. According to the Council of Europe’s Group of States Against Corruption, reforms adopted since 2018 are generally positive, but it is too early to tell whether these early steps have been effective.¹⁷⁹ Many Slovaks are shocked and disappointed by the acquittal of the main suspect of the murder-for-hire case of Kuciak and Kušnírová. Others still “hope” that the judiciary delivers justice and prevents impunity.¹⁸⁰ The results of the March 2020 parliamentary elections also increased uncertainty about the future. Across a diverse range of reformers, the demobilization of the grassroots movement is not seen as a concern but a natural political development. Parties, politics, elections, and institutions are central spaces to negotiate and/or push for change.

This case outlines reformers’ needs and the support they received through four phases of the window and then highlights the key gaps:

- **Pre-window status quo:** roughly 2006 through late February 2018
- **Opening trigger phase:** late February 2018 through March 2018
- **Open window:** March 2019–present?
- **Closing window:** March 2020–present?

Needs and support in each phase

Pre-window status quo: 2006–2018

In Slovakia, the period between 2006 and 2018 was shaped by the Robert Fico/Smer-SD era. During this period, many anticorruption experts and practitioners in the country and suppliers abroad realized that the problem in Slovakia no longer was insufficient or bad quality anticorruption laws. “Micro windows” enabled the adoption of transparency reforms, including transformative ones.¹⁸¹ The remaining challenge is ineffective implementation of existing laws, lack of accountability,¹⁸² and systemic state capture.¹⁸³

Slovak reformers also realized that their assumptions and learning needs have changed. By the 2010s, reformers, whether in government or civil society, were gradually developing

the technical knowledge specific to anticorruption that they did not have when the country transitioned to democracy in 1989, became independent in 1993, or acceded to the European Union in 2004.¹⁸⁴ Many Slovaks stopped hoping that after these critical junctures good things associated with an idealized Western model would follow.

Many Slovak reformers are well-networked abroad, partly a legacy of the 1990s and 2000s. Even if the country is no longer a priority for international suppliers and external funding, and external attention more focused on neighboring Hungary and Poland, personal relationships with partners abroad continue to pay off. Networks help channel access to international technical information exchange, technical skill building, agenda setting, political clout, and (under certain conditions) financing.

Still, the level of investment in infrastructure to support reformers' work is limited compared with investments during the transition.¹⁸⁵ Different international networks and organizations are important but they cannot force local reformers to make commitments or take actions.¹⁸⁶ In focusing attention on specific issues and approaches, external actors help allocate and skew resources to specific issues, too.¹⁸⁷ In addition, language and organizational specializations can mean that some reformers have access to external networks, while others do not.

Locally, most anticorruption work is focused on research and technical agendas. It is also projectized. There is little investment of core funding in state and non-state anticorruption organizations. For the former, under-investment decreases effectiveness.¹⁸⁸ For the latter, organizational survival is a concern.¹⁸⁹ Small financial investments have gone some way to ensure the survival of the field and nurture peer relationships and camaraderie among civil society organizations working in anticorruption as well as with other Slovak stakeholders.¹⁹⁰ This enables many reformers to "pick up the phone" to share information and collaborate on ad hoc efforts and campaigns,¹⁹¹ especially in unifying moments.¹⁹² Formal coalitions tend to fall apart when human and financial resources and momentum dwindle.¹⁹³ Joint projects that force organizations to implement joint projects and actions often do not work for a range of reasons.¹⁹⁴

There are supply areas where external support did not catch up with the shifting reformers' capacities and learning needs. Important gaps in the pre-window phase included skills to take advantage of "micro windows" opened by international processes, electoral realities, or people in the streets¹⁹⁵ (e.g., negotiation, change management, and improved understanding of the workings of legislative process and timing and the administrative state). These gaps might not have been salient during the status quo period, but during micro and macro windows, their absence and the challenges to accrue those capacities rapidly became apparent.

Advocates struggled to steer the anticorruption narrative as anti-system politicians manipulated the anticorruption language,¹⁹⁶ Many politicians weaponized corruption, using it as a tool for electoral competition in a polarized society. Corruption and anticorruption may have become instruments for interference of other kleptocracies in national politics in Slovakia and the region. Long-term staffing of the civil society sector is also a challenge; the public and private sectors have become more attractive for employment in recent decades, as more professional opportunities become available.

A generational transition creates added pressures.¹⁹⁷ During this period, politics was perceived as a “dirty” career path, for many, discouraging mission-driven actors from entering the public arena and reinforcing a status quo that favors political capture.¹⁹⁸

While most media outlets were not focused on corruption prior to the window, Aktuality.sk (Ján Kuciak’s employer), was investing in reinventing investigative journalism in the country.¹⁹⁹ Kuciak, also a member of Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), had participated in international investigations and collaborated closely with Czech peers.

Opening trigger phase: February 2018–March 2018

The opening trigger phase in Slovakia was extremely short: less than a month went by between the murder of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová and the resignation of Prime Minister Fico. Some reformers initially feared the country would backslide after the murders—that journalists would stop investigating corruption cases and Slovaks would turn away from democracy, progressive values, and Europe.²⁰⁰

Very quickly, however, journalists and media outlets came together to finish Kuciak’s investigation into links between top government officials and the Italian mafia. Journalists had to learn to collaborate, share information, and reimagine rules of the competitive media market. They prioritized investigative stories and their role as activists and watchdogs. They learned to work with large datasets and cooperate internationally, much like Kuciak had done,²⁰¹ and, to facilitate such work, security measures were tightened.²⁰² Along with the opposition and parts of civil society, journalists framed the murders as political: a product of the captured system that sustained the ruling party and the elite, which now needed to be held to account.²⁰³

Simultaneously, activists set and changed their goals and quickly adjusted their strategies. A memorial march after the murders turned into a series of reinvigorated political protests.²⁰⁴ Rally organizers included a group of high-school students that had already led anticorruption protests in 2017. The group of millennial organizers was more diverse in 2018. The crowds in the streets were larger. The traditional media was eager to amplify the message and spread the word. The first demand in the streets was a proper investigation into the murders of Kuciak and Kušnírová murders. “For a Decent Slovakia” became a call to action. Connecting with citizens via social media was “relatively easy.” The organizers also were able to crowdfund to pay costs associated with the rallies, among other operational costs.

For a Decent Slovakia used new forms of activism, which complemented the work of traditional CSOs. The movement’s leaders did not aim to build civil society organizations but to activate people with a new set of tools and actions, including but not limited to protests.²⁰⁵ Some of these activists had worked and acquired capacities in civil society spaces. In fact, CSOs and veterans of previous windows provided pro bono advice on the logistics for the first memorial event, as well as technical advice as the anticorruption window opened, and communications and political strategy support.

Autonomy from civil society organizations was a purposive strategy and may have been an asset for For a Decent Slovakia—as smears and misinformation attacks were targeted at civil society groups and coupled with anti-CSO and nationalistic rhetoric.²⁰⁶ Although CSOs remained in the background by choice, this period stretched their limited bandwidth, and, potentially, their technical non-partisan mission.

For many Slovaks, this moment triggered or solidified personal soul-searching moments about whether and how to engage with the public sphere and politics. For some, this was about whether to join protests or not. For many professionals and activists in their 30s and 40s, it was about whether to join political parties and enter the political fray to change the status quo.²⁰⁷ Most reformers who considered changing careers lacked national and international support to make these transitions.

Some civil society reformers took openly political action for the first time, often in a personal capacity. When they did so, reformers and organizations had to reflect on strategy and short- and long-term risks. Talking politics and context with others helped make difficult choices at speed: 145 people, including actors, activists and other personalities, rather than institutions, signed a public petition calling for an investigation into the Kuciak murders and reform of the police and other institutions. The initiative connected established non-governmental organizations such as Fair-Play Alliance, Via Iuris, Slovak Governance Institute, Human Rights League, Open Society, Pontis Foundation, and the Let's Stop Corruption Foundation, all of which committed to prepare a set of proposed measures for anticorruption reform.²⁰⁸

Open window: April 2018–March 2020

As the window opened, activists' and other reformers' goals and calls for action became more ambitious: creating a different political environment while continuing to oversee the murders' investigation.

The murder investigations produced more information on political capture in Slovakia.²⁰⁹ They incentivized a number of journalists and media outlets to take on more investigative stories. The Slovak media kept corruption in the headlines. They acted as a watchdog for police investigations and judicial proceedings.²¹⁰ Kuciak's OCCRP colleagues, along with Slovak journalists, created a library with the material collected during the investigation of the murders. Stories produced by groups of journalists were published in a wide range of media (TV, newspapers of different ideological characteristics, and a tabloid), reaching a wide range of target audiences in the country.²¹¹ A small group of journalists launched the Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK) in late 2018.²¹² The center was inspired by the Czech Centre for Investigative Journalism (CCIJ) and focuses on transnational stories.²¹³ In tandem, the Investigative Journalism Fund was created in direct response to the trigger. The fund's goal is to provide grants to promote investigative journalism and the appreciation of investigative work. There has been limited additional financial support as well, including in-kind support for journalists (e.g., security, language, digital forensics training) from other sources, including OCCRP; the U.S., UK and Dutch embassies, and Stop Corruption. Critically, stakeholders believe that interest in these kinds of stories helps secure ongoing focus and resourcing from media companies.

Other reformers, including candidate and then President Zuzana Čaputová, adopted but also tried to balance possible unintended consequences of the dominant anticorruption narrative: a) political capture and “dirty politics” could undermine reformers’ and citizens’ sense of agency; b) individual prosecutions and retributive justice, on the one hand, and ostensibly attractive but simplistic solutions, on the other, could negatively affect more complex storylines about the need for systemic reforms consistent with democracy and the rule of law.²¹⁴

Inside the government, the new Office for Prevention continued its work to develop a national policy and programs,²¹⁵ leveraging the electoral incentives of the Prime Minister, the recommendations and legitimacy of international bodies (EU, GRECO, UNCAC, OECD), and some financial support from the Financial Mechanism Committee funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. The Ministry of Finance, a local university, and contractors in the private sector were available to address additional capacity needs—from technical savvy to change management support.²¹⁶ The OGP action plan process, not a high-profile process for reformers or the population, was unaffected by political dynamics.

²¹⁷

Slovakia had multiple elections during this open window phase, and corruption was central in the campaigns. New parties and anti-system parties surged, and newcomers, including CSOs, grassroots, and private sector leaders, all took stances on corruption.

As many reformers changed career paths—from journalism to activism,²¹⁸ from the private sector and civil society to political parties or the public sector—they faced the same types of dilemmas and capacity gaps mentioned in the previous phase. Changes in the human resources pipeline across the ecosystem also created dilemmas for anticorruption organizations. For example, the organizers of For a Decent Slovakia supported some non-partisan candidates in the municipal elections and had to respond to public and political attacks for its decision to do so.²¹⁹ At the sub-national level, the bet paid off. Independent candidates won 1,232 mayoral posts, or 42 percent of all mayoral seats in the country. The ruling party did not have a candidate elected for mayor in any of the regional capitals. For a Decent Slovakia supported the elected mayors of Bratislava, Nitra, and Žilina: all people in their 30s who emerged as the faces of grassroots movements in their cities and who “went from activists to mayors in an attempt to introduce a new way of doing politics at the municipal level.”²²⁰

Initially, CSOs also struggled to appear non-partisan amidst fluidity in the positioning of individuals in the ecosystem, especially party leadership with close ties to CSOs, a new president who used to work in a civil society organization²²¹ and many colleagues going into the public sector. They had to ease the public’s confusion about individual reformers’ identity and their mission.²²² Relatedly, the local supplier, Fund for Transparent Slovakia (see “Supporting Slovakia’s in-country reformer networks” on page 61), did not change the scope of its call for proposals to fit the window in order to avoid allegations of partisanship during electoral periods, which concerned its corporate donors, among other stakeholders.²²³ As a result, the fund took on a less adaptive and more risk-averse strategy during the window than in the past.

CSOs simultaneously devoted attention and resources to an ecosystem challenge that, as in other parts of the region and the world, had intensified since 2018: misinformation and disinformation campaigns.²²⁴ Smear attacks targeted at grassroots leaders fueled and interacted with anti-CSO rhetoric, especially as top representatives of the government and ruling coalition joined in the attacks of the extreme-right and the disinformation scene.²²⁵ As a result, Via Juris, the Slovak Youth Council, and the Center for Philanthropy formed a coalition with the goal of growing coordination action against shrinking civic space, including the smear attacks and legislation that would restrict civil space.²²⁶ The group began to monitor the media, political, and legislative environment and share weekly reports with their 50 members.²²⁷ They launched a website to increase awareness of the civic sector by sharing examples of good practices and civic engagement, along with information on CSOs' activities.²²⁸ In the meantime, each organization still decides how to react to attacks through legal and/or communication means, often investing significant time from their teams. It is important to note that the defense effort is complementary but distinct from the website *demagog.sk*, run by the SGI Institute, which verifies the truthfulness of statements made by politicians and other public persons.²²⁹

Micro windows for anticorruption CSOs also multiplied during this period. When electoral results opened more micro windows for CSO and reformer action in cities across Slovakia,²³⁰ CSOs' limited bandwidth and resilience was put to the test. CSOs also coped with ecosystem-wide challenges such as identifying and training qualified replacement personnel and leaders for the window, while managing the loss of personal networks and other resources associated with generational transitions in the sector's leadership.²³¹ It is important to note that short-term increases in financial resources during the trigger and open window might not have sufficed to replace and increase many of these human capacity shortfalls across the ecosystem.

Political strategic challenges were many and, even though each organization chose its own path, the challenges cut across groups, too. Among these challenges: transitioning strategies and tactics tailored to priority micro-windows to a broad range of sectors, public agencies, and geographies. CSOs also had to consider how to regain spaces from new parties that claimed the role of outsiders²³² and (mis)appropriated the public sphere cause, as well as how to work with those who could advance the cause: which new actors could be engaged in meaningful diplomatic dialogue and/or collaboration and which political actors should be ignored as only interested in PR stunts. Prioritizing bets and engagement, therefore, became a priority and challenge for many stakeholders, including those that remained in civil society as well as those who entered other spheres to advance change.

The transition of many Slovaks from civil society and the private sector to partisan politics provides a complementary, but alternative perspective about reformers' learning needs during a window: reflecting and updating assumptions about how change happens and how to effect change from different places in the ecosystem, learning to negotiate and compromise, understanding how to contribute to the success and legitimacy of a political party (as opposed to a CSO or business), among other challenges.

The window, much like in the past, opened many avenues for state-society collaboration, even when the government was attacking reformers in public.²³³ For many organizations, collaboration required skill sets that they did not have or use when performing watchdog

functions (e.g., negotiation). It also created risks of perceived cooptation and derailing organizations from their original missions. These risks had to be managed even as strategic decisions had to be made in a fast-evolving environment. Whatever support was available through informal networks to talk through these organizational decisions and address growing self-/mutual care challenges was probably insufficient. The March 2020 parliamentary electoral campaign further tested individuals and organizations.

Closing window: March 2020–present?

Today, it is hard to know if the window is open or closed. At the national level, the window seems open for some. The government manifesto is promising, including many of the proposals that anticorruption civil society organizations put forward in the 2016 parliamentary election, and steps to bring the country in line with international standards.²³⁴ Journalists' efforts continue, bolstered by new investments in investigative reporting as well as ongoing interest from the public and media outlets.

Still, different theories of change permeate this assessment. Many reformers have questions about the future trajectory of the “macro window” and the “real” commitment and capacity of the ruling coalition. More reformers seem to think that there are multiple “micro” windows for action, including ongoing efforts at the sub-national level—a position often associated with actors that see change as incremental and negotiated.²³⁵ They do not have resources or infrastructure to tackle all possible micro windows.

Civil society organizations continue to face common challenges in state-society relationships—with many CSOs committed to their agendas and proposals while those in the public sector expect compromises and negotiations to move agendas forward while the window is open.²³⁶ It is not easy to transition strategies for those who choose to do so. In the words of a civil society reformer: this is “a dilemma of critical importance and great concern.” CSOs need government leverage and support, but at the same time, want to avoid repeating situations in past windows when CSOs cooperated and were labelled as politically involved and partisan and lost legitimacy.²³⁷ This can be especially challenging when former peers and colleagues are now in public positions, creating perceived or real conflicts of interest.

Others view the window as closed—a position often associated with actors who assume that change should have been sudden and that holistic, “first” best solutions are possible. The grassroots movement is demobilized and so is its injection of information into the public agenda. Reformers inside and outside the government are burned out without many spaces or resources for self and mutual care. The financial survival, staffing, and bandwidth of civil society organizations remains a challenge. Investments in the ecosystem's infrastructure, including and beyond anticorruption, and in the anticorruption agenda are hard to mobilize.²³⁸

On September 3, 2020, the alleged mastermind and intermediary in the murders of Kuciak and Kušnírová were acquitted by the court of first instance. Some are shocked and/or fear that disillusionment will set in; many more are demanding answers from law enforcement and the judiciary.²³⁹

Support gaps and lessons

Political, technical, ecosystem, and organizational needs take different forms in different phases of the window. The common thread is that investments made over decades in state and non-state anticorruption technical capacities, ecosystem infrastructure, and organizational capacities paid off in the window that opened in 2018. However, the stock of assets began to depreciate due to the lack of consistent support for Slovak anticorruption organizations. In particular, needs that were not met during the status quo period (such as talking politics, strategy, and developing and managing the leadership pipeline in civil society organizations and political parties) became more acute when the window opened.

Furthermore, the limits of the prevailing approach to corruption—as a narrow technical problem—also became more salient and urgent after the trigger. In that moment, the debate about anticorruption became central to the broader struggle for democracy and open society. Yet, there is not much international anticorruption support for working with or through the political spaces, such as elections and parties, that took center stage in this struggle.

An external supply of technical knowledge was not an acute need before, during, or after the window. New gaps were addressed with relatively small financial costs or, at least, financial costs that suppliers were willing and able to afford given the magnitude and salience of the shock that triggered the window—the murders of a young journalist and his fiancée. Reformers were able to access premium services from producers of technical knowledge in the field, such as translation of publicly available technical knowledge.

Slovak reformers had a stock of networks, peer relationships, and camaraderie locally, regionally, and internationally. These networks, often undervalued, were brought to bear during the window to supplement other needs. These relationships seem critical to understand the quick and effective mobilization of a grassroots movement as well as collective action inside and outside Slovakia to support journalists.

These relationships enabled informal shared analysis and distributed actions in the ecosystem, including the division of labor between the fluid social movement and organized civil society while it was relevant. Slovak reformers made the strategic choice to collaborate this way rather than use a formal coalition or joint strategy. According to a local civil society expert, the demobilization of For a Decent Slovakia after the March 2020 elections is not a concern that should mobilize external support but a natural state of affairs that requires other actors to regain centrality in the political and policy arena.²⁴⁰ Consequently, the longer-term capacity challenge seems to be sustaining a capable, mission-driven pipeline of leadership to replace those who enter the political and policy arena. A related challenge is learning from gaps already identified as outsiders entered politics during the window.²⁴¹

Networked organizations and individuals also faced many common challenges on their own, including: shifting goals and transitioning strategies during the course of the window and steering the anticorruption narrative as that message was appropriated and, sometimes, manipulated by anti-systemic and populist politicians. For grassroots and organized civil society leaders, publicly distinguishing allies in the politico-partisan sphere created the added challenge of dissipating doubts about their own mission and goals.

Similarly, civil society groups largely faced alone misinformation and disinformation campaigns that attacked their evidenced-based work, their advocacy positions, and their very legitimacy; at times, reformers faced legal and physical risks as journalists did. For the task at hand, local fact-checking and individual action seem to fall short.²⁴²

Although the grassroots movement crowdfunded successfully, fit-for-purpose funding was and is a challenge for reformers in civil society organizations; for independent, long-term journalistic investigations; and, at times, for reformers in the bureaucracy. The need was for core funding—even in amounts that are relatively small by international standards—that is consistent from the status quo to the tapering of the window, rather than a windfall during the window that organizations would not be able to absorb in a timely manner. Funding was needed in the manner of the small Fund for Transparent Slovakia’s flexibility, rather than the large European Union grantmaking rigidity, which was strongly criticized by many reformers.²⁴³ At the same time, more funding for civil society organizations without an improved leadership pipeline—which is hard to mobilize in the very short term—seems a partial solution, at best.

Annex: South Africa Case Study

Summary of the window

Jacob Zuma's presidency saw nearly a decade of backsliding for South Africa's anticorruption efforts, as well as democratic institutions more broadly. President Cyril Ramaphosa's administration entered in early 2018 to high expectations for reform, but the window would only remain open for about 18 months, as the latter half of 2019 saw disillusionment from a sense that the opportunity had been missed. The context for why the window was largely missed, and how reformers could have been better supported to seize it, lies in the history of how the window opened.

Before Zuma, several major corruption scandals signaled the problems to come. For many, the first sign of trouble was the 1999 Arms Deal: a weapons acquisition deal with British Aerospace, Saab, and a range of other European countries that was plagued with bribery allegations. Andrew Feinstein, a former African National Congress (ANC) MP, called it the moment his party "lost its moral compass."²⁴⁴ In the 2000s, the "Travelgate" scandal involved MPs defrauding a system of travel vouchers. While these events were investigated, including with home raids of Zuma and other prominent ANC members, the late 2000s saw a political backlash undermine the investigative bodies, resulting in the disbanding of the Directorate of Special Operations (aka, the "Scorpions").

When Zuma came to power in 2009, he accelerated the corruption and decapitation of the state. Previously well-functioning agencies—like the South Africa Revenue Service (SARS) and the South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)—were undermined by the ANC's of "cadre deployment" (whereby party loyalists are placed in positions regardless of qualifications) and captured through compliant appointments in key positions. A new investigative team was established (the "Hawks") but without its predecessor's budget, mandate to follow big cases, or ability to coordinate with SARS or other agencies.

Much of what Zuma and his allies did was not understood until later. The capture of state-owned enterprises allowed looting via inflated and fabricated contracts. Prosecutions were undermined or never started in the first place. Members of the Gupta family leveraged their wealth, business empire, and ties to Zuma to wield unprecedented influence over hiring, policy, and procurement. While some commentators have since referred to the Zuma years as South Africa's "lost decade" of development, others point out that it was far worse: not merely years lost, but a severe institutional regression that would not be easily fixed.

These problems started to come to public attention in the fall of 2016, as the idea of “state capture” was launched into the national spotlight. The earliest moment was a report from the country’s public protector titled *State of Capture* in October 2016.²⁴⁵ The opening continued: in a flurry of events in March 2017, Zuma fired Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan, reshuffled the cabinet, and found himself asked to not attend the funeral of Ahmed Kathrada, who had previously called on him to resign—an early instance of Zuma’s fellow anti-apartheid veterans turning against him.²⁴⁶ The major acceleration for the window came with the Gupta email leaks in May 2017 and the ensuing investigations. In the words of one civil society activist, after the leaks “everything made sense... we saw the superstructure of it all.” As the investigations continued, a broad coalition of business, civil society (including faith groups), and ANC veterans turned on Zuma.

The window fully opened with Ramaphosa’s election, first as head of the ANC in December 2017 and then as president of South Africa in February 2018. It lasted until roughly mid-2019, with opinions differing on when the opportunity was lost.

This case outlines reformers’ needs and the support they received through four phases of the window:

- **Pre-window status quo:** roughly 2009 through fall of 2016
- **Opening trigger phase:** fall of 2016 through February 2018
- **Open window:** February 2018 through mid-2019
- **Closing window:** mid-2019 to present

Needs and support in each phase

Pre-window status quo: 2009–Fall 2016

Civil society saw an awakening—albeit a slow and difficult one—during the Zuma years. From around 2009, the fight on the Protection of State Information Bill (aka, the “Secrecy Bill”) became an important first political moment for civil society, sparking the Right To Know (R2K) coalition that later built toward the anti-state capture movement.²⁴⁷ That fight was a good example of international solidarity (with bilaterals/multilaterals and others speaking out).²⁴⁸ The Zuma years also saw the establishment of new organizations focused on corruption (e.g., Corruption Watch) and significant litigation over things like appointments.²⁴⁹

However, this status quo phase was marked by a lack of common analysis of state capture: CSOs were pursuing various issues but without clear understanding of how those were connected.²⁵⁰ In addition, normal civil society resource constraints were made worse as South Africa “graduated” to the upper income bracket, leading foreign partners to focus more on economic diplomacy and less on human rights work, while domestic philanthropy was unable or unwilling to fill the gap.²⁵¹ Movement energy in this period was more

focused in other areas, such as the student-led Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall protests in 2015 and 2016.

For civil society groups fighting corruption in this period, the major needs were: consistent funding, joint strategic analysis, and cross-organizational and cross-issue coordination.

Opening trigger phase: Fall 2016–February 2018

The trigger phase was marked by uncertainty over whether revelations of corruption and increasing public anger would translate into a real window for reform, or fizzle out as Zuma maintained power. Formalized civil society continued its oppositional stance to the Zuma administration through lawsuits while trade unions and others increasingly mounted protests calling for investigations into state capture and Zuma’s resignation.

Investigative journalism is credited with a major role in opening the window, though the overall media landscape in South Africa is small, concentrated, and partially captured by partisan interests.

Reformer needs in this window were similar to those in the status quo phase, with an increased need for security support (both digital and physical) and whistleblower support and protections.

Open window: February 2018–mid-2019

With Ramaphosa’s election in February 2018, the window was clearly open and expectations for reform were high. While reformers within government suddenly had a mandate for change, reformers outside of government faced the “Cyril effect”: a demobilization and decrease in pressure on government—at a moment that many thought, especially in retrospect, should have been met with an increase in pressure.

Reformers within government

Ramaphosa’s administration met high expectations early, by removing compromised cabinet ministers, SOE executives, and heads of captured agencies. Other efforts emerged over time, including: the Zondo Commission (formally: the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture) in August 2018; the political party funding transparency law, passed in June 2018 and signed January 2019; and the National Anti-Corruption Reference Group, convened in September 2019 as a revival of a 2014 forum to create a national anticorruption strategy. Much of the reform at SOEs happened under the radar over time, with bad actors pushed out and contracts cancelled, but few of these changes made headlines.²⁵²

None of these efforts amounted to the big changes that people (both political elites and others) expected under Ramaphosa. There have been no major convictions, both because prosecutions take time and because Zuma and his allies have successfully used the processes of constitutional democracy to slow their cases. This period also saw the start of resistance by vested interests—sometimes referred to as the “pushback” against the “fightback” against state capture. For example, the public protector (a legacy Zuma

appointment) began attacks against Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan in May 2019, while the EFF and parts of the ANC called for Gordhan's removal. Even with a commitment to reform, Ramaphosa was constrained by his tenuous position in the ANC, as well as his inability or unwillingness to challenge the party or shape public opinion.

State-owned enterprises

The SOE reform process started at the level of governance, with a cleaning out of the boards, before moving to the executive suites. Stolen money was tracked and recovered with the help of forensic finance experts, many of whom had previously been pushed out under Zuma, spent time in the private sector, and then came back to public service in response to Ramaphosa's call of "thuma mina" ("send me"). Despite this outside help, forensic finance was a bottleneck both for recovery and prosecution.²⁵³ Existing labor laws also created challenges, as they were used by Zuma-friendly human resources directors to protect those accused of corruption.

The major challenges lay in rebuilding and restructuring the SOEs. The focus on policing corruption, from detection and recovery through to prosecution, was not matched with an equal focus on rebuilding procurement or financial systems that had been decimated by a decade of deliberate mismanagement.²⁵⁴ This situation left managers uncertain how to make basic procurements. Larger hurdles loomed when trying to restructure SOEs to into more sustainable business models; for example, efforts to restructure South Africa Airways have seen pushback from trade unions.

Zondo Commission

The Zondo Commission faced high expectations from the start. It produced short-term mobilization, giving civil society and others a focal point since the National Prosecution Authority's work on building cases had no public-facing component. Early on, the commission needed some basic support with capacity and operations.²⁵⁵ Over time, it became clear that it needed coordinated civil society contributions, both to help document state capture as well as to advance bigger, structural reforms to restore democracy and rule of law.

Prosecuting authorities

Similar to the Zondo Commission, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) faced high expectations—specifically, that wrong-doers would be marched off in handcuffs. These expectations ran counter to the reality of prosecutorial work, which takes time. The NPA has had to deal with the ways its own capacity had been gutted, as well as the Zuma faction's use of constitutional protections to slow the process. The NPA has received support from the private sector in South Africa, as well as foreign specialists, though the politics of accepting outside support make the latter sensitive.

Reformers outside government

Civil society and investigative media pressured Zuma's government through lawsuits, exposés, and mobilizations, but these initially faded away when Ramaphosa came to office and the window for reform was fully open.

Formal civil society

Civil society groups ran several initiatives to advance reforms during the open window, including a Civil Society Working Group on State Capture (starting in late 2018 and coordinated by Open Secrets), a People's Hearing on State Capture (held in October 2019 by the same working group), and others.

As a whole, South African civil society faced multiple challenges during the open window. While the final year of the Zuma era saw a broad coalition united under a common understanding of the problem, Ramaphosa's election saw a withdrawal of faith groups and business associations, leaving a smaller subset of professionalized civil society (often those groups without strong grassroots/movement connections) struggling to engage constructively. Perennial challenges such as limited collaboration, coordination, and funding were exacerbated by the realization that intra-party dynamics at the ANC were major obstacles to progress. Many in civil society began to see a need to shift from a strategy of outside mobilization to inside pressure—a pivot they were unequipped for and sometimes hesitant to make.²⁵⁶ A related shift was needed to move the focus from prosecutions to larger, structural reforms, including preventative anticorruption reforms as well as more ambitious changes to presidential powers.

In addition to these larger strategic needs, civil society groups faced technical and capacity related challenges, including data management, digital and physical security, and management skills. Activist burnout continued to be a problem, though the networks and relationships built among civil society organizations during the prior phases continued to provide space for camaraderie and mental health support.

Investigative media

South Africa's overall media landscape is small, concentrated, and partially captured, with partisan media filling the void left by struggling traditional newspapers. However, investigative media—such as amaBhungane and the Daily Maverick's Scorpio—is credited with a major role in opening the window, via #GuptaLeaks and other work. These outlets receive donor funding (which brings political/reputational risks), but technical or other support is more ad hoc, typically accessed through personal networks rather than formal partnerships.²⁵⁷

Closing window: mid-2019–2020

Reformers have different opinions on when the window closed, ranging from as early as mid-2019 or as late as early 2020. Without prosecutions, the impunity narrative continued. Potential whistleblowers saw fewer reasons to come forward, and so did so at a declining rate.²⁵⁸ People were frustrated by the lack of prosecutions and accountability. The faith rekindled by Ramaphosa's election slowly slipped away.

As COVID-19 hit the world and South Africa, the Zondo Commission was continuing its hearings without having released even an interim report. NPA investigations and SOE reform continued as well. However, what little focus remained in the fight against state capture and corruption was overshadowed by the pandemic, the lockdowns, and the

associated economic crisis. In July 2020, Ramaphosa amended the Zondo Commission's remit to allow information sharing with the NPA, creating the possibility that its hearings would support prosecutions and that a micro-window might remain open.

Support gaps and lessons

Reformers both inside and outside government found support for many of their needs, but gaps remained—many of those gaps were better seen in retrospect.

Reformers within government mostly turned to the domestic private sector for support in areas such as forensic accounting. International support for institutional reform efforts, such as capacity support to the NPA, was less common; when it occurred, it tended to be tightly focused and under-the-radar, given the potential for political backlash over foreign support. Government reformers' unmet needs, such as the need to rebuild administrative functions, were more often due to lack of prioritizing those needs rather than a lack of support available.

On the civil society side, the need for outside financial support continues, as domestic philanthropy has yet to reach a level to sustain the robust ecosystem of anticorruption and reform groups. In fact, several organizations have had to close their operations in recent years, leading to gaps in the ecosystem (e.g., around whistleblower support).

Beyond the need for funding, civil society groups needed collaborative space to coordinate, conduct joint analysis, and develop joint priorities and strategies. The working group on the Zondo Commission provided some space for this but was not explicitly designed for such work, meaning it only served these functions as a by-product. A shared strategy would have likely highlighted some tactical needs: finding champions within the government; working an inside game; facilitating leader-to-leader messaging from foreign ministers, heads of state, or international figures; or engaging global actors like multilaterals and major auditors or banks. However, without a shared strategy, the civil society reformers articulating these needs did not find support for them.

Broadly, the biggest support gap and lesson was that the open window was a time to ramp up support, not dial it back. The “Cyril effect” was a sense that reform was possible—but significant further work was needed to make it real.

List of interviewees

Important note: For confidentiality reasons, some interviewees are not listed.

In-country reformers

Name	Organization	Country
Dadisai Taderera	Accountability Lab	South Africa
David Lewis	Corruption Watch	South Africa
Duduetsang Makuse	SOS Coalition	South Africa
Fatima Hassan	Formerly of Open Society South Africa	South Africa
Hennie van Vuuren	Open Secrets	South Africa
Jay Kruuse	PSAM	South Africa
Lukas Muntingh	Dullah Omar Institute	South Africa
Martha Hungwe	Open Society South Africa	South Africa
Mbongiseni Buthelezi	Public Affairs Research Institute	South Africa
Mukelani Dimba	International School of Transparency	South Africa
Naushina Rahim	Open Secrets	South Africa
Neeshan Balton	Ahmed Kathrada Foundation	South Africa
Nkateko Chauke	Open Society South Africa	South Africa
Olmo von Meijenfeldt	Democracy Works	South Africa
Pierre de Vos	University of Cape Town	South Africa
Stefaans Brümmer	amaBhungane	South Africa
Thami Nkosi	Right to Know	South Africa
Zen Mathe	Open Secrets	South Africa
Zukiswa Kota	PSAM	South Africa
Chuck Call	Researcher	Guatemala

Claudia Paz y Paz	former Attorney General	Guatemala
Claudia Samayoa	Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Guatemala (UDEFEHUGUA)	Guatemala
David Holiday	Open Society Latin America Program	Guatemala
Dennys Mejia	Plaza Publica	Guatemala
Edgar Rivera	DOSES	Guatemala
Edie Cux	Acción Ciudadana - Grantee NED	Guatemala
Gabriel Wer	Justicia Ya	Guatemala
Gustavo Berganza	DOSES	Guatemala
Helen Mack	Fundación Myrna Mack	Guatemala
Javier Estrada Tobar	Nómada	Guatemala
Juan Francisco Sandoval	FECI - Prosecutor	Guatemala
Lucrecia Hernández Mack	Movimiento Semilla	Guatemala
Luz Lainfiesta	DCOP for the Peacebuilding	Guatemala
Martin Rodriguez Pellecer	Independent journalist (ex Nómada)	Guatemala
Ronalth Ochaeta	Movimiento Semilla	Guatemala
Sara Barker	Creative - USAID	Guatemala
Sergio Funez	CEIDPAZ	Guatemala
Thelma Aldana	Movimiento Semilla	Guatemala
Walter Flores	CEGSS	Guatemala
Andrej Skolkaj	Researcher	Slovakia
Arpád Soltész	Jan Kuciak Investigative Centre	Slovakia
Boris Strečanský	Center for Philanthropy	Slovakia
Ctibor Košťál	Bratislava City Manager	Slovakia
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Jan Orlovsky	Open Society Foundations	Slovakia

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Radovan Pala	TaylorWessing	Slovakia
Michal Pisko	Transparency International Slovakia	Slovakia
Milan Sagat	Via Iuris	Slovakia
Peter Kovařík	Director General of Section of Corruption Prevention and Crisis Management	Slovakia
Peter Kunder	Fair Play Alliance	Slovakia
Peter Učeň	Consultant	Slovakia
Zuzana Wienk	formerly of Fair Play Alliance	Slovakia

Support providers

Name	Organization
Adriana Beltrán	Wola
Arne Strand	U4
Bruno Brandao	Transparency International Brasil
Catherine Phuong	UNDP Southeast Asia
David Kode	CIVICUS
David Machinist	U.S. Department of State
Dayo Olaide	MacArthur Foundation
Diana Torres	UNDP
Eric Olson	Wilson Center
Frank Brown	CIPE
Gavin Hayman	Open Contracting Partnership
Harald Tollan	IADB
Jim Anderson	World Bank
Jo Marie Burt	Wola
Johannes Tonn	Global Integrity
Jonathan Said	Tony Blair Institute
Manuel Garrido	Independent Consultant (Former Chief Investigator and Prosecutor CICIG, MACIH)
Michael Camilleri	Inter-American Dialogue
Roberto de Michele	IADB
Robin Hodess	The B Team, Open Government Partnership
Staci Samuels	CIPE
Vladyslav Galushko	Open Society Initiative for Europe
Yuen Yuen Ang	University of Michigan

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Endnotes

- 1 Collier & Collier (2002). It is worth noting that CIPE has the same understanding of windows of opportunity as a starting point for their Rapid-Reaction Anti-Corruption Project (interview with international experts).
- 2 Collier & Collier (2002).
- 3 Mungiu-Pippidi (2017).
- 4 Studies show different explanations for the emergence of corruption scandals, including: accountability mechanisms (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006), the media (Michener, 2010), and competition among government actors (Balan, 2011).
- 5 Although Mungiu-Pippidi (2017) argues that anticorruption protests around the world have not increased sufficiently enough to change governance, others may challenge this assessment (Beyerle 2014, Pereyra, Gold & Gattoni forthcoming).
- 6 Mechanisms for change include bargains among elites, citizen engagement, and international actors whose efforts can influence the relative ability of domestic coalitions to push for reforms (The World Bank, 2017). Particularly interesting are cases where anticorruption global strategies are incorporated within broader national development initiatives, encouraging cross-agency cooperation (UNDP 2014) as well as experimentation and learning (de Michele and Guerzovich, 2010). On accountability coalitions and collective action, see Johnston and Kpundeh (2004), Smulovitz and Peruzzotti (2000, 2002), Guerzovich (2010), Taylor and Praça (2014), Melo (2016), Taylor (2018), among others.
- 7 Rose-Ackerman (1999).
- 8 Rohstein & Uslaner (2005).
- 9 Karklins (2005); Florez et al. (2018).
- 10 The World Bank's emergent anticorruption action plan and analytical work includes a focus on state capture, which is consistent with recommendations for Latin America (IADB Expert Advisory Panel), among others (Anderson et.al., 2019 Engel, et.al., 2018).
- 11 R. Valdez, Minister of Finance during the window, cited by Simon (2020).
- 12 The needs identified here parallel those described by others. See e.g. Bellows (2018).
- 13 Aris, Engel & Jaraquemada (2019).
- 14 Praça & Taylor 2014; Melo 2016; LaForge 2017; Aranha 2020, Menezes de Oliveira, Schommer & Guerzovich (unpublished manuscript).
- 15 Similarly, the ACORN program in Nigeria identifies as a key lesson the importance of relationship management with a "collaborative approach" (rather than the previous "throwing stones" approach) as positive for relationships between state and non-state

partners, as well as for information sharing, coordination, and more effective and efficient anticorruption interventions. However, collaborative approaches are delicate for CSOs, which must avoid being co-opted. (Anticorruption in Nigeria Programme, 2019).

- 16 On Guatemala, see e.g. (Flores & Rivers 2020).
- 17 Interview with Slovak expert. On the flip side, Professor Lily Tsai is working on a book focused on the role of retributive justice in the Chinese anticorruption window of opportunity for reform.
- 18 Florez et al. (2018).
- 19 Rodrigues (2018).
- 20 Heinrich (2017).
- 21 See case study in page 78, also (Flores & Rivers 2020).
- 22 Florez et al. (2018).
- 23 On trust building and partnerships in Vietnam, please check, The Global Anticorruption Podcast (2019a).
- 24 Rodriguez-Olivari (2020) and Falcao cited in Nêumanne (2018).
- 25 Abregu (2007), also Basombrio (2005).
- 26 Shevchenko (2019).
- 27 Word Bank (2012).
- 28 Interview with international supplier.
- 29 Cohen et al. (2010).
- 30 Hart and Taxell (2013).
- 31 Interview with human rights supplier. Also in Pakistan and Afghanistan, among other places, for young women reformers, the very act of creating a profile online and expressing an opinion that does not agree with the status quo or patriarchal norms can be so challenging that they can even be attacked physically, showing how the digital world sometimes can mirror the offline world, and vice versa.
- 32 Interview with an investigative journalist.
- 33 Bellows (2018); Raynor et al. (2014).
- 34 Interview with international supplier.
- 35 Guerzovich et. al. (2017). Also, GPSA's grant-making and capacity building and implementation support model seeks to nurture these forms of collective action, though its portfolio is more focused on sectoral "micro" windows than broad

anticorruption windows. In some moments and countries, OGP's Action Plan process has nurtured similar relationship building, learning, and collective dynamics (Gerson & Nieto 2016), but it has not done so in many others (Guerzovich & Moses 2016), including the Guatemala window (Flores & Rivers 2020).

- 36 Rothstein (2011); Aidt (2003); Rose-Ackerman & Palifka (2016).
- 37 Guerzovich (2010), (2011); Fukuyama (2014); Grindle (2012); Stephenson (2019).
- 38 See e.g. Kaufman (2015).
- 39 See e.g. Tonn (2019); Taylor (2018).
- 40 Rothstein (2018).
- 41 Anderson et al. (2019).
- 42 Interview with international supplier.
- 43 On the general phenomenon, see Poirrier (2018).
- 44 IADB (2020).
- 45 The World Bank (2020).
- 46 Interview with an international expert.
- 47 Interview with an international non-governmental supplier.
- 48 Belows (2020).
- 49 Interview with international organization supplier.
- 50 U4 (2020).
- 51 Open Contracting Partnership (2015).
- 52 Miller-Dawkins & Southall (2018).
- 53 The International Centre for Asset Recovery (2017) strategy describes the combination of factors that explain each decision. The embedded experts model has been tried in: Ukraine, Kenya, Malawi, Peru, Tanzania, and Uganda, among other places.
- 54 Improving Transparency with the OECD (2020).
- 55 OECD (2019). Also on Costa Rica see Arias et.al. (2016).
- 56 An example of this approach, often used by the World Bank, is a rapid study on the effects of corruption on public-private partnership contracts produced by the IADB (de Michele et.al. 2018) to address salient challenges during the Lava Jato investigations.
- 57 Interviews with multiple international governmental suppliers and local activists.

- 58 USAID (2014).
- 59 Bellows (2018).
- 60 See e.g. OGP (2018).
- 61 Kaufmann et al. (2015).
- 62 De Ver (2014).
- 63 Global Integrity (2020).
- 64 Poli & Guerzovich (2020).
- 65 Ciudadano Inteligente (2017), Mosso (2017a, 2017b).
- 66 Interviews with reformer and suppliers.
- 67 Kaufmann et al. (2015).
- 68 Call (2019), Millar (2014), Gürgen & Wolf (2000) among others. 69 D. Kalienuk in Global Anticorruption Podcast (2019b), Nitsova, S. et.al. (2018).
- 70 Kuz (2020), Nitsova, S. et.al. (2018).
- 71 Rose-Ackerman (2007); Rothstein (2011); Heywood (2018) among others.
- 72 Samuel Rotta, Proética, the Peruvian chapter of TII in AS/COA (2020). These are dilemmas that the Anti-Corruption Office in Argentina faced between 1999 and 2000, when it opted for prioritization criteria, despite advice and political pressures to the contrary (Guerzovich 2010). Daria Kalienuk from ANTAC in Ukraine is concerned by the unintended effects of lack of prioritization in requirements of which officials disclose assets; see Global Anticorruption Podcast (2019b).
- 73 Achref Auadi in Global Leadership Academy (2020). For more on I-Watch’s strategic approach see Florez et al. (2015).
- 74 On Ghana see e.g. Mills (2019).
- 75 Adaptive approaches are an exception rather than the rule. Examples include: the FCDO’s PERL program in Nigeria, which also uses a political transition management approach; and GPSA-sponsored projects which use monitoring and evaluation tools, such as technical reports, to incentivize and document discussions about shifting conditions and assumptions, and their strategic and operational implications.
- 76 Interview with an international non-governmental supplier.
- 77 This issue was discussed in the Rapid Response Community of Practice in September 2019.
- 78 Interview with international non-governmental supplier.
- 79 See e.g. the “movement coaching” of Rhize (2020).

- 80 Interviews with Slovak public officials.
- 81 See project evaluations such as Mills (2019), Costachi, et al. (2018).
- 82 Masaki et al. (2017).
- 83 UNODC (2008).
- 84 For more information, To Increase Young Tunisians Political Engagement Project in Tunisia (2020).
- 85 Off the record conversations with suppliers, consistent with shortcomings, dilemmas and uncertainties raised by: Miller-Dawkins & Southall (2018), Guerzovich & Schommer (2019); Schutt and IBP's Strategy and Learning Team (2020), LeBillon et al. 2020.
- 86 Cheeseman & Peiffer (2020); also Flamingo (2016), Florez et.al. (2018), Guerzovich (2010, 2012).
- 87 Interview with international non-governmental supplier.
- 88 Grans-Morse (2018).
- 89 Topos Partnership (2020).
- 90 The World Bank (2017); Fukuyama & Recanatini (2018).
- 91 Barrington (2020).
- 92 On the broader phenomenon Miller and Colliver (2020a).
- 93 ISD (2020) and Powell (2020).
- 94 Interview with international supplier.
- 95 Interviews with international suppliers.
- 96 Interviews with international suppliers.
- 97 Lack of coordination due to competitive and organizational dynamics was an important theme of the Rapid Response community of practice calls in September 2019 and June 2020. Relatedly, suppliers have pointed to the unintended consequences of funders prioritizing an issue (e.g., contracting) in an area (e.g., South East Asia) and failing to coordinate the portfolio of overlapping projects on the ground, which impacted everyone's effectiveness.
- 98 RRC (2019).
- 99 Messick (2020).
- 100 Interview with Slovak expert.
- 101 Halvorsen and Nossun (2016). Other examples of universities playing important

roles during windows include Universidad Nacional de Asunción in Paraguay, the Public Administration School at UDESC in Brazil, the UNSAM in Argentina, the University of Chile, Ateneo School of Government in the Philippines, and PSAM at Rhodes University in South Africa and the SADC region.

- 102 Interview with international supplier.
- 103 Bellows (2020)
- 104 Over a decade ago, Martin Abregu made a related point about the need to pay greater attention to the relationship between civil society and political parties.
- 105 The Bradley Herald (2015) and BBC (2019). Also Daria Kalienuk on her trajectory in The Global Anticorruption Podcast (2019b). On the experience of Argentine reformers, see de Michele (2005).
- 106 David-Barrett et al. (2020).
- 107 Interview with international supplier.
- 108 Towards Transparency (2020).
- 109 Schutte (2020).
- 110 ICAI (2020).
- 111 Point raised at the Rapid Response Community of Practice in December 2019.
- 112 Interview with supplier, also see Prosperity Fund Global Anti-Corruption Programme (2019), STAAC (2018).
- 113 Interview with supplier.
- 114 Rapid response Community of Practice call in June 2020.
- 115 Interview with international supplier.
- 116 Interview with international supplier.
- 117 Rhize (2020).
- 118 ICAI (2020).
- 119 ACREC (2020). In Ukraine, there are other efforts to build local non-state actors' capacities, including through learning by doing via social accountability (e.g., The World Bank 2020b).
- 120 The network of students and disciples of Carlos Nino have been key to understanding the ongoing training of generations of anticorruption experts in several Argentinean universities who have gone on to support reforms in micro and macro windows since the transition to democracy (Pereyra, 2013).
- 121 Interview with international supplier.

- 122 The World Bank's (2019) support to Guyana includes a component to increase female leadership in natural resources governance.
- 123 Rodrigo Janot, former Brazilian prosecutor general, spoke about the health consequences of Lava Jato's pace and pressure for his team, and Claudia Paz y Paz reflected on her experience (Inter-American Dialogue 2019).
- 124 Norad (2020).
- 125 For an assessment see Schutte (2020). For issues and approaches covered by the network see The World Bank (2018) and U4 (2020).
- 126 Open Heroines is currently carrying out research about its work that may help shed light on specific needs.
- 127 Bellows (2018).
- 128 Interview with international supplier.
- 129 Interview with journalist.
- 130 Interview with journalist.
- 131 Trapnell (2017).
- 132 Interview with international supplier.
- 133 CIVICUS (2020a and 2020b).
- 134 Asuntos del Sur (2020).
- 135 Guzman (2020).
- 136 Examples include, Bandeira (2018) #ElectionWatch on Brazil and Salviano, et.al. (2020), @DFRLab (2017) on protests and symbols in Russia.
- 137 Exceptions include technical areas where there is a global shortfall of supply, such as financial investigators who are hard to recruit for the UK government, among others (ICAI 2020).
- 138 On translators' skill sets and effectiveness, see Poirrier (2018).
- 139 For an exception see Florez, et al. (2018).
- 140 On the case of Albania, see Duffy (2020).
- 141 CIPE Rapid Response COP Call, June 2020.
- 142 Interview with support provider.
- 143 Rahman (2017).
- 144 Interview with expert and suppliers.

- 145 Schutte (2020).
- 146 For a position on these pan-civil society platforms see Miller and Colliver (2020a).
- 147 Flores & Rivers (2020).
- 148 Leontiev and Pala (2017).
- 149 Basombrio (2005).
- 150 Interviews with expert and non-governmental reformer.
- 151 See People Powered Hub at <https://www.peoplepoweredhub.org/mentorship>.
- 152 Mitchell and Cameron (2015).
- 153 Open Society Justice Initiative (2016).
- 154 Interview with civil society reformer, February 2020.
- 155 Brett (2008).
- 156 Casas-Zamora & Carter (2017).
- 157 Flores (2019).
- 158 Casas-Zamora & Carter (2017).
- 159 Díaz Luna (2017).
- 160 Cuevas-Molina (2016).
- 161 Interview with civil society representative.
- 162 Open Society Justice Initiative (2016).
- 163 Interview with civil society activist.
- 164 Call & Hallock (2020).
- 165 Net centers often involve dozens of people managing hundreds of fabricated accounts to create fake news or smear campaigns, which are often attached to a more conventional online marketing businesses based in Guatemala City—and usually operate on behalf of the far right. More information on The Intercept (2018).
- 166 Interview with prosecutor.
- 167 Interview with CSO reformer.
- 168 UDEFEGUA (2017).
- 169 Interview with CSO reformer.
- 170 Quoting an ex prosecutor and political party leader: “How to protect everything that has been done in 12 years?” (Interview with reformer).

- 171 See Terenzani and Hrabovská Francelová (2020).
- 172 Jahic (2020).
- 173 Ucen (2020).
- 174 Hrabovská Francelová (2019).
- 175 In 2017, before the murders, the government had created a Corruption Prevention Department to conceive and coordinate state anticorruption efforts. In 2018, an Anticorruption Policy of the Slovak Republic for 2019-2023 was approved. The Slovak government adopted Act No. 54/2019 on the protection of Persons Reporting Anti-Social Activities 17 (Whistleblower Protection Act) and established the Office for the Protection of Whistleblowers in February 2019.
- 176 The Group of States Against Corruption warned that 2017 had been a dark year for anticorruption in Europe and about the risks of backsliding (GRECO 2017). Slovakia had failed to make satisfactory progress with the group's recommendations (GRECO 2019).
- 177 Spectator (2020).
- 178 US Embassy in Slovakia (2019).
- 179 GRECO (2019).
- 180 Sirotnikova (2020).
- 181 Interviews with governmental and nongovernmental reformers and experts. For an example of the articulation of local support in a micro window (beneficial ownership) see Leontiev and Pala (2017).
- 182 Interview with civil society reformer.
- 183 Skolkaj (2018).
- 184 The “core” group of CSOs focused on these issues include Fair Play Alliance, TI Slovakia, Via Iuris, Slovakia Governance Institute, and the new comer, Slovakia Digital.
- 185 Interview with local expert.
- 186 These include GRECO, the OECD Anti-Bribery Group and Integrity Area, UNCAC, OGP, European Institutions, including the European Parliament, OGP, OCP or Open Ownership, TI, among other external actors.
- 187 Interview with government official.
- 188 Interview with government official.
- 189 The well-assessed Fund for Transparent Slovakia provides more flexible resources and creates a “barrier” between corporate funders and civil society groups, but

funding is too limited for the scope of the work. Evaluation, Interview with expert, Interview with reformer (see “Supporting Slovakia’s in-country reformer networks” on page 61).

- 190 Interviews with expert and suppliers. Also see Ucen (2018).
- 191 See for example, The White Crow Award or a collaboration between Transparency International -Slovakia and Slovakia Digital (Transparency International - Slovakia 2018).
- 192 Interview non-governmental leader.
- 193 USAID (forthcoming)
- 194 Interview with local support provider.
- 195 Interview non-governmental leader.
- 196 Wienk (2013).
- 197 Interview with local expert.
- 198 Interview with local expert.
- 199 Interview with journalist.
- 200 Interviews with non-governmental actors.
- 201 Jahic (2020), Spectator (2018).
- 202 Martin Pastierovic in TRT (2018).
- 203 Ucen (2018).
- 204 For a Decent Slovakia initiative is the most significant civic initiative during this period, although several others emerged (Terenzani and Hrabovská Francelová. 2020).
- 205 Interview with Slovak expert.
- 206 Bútorová & Bútorá (2019), Hopkova (2019).
- 207 Interview with expert, government official, and non-governmental expert. On the phenomenon, see Kalan (2019), Sirotnikova (2020).
- 208 Spectator (2018).
- 209 Interviews with expert, journalist and non-governmental actors.
- 210 Holcova (2018).
- 211 Interview with journalist, OCCRP (2020).
- 212 Minarechova (2019).

- 213 For more on the center, see Willoughby (2020).
- 214 Interview with expert.
- 215 Prevenca Korupcie (2018). Interview with government officials.
- 216 Interview with government officials.
- 217 Interview with government officials and reformers, also see (OGP 2019).
- 218 E.g. Cuprik (2018).
- 219 Terenzani (2019).
- 220 Terenzani (2019 and 2018).
- 221 On Slovakia's President Čaputová see. Gessen (2019) and Djonovik (2020).
- 222 Interviews with expert and civil society leaders.
- 223 Interviews with suppliers.
- 224 Interviews with reformers, experts, and suppliers. Also see, Globsec (2020)
- 225 Wienk in Personal Democracy Forum (2018).
- 226 Interviews with reformers and suppliers, also see Dlhopolec (2020); USAID (forthcoming).
- 227 Civic Space Watch (2020).
- 228 The effort recently received approximately EUR 100,000 in a grant from Civitates to support consensus building and collective action. Other financial support available for work on civic space includes two new programs announced in 2019 for CSOs beyond anticorruption. Stronger Roots for Civil Society, implemented by Open Society in Slovakia, and other countries in the region will provide EUR 30,000 and mentoring and consultations to CSOs, with the goal of increasing their organizational and sectoral resilience and embedding themselves in the communities they serve. In 2019, the Active Citizens Fund (ACF), supported by the European Economic Area, awarded EUR 2.65 million to 49 projects including on human rights, the rights of sexual minorities, and women's reproductive rights. USAID (forthcoming). Interviews with supplier and nongovernmental reformers.
- 229 USAID (forthcoming).
- 230 A case that is often mentioned by reformers to illustrate the point is the city of Nitra where TI-Slovakia (2020) conducted an audit of select transparency policies. The exercise informs the city's new anticorruption strategy.
- 231 USAID (forthcoming).
- 232 Orlovsky (nd).

- 233 Juraj Rizman in Hrabovská Francelová and Terenzani (2019).
- 234 Interviews with non-governmental organizations and government officials.
- 235 Interviews with non-governmental organizations and suppliers.
- 236 Interviews government official and experts.
- 237 Interview with expert.
- 238 Interview with expert and suppliers.
- 239 Spectator (2020).
- 240 Interview with expert.
- 241 Interviews with expert and governmental reformer.
- 242 Interview with nongovernmental leader and supplier.
- 243 Interview with experts, suppliers, and nongovernmental reformers. On the FpTS, see Ucen (2018) and “Supporting Slovakia’s in-country reformer networks” on page 61.
- 244 Feinstein (2011).
- 245 Open Society Foundation for South Africa (2019).
- 246 29 March 2017. “Ahmed Kathrada funeral: South Africa’s Zuma asked to stay away.” BBC News.
- 247 Interview with civil society activists.
- 248 Interview with civil society activists.
- 249 Interview with civil society activists.
- 250 Interview with civil society activists.
- 251 Interview with civil society activists.
- 252 Interview with civil servant.
- 253 Interview with civil servant.
- 254 Interview with civil servant.
- 255 Interview with civil society activists.
- 256 Interview with civil society activists.
- 257 Interviews with civil society activists and independent media actors.
- 258 Interviews civil society activists.