UNCAC COALITION

A Guide to Transparency and Participation in the UNCAC Review Mechanism

Transparency and civil society participation are essential to the effectiveness of the UNCAC Review Mechanism. Multiple international instruments and fora have highlighted that the fight against corruption needs to live up to its own standards and that it requires the involvement of all stakeholders – both from within and outside governments – to ensure success.

An open and inclusive process can bring additional information and technical expertise to the discussions, safeguard the legitimacy and accountability of the process, and ensure compliance with international human rights law, as well as compliance with the commitments and principles contained within the UNCAC itself.

Since the UNCAC Review Mechanism was adopted in 2009, there have been many positive examples from around the world of how to conduct the country review process. Some countries have led the way by proactively publishing their self-assessment checklists and full country reports, while others have enabled civil society input at various stages of the review process and supported its participation on the international stage.

This guide draws on positive practice in the first and second cycles of UNCAC reviews, as well as applicable international law. It identifies the multiple concrete steps that States Parties can take throughout the review process to ensure that it becomes transparent and inclusive, and consequently robust, legitimate and effective.

Please send your comments or questions on this guide to info@uncaccoalition.org.

	Country Review					Guiding Principles
	Preparation	**Self-Assess-ment**	**Peer Review** (Dialogue and On-Site Visit)	**Report**	**Follow-up**	
PARTICIPA-TION *(From consultation to dialogue and partnership)*	Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to support a transparent and inclusive process. Research which non-state actors work on anti-corruption, transparency and democracy issues in the country and invite them to participate in the review process. The non-state actors involved should include representatives of civil society organisations (CSO), the private sector, professional associations, academia and the media. Form a multi-stakeholder advisory team or joint planning group to consult on the organisation of the implementation review. Consider awareness-raising and capacity building opportunities to facilitate participation.	Invite CSO representatives and other non-state actors to contribute to the self-assessment. Convene one or more national stakeholder workshops to gain inputs for the self-assessment and raise awareness about the review process. If time and resources of government and/or civil society do not allow for the above steps, invite civil society comments on a draft self-assessment, which is then reflected in the final version.	Include non-state actors wherever possible in dialogues and meetings with the expert review team, including in all meetings during the on-site visit. Encourage written submissions by non-state actors to the review team, providing assessments of government implementation and recommendations for improvements.	Invite non-state actors to provide input to the country report approval process. Include detailed information on how the review process was conducted in the review report.	Organise a stakeholder dialogue and meetings to shape a follow-up action plan to implement the review recommendations. Provide opportunities for civil society to comment on government progress reports and to present their own monitoring reports to government.	**Inclusivity** – make efforts to secure participation from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, including marginalised and at-risk groups. **Capacity** – where appropriate, train and support stakeholders to participate in the process. **Timeliness** – ensure sufficient time for stakeholders to submit their comments and input, and for these to be taken into account. **Responsiveness** – explain how the stakeholders' input is being assessed and incorporated into decisions. **Resourcing** – ensure adequate resourcing to receive and process stakeholder inputs. **Independence** – allow civil society to remain independent and guarantee the right to campaign and act irrespective of their views and relationship with the government.

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TRANSPARENCY *(Active publication and information sharing)*	Publish and maintain comprehensive information on the upcoming review (e.g. in a section of the competent ministry's website) including: - The UNCAC review process, its methodology and schedule; - The contact details of the government's coordinator of the process (focal point); - Qualification criteria for non-state actor participation and key entry points for contributions. Allow interested stakeholders to stay informed throughout the review process, e.g. through an email newsletter.	Publish the completed self-assessment checklist on the government's website as soon as it is available and before the beginning of the peer-review phase. Agree to prompt publication of the self-assessment on the UNODC website. Communicate the completion of the self-assessment through relevant channels to the public and inform the stakeholders who have contributed or otherwise expressed interest in the process.	Encourage the expert review teams to visit the country under review. Schedule the visit in a way that provides stakeholders with sufficient time to prepare. Publicise the visit, along with a schedule of events and the composition of the review team on the government's website. Seek the reviewers' permission to publicise their contact information, or create a mechanism that allows stakeholders to submit written input to them.	Make sure to publish the country review findings, including the full country report, in the original and local languages on the government's website. Agree to the publication of the full country report on UNODC's website. Actively communicate the release of the report to stakeholders and the public. Provide the report to Parliament and the media.	Report regularly on progress in relation to the country review recommendations, uploading reports on a designated government website and by submitting progress reports to the UNODC. Publish information about opportunities for non-state actors to provide input to and feedback on the progress reports.	**Accessibility** – ensure the publication is accessible online and understandable for all stakeholders and, wherever possible, address obstacles such as geography, language and the digital divide. **Openness** – ensure that documents and data are published and available online in open and easily accessible formats through a single designated government website. **Timeliness** – ensure the publication is sufficiently timely to allow for meaningful monitoring of and participation in the process. Even if the schedule changes: sufficient advance notice for stakeholders is crucial. **Accuracy** – ensure that the most relevant and up-to-date information is provided.

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	Conference of States Parties & Subsidiary Bodies
Participation *(From consultation to dialogue and partnership)*	*Signatory States:* Confirm that in line with CoSP rules of procedure 2 and 17, non-state actors are entitled to participate as observers in all CoSP subsidiary bodies, including in the Implementation Review Group and in any UNCAC Working Groups. Be willing to include civil society representatives in national delegations. Support initiatives to expand civic space in UNCAC fora and end practices that allow for CSO representatives to be excluded from a CoSP upon request of undisclosed governments without any reasons being provided. Ensure sufficient funding for the IRM, including to enable expert team country visits and meetings with stakeholders. Instruct UNODC to convene a periodic conference of UNCAC stakeholders in advance of the CoSP to share experiences with respect to UNCAC implementation. Drawing on the experience of international human rights treaty bodies, mandate the creation of a safe reporting mechanism, enabling individuals and legal entities to safely share information with the UN on corruption issues covered by UNCAC, especially grand corruption.
Transparency *(Proactive Publication)*	*Signatory States:* Support a continued review process with higher minimum levels of transparency and civil society participation, as well as the creation of a follow-up mechanism on previous reviews. *UNODC:* Publish the list of UNCAC government focal points online and add all information relating to the reviews, including whether countries have authorised a country visit, schedules of visits, members of the Peer Review Teams and the current status of the review.