

Questionnaire

All the responses in this questionnaire are linked to Transparency International-Secretariat's experience with the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG).

Further information regarding the levels of transparency and civil society participation in the international meetings of six anti-corruption review mechanisms can be found here: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/transparency_participation_an_evaluation_anti_corruption_review_mechanisms

Please share your experience in exercising, or seeking to exercise, your right to participate in public affairs in one or several of the following global governance groupings/spaces: G7, G20, G77/G24, NAM, BRICS, WEF and BM in terms of:

- a. Access: Although the ACWG meets three times a year and each meeting has a length of two days, we are only invited to attend and speak in a single short session.
 - b. Inclusivity;
 - c. Influencing the decision-making process. The way in which the G20 ACWG engages with civil society organizations makes it really very difficult not only to influence the debate, the decision making process, but also the main priorities in which the Working Group will focus for the next years.
2. What were the main structural and/or practical obstacles you or your colleagues encountered when participating, or seeking to participate, prior to, during and after decision-making (for instance in terms of shaping the agenda of decision-making processes, participation at an early stage when all options are still open, accreditation, physical and/or online access to forums, issuance of visas, availability of funds, access to information relevant to decision-making processes, etc.)?

There are several structural and practical obstacles that we face at different stages of our participation:

Before the meeting:

- Lack of basic and relevant information: One of the biggest weaknesses of the G20 is its communication. Currently, no permanent official G20 website exists. Every presidency establishes its website which is no longer updated after the end of the presidency. G20 documents are often hard to find as information is scattered through several different websites, making it difficult to civil society, the media and researchers to consult documents or inform

themselves about G20 activities. Interested parties should be able to consult all G20 relevant documents in all single platform.

Furthermore, although we are invited to the meeting, the G20 doesn't share with us the agenda of the event. This has a negative impact in our participation in the meeting and possibilities of influencing the ACWG as we are invited to speak in a short session and we don't even know the topics the Working Group is discussing.

- Delay in receiving the invitation to attend to the ACWG Meeting. Although the exact days of the meetings are known in advanced, we generally receive the formal invitation and registration form with a short notice.
- We never receive any kind of financial support for the G20 in order to attend to the ACWG meeting.
- Lack of fluent and effective contact with civil society organization representatives: Many G20 countries don't have a regular contact or formal meetings with civil society representatives in order to inform them about the progress of the work of the ACWG and listen the recommendations, concerns and demands of civil society organizations.

During the meeting:

- Although the ACWG Meetings length is of two entire days, we are only invited to speak in a single short session (no more than 60 minutes) and not to the different thematic sessions.
- In several occasions, although we shared in advanced our policy documents with the G20 ACWG chair and co – chairs (responsible for the logistic of the meeting) and requested them to forward them to the rest of the G20 delegates in advance to the Meeting so we can have a constructive and valuable exchange with them in the single short session in which we participate. However, in several occasions the G20 ACWG chair/co-chair don't distribute the papers in advance, which means that the G20 delegates only receive the documents once the session of exchange with civil society is started.

After the meeting:

- Lack of fluent and effective contact with civil society organization representatives: Many G20 countries don't have a regular contact or formal meetings with civil society representatives in order to inform them about the progress of the work of the ACWG and listen the recommendations, concerns and demands of civil society organizations.
- Lack of relevant information: There isn't any kind of information regarding the implementation of previous commitments assumed by the G20 country members, there is no public minute of the meeting

3. Which improvements do you see as key to secure genuine and meaningful participation in decision-making processes of the aforementioned groupings/spaces, including by the underrepresented parts of society as mentioned above, victims of discrimination and marginalization because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as social movements?

In order to ensure an effective engagement the G20 ACWG should incorporate several changes:

- **Improve annual accountability reports:** past accountability reports have not been consistent. Different approaches are taken under different presidencies, which can have a negative impact on continuity. There should be a more formalized approach regarding how the accountability reports are prepared and the issues to be covered.
- The ACWG should clearly communicate **what it intends to achieve and by when**. The yearly work program is a unique opportunity to translate in a more clear and specific way not only the areas of work in which the ACWG will be focusing on, but also clear objectives and timeline. The accountability report should then assess what has been done and achieved under the proposed work program.
- **Monitoring specific anti-corruption commitments:** G20 countries should be accountable for the commitments they have assumed over the last years and show in a clear and comprehensive way the progress that has been made, the challenges that still remain and how they plan to overcome them and under which timeline. We believe that dedicated accountability reports for each of the commitments areas (High-Level Principles) are the best way to assess implementation and hold countries accountable. This approach may also be useful in identifying areas where countries need technical or other type of support. A general, combined progress report is not satisfactory for monitoring progress and leads to gaps;
 - The current bi/tri-annual action plans usually define areas of focus for actions of the working group. These more comprehensive reports could be aligned with these areas of focus and used to improve the collection of best practices, sharing of knowledge and expertise and other policy-related actions led by the ACWG. For example, for the 2019-2021 Annual Plan, the ACWG has committed to work on three areas where the G20 has made concrete commitments through the adoption of high-level principles (conflicts of interest, liability of legal persons, and beneficial ownership)¹, the working group could therefore prepare specific evaluations to assess how well these principles have been implemented in each G20 country. These evaluations should provide a clear picture of what each country has done to implement each of the commitments. In cases of non-compliance, countries should report on the challenges and propose actions on how to address them, including a concrete timeline.
- **Improve accountability mechanisms: in the past years, the Working Group**

¹ [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAF/WGB/RD\(2018\)10&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAF/WGB/RD(2018)10&docLanguage=En)

has worked on several issues and developed a wide varied of resources. Unfortunately, however, detailed knowledge on the Working Group has been limited due to the poor engagement and **lack of public information**. In order to improve the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group accountability we recommend the following:

- **Having an effective engagement with Civil Society:**

Civil society is not just a watchdog, it includes innovators, technologists and policy experts that can help not only holding governments accountable for their commitments but also support the implementation in order to achieve the best possible results. Civil society can also to contribute to increased transparency and the credible evaluation of outcomes. There is therefore room for a more meaningful engagement with civil society. Although the ACWG invites CSOs representatives to their meetings, it is time to improve the Working Group engagement with CSOs in order to ensure it is effective. This could be done by:

 - Inviting NGOs and business representatives to additional parts of the Working Group meetings to provide insights and guidance on a thematic basis and not in a single short session.
 - Sharing with civil society representatives the agenda of the meeting.
 - Meeting with civil society groups in-country prior to G20 ACWG meetings. This is already the practice in some countries, where governments convene meetings with business and civil society stakeholders in-country throughout the year.

- **Improve communications:** Currently, no permanent official G20 website exists. Every presidency establishes its website which is no longer updated after the end of the presidency. G20 documents are often hard to find as information is scattered through several different websites, making it difficult to civil society, the media and researchers to consult documents or inform themselves about G20 activities. Interested parties should be able to consult all G20 relevant documents in all single platform.
 - There should be a permanent official G20 website maintained by contributions of all G20 countries, accessible in languages which could be the official UN languages and containing all G20 resources.
 - We welcomed the German presidency's initiative² to compile all existing anti-corruption commitments into one location as well as the Argentinean initiative of putting all those commitments in the G20 official website.
 - The ACWG has also committed in its Action Plan 2019-2021 to publish its work plan annual progress reports in the official G20 website. This is an excellent initiative that should be implemented since the beginning of each G20 presidency, ensuring that all the documents are easily located. Under no circumstance there should be long delays in the publication of the anti-corruption documents. We encourage all

² https://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/G20/G20_node.html

G20 host countries to publish all the G20 anti-corruption existent resources in the official G20 website.

- **Improved cooperation and coordination:** the **G20 ACWG should step out of the G20 silo.** Corruption is not an add-on issue that can be dealt with in isolation. The G20 ACWG should consult and be consulted by other G20 Working Groups. Any high-level G20 pledge, for instance around infrastructure or investment, should incorporate and consider corruption risks and countermeasures.

4. What has been your experience exercising, or seeking to exercise, your rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in the holding of meetings of one or several of the aforementioned groupings/spaces and in the margins thereof?

In the framework of the G20 ACWG Meetings our access to freedom of expression was always respected. However, in November 2017, when Transparency International participated of the UNDOC meeting in Vienna, we wanted to present our technical publications and we were censored we were asked to remove all our publications, which had a 100% technical character.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 19 – Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and across frontiers.

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CENSORED

5. Have you or your colleagues been the subject of reprisal because of your participation, or attempt to participate, in a meeting or activity of one or several of the aforementioned groupings/spaces? If so, please provide information on the type of reprisal, the perpetrator(s), whether you reported the case to the organizers and the relevant authorities, and which action they took to address the situation and prevent reoccurrences (if any).

We have never been subject of reprisal as a consequence of our participation or attempt to participate in a meeting. However, In 2017, when Transparency International participated of the UNDOC meeting, we wanted to present our technical publications and we were censored.

6. In your view, what is the overall impact of the economic and financial policies of the aforementioned groupings/spaces on a democratic and equitable international order?

Originally created as an informal forum to maintain financial stability, the G20 is at the global level, the most relevant space in common in which developed and emerging countries to discuss issues on the global agenda and has a clear and concrete impact in the economic development, not only of its countries members, but also beyond.

Regarding corruption, in recent years cross-border grand corruption scandals have not only embroiled G20 countries but have also shown that national efforts to fight corruption often fall short. International spaces, such as the G20, in which countries can come together in order to coordinate their anti-corruption policies and efforts, are essential.

Since 2010, the G20 has been making all the right noises, ranging from setting up a specific working group on anti-corruption to developing more than 60 documents that address a wide range of topics, including beneficial ownership transparency, open data and asset disclosure.

7. More broadly, in what way(s) do you see a lack of genuine and meaningful participation and lack of influencing of decision-making process by the public in global governance grouping/spaces in general hampering the realization of a democratic and equitable international order?

In order to tackle the major global challenges we face, but even as the space for Civil Society shrinks around the world, Civil Society groups are increasingly important for moving the agenda forward as we bring a set of unique skills to the table:

- o Expertise and collaborate : Civil society is not just a watchdog – we include innovators, technologists and policy experts. Governments should, collaborate with us, Build tools with us.

- o Hold accountable: Civil society will hold governments accountable – because we want the best outcomes. We work so that both governments' time and resources are used effectively and in the best interest of citizens. So when they commit to something we will hold them accountable. Sometimes governments won't like it, but often, by doing so, we have found we are strengthening the champions inside government who really want to get things done

- o Explain: Much government policy is too technical for normal citizens. Civil society can help explain what changes mean. Governments should talk to civil society about your plans so we can provide feedback on how they will impact people.

- o Provide balance: One of the greatest weaknesses at the G20 (and many other international fora) is the lack of openness to having civil society representatives around the table, in the same way the door has been opened to businesses. This does nothing for trust, and it shows why people around the world believe governments are too close to business or only act in their interests.

However, governments and many international organizations don't have an effective engagement with civil society organizations. When they invite us to their official meetings, we don't have the same level of access than the private sector: We are treated as second class partners.

Furthermore, in many international spaces civil society is only invited to engage at the end of the process, without receiving relevant information in order to influence the process.

Given the enormous challenges we are facing, working together is not an option, it is a survival imperative.