

Call for Proposals

Scoping existing anti-corruption evidence in 3 core areas

Summary

The Global Integrity Anti-Corruption Evidence (GI-ACE) Research Programme is seeking 3 individual consultants (or teams of consultants) to scope and summarize the available evidence on three important areas of anti-corruption work:

- Global Finance & the Enablers of Corruption
- Crisis Response and Corruption in Vulnerable Sectors
- Corruption Risks in Trade and Commerce

Expected deliverable for each area is a comprehensive report that makes a clear link between key practitioner interests and the available academic literature (and gray literature where useful) in order to identify evidence gaps in our existing knowledge.

Timeline: 12 weeks between 11 July 2022 and 30 September 2022

Budget for each report: ~\$33k USD for each short-term study

Donor: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

Deadline for Application: Sunday, July 3rd, 2022 6 pm EST

Solicitation

Background

The Anti-Corruption Evidence (ACE) programme is funded by UK Aid and designed to produce new and operationally relevant research evidence on tackling corruption to support evidence-based and ultimately more effective anti-corruption initiatives in countries around the world. ACE represents a multi-year and multi-million pound investment by FCDO and comprises three distinct programme strands: GI-ACE, headed by Paul Heywood, SOAS-ACE, headed by Mushtaq Khan, and SOC-ACE, headed by Heather Marquette.

[GI-ACE](#) has worked with fourteen research teams over the last three years in generating world-class evidence on anti-corruption initiatives around the world, to help inform practitioners' efforts to deliver better outcomes. The teams conduct research that is problem-driven and rigorous, designed to inform practitioners' efforts to craft and implement more effective anti-corruption interventions in their

own contexts. We've supported academics to generate evidence on 'what works' to tackle corruption in FCDO priority countries and beyond. The aim is to better address corruption challenges by supporting policymakers and practitioners at the frontline of anti-corruption work in designing and implementing more effective anti-corruption initiatives.

Projects have generated impact via concrete tests of anti-corruption interventions, providing insights and findings that were presented to a range of governments around the world, including bodies such as FCDO and USAID, civil society organizations and international organizations such as World Bank, IMF and OECD as well as other key players in the anti-corruption space.

GI-ACE research also generated substantial media attention, particularly around its findings on the transnational networks facilitating illicit financial flows as well as corruption risks in procurement and through its work on specific sectors, including on integrity-enhancing measures in professions and in the civil service.

The GI-ACE programme has been granted a six month funding extension to identify and scope existing evidence in three areas of anti-corruption work — based on the assumption that a rigorous evidence review will help to delineate what future research might need to look at to help develop yet more effective anti-corruption interventions.

Objective

This call for proposals seeks to commission three separate short-term studies that will scope and summarize the available evidence in three important areas of anti-corruption work that have come into sharper relief as a result of previous work done under the GI-ACE programme as well as recent advances within the field more generally. The aim is to identify core questions and evidence gaps that would benefit from policy-oriented academic research should further funding become available in the future to support more in-depth and longer term projects.

Themes

Research consultants or small established teams of research consultants are invited to submit their proposals for these short-term research opportunities in regard to one or more of the identified themes as laid out below:

1. Global Finance and the Enablers of Corruption

The release of the Panama, Pandora, and Paradise papers as well as the FinCEN files in autumn 2020 highlighted how — despite increased awareness of the scale of illicit financial flows — a global elite still benefits from the active assistance of banks, financial institutions, and other enablers to move vast sums of dirty money around the world. Significant and innovative research was conducted under the auspices of GI-ACE projects, focusing in particular on the role of enablers (such as bankers, lawyers, realtors, auditors, etc.) and regulatory frameworks in relation to illicit financial flows (IFFs). Reflecting the growing worldwide momentum to pass new and enhanced anti-money laundering legislation, including on beneficial ownership registers (a trend that has received a boost with the Biden administration's commitment to crack down on illicit finance and the recent war by Russia on the Ukraine), we now seek to assess the state of the art in regard to existing evidence and remaining research gaps. An important starting point is the question about what kind of evidence might be needed to inform the development of appropriate measures to protect those in

the Global South who suffer most from the connivance of professional facilitators in IFFs and other forms of money laundering and what evidence might be needed to further enhance the ability of northern governments to more effectively play their role in combating IFFs.

2. Crisis Responses and Corruption in Vulnerable Sectors

Past health emergencies and natural disasters, such as the Ebola crisis in West Africa, cyclones in East Africa or Hurricanes in the US saw the emergence of fraudulent charities, government and private-sector benefit fraud, identity theft, government contract and procurement fraud, and other forms of corruption at the intersection between public and private actors. As the world faces growing threats from climate change, increasingly frequent extreme weather events and health-related crises, the risk of corrupt actors exploiting emergency measures has also increased. More research is needed in order to better assess the risks and more accurately identify effective practices to better deal with crises and to prepare for and establish anti-corruption measures before a crisis hits. The recent COVID-19 crisis has again highlighted how such potential risks and opportunities for corruption in health research, development, procurement, and delivery remain present, particularly as emergency powers allow for conventional scrutiny measures to be circumvented. What is the state of the available evidence to help untangle what feasible anti-corruption measures and interventions might look like that can strengthen the resilience of vulnerable sectors, so that they are more resistant to being overridden by the invocation of emergency powers. And conversely, what are the remaining gaps that would be useful to explore?

3. Corruption Risks in (Global) Trade and Commerce

Transactions between people and companies in an increasingly globalized world have opened new opportunities for corrupt exchanges, e.g. illicit cross-border trade, underground financial systems, trade diversion, transfer pricing, invoicing abuse. Yet, there has been little focus on how to address such corruption challenges. Commodity trading is a sector of significant strategic importance that is exposed to major corruption risks that are still insufficiently understood, with knock-on effects on the well-being of people around the world and implications for sectors such as health, technology or housing. Commodities trading companies (CTCs) - especially in the oil and gas sectors - often operate in high-risk locations with weak governance, institutions, rule of law and limited state accountability. The sector is notoriously opaque and poorly regulated, with low levels of transparency and accountability. Based on a review of existing research evidence — and guided by an approach that identifies a clear rationale as to what lens might be useful to take — we want to commission a study that will identify evidence gaps in order to help set the agenda for future work needed to help develop more effective anti-corruption interventions.

Approach

For the evidence review to achieve its intended purpose within the proposed time frame, the research team must identify a clear rationale for their point of departure. We are less interested in just a listing of existing research on each area (although that should form part of the overall approach), than a clearly articulated framework that helps distill which questions are most important and how further research might help to shed light on key questions to support anti-corruption interventions.

In line with the ACE principles guiding our work, we strongly suggest the framing of each study should be grounded by research questions derived from real-world problems and priorities. We

expect research teams to justify their approach in a way that extends beyond the particular interests of any one organization or jurisdiction, whilst avoiding being overly theoretical and abstract.

GI-ACE has prioritized listening to diverse practitioners over recent years and we encourage striking a balance between conducting a rigorous evidence review and grounding the framing and approach in stakeholder insights and observations about current policy developments.

Expected Deliverables

A well-structured and well-written report that provides a clear framing for its point of departure, identification of key research areas and gaps and suggestions for future topics of relevance to those engaged in anti-corruption initiatives. Ideally we might be able to take advantage of the research team guiding one or two (virtual) focus groups throughout the three month period — supported by the the GI-ACE team where useful.

How to apply

- A brief cover letter highlighting your (or your team's) motivation and fit to conduct the research, as well as any risks or challenges you identify. Please limit your letter to one page.
- A brief research proposal providing an overview of how you would frame your approach, the methods you will employ, and the format of your report. Please limit your outline to no more than three pages.
- A breakdown of funding requirements (up to maximum of \$33k for each theme) and how this funding would cover the required capacity of you (and/or your team) to complete the research — based on a timeline of no more than three months (Gantt charts might be a useful way to indicate capacity, cost and approximate timelines).
- An outline of your experience, fit and qualifications to undertake this project, including a 2-page CV for all who will be involved.

The impacts of corruption are felt on a global scale and are highly influenced by the perpetuation of unequal power dynamics and inequity. As such, we are committed to bringing together a diverse team of researchers that will deliver research products that reflect the intersectional nature of the anti-corruption field.

Please submit all required documents — saved as pdf files — to veronica@globalintegrity.org, cc johannes.tonn@globalintegrity.org and paul.heywood@globalintegrity.org.

Deadline for Application: Sunday, July 3rd, 2022 6 pm EST

For any questions please contact:

Johannes Tonn, GI-ACE Programme Lead at johannes.tonn@globalintegrity.org and cc Paul Heywood, GI-ACE Programme Director at paul.heywood@globalintegrity.org