

# TI INDO-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP STRONGG

## Accountability in Asia Pacific

The *TI Indo-Pacific Partnership for Strong, Transparent, Responsive & Open Networks for Good Governance (TI IPP STRONGG) 2020 – 2023* aims to contribute to reduced corruption in the Indo-Pacific region by empowering a strong and independent civil society voice and network that can mobilise action in support of increased accountability of public and private institutions nationally and regionally.

The TI Indo-Pacific Partnership for Strong, Transparent, Responsive & Open Networks for Good Governance (TI IPP STRONGG) 2020 – 2023, co-funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), supports TI chapters and partners based in the region to engage citizens, including women, youth, and vulnerable groups, as well as representatives from public institutions, private sector entities, and civil society organisations (CSOs), in a wide range of anti-corruption initiatives. The TI Secretariat team based in Germany, Australia and Fiji ensures the overall coordination of the programme, provides support to chapters and partners, strengthens TI's presence in the region, and leads TI's advocacy initiatives at the regional level.

### Programme At A Glance

- **Objectives:**
  1. Informed, engaged and active public demand for accountability.
  2. Responsive, effective and accountable governance frameworks.
  3. A strong, independent and active TI civil society anti-corruption voice in the region.
- **Timeframe:**

January 2020 – December 2023
- **Locations & Outreach:**

16+ countries across the Indo-Pacific region, including Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, and Vietnam, with regional and global advocacy and support based at the TI Secretariat, in Australia and Fiji
- **Total Budget:** 7.48 million EUR



Illustration: © Transparency International  
Global Corruption Barometer - Asia 2020

## BACKGROUND

In one of the most diverse and populous regions in the world, corruption remains a common challenge faced by most, if not all, countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Corruption is prevalent across most sectors and evident in political, private, and public spheres. [The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) scores many countries in the region below 50 out of 100, indicating serious corruption in the public sector. Although the past decade has seen progress, particularly through the development of accepted standards such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), much remains to be done if the commitment to make substantial progress by 2030 is to be truly realised and maintained over time. This is only possible if corruption is addressed and good governance prevails. National laws, institutions and practices are often poorly enforced and monitored, which results in governance deficits and allows for the manipulation of public power for private gain. State capture, excessive power of the executive, lack of public accountability, ineffective bureaucracy, collusion, and other corrupt business practices remain common shortcomings for many countries in the region.



*Bribery rate by country: Percentage of public service users who paid a bribe in the previous 12 months (Source: GCB Asia 2020)*

The past few years have also seen an overall weakening of democratic institutions and political rights and shrinking civil society space, which have further impeded progress in combatting corruption. [Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer – Asia 2020 \(GCB\)](#) revealed that among the 20,000 survey participants, 1 out of 5 people who had used public services in the 12 months prior to the survey had paid a bribe. Meanwhile, the [GCB – Pacific 2021](#) report revealed that the region had the highest rate of bribery for accessing public services worldwide. Despite the economic and political pressure, the threats to freedom of expression and the fear of retaliation, 62% of people in Asia and 71% in the Pacific believe that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption.

## OBJECTIVES

As a civil society organisation, TI plays a key role in empowering people to be informed, aware, and equipped to act against corruption. In line with [TI's global strategy 2021-2030](#), the programme focuses on leveraging TI's added value as an anti-corruption movement with national, regional and global presence to strengthen civil society's ability to influence and actively participate in efforts to strengthen good governance in the Indo-Pacific region towards:

1. **Informed, engaged and active public demand for accountability** - people, including women, young people, and vulnerable groups, need to be informed, engaged and active in holding their governments to account. At the same time, action is needed within institutions to be willing to listen to feedback and evidence of malpractice and to sanction corrupt behaviour as well as close loopholes to reduce opportunities for further corruption. TI will use its strong position of access to transmit public demand for accountability to institutions in question and to develop new partnerships at national and regional levels.
2. **Responsive, effective and accountable governance frameworks** - public and private institutions must be transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of their constituencies, including those in disadvantaged positions. TI will use its longstanding expertise to advocate for public policy and institutional reform based on best practices and civil society engagement.
3. **A strong, independent and active TI civil society anti-corruption voice in the region** - the TI movement in the region needs to strengthen its foundations to ensure it has sufficient capacity, voice, access, and agency to connect public and private institutions with the wider public. The programme will use the inherent strengths of the TI network to support TI chapters, increase capacity and learning between TI chapters, and increase presence at the regional level.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

**16+ TI chapters and partners across the Indo-Pacific region are supported to develop and implement** relevant, gender responsive, inclusive, and context-appropriate initiatives that contribute towards the programme objectives. The TI-S AP team provides ongoing support to chapters and partners on internal capacity, external communications, fundraising, financial sustainability, internal governance, safety and security, and cross-cutting issues such as gender and civic space.

- **Australia:** Strengthening accountability in the infrastructure sector across the Indo-Pacific region, with the development of an accountability tool to be piloted in Indonesia, in the Solomon Islands or another Asia Pacific country.
- **Cambodia:** Engaging communities in anti-corruption through social accountability mechanisms focusing on youth-led initiatives, advocating for the enactment of anti-corruption legal frameworks, and generating evidence on beneficial ownership.
- **Fiji:** Engaging key partners on anti-corruption, including the Ministry of Economy, the Fiji National University (FNU), and youth groups, through events, capacity development initiatives, and joint projects.
- **Indonesia:** Citizen engagement in public decision-making, public procurement monitoring, and corruption reporting mechanisms, and piloting the Infrastructure Corruption Risk Assessment Tool (ICRAT) in collaboration with TI Australia.
- The **Kiribati** Island Corruption Kickers (KICK) joined the programme in 2021 and were supported through the provision of a small grant that included activities for the preparation and launch of the Pacific GCB report at the national level.
- **Maldives:** Studying the healthcare sector and corruption, as well as strengthening anti-corruption frameworks, including the Right to Information, Asset Declaration, and Whistleblower Protection.
- **Mongolia:** Monitoring procurement in the healthcare sector through social accountability mechanisms and improving anti-corruption frameworks, including Disclosure of Beneficial Ownership, Whistleblower Protection, and Political Party Financing.
- **Nepal:** Citizen engagement through social accountability mechanisms and educational activities, as well as engagement of public institutions and NGOs on good governance standards and private sector representatives on business integrity.
- **New Zealand:** Generating evidence on corruption risks associated with money laundering in the Pacific region to develop advocacy strategies around mitigating these risks.
- **Pakistan:** Citizen engagement through social accountability mechanisms and advocacy for improved anti-corruption frameworks and institutions, with increased engagement on the right to information and disclosure of public procurement-related data.
- **Papua New Guinea:** Leading a strong civil society voice to promote good governance and advocate for effective anti-corruption frameworks.
- **Solomon Islands:** Empowering communities through awareness raising on civic engagement and good governance, as well as contributing to policy and legislative reforms with active input from an informed and influential civil society.
- **Sri Lanka:** Increasing citizens' participation in anti-corruption through social accountability initiatives and innovative educational activities, and advocating for greater accountability of institutions, including the police and government mechanisms related to procurement.
- **Vanuatu:** Reaching communities throughout the country and raising awareness about corruption issues and citizen rights. The sessions include a focus on the right to information, particularly in the context of elections and the pandemic.
- **Vietnam (2020-2021):** Generating evidence of the gendered impact of corruption in Vietnam and engaging women in anti-corruption.

**Institutional support for Pacific TI chapters is provided, in recognition of the unique challenges faced by anti-corruption civil society working in the Pacific region.** This includes support for TI Papua New Guinea, TI Solomon Islands and TI Vanuatu to maintain a level of institutional capacity needed to contribute to a strong anti-corruption voice in the Pacific.

**Knowledge products on corruption in the context of the region are generated,** which includes conducting the Global

Corruption Barometer in the Indo-Pacific region. As a first step to inform advocacy at both national and regional levels, TI-S surveys people’s experience of corruption in the region. The Global Corruption Barometer conducted in both Asia and the Pacific collected data across a total of 34 countries, creating an unprecedented source of information on people’s lived experience of corruption in the region.

Both the Asia and the Pacific GCBs include gender disaggregated data and, for the first time, measure sexual extortion (or sextortion) rates as a form of bribery. TI-S and the chapters develop advocacy strategies based on the findings.

**TI’s presence and engagement in the region are strengthened** through strategic national-level outreach and partnerships and the setting up of a TI-S office in the Pacific region.

**Thematic support and regional expertise are provided to increase synergies and alignment with other TI initiatives**, including the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium (GACC) project and Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs).

**TI’s ongoing national and regional advocacy** around key anti-corruption topics is increased, including strengthened Right to Information, whistleblower protection, anti-corruption agencies, SDG 16, gender and corruption, and governance frameworks protecting civil society space. TI builds on regional opportunities for outreach, partnerships and advocacy in different regional spaces.



TI's global strategy 2021-2030

## TI IPP STRONGG Programme’s response to the COVID crisis



Both the TI-S AP team and the participating chapters and partners adjusted their activities and work plans in the first half of 2020 to reflect both the impact of COVID on the different initiatives conducted under the programme, as well as the importance of responding directly to COVID governance issues.

Activities include:

- Raising citizens’ awareness on COVID-19 related issues, in particular on their right to access information during the crisis, through outreach activities, trainings, and social media campaigns targeting women, youth, and vulnerable communities that are most affected by the crisis;
- Helping citizens seek redress for their grievances on COVID-19 related complaints through the TI Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres;
- Advocating for transparency, fairness, and accountability in the distribution of relief packages, treatments, and vaccines;
- Monitoring public procurement and advocating for transparency for COVID-19 related contracts to ensure that citizens are made aware of and included in COVID-19 related budgeting processes and decisions;
- Collecting evidence and producing knowledge products around corruption and COVID-19 that can be used in informed advocacy interventions.
- Disseminating tools and information developed by TI globally, bringing regional experience into global discussions and facilitating discussions at the regional level to advocate for transparency and accountability in the COVID-19 response.

