

Guidelines for authors and contributors

This document lays out what is involved in authoring a review for CurbingCorruption, what we are expecting from our authors, and guidance on structure and style.

# Options for authoring and contributing

There are four ways you can work with us:

1. Research Contributor (grad students especially): You can write a small research project, or your dissertation project, in the form of a contribution. The contribution could be any one of the following:
* Examples of corruption reform within a single sector. You could cover just one part of the sector (e.g. hospital reforms within the health sector, or the reform of electoral commissions within the broader sector of political and electoral institutions). Or you could examine one particular aspect of reform, for example the ways that international organisations do/do not contribute to sector corruption reforms, or the politics of sector reforms within a sector. We can suggest numerous research projects within this scope, in discussion with you.
* Examples of sector corruption reform within a single country (China, Japan, Canada, Philippines, Nigeria, etc). You could cover just one sector (e.g. in a large country such as Nigeria or India), or do the research on reforms across some or many sectors
* Examples of sector corruption reform across one or more sectors in non-English-speaking countries (eg countries speaking Arabic, Russian, Spanish, etc
* Examples of corruption reforms in conflict countries and fragile states (a special situation)

After you have agreed the scope and timing with us at CurbingCorruption (via email), you then need to agree it with your supervisor. We will support and supervise your work, via skype calls, and will edit your contribution.

You can separately publish your stand-alone piece or use it in any other way that you want. We can also publish the stand-alone piece in CurbingCorruption, from where it can be hyperlinked and downloaded. This option can be convenient for students and young researchers seeking a site where their work will be available and referenced publicly.

1. Lead author for a sector: You be the lead person in drafting the sector review: do the research, write the sector text, and follow this actively through the editing process to the point of publication on the web. In this case we credit you as being either the ‘originating author’ of the review, or the lead co-author, in the case that an editor has contributed heavily. This is a demanding task and is likely to need people who have several years of experience of working on corruption and governance issues and enough experience to be able to keep the focus on solutions, not just on the problems of corruption. Don’t let this stop you applying though if you’re keen.
2. Co-author: You can again be the lead person on the research and write the draft text, but then hand over to us to finalise it (usually for reasons of available time). One of our editors will then complete the review or we may ask another volunteer to finalise it with us. In this case you would be credited as a co-author of the review.
3. Practitioner contributor (officials and stakeholders): We welcome your contributions to the text - this is one of the deliberate intents of the website. You can contribute text in any way that you like, which we will then edit into the sector review. You will be credited as a contributor to the review. Your text does not need to be ‘academic’ – we just want the examples, and any accompanying analysis of the reforms – to be available for others to read about.

# Sectors

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# Editing, curating, original versions and updated versions

1. After the sector review has been uploaded to the site, CurbingCorruption editors are in charge of all future changes, so do expect to cede control of the review content.
2. Nonetheless, originating authors are encouraged to stay involved to curate their review in response to feedback, third party contributions and additional experience.
3. Because the sector material is expected to evolve continuously as people contribute, there will not be a permanent text. It means that the website version at any point in time is the ‘authoritative’ version of the review.
4. The complete sector text is regularly exported from the website, usually to WORD, tidied up, and then re-uploaded to the website as a pdf copy. This pdf is stored in two places - the ‘Publications’ section of the website, and at the top of the Sector Review. Its location in the Publications section serves as the reference point from which it can be hyperlinked and downloaded. This pdf document is a useful stand-alone version at any point in time; but is never the ‘authoritative’ version, which is the current web version.

# Style

Writing in an accessible style is essential. The reader – who we assume to be a public official looking to establish an anti-corruption initiative – may not have English as their first or even second language, will be pressed for time, and may have no detailed anti-corruption knowledge. He/she needs to feel right from the beginning that this site will be of immediate practical assistance.

1. Sector reviews are written to be read and updated on the web. This is a quite different style of writing from printed form. Your material should be structured from the start as a web text. For example, you should tell the reader the main points in the first paragraph of each section or sub-section, allowing all the further detail and examples to sit within expandable/collapsible paragraphs. You should use photos, videos, diagrams, examples, short paragraphs and other such means to break up chunks of text. We can give guidance on this.
2. Write in an easy, friendly style; not in an ‘academic’ style or format. The style and material should be constructive, stressing possible actions rather than lists of problems.
3. Despite being easy to read, the review needs to have depth to it, because corruption will never be ‘easy’ and the reader needs to dig down more if he/she wishes to. So do provide the depth, which we will handle by way of ‘collapsible text’, where all the detail is hidden unless the reader is specifically interested and opens it up.
4. Use lots of examples, in each section and sub-section. Such reform examples may have worked or may have failed – the point is to give constructive ideas for the reader to form their own opinion of whether to try it themselves. It takes effort to find examples; that’s one of the points of this website. We use two different formats for examples: 1) Important ones that really illustrate your point, which will be largely in the main text, and 2) ‘Ordinary’ examples, which get a title and sometimes 1-2 lines of descriptive summary in the main text, then the rest of the example is placed within collapsible text.
5. Sources are always referenced and hyperlinked. We do not use ‘Notes’.

# Substance

The heart of the work is to produce sector-specific guidance on curbing the corruption problems in that sector by way of lots of examples of what others have done so as to give inspiration and ideas to public officials around the world. This sounds easy, but it’s not:

* 90% of what is written on corruption is about the problems and horrors of corruption, not on how solutions and reforms have played out. This means you have to dig more deeply into what has been written to extract the positive lessons of reforms that have been tried, including where they failed.
* Today’s narrative on corruption is mostly national (e.g. ‘Estonia is less corrupt than Greece’) or global (e.g. beneficial ownership transparency), rather than on a sector basis. You have to read more widely to bring out the sector lessons from national and international studies.
* The corruption narrative splits sharply between corruption in developing countries (especially from development agencies, World Bank, the UN, U4, etc) and in developed countries. Examining analysis, reforms and strategies within a single sector means you can address the issues in a different way, one that is more about the peculiarities of the sector and less about the differences between developed/ developing countries. However, few of the articles you read will help you do this directly; you have to dig more.

Bringing out the particularities of corruption reform within the sector, by finding and reflecting on large numbers of examples within the literature, is the heart of the sector review.

# Structure of the review

The broad structure of the review is fixed, with the idea that your guidance and your examples will fit into a recognisable template that comes from the foundational ‘five-step’ guidance.

The four main sections to each review are: 1. Analyse the Corruption types in the sector; 2. Review the Reforms and reform approaches; 3. Develop the overall strategy; 4. Transnational initiatives. (The fifth step ‘Ask & Connect’ is standard to all reviews).

Occasionally the main four-section structure will not fit nicely with a particular sector (there are three current cases: construction, private sector, local government). Ask us about this if it seems to be the case in your sector.

The review design also requires one introductory paragraph at the front where you set the scene of the sector, and a section for recommended reading and bibliography at the end. We prefer any additional explanatory material to be in the text rather than as annexes, where it is hidden as collapsed text.

You can see the indicative contents page, plus some guidance, on the attached page.

# Editing

You should expect quite intrusive editing by the editorial team, because we intend to have a constant, identifiable style across the whole website. Please don’t be offended!

We are likely also to send your draft to others in the sector for critical comment. This is a less time-consuming process than academic peer review, as the editors are the judge of the material.