

## STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO PROMOTE INTEGRITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



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The Latin American and Caribbean Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS) is an international organisation<sup>1</sup> which groups together the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of 22 countries in the region<sup>2</sup>. In addition, it is made up of 29 subnational audit institutions<sup>3</sup> and organisations from other regions<sup>4</sup>.

Among the main objectives of OLACEFS is the creation and development of professional and institutional capacities of its members, as well as promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices in governmental control, international standards and the fight against corruption, among others. Additionally, the Organisation has sought to become

a regional platform to facilitate access to various international cooperation initiatives, which has allowed the execution of relevant projects to improve external control in environmental matters, develop various coordinated audits<sup>5</sup> with a focus on the SDGs, and implement methodologies to assess the ease with which citizens and external stakeholders can access the information generated by SAIs.

In this context, on Wednesday, 03 February 2021, OLACEFS and the Alliance for Integrity, signed a Memorandum of Understanding<sup>6</sup>. This agreement seeks to promote the joint implementation of actions aimed at capacity building of SAIs in the region, to ensure that the external control carried out by its members is done as effectively as possible, in the context of promoting integrity and accountability of the public sector as measures to prevent and combat corruption.

The foregoing will also strengthen the capacities of SAIs to support the efficient, effective and transparent implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially considering that its Goals 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" and 17 "Partnerships for the goals" include matters related to the promotion of integrity in the public sector and the fight against corruption.

1 For more information, you can consult: <https://www.olacefs.com/>

2 The 22 full members of OLACEFS are the SAIs of Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

3 They correspond to state or local control entities of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

4 They correspond to the SAIs of Spain, Italy and Portugal.

5 You can find more information at: <https://www.olacefs.com/auditorias-coordinados/>

6 For more information go to: <https://www.olacefs.com/olacefs-y-el-programa-alianza-por-la-integridad-de-la-giz-firman-memorando-de-ententación/>

In this framework of collaboration, together with the Alliance for Integrity, we deepen our knowledge of public-private initiatives in which SAIs of the region have participated. The second line of work of the Memorandum of Understanding seeks to strengthen the capacities of SAIs in their communication and inter-institutional articulation (organised public-private dialogues). To do this, we conducted a survey among all OLACEFS members to collect information on regional experiences on collaborative work between SAIs, the private sector and/or civil society to prevent or combat corruption.

Based on the analysis of the survey results, it seems relevant to us to present four innovative initiatives that have the potential to become replicable experiences in the region.

### **1. Guide with recommendations for emergency contracting during Covid-19, Court of Accounts of the Union of Brazil**

The Federal Court of Accounts (TCU-Brazil)<sup>7</sup>, in conjunction with Transparency International Brazil<sup>8</sup>, developed the Guide with recommendations for emergency contracting during Covid-19<sup>9</sup>. This was intended to serve as a reference for the prevention and fight against corruption in the current pandemic scenario, offering public decision makers and control bodies practical information to properly conduct the administration of public funds during the crisis, at the Federal, State and Municipal levels.

In accordance with the above, this initiative aims to save lives and minimise the impacts of the pandemic by supporting the administration so that the funds destined to manage the crisis reach their destination.

### **2. Adherence to the Global Compact Initiative, Office of the Comptroller General of Bogotá, Colombia**

This initiative of the Comptroller General of Bogotá<sup>10</sup>, in conjunction with the Local Network Corporation of the Global

Compact in Colombia,<sup>11</sup> seeks to promote the commitment of the private, public and civil society sectors by aligning their strategies and operations with ten universally accepted principles in four thematic areas: Human Rights, Labour Standards, Environment and the Fight Against Corruption, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The foregoing underscores the efforts of the Bogotá Comptroller's Office in this area. This has been governed by a strategy of social responsibility, establishing commitments with the SDGs, the fight against corruption and the protection of the environment. To achieve this, it has adhered to the United Nations Global Compact since 13 March 2019, incorporating the 2030 Agenda in all its processes. To do this, the organisation has made efforts during 2021 in two lines of action:

- Preparation of the Sustainability Report, which includes the report of the ten principles of the Global Compact, highlighting number 10, related to the fight against corruption. There, the results of the strategic processes are presented: Fiscal Management Oversight and Control, Fiscal Accountability and Economic and Public Policy Studies; and
- Raising awareness and strengthening the competencies of the "Global Compact - Agenda 2030" of the employees of the Office of the Comptroller General of Bogotá DC.

The Preparation of the Sustainability Report<sup>12</sup> has been carried out since 2018. Currently, the 2019 report is in the process of being reviewed for publication and the 2020 Report is under development.

7 Federal Court of Accounts (TCU-Brazil): <https://portal.tcu.gov.br/inicio/>

8 Transparency International Brazil: <https://transparenciainternacional.org.br/home/destaques>

9 To access the document go to: <https://bit.ly/3w0sZHI>. It should be noted that the study "Public Procurement in Emergency Situations," developed by Transparency International Brazil in conjunction with twelve offices of the agencies in Latin America, served as the basis for the initiative. You can access the study at: <https://www.olacefs.com/contrataciones-publicas-en-situación-de-emergencia/>

10 Office of the Comptroller General of Bogotá: <http://www.contraloriabogota.gov.co/>

11 Local Network Corporation of the Global Compact in Colombia: <https://www.pactoglobal-colombia.org/>

12 To learn about the Sustainability Report of the Comptroller's Office of Bogotá, go to: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/participants/135215-CONTRALORIA-DE-BOGOTA-DC-#company-information>

### 3. Office of the Comptroller General of the State of the Republic of Ecuador

The Comptroller General of the State, according to the provisions of its Organic Law, has the legal authority to receive and analyse complaints<sup>13</sup> that enter the institution through the various channels enabled for it and that are raised by the general public, contractors and duly constituted legal entities of private law, who, in exercise of the corresponding social control, seek to eradicate corruption from the active administration.

In order to receive complaints, the State Comptroller General's Office has various channels, virtual, face-to-face, telephone, email, among others.

### 4. Anti-Corruption Alliance UNCAC, Comptroller General of the Republic of Chile.

The Anti-Corruption Alliance UNCAC Chile<sup>14</sup> was created in 2012 by the Comptroller General of the Republic of Chile and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the aim of designing and developing actions that allow compliance with the principles of the UNCAC, such as the implementation of Codes of Ethics in the public sector, recognition of good practices, legislative monitoring and proposals to strengthen national efforts to combat corruption.

This is a permanent and voluntary work initiative, made up of 30 entities from the public and private sectors, academia and civil society that collaborate in five working groups: promotion of integrity; training; standards and good practices; legislative proposals; and communications.

Regarding some achievements obtained by the Alliance in recent times in Chile, we can highlight:

- Signature of an inter-institutional agreement to implement and develop Codes of Ethics in all the municipalities of the country;
- Execution of numerous public and private sector trainings on corruption;
- Conducting online seminars on the risks of corruption during the Covid-19 crisis;

- Launch of the decalogue "Recommendations of good integrity practices in times of pandemic;" and
- Prioritisation and follow-up of key bills to achieve UNCAC standards.

Additionally, this Alliance has been internationally recognized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other organisations as a good practice to strengthen the fight against corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Conclusions

To strengthen the prevention and fight against corruption, and the promotion of integrity in the region, it is essential to have a multisectoral dialogue – especially between SAIs and the private sector – generating alliances that allow the exchange of relevant information and, in this way, making the work of all the actors in this matter more efficient and effective.

In general terms, we can see that in order to promote integrity and effectively fight corruption, it is essential to have the support of international actors with relevant knowledge and experience in the matter, such as Transparency International, United Nations Global Compact, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), etc. This allows creating synergies, raising awareness on the matter and disseminating the achievements that are obtained.

Finally, it is important to mention that the above is closely related to the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which promotes sustainable development through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leaving no one behind.

13 For more information, you can access the 2019 Institutional Accountability Report at: <https://www.contraloria.gob.ec/WFDescarga.aspx?id=2674&tipo=doc>

14 For more information go to: <http://www.alianzaanticorruccion.cl/>