

U4 GOAL NARRATIVES: *TURNING OUR NEW STRATEGY INTO ACTION.*

GOAL 1: TO ACHIEVE GREATER IMPACT ON THE GROUND

Key trend: Anti-Corruption needs to respond to local conditions.

Objective: U4 will shift even further towards supporting local practice, strengthening our partners' work, and achieving greater impact "on the ground".

Who we will work with:

We will work with whoever can make a difference. We will support local actors tackling corruption and related challenges in their work, and actively focus on gender equality and inclusion throughout. We will support our U4 partners and other agencies, their field staff, and their government and non-government partners in countries where they support programmes that tackle corruption to deliver greater impact on the ground.

How our work will change:

We will combine technical and political expertise to ensure that all our initiatives are tailored to context, and that our pathways to impact are evidence-informed and politically feasible.

We will test, refine, and improve communication and engagement strategies to make U4 resources and research available and accessible to all potential users, to support action in our target sectors, in the anti-corruption community, and development practitioners in general.

We will deliver this change particularly through our in-country engagement (U4-ICE) strategy. Experimentation and continued improvement have been core to our in-country work since 2005, responding to new problems, and evolving partner needs, not least during COVID-19.

We will continue to adapt our in-country workshops with our U4 partners, and use bespoke research, targeted training courses, and targeted communication. We will offer a menu of options, such as mixing 'high-impact' events with longer term engagement where we judge that that these can maximise change.

By 2023 we will complete the 'Anti-Corruption Partnership Pilot' (APP co-led by Sida) in Moldova, and in Zambia's health sector. The APP will extend and deepen U4 engagement in countries identified as having a specific opportunity to accelerate action and where we can coordinate efforts for larger impact. APPs include research to better understand and navigate the political economy of corruption and reform, shape new programmes, and deepen relationships to overcome practitioner constraints. All U4-ICE and APP learning will continuously feed back into refining and updating U4's core services.

We will use our in-country research to strengthen our collaboration with local and regional research organisations and civil society organisations, not only to deepen our knowledge but also to share evidence, expertise, and experience with one another.

Our online courses will continually integrate knowledge from the ground, including practitioner perspectives and allowing for greater interactivity. We will continue to ask 'who should train?' and 'how can they learn best?'. We will strive to make mutual communication and learning between U4 and practitioners as rapid and effective as possible. We will adapt our products so that they are accessible to wider audiences and make material available in a range of formats and appropriate languages to maximise reach and impact.

Measuring progress and impact:

We will define key indicators for 'impact on the ground' under our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, and develop 'pathways to impact' stories for long-term engagement, to document real-world change, and demonstrate the value of U4's work.

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Key Risks and mitigation:

- COVID-19 showed how crises – global, local – disrupt plans. We will continue to apply the lessons and a flexible approach, combining in person, digital, and hybrid events.
- Turnover of donor staff can undermine our work, so we will build strong local partnerships to help sustain engagement even with ‘donor churn’.

Goal 1: Milestones (Intermediate outcomes)

When	What
2022	
	Review and adapt, together with our U4 partners, the in-country workshop format and selection process, including re-doubling our efforts to put gender as a key element of each engagement. This new format should be operational for 2023 engagements.
	All U4 staff complete gender training, and the gender development and anti-corruption refresher course.
	New communication strategy operational, including Goal 1 focussed improvements to translation, audience development, and accessibility.
	Reflection and next steps from the APP intermediate lessons
2023	
	First annual review of U4 renewed gender strategy.
	APP end review and lessons feeding into the revised in-country workshop model
2024	
	Mid-review of the pilot test revised in-country workshop model
2025	
2026	
	Final review of revised in-country workshop model. We will have connected more closely our in-country engagements to our core work and services, such as research and online trainings, to maximise impact, efficiency, and coherence.

GOAL 2: A COHERENT, GLOBAL APPROACH TO ANTI-CORRUPTION

Key trend: Geopolitical power is shifting and a range of actors, including authoritarian regimes and kleptocrats, can challenge and stall international agreements to counter corruption, and also undermine implementation, in their own and also in other countries.

Objective: We will proactively offer strategic advice, support, and evidence to strengthen the coordination and development of joint positions among our U4 partners in their anti-corruption responses and in international policymaking. We will help them to identify common ground and possible collaboration with the ‘not-so-likeminded’ where strategic interests coincide - such as corruption that undermines responses to climate change.

Who we will work with:

We will deepen our understanding of the political economy and working of international and regional actors in anti-corruption, and intensify engagement with selected multilateral and regional organisations and international professional networks as part of international fora.

We will engage them in our research, publication process and knowledge dissemination. We will seek to work with experts in international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on corruption and governance, and seek expertise and alliance from outside the anti-corruption community on issues such as human rights, peacebuilding, governance, and the environment.

We will learn from our experience in health, and target research and advice at major actors in sectors where goals and outcomes are held back by corruption – e.g. climate, education, growth, justice. We believe that the biggest real-world impacts will be delivered by U4 working beyond the ‘anti-corruption community’.

We will identify and try to engage selected representatives of emerging powers and countries whose governments are stalling reforms at international level, including in U4 training.

How our work will change:

Complex crises - COVID-19, climate change, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine - demonstrate that to maximise U4’s impact, we have to combine long-term research and policy engagement with urgent and agile analysis and advice.

We will further develop our series of Partner Fora by identifying (together with U4 partners) a rolling calendar of priority topics. Fora will be a platform to discuss emerging international priorities, and help our partners identify joint positions and coordination. This will include interrogating traditional approaches and ‘received wisdom’ in aid and anti-corruption, such as by thinking through decolonising anti-corruption and interventions, and critically examining the consistency of domestic, foreign policy, and aid agendas.

We will be open minded and inclusive, bringing to the table the ‘like-minded’, and those with contrary views. This will include international and local NGOs, philanthropic organisations, corporations and other relevant organisations at the domestic level. This will be supported by in-depth research.

In parallel, we will identify and invite to our trainings and in-country engagements – when relevant - representatives from emerging powers and from outside the anti-corruption community, aiming to inform them about U4’s work, and build relations with them and U4’s

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trainees. We will continue to consider options for maximising access to U4 training courses and material, but without losing quality, control, branding, or allowing others to profit.

To stay abreast of international policy dialogues and the political economy of aid and diplomacy, to support our U4 partners, and to disseminate U4 knowledge, U4 advisers will participate in select international fora. We will pilot new approaches such as a tracker of new international initiatives on U4 website, and invite experts to blog on these initiatives.

We will ensure that we are not limited by anglophone communication. In addition to French and Spanish we will aim to make more material available in the language of emerging powers (Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian; Portuguese, Russian).

Measuring progress and impact:

We will define key indicators for 'approach coherence' under our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework.

Key Risks and mitigation:

- U4's partner contact points have technical skills but not always decision-making power to help drive change. We will work with them to target senior decision makers for U4 events, and aim to be 'in the room' with them during international fora.
- U4's voice can get lost if we become part of more generalised anti-corruption coalitions with bigger global organisations. We do not need to be louder than others, but we will provide new and distinct evidence and analysis that they can voice and amplify by. Becoming more visible and vocal might risk some push-back on sensitive issues. We will mitigate this by focusing on U4's role on evidence-based policy advice.
- U4 spread too thinly: we need to be strategically selective in international engagement.
- Turnover of U4 Advisers can lead to 'network disruption', as well as enabling us to refresh our expert offer. An institutional record and memory needs to be maintained.

Goal 2 Milestones (Intermediate outcomes)

When	What
2022	
	U4 foundational workstream on what U4 understands by 'decolonising anti-corruption', and what we will do differently as a result.
	U4 has a clear and consistent policy on translation and the dissemination of U4's work in other languages.
	Every U4 Adviser is a member or engaged in at least one regional/ international anti-corruption network as an 'U4 expert ambassador'. Engagement and progress will be recorded for institutional memory.
	Tracker of international policy initiatives on U4's website.
2023	
	U4 has ECOSOC consultative status (is allowed in UN conferences)
	U4 partners act jointly on issue of common concern in UNCAC at 10 th COSP
	Set and achieve annual targets for % participants in U4 Trainings from emerging powers and/or international actors influential outside 'like minded' group].
2024	At least 2 new 'pathways to impact' stories based on U4's work to strengthen the coordination and development of joint positions among our partners

GOAL 3: ADDRESSING THE COMPLEXITIES OF CORRUPTION HEAD-ON

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Key trend: Innovating approaches to anti-corruption

Objective: 20 years ago, corruption in development was typically viewed as a relatively well-defined, generic problem, mainly to be found in low-income countries. Today, we know tackling corruption is vastly more complex, requiring that we solve myriad connected puzzles across the globe and in different sectors, including in places and spaces conventionally seen as distant from the problem of large-scale corruption.

Goal 3 is about how U4 helps solve these puzzles. Anti-corruption efforts will always be confronted by different dynamics and new challenges. For example, new technologies will add dimensions to corruption and anti-corruption alike, while changing social, economic, and political dynamics will require constant vigilance. To make a meaningful contribution, we must first understand specific issues and work from these along global chains to address both technical and political aspects of corruption. We must be able to identify anti-corruption interventions that engage with complexity, but do not fall foul of it.

Who we will work with:

We understand complexity in corruption, and efforts to tackle it, broadly. For example, corruption manifests itself in myriad ways, with important nuances across time, sectors, and countries.

Methods for addressing corruption are also complex, particularly if they overlap with efforts to tackle other societal challenges, e.g., organized crime, rising authoritarianism, and insecurity. The U4 partners – our priority audience – are large, complex organizations too, facing their own internal dilemmas and trade-offs.

Addressing the intricacies of corruption head-on means we must first research and understand different types of complexity, how they constrain anti-corruption success, and how effective strategies can nevertheless be forged. This connects to our work on localization (and Goal 1 – greater impact on the ground), in the form, for example, of strong collaboration with researchers and experts in key countries and sectors around the world. We will prioritize partners who both add to our expertise and competencies, and who are key allies and voices in anti-corruption, such as investigative journalists, scholars, transparency and human rights activists, country and sector experts, forensic auditors, banking, and technology specialists.

How our work will change:

We will be more structured¹ in identifying new capability needs in U4, and deepen our existing approaches that help tackle complexity. We will engage with a range of communication formats to help our partners address complexities head-on. We will extend our proven approaches, and experiment with the new:

- **Podcasts:** Continue our expert podcast series interpreting latest evidence on tackling corruption, understanding complexity, with clear ‘so what?’ for policy and practice.
- **Infographics:** Continue generation of select infographics to more effectively communicate our expertise, findings, and proposed solutions.
- **“AC Talks”:** Experts from around the world on anti-corruption and related issues discuss pressing topics. 30-45 min discussions recorded and hosted on U4 website.

¹Mapping of the U4 team’s strengths and capacity gaps, and use this to better identify who to collaborate with (either externally or internally)

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- **Quick Explainer Videos:** 1-2 min videos explaining key corruption and anti-corruption issues, shared on social media.

Measuring progress and impact:

We will introduce a new question to our bi-annual user survey on whether U4 outputs demonstrate deep understanding of the complexities faced in anti-corruption, and whether our evidence and advice are offered in the right formats. We will also collect evidence of examples where our understanding of the intricacies of anti-corruption and related advice are helping lead to real-world impacts. We will use social media and web analytics to understand which formats have the best reach and prompt most engagement and debate.

Key Risks and mitigation:

- A risk when addressing complexity is that we might get lost in the detail. This could result in mere description of complexity, without truly understanding or explaining it. This could in turn lead to weak advice on solutions to our audience. To mitigate this risk, we aim to link our Goal 3 work to our efforts to continually improve our methods and quality control processes, and continually ask bigger “so what” questions about the focus of our work.

Goal 3 Milestones (Intermediate outcomes)

When	What
2022	
	Articulate how we will engage with complexity via our new communication strategy, and research strategy.
	Map U4 team's strengths and capacity gaps, and use this to better identify who to collaborate with (either externally or internally)
	Renew podcasts strategy, and generate first infographics
2023	
	Basic guide on corruption, anti-corruption and complexity
	Develop a hub for short explainer videos and AC Talks
	Add questions on complexity to user survey; use data to refine approach.
2024	
2025	

GOAL 4: **PUSHING ANTI-CORRUPTION UP THE AGENDA IN OUR PARTNERS' HOME COUNTRIES**

Key trend: Democracy and justice are coming under increased threat around the world, including in established democracies. Populism is transforming politics and narratives can be more important than evidence or 'truth'. In the meantime, climate change put our resources under stress, with the need to avoid leakages to optimise responses. Ensuring AC remains a top priority in U4 partners home country require to engage with key stakeholders that can help to level up standards for anti-corruption in strategic themes.

Objective: Over the next five years, U4 will support its partners to push anti-corruption up the agenda in their home countries, and keep it there. We will make the case with evidence that anti-corruption is a key driver for change in our U4 partner countries, demonstrating that corruption is related to a wide range of local, regional, and global challenges, and that tackling corruption requires a transnational and cross government effort, not just at the distant end of foreign policy and development aid.

Who we will work with:

We will map and strengthen relationships with stakeholders for our thematic work in the U4 partners' home countries, reaching out with researchers, think tanks, civil society organisations, private sector to support coalition building and efforts to push anti-corruption connected with local, regional and global challenges. We will work more closely with our U4 partners to develop awareness and to provide evidence to support their commitments to anti-corruption at home.

How our work will change:

We will engage proactively with staff from our U4 partner agencies, and across their governments, seeking opportunities to influence and reach a broader audience. We will identify and engage more actively with stakeholders within our U4 partner countries on priority themes. We will refine knowledge, skills, and capacities to develop an influence strategy with three levels – working within and outside government:

1. **Cross-government:** identify obstacles for anti-corruption efforts, ways to tackle these, and ensure synergies and engagement to push the anti-corruption agenda.
2. **"Pushing from within":** considering how anti-corruption can be pushed across our U4 partner government (eg. ministries, aid agencies) by working with U4 partners to strengthen their efforts. We will provide evidence and insights on the effects of corruption on home governments (eg. illicit financial flows, geo-politics, global security, climate).
3. **Public interest:** we will use research and insights on coalition building in policy advocacy and influencing public agendas to advocate for change in our U4 partner countries, and counter those undermining anti-corruption efforts. The aim is to increase leverage for U4 and our partners to promote anti-corruption at home, abroad, and internationally.

Measuring progress and impact:

We will expand U4 engagement in our partner countries through tools such as op-eds in collaboration with think tanks or NGOs, interviews with local media, publication in local or national newspapers and peer websites.

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We will extend the number of events such as roundtables, webinars organised in, or attended by U4 partner home countries, on Goal 4 themes, and aim for participation by senior officials across government. We will also seek more engagement with U4 products from partner countries (eg. More web users from U4 partner countries, more engagement on social media).

We will use 'storytelling' ('crown jewel' examples and impact case studies) on U4 work to gain attention and traction within U4 partner countries.

Key Risks and mitigation:

- Our U4 partners may face difficulties in pushing anti-corruption up the national agenda such as through political changes, lack of commitment or lack of capacities. We will mitigate using leverage points and coalitions of support, and peer influence /support among U4 partners to push the anti-corruption agenda.
- There may be reputational risks when engaging with new stakeholders. We will therefore use due diligence checks before engaging.
- We will need to adjust objectives and workload for team members in line with new ambitions, and earmark "ad-hoc time" to enable us to adapt to changing situations.

Goal 4 Milestones (Intermediate outcomes)

When	What
2022	
	U4 training needs identified and plan developed for 3 influencing approaches.
	Training for U4 team on issues such as cross-government strategies, Community Organising/Coalition Building, Lobbying and Advocacy.
	Identify relevant stakeholders, networks, platforms in at least two U4 partner countries (e.g. Finland, Canada) for priority anti-corruption themes (round 1).
2023	
	U4 Partner Forum on Goal 4 themes – and any course correction of strategy.
	Identify key stakeholders, networks and platforms in at least two U4 partner countries for priority anti-corruption themes (round 2).
	Ongoing dialogue with U4 partners on pushing AC 'up the agenda'.
	Developing new relationships with anti-corruption stakeholders (think tanks, researchers, CSO, etc.).
	Focus on public interest strategies and enhancing knowledge and awareness.
	Extend U4 evidence on 'how anti-corruption change happens' to Goal 4 and Partner country themes, and help networks apply lessons in their work.
2024	
2025	
	Review success and challenges of Goal 4 coalition strategy.

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GOAL 5: THE ORGANISATION WE WANT TO BECOME

We - the U4 team - added Goal 5 to underpin delivery of the 4 strategic goals in the U4 strategy.

Key trend: Teams deliver at their best when all their people know how to perform together, complement each other, and have balanced and responsible workloads.

Objective: U4 will systematically seek new ways to communicate, plan, implement, and learn as a team through collective efforts.

Who we will work with:

Different people hold the keys that help us develop U4 into a thriving organisation: our own colleagues in the team, at CMI, and within the partner agencies. External consultants can contribute awareness of best practice for team dynamics, efficiency, and work-life balance.

How our work will change:

U4 will seek a *work culture shift*. Shifting our focus from the individual to make more space and time for the collective, and to build the team, and the organisation, we want to become:

A great place to work: We will create space and time to have a more conscious, cohesive, holistic, and evidence-based approach to our work.

True teamwork is important: we will work smarter if we combine our skills throughout – from concept stage to ex-post analysis. Working collectively, smartly, and effectively has consequences: we need to rationalise our workloads and our over commitments, run fewer simultaneous projects than we are used to, and define and adopt new work habits that help all accept that more ‘meeting in the middle’ is needed, even if this means reducing our time committed to personal delivery. With the rest of CMI staff, we will create a long-term plan for how CMI and U4 should pull in the same direction, ensure positive personal linkages, and draw on each others’ strengths.

Learning better, advising better: We want our work to have long-term meaning and value, and *positive results* and *impact*. This requires that we *learn* and *improve*. To do this, giving and receiving effective *feedback* from within and outside the U4 team is an essential, ongoing process. Getting this right requires time, practice, responsibility, commitment, trust, and investment. We will allocate enough time to attune internal processes to truly benefit our work and the team. A supportive work environment needs to be cultivated and sustained by a healthy work-life balance. Together, the U4 team aims to build a work culture that is inclusive and considers individual needs within an enabling environment where we also deliver well as a team.

A dynamic communicator: Together, we will develop a communication strategy and plan for *punching above our weight* in the global anti-corruption community and beyond. We will make clear each U4 team member’s roles and responsibilities as communicators – building on each other’s strengths and learning and testing new skills. We will allocate the time and resources required to succeed, such as a proportion of overall time and costs at U4. This includes a shared, dynamic use of social media, and new types of content such as U4 impact stories.

A voice for inclusivity and gender equality: Communicating how to integrate gender and inclusion in anti-corruption work remains a U4 priority task. We will promote continued focus on avoiding harmful impacts of both corruption and anti-corruption interventions on women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and other marginalised groups. We will reinforce efforts that promote diversity in our team and among collaborators in our daily

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operations and our research. Furthermore, we will take steps to ensure that U4 outputs are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

Bringing ethics to the fore: Corruption is a sensitive issue, potentially causing ethical dilemmas for researchers and participants. CMI and U4 staff need to collaborate closely to ensure compliance with regulations and best practice for all involved. We will go beyond compliance, internal ethics training and data protection compliance, to advance an active conversation about how U4, our partners and collaborators, ensure our work does good.

Measuring progress and impact:

We will simplify and adapt our MEL framework to track and demonstrate the effects of Goal 5 priorities for team development and communication. We will balance the need to track change, with the resources the team can devote to collection and analysis of data. U4's work environment will be assessed on a yearly basis – accompanied by a team *results workshop*.

Key risks and mitigation:

Too many competing priorities are an acute risk to achieving our goals. We can mitigate this by earmarking funds, time, and naming coordinators for each area listed, such as:

- Earmarking minimum U4 budget (covering costs and staff hours) for communication.
- CMI-U4 annual plans and budget for individual and group training targets (specifying which proportion of CMI's overhead earnings covers training costs).
- A work-life balance and office culture policy.

Goal 5 Milestones (Intermediate outcomes)

When	What
2022	Process: Developing new Communication strategy, including team training plan and plans for earmarking resources/staff time for comms work in 2023
	Process: Improving accessibility of outputs, including inclusion of persons with disabilities, and compliance with EU web accessibility directive: <i>Essentials I</i> course and U4 website
	Process: Revise the U4 MEL framework and include Goal 5, plan for earmarking staff time for MEL in 2023
	Discussion: Improving feedback within U4, and from funding partners to U4 team.
	Discussions: Bringing ethics to the fore and incorporating inclusion/gender in AC outputs. Earmark resources for this work in 2023.
	Team workshop: Work-life balance and office culture. Earmark resources for this work in 2023 and follow up CMI work environment survey action points.
	Draft policy: Work-life balance and office culture in line with CMI policy.
2023	Significant attention to gender & inclusion in at least 50% of U4 research outputs 2022.
	Review work-life balance and office culture policy.
	Update and implement team learning plans on communication, inclusivity, gender analysis, and ethics (including implementing ethical guidance towards contracted collaborators)
2024	Mid-term review.