

“WHISTLEBLOWING IN EUROPE: SUPPORTING THE AGENTS FOR CHANGE”

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT EVALUATION

1. Introduction

Transparency International Secretariat (TI-S) is gratified and encouraged by the findings of the evaluation of the project entitled “Whistleblowing in Europe: Supporting the agents for change”. The evaluation was undertaken by a team of two independent external evaluators – Pierre Robert and Benjamin Stachursky - who interviewed 28 stakeholders in 11 project locations in December 2016 – February 2017. TI-S would like to express its appreciation and thanks to the evaluators for the detailed work undertaken, and to all the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation. TI sees evaluations as opportunities for learning, and will be taking lessons learnt forward into future projects.

The evaluated project, funded by the Adessium Foundation, has a budget of EUR 600,000; it started in November 2013 and will end in May 2017. It aims to support whistleblowing by:

1. Advancing effective legal protection of whistleblowers in 10 European countries, i.e. supporting the development of new legislation and the effective implementation of existing laws via sub-grants to TI chapters (result area 1);
2. Providing legal advice and practical support for whistleblowers, i.e. supporting chapters that offer this service in Europe by providing training in critical areas, enabling exchange and peer support across Europe as well as collecting and analysing data provided by these advice centres (result area 2);
3. Contributing to a more positive perception of whistleblowers by promoting whistleblowing to key audiences (result area 3).

The evaluation provides detailed feedback that is helpful for the future design of a multi-country advocacy project on whistleblowing, and the recommendations offered are well aligned with TI’s priorities at the European and national level for follow up action both in terms of strategic advocacy and project sustainability.

This management response reflects on the evaluation findings and, in its conclusions, suggests how TI would like to enhance its impact across the European Union (EU) and beyond. TI appreciates the support provided by the Adessium Foundation and welcomes further discussions of the findings of the evaluation.

1. Feedback on findings

Overall, the findings of the evaluation are very positive, pertinent and in alignment with TI-S’ assessment of the project.

The evaluation confirmed that the overall approach and theory of change formulated by TI for this project was sound and highly **relevant**. It also confirmed the fact that TI is clearly recognised as a key stakeholder on whistleblowing issues at the international and domestic level.

The project was deemed highly **effective**, with most set goals already achieved. The evaluation found that this high level of effectiveness owed very much to the multi-faceted role TI-S played by supporting and coordinating chapters' activities, facilitating knowledge exchange, and by leading the outreach strategy and advocacy for an EU-wide legislation.

The evaluation also highlighted the **sustainability** of the work, such as the shift made by TI-S and several chapters to place whistleblowing as an issue and whistleblower stories at the centre of their broader anti-corruption strategy. The project also allowed several chapters to develop a critical mass of activism and expertise on whistleblower protection, and thereby further strengthen their profile in this field.

In terms of the **shortcomings** as identified by the evaluators, the evaluation points to the need to further integrate outreach activities into TI's work on whistleblowing. The evaluators argue that because the third result area of the project was mainly implemented at the level of TI-S, it did not "explicitly and systematically link" to the other two areas, and thus they conclude that "the overall project tended to address the improvement of whistleblowers' image (i.e. result area 3) as an end in itself, not necessarily in relation with improving legislation and practices."

We at TI would argue, however, that activities undertaken by TI-S to promote whistleblowing were carried out to support the other two result areas. The main message of TI-S outreach campaigns (such as the one around the Luxleaks case) and interventions in public events was always the need for better whistleblower legislation in EU countries. Explaining the importance of whistleblowing and the positive impact that whistleblowers can have underlines TI's advocacy ask for better whistleblower protection. Similarly, one of the very goals of these promotional activities was to inform potential whistleblowers about the advice and support that they could find from TI in their country.

2. Response to recommendations and follow-up actions

TI-S fully agrees with – and is currently implementing – the evaluation's recommendation to develop a follow-up project proposal, building on the theory of change of the present project. The evaluation recommended that the follow-up proposal take into consideration a number of elements, as follows:

Scope of the project:

- The evaluation recommended that the follow-up project cover the same three result areas. However, TI decided to focus in the next project on "only" two of the three results areas, namely (1) advocacy for new/improved whistleblower legislation and policies and practices that effectively protect whistleblowers in the private as well as the public sector, and (2) public outreach activities to improve the image of whistleblowers.

Legal advice and practical support will still be provided to whistleblowers by Chapters through their Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALAC) but support to these centres, which provide advice not only to whistleblowers but to any victim or witness of corruption, will take place through separate projects. Indeed, one of the lessons learned by the project team that is not captured in the evaluation is the difficulty in practice to fully integrate

advocacy and direct advice to whistleblower into one project, and this for very practical reasons: not all chapters working on the issue of whistleblowing are operating an ALAC and not all European chapters with an ALAC consider advocating for better whistleblower protection a priority in their national context.

- The evaluation also recommends including an EU-wide dimension that supports the development of an EU Directive on whistleblowing or other regulatory instruments at the EU level: TI considers advocacy toward an EU-wide legislation on whistleblowing a priority and has developed a separate project proposal with the TI EU Liaison Office to carry out that work. While this is not yet final, this proposal was submitted to the Open Society Foundation.

Promotion/ outreach: The evaluation recommends further efforts to systematically deepen the integration of outreach activities into TI's work on whistleblowing (and beyond) at the level of TI-S and of TI chapters. TI fully agrees with this recommendation and has already started to implement it in the current project at TI-S level (as explained above). As noted in the evaluation, some TI chapters, such as TI France and TI Italy, have also already adopted this approach.

TI-S will design the next project to ensure that the strategic link between advocacy effort towards the adoption and/or implementation of legislation and outreach work to inform/change public opinion on the issue of whistleblowing are explicitly integrated to TI chapters' advocacy campaigns at national level.

Research: The evaluation recommends conducting baseline research/surveys at national level on behaviour and attitudes on whistleblowing to better understand specific opportunities and challenges in this field, develop activities specifically addressing them and monitor changes/progress over time on behaviour and attitudes toward whistleblowing. Some chapters such as [TI Ireland](#) and [TI Slovakia](#) have already conducted such surveys and TI-S will encourage other chapters to do so under the next project.

Project duration: One of the key weaknesses identified by the evaluation was the lack of sufficient time in the grant to achieve legislative change in some countries. Indeed, legislative and policy processes can be very lengthy. To address this issue, and in line with the evaluators' recommendation, TI will propose a follow-up project with national initiative running for at least 24 months (the overall project duration should thus be 30 months, taking into account the kick-off phase and closing of the project).

Coalition-building: The evaluation noted that working in coalition was one of the key elements contributing to the success of the project activities at the national (and EU) level. TI-S fully agrees with this assessment and will discuss internally how to further encourage Chapters to work in coalition in the next project.

Sub-granting to national chapters: The evaluation suggests the allocation of sub-grants on the basis of a call for proposals or a similar competitive mechanism. This was the approach adopted by the evaluated project, and it indeed proved successful to ensure that chapters with a strong interest in the issue of whistleblowing and (potential) political momentum in their country received the appropriate resources. This approach also allows chapters to carry out initiatives that are tailored to their national context and expertise, and thus more relevant, effective and sustainable.

Trainings: The evaluation pointed out that training provided during project meetings had limited effectiveness. Indeed, the trainings tended to be short, not always fully relevant for all chapters, and the project coordinators present at the meetings were not necessarily the ones that needed to be

trained. To address this issue, TI-S is considering including training components directly in the sub-grants to chapters. This way trainings can be tailored to chapters' needs and context, as well as take place locally, allowing all project staff (management, communication, lobbying, etc.) at chapter level to participate.

Role of TI-S: TI-S will continue to support and coordinate chapters' activities, to facilitate knowledge exchange, and to lead the development of some areas of work.