

The Utstein Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (4A-RC)

John R. Heilbrunn

**Department for Democracy
and Social Development**

The Utstein Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (4A-RC)

John R. Heilbrunn

Sida Evaluation 07/22

**Department for Democracy
and Social Development**

This report is part of *Sida Evaluations*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, Sida Studies in Evaluation, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

This publication can be downloaded/ordered from:
<http://www.sida.se/publications>

Author: John R. Heilbrunn.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 07/22

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Democracy and Social Development

Copyright: Sida and the author

Registration No.: 2005-002421

Date of Final Report: June 2007

Printed by Edita Communication AB, 2007

Art. no. Sida39524en

ISBN 978-91-586-8233-7

ISSN 1401—0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Content

Abbreviation & Acronyms	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Overall Recommendation	4
Specific Recommendations.....	5
Introduction	7
1. Review of the Website as a Virtual Resource Center.....	9
1.1. Level of Use and Targeting.....	9
1.2 Presentation	10
1.3 Functionality.....	10
1.4 Responsiveness and Targeting Actual and Potential Users	10
1.5 Project Database.....	11
2. An Assessment of the Functionality and Usefulness of the Online and In-country Anti-corruption Training Courses	13
2.1 Functionality and Usefulness of the online training.....	13
2.2 Functionality and Usefulness of the In-Country Training.....	15
3. An Assessment of the Use and Quality of the Helpdesk Operated by Transparency International (TI).....	16
3.1 Use of HelpDesk	16
3.2 Quality of Helpdesk Responses.....	17
4. Surveys of Agency Users	20
4.1 Surveys of Users	20
4.2 Future Needs for Users	21
5. Assessment of Governance Mechanisms	22
5.1 Existing Mechanisms for U4 Governance.....	22
5.2 The Steering Committee	22
5.3 The Lead Donor.....	23
5.4 Logistics and Communication.....	25
6. A Cost-benefit Assessment and Review of Relevance	25
6.1 A Cost-benefit Assessment of the U4-RC	25
6.2 An Assessment of Topical Focus.....	26
7. Possible Future Expansion.....	26
7.1 Expanded Training Services.....	26
7.2 Implications of more U4 partners for the operations of U4-RC	27
7.3 Implications of more U4 partners for the U4-RC governance structures.....	27
Annex 1 Terms of Reference	28

Abbreviation & Acronyms

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDB:	Multilateral Development Banks
MinBuZa	Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD DAC	Donor Assistance Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
U4 RC	Ustein Anti-Corruption Resource Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
TI	Transparency International
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the welcome and cooperation given me by the U4-RC staff at CMI (Gunnar Sorbo, Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Alf Morten Jerve, Harald Mathisen, Jessica Schultz, and especially Kirsty Cunningham). In addition, I would like to thank Lise Rakner, Ivar Kolstad, Tina Soreide, and Inge Amundsen for their time and patience with my questions. Robin Hodess and Victoria Jennett graciously answered my inquiries at Transparency International – Berlin. Finally, Henrik Lunden and Odd-Helge Fjeldstad provided excellent comments on a preliminary draft.

Comments on the review are welcome and can be sent to John R. Heilbrunn
(jrheilbrunn@earthlink.net)

Overall Recommendation

This Review recommends that the U4-RC remains under the able management of the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), which by virtue of its high quality staff, its responsiveness to the U4 partner agencies' demands, and its willingness to support the initiative as adduced by statements from CMI's Director, the CMI representative on the U4 Steering Committee, and the U4-RC Research Manager. The conclusion of this Review is that CMI is optimally placed to retain the continuity and high quality output of the U4-RC that the U4 Steering Committee has come to expect.

The U4-RC has been based at CMI since its inception. In 2004, an external review recommended that the virtual website remain at CMI for Phase II of the initiative. The reasoning was that U4-RC was being effectively managed at CMI and the overall objectives of the center as articulated in the *Memorandum of Understanding* were being met. This Review assesses progress of the U4-RC and the extent to which it is meeting the expectations of the MOU for its continuation at CMI for Phase III.

In the MOU for Phase II, the U4-RC is explicitly identified as a virtual center and not a physical entity. This Review proposes that the MOU for Phase III be changed to accommodate the increased demand for in-country training that U4-RC staff and selected experts provide for U4 agency staff and government officials. This amendment to the MOU would bring the U4-RC activities more in correspondence with the stated goals of the sponsoring donor organizations.

To put the U4-RC up for tender is one option that the U4 Steering Committee (SC) might consider. Some reservations: first, the U4-RC is operating efficiently and comments from the SC members suggest a high degree of satisfaction. Given that satisfaction, the disruption that would result from putting the center up for bid seems a higher cost than any benefits that might so result. The U4-RC is doing its job and its clients have expressed that they are highly satisfied with its output.

Second, a shift in the management of the U4-RC would inevitably carry transaction costs that might affect continuity and quality of services including training and research output. Conceivably, a lag time in the provision of services would result. The length of lag time would be a function of the degree to which a handover of responsibilities was seamless or troubled. Even if a transfer of responsibilities was relatively undistruptive, it would be difficult to avoid some break in continuity.

Third, putting the U4-RC up for tender might be construed, either explicitly or implicitly, as a shift on the U4 Steering Committee's support of CMI. It is possible that CMI's management would have little choice but to reconsider its priorities insofar as they are relevant for its research funding strategies. This reordering of strategic priorities might have an impact on CMI's commitment to the U4-RC and presage a necessity to move the center. A move from CMI would then result in transaction costs and some disruption of service.

However, this Review found that challenges are salient in CMI staff size, competencies, and its relations with Transparency International's administration of the HelpDesk. These challenges may increase if the Lead Donor invites Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, and Ireland to join the U4-RC as the Steering Committee so mandated in October 2006. Hence, the Review makes a number of recommendations for Phase III of this innovative and important effort on the part of six bilateral agencies to work in concert with one another and harmonize their approaches to fighting corruption.

Specific Recommendations

Chapter 1: Presentation, functionality, responsiveness

To the priority of broader PFM knowledge, the U4-RC should contract out for specific studies on PFM to deepen and broaden its U4 Issue Papers and Briefs.

A second recommendation from a consultation of numerous U4 Issue Papers and Briefs is that the already high quality might be further improved by a more rigorous review (internal or external) to bring a more uniform quality. This review process might be facilitated by the creation of an international editorial board for U4 publications.

Project Database

Due to the costs of maintenance and the problem of coordinating multiple donor entries, the Project Database should be archived and resumed in a new format upon commencement of Phase III.

Second, the U4-RC should engage an information technology firm to write a simple template that could be attached to budget pages in the relevant bilateral agency. This template would contain the following information:

Region and country

Project name and sector of activity

Responsible officials and contact information

Project start and end dates

Chapter 2: Functionality and usefulness

The online courses bring a real value and they should be offered more frequently

Second, entry level staff in participating agencies should be required to enroll and complete the course either prior to or at the time of assignment to overseas post.

Third, the course materials should be updated to ensure relevance and a state-of-the-art approach to training.

Advanced/Specialized Training

The U4-RC should provide selective advanced training in those areas for which it has both a mandate (education and health) and a comparative advantage in terms of staff skills (PFM, CES). The U4-RC should update and further develop its online courses.

Interest on the Steering Committee's part for more in-country advanced and basic training should be incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding for Phase III so that the U4-RC complies with terms of the MOU.

Chapter 3: The Helpdesk

Dissatisfaction with Helpdesk performance by TI must be corrected in the interests of the U4-RC's sustainability.

Guidelines should be drafted for questions that are posed to the Helpdesk.

The Helpdesk should revise and improve use a standardized response to ensure that the coordinator be able to answer in the allotted ten day.

A third possible choice is that the Helpdesk service be either put up for bid or perhaps housed at the U4-RC. However, critical staffing implications arise if the Helpdesk is housed at the U4-RC and these should be considered carefully by the CMI management.

Chapter 4: User Surveys and future directions

A more systematic survey of user satisfaction should be undertaken by a credible survey firm with appropriate follow up for non-response. This survey should be able to differentiate among frequent users, occasional users, users who only visited one or two times; as well as individuals who had “hit” the site, but never entered and users who were registered, but had never accessed the website.

Some strategies for future users might include the following recommendations:

A link to a monthly “Best Practice and Lessons Learned” that might be displayed on the introductory page.

The U4-RC might rotate an example of a particular PFM, CES, or experiences with anti-corruption commissions as strategy or policy that users could consult.

A list of events that concern U4 partner agencies as well as multilateral conferences and events.

A list of official donor strategies and policies toward corruption might be a useful addition so that recipient government officials would be able to understand the positions of U4 partner governments.

Chapter 5: Governance structures

Since the U4-RC is housed at a Norwegian research facility and the Lead Donor is Norad, it is crucial to protect an appearance and reality of independence of the Lead Donor from CMI.

Chapter 6: Cost-Benefit – no recommendations

Chapter 7: Growth of U4

It is imminently possible, cost-effective, and carries considerable secondary benefits if the U4-RC increases the numbers of online courses it offers.

The U4-RC should increase its senior research staff actively working on corruption and corruption related projects if it is to increase the number of in-country workshops.

If the number of U4 partner agencies increases to include Denmark, Switzerland, Ireland, and Finland, the U4-RC will need to increase its staff at both the level of junior researchers (five may be sufficient) and probably one or two senior researchers whose work is either on corruption and political economy, economics, or political science.

Introduction

This report presents the findings and recommendations from a review of the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (hereafter referred to as U4-RC) carried out by Dr. John Heilbrunn, 8–19 June 2007. To prepare this Review, Dr. Heilbrunn reviewed survey results completed a desk review of online services and background documents, met with the U4-RC management and staff at the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen Norway, and the coordinator of the Helpdesk at Transparency International's headquarters in Berlin (13 June 2007).

Structure and Support of the U4-RC

The U4-RC is a remarkable achievement in donor coordination between now six bilateral development agencies. It is the position of this Review that all efforts in moving forward should continue toward deepening this goal. The U4-RC has potential to enable an unprecedented harmonization of development policy among as many as ten bilateral donors. However, this Review suggests that it is equally critical that the U4-RC adhere to the most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the period of 1 February 2005 to 31 December 2007. The MOU defines the U4-RC's mandate is to operate as an over-arching information management service, a virtual center.

Six governments constitute the Donor Group:

The Kingdom of Norway represented by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The Kingdom of Sweden represented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland represented by the Department for International Development (DfID).

The Kingdom of the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation (MinBuZa)

The Government of Canada Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

The Republic of Germany (two development agencies) Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ).

Officials of these six bilateral development agencies have access to the U4-RC website, including its project database. They may participate in online and in-country training, and may pose questions to the Helpdesk.

The U4-RC has received an overall budget of £1.310.00 for the 35 months under the MOU.

This budget has been divided among the members of the Donor Group as follows:

Norway £456.500.

The United Kingdom £456.500.

Sweden £397.000.

In 2007, other contributions have been provided by

Canada £130.464 (C \$300.000) core funding to increase non-training related activities.

The Netherlands £135.888 (E200.000) core funding expected in autumn 2007.

Plan of this Review

1. An Overall and specific recommendations that suggest directions for the U4-RC to take in Phase III.
2. Review of presentation, functionality, responsiveness, and targeting of actual and potential users of the website as a virtual resource center. This review includes an assessment of actual and potential usage as well as a strategy to increase usage. The intent of this section is to show how presentation and functionality have been reflected in usage of the U4-RC.
3. An assessment of the functionality and usefulness of the online and in-country anti-corruption training courses. These courses have been identified as a priority at SC meetings and therefore their strengths and weaknesses are discussed for consideration of future course.
4. An assessment of the use and quality of the Helpdesk operated by Transparency International (TI). The Helpdesk is a second identified priority on which the SC has placed considerable value. How the Helpdesk responds to identified demand in light of a probability of the U4-RC's expansion is discussed in this section.
5. Surveys of users from all six agencies and different geographical locations conducted 2005–07, including headquarters and country offices. This will facilitate an understanding of the current and future needs of users to inform decisions as to the focus of the U4-RC for the next phase of the project in order to ensure this is demand led and operationally useful. This section examines the review contributed by Netlife Research on the website and its capacity to respond to future needs.
6. A general assessment of existing mechanisms of governance for the U4-RC (including logistics and communication) to assess the extent to which these support development of content and management of services of Centre, and recommend changes if deemed necessary. The management of the U4-RC is conditioned by the governance structure imposed by SC and the direction at CMI. This section considers how well CMI has performed in its development of content and capacity to respond to donors' demands for services (i.e. training and Helpdesk)
7. A cost-benefit assessment of whether the U4-RC offers value for money. The relevance of the U4-RC's topical focus will also be reviewed, with regard to the extent to which the U4-RC's programme is consistent with the donors' anti-corruption requirements and global priorities. This section note how the U4-RC has become integrated into the anti-corruption strategies of subscribing donor agencies.
8. For the next period, the current donors have expressed a wish for the U4 RC to expand its training activities. What types of extra resources will this necessitate and through which alternative avenues may such a goal be reached? It is also likely that the U4 resource centre will expand concerning number of donors. Is there a need to revise the governance structures of the U4 if this happens? This section assesses the constraints on the website imposed by the SC and the MOU to assess whether the MOU adequately responds to training demands.

1. Review of the Website as a Virtual Resource Center

Review of presentation, functionality, responsiveness, and targeting of actual and potential users of the website as a virtual resource center. This review includes an assessment of actual and potential usage as well as a strategy to increase usage.

In this section, the Review considers issues of use and targeting. It then turns to the website's presentation and the ease of use. Related to presentation is the question functionality; does the U4-RC fulfil its stated objective of furnishing a virtual information service? From function, the Review considers the website's responsiveness and targeting of actual and potential users. Then, the Review turns to the Project Database, one of the major components of the website.

1.1. Level of Use and Targeting

Between 2005 and 2007, the U4-RC conducted surveys of users' reactions to the website and its services. Response rates were extremely low; only 35 users responded in 2005 and an even fewer 22 responded in 2006. This response rate is too low to arrive at any meaningful conclusion and its findings cannot therefore be used to suggest anything more than possible trends among users of the U4-RC. Although the sample is biased toward those with strong feelings toward the service, the trend was positive.

In 2005 and 2006, the U4-RC collected statistics on website use to show how U4 services by donor agency staff worldwide (e.g. Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania). Between the start of Phase I and 2005, 1030 individuals from one of the donor agencies had registered and consulted the website. When the public and closed websites were merged, the numbers of people consulting the website no longer differentiated between donor U4 agency staff and the general public. Information for specific donor agency website use is unavailable. If the U4-RC wants to determine levels of usage it will need to make an effort to collect additional user information perhaps at the point of registration. However, this bureaucratic step might result in a reduction of usage as people could conceivably prefer to avoid any further steps in consulting a source of needed information.

From the table below, it is apparent that visits to the public website are significant. It is necessary to distinguish between *visits* wherein an individual enters the website for a specific purpose and opens one or more pages; a *hit* is registered when the visitor opens any page or PDF file. Hence, a visit to U4.no may result in multiple hits depending on how many pages or PDF files the visitor consults.

Year	2004	2005	2006	Increase 2005-06
Total Hits	526.633	1.673.178	2.376.265	703.087
Total Visits	52.794	95.776	125.659	29.883

The September 2005 Steering Committee meeting approved an expansion of different focus areas to include Public Financial Management and Corruption in Conflict and Emergency Situations. These subjects are critical areas for the donors and reflect priorities of the OECD DAC. The SC also noted that questions of political will, corruption in procurement, and corruption in the judicial sector were also potential topics for the U4-RC. These focus areas are critical in terms of priorities that have been identified by donors that are members of the U4-RC as well as other multilateral and bilateral organizations.

To encourage donor agency staff to use U4-RC more regularly it has been suggested that much more be done to promote the services already available. Two areas that have received particular attention are the *training courses*, both online and in-country, and the *Helpdesk*. If the number of governments participating in the U4-RC increases, as is anticipated, then resources allocated to these two activities must increase as well. This increase should include staff for conducting training and for the Helpdesk that is currently managed by TI.

Recommendations for the targeting of users are made below in section 1.4

1.2 Presentation

The U4-RC presents an excellent “brand name” for the six partner agencies that provide funding for the website. Overall, the look of the website is clean and attractive; headings, titles, and links are clearly shown on all pages. The theme pages are easy to access and their links to PDF documents are easy to follow. Search tools are accessible and users know where they are located on the website’s pages.

However, certain problems are present and might be corrected. First, the text font used throughout the site is small and should be increased to 10-point. Second, some pages are too long and require users scroll down the page to access all the information. This might have an effect of failing to provide users with information they seek because it is at the bottom of the page. Third, important words are left in normal type. A response is to put in bold words that the website designers deem important for users to see.

1.3 Functionality

Overall the functionality of the U4-RC website is competent and free of unnecessary technical tricks and unnecessary graphics. Fewer graphics minimises download times; the web page size is at or below 50.000 bytes. This facilitation of download time is a real advantage for users based in Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Other elements of functionality are that blue underlined text for links. Third, most links are labelled descriptively so that users are able to discriminate between similar links. Fourth, files are clearly differentiated between html and PDF; users know when they are downloading a PDF file that requires Adobe Acrobat. Fifth, the same navigation aids are used on all pages and, wherever possible, the navigation tools are in close proximity and use text-based aids. Finally, the U4 logo routes the user to the homepage for consulting other pages on the website.

The fact that 35 respondents to the 2005 User Survey rated the majority of services provided by U4-RC as highly useful is an indication that the website’s technical functionality is effective. Respondents were also highly positive about the Helpdesk and the online anti-corruption training courses. The 2005 survey showed that an ambivalence about the website’s functionality. For example, on a scale of 1 to 5, only the category of reliability (credible/trustworthy information) was rated higher than 4 (good). Otherwise, rating the site, the load time for the webpage, the appearance, ease of use, readability, and quality of content were all rated between 3 and 4. However, given that the sample size was so low, a self-selection process of those users who were unusually motivated might be assumed.

1.4 Responsiveness and Targeting Actual and Potential Users

At the end of Phase I, the SC decided that initial theme pages would address corruption in education, corruption in the health sector, and the SC approved studies of corruption in public financial management. To complement these theme pages, the U4-RC has produced a number of Issue papers downloadable in PDF format. The topic covered by U4 Issue papers respond to demands from the SC meetings, user surveys, and the priorities of development effectiveness articulated by the OECD DAC. These subjects include corruption in key social sectors (education and health), political corruption, corruption in disaster relief, and the critical topics under the rubric of public financial management. A sample of U4 Issue papers include:

Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, “Revenue Administration and Corruption” (U4 Issue 2: 2005).

U4-RC, “Corruption in the Health Sector” (U4 issue 1: 2006).

U4-RC, “Corruption in the Education Sector” (U4 Issue 4: 2006).

Inge Amundsen, “Political Corruption” (U4 Issue 6:2006)

Jessica Schultz and Tina Soreide, “Corruption in Emergency Procurement” (U4 Issue 7:2006).

The U4-RC also displays reports and U4 Briefs that are written expressly for practitioners; these briefs are often shorter versions of U4 Issue papers and they are downloadable in PDF format. U4 Briefs and background papers are updated regularly; some samples include:

A series of paper and briefs on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

– These papers include:

“Technical Assistance Background Paper” (report on Montevideo Conference by Karen Hussman and Miguel Panailillo, June 2007)

“UNCAC: A Primer for Development Practitioners” (U4 Brief 3:2007 by Jessica Schultz)

“The Recovery of Stolen Assets: A Fundamental Principal of the UN Convention against Corruption” (U4 Brief 2:2007 by Jack Smith, Mark Pieth, and Guillermo Jorge).

“Corruption and Fraud in International Aid Projects” (U4 Brief 4:2007, W.M. Kramer)

“Achieving Success and Avoiding Failure in Anti-Corruption Commissions: Developing the Role of Donors (U4 Brief 1:2007 by Robert Williams and Alan Doig)

The diversity of PDF resources available on the U4-RC is outstanding and serves to attract users who are interested in the issue of corruption either as practitioners or researchers. One minor criticism is that the papers are somewhat uneven in analytic quality. Although an unevenness of quality is to be expected on any website as large and complex as the U4-RC, a standard level of quality might improve the site’s ability to target potential users. Secondly, a standard quality would enhance the U4-RC’s reputation as a tool for researchers and practitioners.

To the priority of broader PFM knowledge, the U4-RC should contract out for specific studies on PFM to deepen and broaden its U4 Issue Papers and Briefs.

A second recommendation from a consultation of numerous U4 Issue Papers and Briefs is that the already high quality might be further improved by a more rigorous review (internal or external) to bring a more uniform quality.

1.5 Project Database

The Project Database includes various projects that have been undertaken by U4 agencies over the years. It contains a wealth of information and has a remarkable potential to serve as a resource for staff embarking on operational missions to particular countries. The Database contains descriptions of projects that may be searched by agency (e.g. DfID, Norad, Sida, etc.) or country/region, keywords, or all projects. A total of 313 projects are listed in the Database at the current time; although a substantial number of the projects listed in the database are current, others are out of date, and some were even started before 2003. For example, by searching under DfID, 83 projects are displayed. The database provides the title of the project, its start and termination dates, budget, who administers the project and their contact information. At the top of the page is DfID’s Andhra Pradesh Economic & Public Sector Reform project. By clicking on the project name the website displays the following page:

Andhra Pradesh Economic & Public Sector Reform

Responsible agency:	DFID (UK)
Project number:	149-542-063
Agreement partner:	Economic and Public Service Reform, Government of Andhra Pradesh
Implemented by:	DFID, World Bank
Type of aid:	Bilateral
Approval date:	February 2002
End date:	January 2006
Project stage:	Implementation
Amount committed:	65,000,000 GBP (102,479,700 €)
DAC sector:	51010
AC relevance:	Implicit
Recipient countries/regions:	India, South Asia
Keywords:	National anti-corruption strategies and policies; Poverty reduction strategies; Public (civil) service reform and management;

Project description: This proposal provides £65 million to the Government of Andhra Pradesh this financial year to support a programme of economic and public service reforms (EPSR), and £0.5 million in related technical assistance. This support is for the first year of a medium-term programme. The goal of the programme is to accelerate poverty reduction in Andhra Pradesh. The purpose is to support GoAP in undertaking critical pro-poor reforms within a fiscally sustainable framework.

2. The Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) has committed itself to eradicating poverty, accelerating growth and pursuing better governance, setting out ambitious goals in its Vision 2020 document. To help realise these goals, the government has developed a medium-term programme focusing on key cross-cutting economic and governance policy reforms to improve the environment for poverty reduction and accelerated growth, underpinning strategies and programmes in other areas.

3. As part of its efforts to operationalise Vision 2020, the government set up a Poverty Eradication Mission with members from government, civil society and academic institutions. A strategy paper for poverty reduction has been prepared, mainly focussing on targeted poverty reduction schemes. A key element of this reform programme is to develop an overarching policy framework to broaden the understanding of poverty and enable the government to sharpen the poverty focus of all its policies and programmes.

The Project Database is perhaps the most problematic part of the U4-RC. First, a number of entries are so far out of date as to be of little use for operational staff members who want to know about on-going projects in countries where they might be going to work. Second, the Project Database contains a dizzying number of documents. However, an investigation of the Project Database shows that the documents are no longer relevant. Third, a perusal of the Project Database finds hundreds of documents from programs that may no longer exist. Hence, the entire link has little relevance for operational staff seeking ideas or contacts with colleagues working in other countries on similar programs or to solve contemporary problems. These issues undermine the validity of information on the entire U4-RC and should be addressed without delay.

Updating the Project Database would be an impossibly involved task for U4-RC staff members or bilateral agency administrators to undertake. Moreover, the costs of updating the Project Database would be prohibitive. With the U4 partner agencies, no mandate to maintain and update a Project Database is present.

Hence, the recommendation of this Review is that first the entire Project Database should be archived (and accessible) and resumed in a new format upon commencement of Phase III. This recommendation acknowledges the potential that a Project Database has for donor collaboration, a fundamental goal of the U4-RC.

Second, the Review recommends that the U4-RC engage an information technology firm to write a simple template that could be attached to budget pages in the relevant bilateral agency. This template would contain the following information:

Region and country

Project name and sector of activity

Responsible officials and contact information

Project start and end dates

Below is a suggestion for table that could serve as a template

Project Database – Donor	DfID
Region	Africa
Country	Benin
Project name	Rule of Law – reducing corruption in judiciary
Sector	Public sector – governance
Responsible official – contact numbers	Charles Stuart – 26.02.36.65.71
Project start and anticipated end date	30 February 2008–31 April 2010

If budget input data is completed in central offices in, for instance, Oslo, London, or Stockholm, it may be possible to link the template to that input and have the data sent directly to the U4-RC. In that fashion, the U4-RC would contain new and up-to-date information on projects that are actually occurring in the world. It would *harmonize* donor activities by setting a template that is operational for all the participating agencies and thereby improve the overall effectiveness of development assistance.

2. An Assessment of the Functionality and Usefulness of the Online and In-country Anti-corruption Training Courses

This section of the Review evaluates the online and in-country training courses that the U4-RC provides to staff members of partner agencies. The SC has consistently supported both the online and in-country training courses. Online training materials were substantially revised in August 2005. A shift in emphasis, however, has been the SC's demand for more in-country training with advanced modules on education. How the in-country training progresses will require re-consideration of the Memorandum of Understanding that defines U4-RC activities by both the SC and the U4-RC team.

2.1 Functionality and Usefulness of the online training

U4-RC online training is innovative and the courses bring a positive return to investment. First, the website is easy to navigate and its links to resources on the U4-RC are clear. One suggestion is that a minor effort might be undertaken to revise and update the training materials; however, they are currently very good. Also, easier access to the "Resources link" from the course pages might allow "stu-

dents” to access PDF documents that would deepen their understanding of corruption and issues related to corrupt behavior. This link might respond to the more talented and interested participants who have time to read other documents.

Thus far, ten online training courses (4 in 2005, 4 in 2006, and 2 in 2007) have been offered and 3 more are planned for the remainder of Phase II. Statistics available for nine courses show that 242 people, including 16 invited participants, have enrolled in the course. Of these 242 individuals, 187 completed the work and received “diplomas” for their efforts.

To present the course, the U4-RC invites a number of experts, who are practitioners and academics with strong reputations in the field of fighting corruption. Each invited expert is responsible for one of six modules that the online course offers:

Part 1: Definitions and Concepts

Part 2: Consequences

Part 3: Causes and Explanations

Part 4: National Anti-Corruption Efforts

Part 5: International Law and Cooperation

Part 6: Donor Strategies, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

Participants in the read a brief paper on the topic of each module and then respond to specific open-ended assignments as shown from Part 3 below:

Task:

Find a background paper that discusses the *causes of corruption in a specific developing country*. Check for instance the government’s National Anti-Corruption Strategy (paper), a development agency’s anti-corruption strategy for this country, the TI National Integrity Study (if it exists), the TI Global Corruption Report, or political statements on anti-corruption.

Does this document identify the *main drivers of corruption* in the country?

What are the *causes of corruption* identified (or assumed) in this document?

Can you identify any *explanatory approach* (ideology, theory/school, science, method) behind the analysis?

Finally, argue *your opinion on the root causes* and what best explains corruption in this country.

For each module or part, a similar assignment is posed to the participants. Their responses, generally 1 to 3 pages in length, are evaluated and the “students” receive comments on their papers from the invited experts. The students are expected to revise their papers according to the experts’ comments. At the end of the module, they receive a satisfactory or unsatisfactory assessment of their work.

The work load is intended to be approximately 30 hours to complete the six week course. “Students” course evaluations and comments suggest a high level of satisfaction with the course facilitation, its texts and assignments, the experts’ interventions, and evaluations.

The online courses bring a positive value for money and the recommendation is that they should be offered more frequently.

Second, entry level staff in participating agencies should be required to enroll and complete the course either prior to or at the time of assignment to overseas post.

Third, the course materials could be updated to ensure relevance and a state-of-the-art approach to training.

2.2 Functionality and Usefulness of the In-Country Training

The U4-RC has conducted 19 in-country training workshops since January 2005. Basic courses (“Essentials of Anti-Corruption”) are two day workshops that have mostly been restricted to U4 partners only. Since January 2005, 19 training workshops have been held in Malawi (two sessions), Mozambique (two sessions), Nicaragua, South Africa, Nigeria (two sessions), Kenya (two different workshops – basic and advanced), Bern, Afghanistan (two different workshops), Palestine, Yemen, Pakistan, Ottawa (two different sessions), and Georgia. An “Essentials of Anti-Corruption” workshop is currently being prepared for Tanzania in September 2007.

At the September 2005 SC meeting, the positive return on investment from in-country training workshops was discussed. SC members noted that the workshops were positively received by participants and that demand for participation exceeded to capacity of U4-RC staff to deliver. The SC members observed that in-country workshops had benefited from a close interaction with relevant local TI chapters, sources, and local experts. However, SC members commented that follow up or debriefing could follow the workshops some time after the training to gain an impact assessment on the in-country donor community. Finally, the SC members suggested that it might be beneficial to invite local government counterparts in the workshops.

At this same meeting, SC members contemplated the question of whether the U4-RC should offer advanced in-country training workshops on such issues as corruption in emergency situations (CES) and public financial management (PFM). Some concern was voiced that a number of other donors had been running workshops on PFM and therefore demand might be less than optimal. It was advised that it might be best to circulate information and get a sense of demand for such training. This caution has been reflected in the in-country training workshops that have concentrated primarily on basic training that reflects the six parts of the online courses.

Earlier workshops were attended overwhelmingly by U4 agency staff. On average, 70 percent were from U4 partner agencies and 30 percent came from non-agency (country national) staff. Demand to participate in the general training workshops has been high and most workshops have included approximately 30 participants. For example, 28 people attended the January 2005 workshop in Malawi, 34 in the February to March 2005 workshop in Mozambique, 34 were at the April 2005 course in Nicaragua. Specialized workshops have been particularly attractive with 49 attendees to the May–June 2006 workshop on resource leakage and corruption in the education sector in Kenya. At the most recent workshop in Tbilisi, 28 participants attended of which 9 were from the U4 partner organizations and the others were officials from various offices and organizations in Georgia. The U4-RC staff has intentionally limited the numbers of participants as a means to increase the potential impact of the in-country training.

Although the in-country training workshops have been popular several problems are apparent in U4-RC’s capacity to provide the service.

The in-country training courses present a serious challenge for the U4-RC by virtue of demands for staff time in preparation.

The U4-RC has a relatively small staff

New recruitment is offset by anticipated absences

The skill mix within the U4-RC and CMI might be inappropriate for a wide-ranging set of workshops (e.g. procurement, audit functions, etc.) This comment acknowledges the ability for CMI to utilize its own staff and external expertise for workshops. However, some limits are imposed by staff size and skill mix that would argue for CMI to work within its comparative advantage.

The cost of international travel and support is high and the return on investment for such courses is low relative to other uses of financial resources (increased online training). Although the travel and

experience deepens the U4-RC's staff competencies, the question arises of whether this use of resources is optimal for the donor agencies funding the U4.

Issues of duplication; a possibility that the U4-RC is providing workshops on subjects about which other bilateral and multilateral organizations are giving training workshop and actually might have a comparative advantage

Finally, the contradiction that is apparent in the U4-RC providing in-country training when its explicit mandate is to be a virtual resource.

It is the recommendation of this Review that the U4-RC provide selective training in those areas for which it has both a mandate (education and health) and a comparative advantage in terms of staff skills (PFM, CES). The U4-RC should update and further develop its online courses.

3. An Assessment of the Use and Quality of the Helpdesk Operated by Transparency International (TI)

The U4-RC contracted with Transparency International as the manager of the Helpdesk originally in London. Responses to queries to the Helpdesk were provided by a TI employee at their London office. For reasons internal to TI, the Helpdesk was moved from the London office to TI-HQ in Berlin, where a small staff (one person at 80% time, others on an ad hoc basis) has been responsible for coordinating responses. Overall, users have been quite happy with the Helpdesk. It has been an excellent means for staff in partner organizations to pose questions about corruption and receive timely responses (within a 10 day limit). Although the Helpdesk reported in June 2006 that its maximum output would be four queries a month, even a relatively modest increase usage has posed a problem.

3.1 Use of HelpDesk

The contract between the U4-RC and Transparency International (TI) for the management of the Helpdesk states that “the Helpdesk will produce timely professional answers to corruption related queries of agency staff through conducting research and consulting its network of pro-bono experts.” At numerous meetings, SC members have a high degree of satisfaction with the Helpdesk and a sentiment that the Helpdesk as an important asset of the U4-RC. Answers have been thorough and those individuals who pose the queries have an ability to enter a dialogue with the Helpdesk. Indeed, when taken on the whole, the 101 responses to Helpdesk queries that are published on the U4-RC indicate a cost-effective and useful service.

Use of the Helpdesk has been increasing over the past years and may be expected to continue to increase in the short-term. This increase in demand may be especially the case if the U4 expands to include the donor agencies of Denmark, Finland, Ireland, and Switzerland. (The SC mandated the Lead Donor to contact the donor agencies of these governments to inquire as to their interest in joining the U4.) As the table below suggests, use of the Helpdesk has increased significantly as is evident from the statistics presented by the U4-RC and those reported by TI:

Year	Responses published on www.U4.no	TI	Difference
2003	25	23	2
2004	20	23	3
2005	20	24	4
2006	26	35	9
2007 (to date)	10	n/a	10

As the table above shows, since 2006, the numbers of queries have substantially increased. Among the more common queries topics have included such topics as

Designing anti-corruption strategies/interventions, national integrity pacts, and anti-corruption commissions

Approaches to fighting corruption in post-conflict countries

The use of blacklists and debarment for companies that engage in corruption on projects that involve donor funds

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (explaining, implementing, experiences with) International experiences with asset declaration

Country specific requests (i.e. Zambia, Mali, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Ghana, Rwanda,)

Scale of assets stolen in Africa

3.2 Quality of Helpdesk Responses

The Helpdesk is accessible on the internal (restricted) site. As the table above shows the numbers of queries dipped in 2004 and increased markedly in 2006. Several reasons may account for the increased usage of the Helpdesk. First, the increase demonstrates the successful promotion of U4 information materials in the donor agencies; in particular, the U4 newsletter and online courses. Second, the increase is undoubtedly due to the increased importance that governments have attached to good governance and anti-corruption in their bilateral assistance strategies. To many queries the Helpdesk has provided cogent and concise answers within the allotted 10 days. Questions sent to the Helpdesk have increasingly focused on specific anti-corruption policy issues including the UNCAC, corruption in emergency situations (CES), and PFM.

When an inquiry is received by the Helpdesk at TI-Berlin, the coordinator first conducts desk research as a primary method. Then, the Helpdesk coordinator at TI contacts a U4-RC panel of experts (approximately 35 pro bono individuals including retired World Bank staff members, members of NGOs in the developing world, and selected academics) with knowledge of the region or issue. The coordinator poses the question and requests a response. If Helpdesk coordinator feels that the information is unsatisfactory or inadequate, the inquiry is forwarded to local TI offices for consideration by TI country staff. The coordinator assembles the materials and drafts a response to the question that is sent to the TI research manager for comment, and after making changes, the response is forwarded to the U4-RC staff at CMI. Responses reference materials for further reading and the coordinator attempts to maintain contact with the agency staff member who made the inquiry to ensure that further clarification is not necessary. The response is sent within 10 days.

This method of receiving and answering queries creates a problem of ad hoc responses to specific questions. As the volume of queries has increased, the quality of responses has become uneven. This qualitative unevenness has been reported by U4-RC as an increasingly salient problem. As the table above shows, a marked difference is present in the response rate that TI cites and those that the

U4-RC staff felt were sufficiently of quality to put on the website. Managers at the U4-RC had to make judgments to withhold some responses from the website for reasons of quality. As a consequence, considerable dissatisfaction with TI's management of the Helpdesk was expressed by both senior and junior U4-RC staff members. *This dissatisfaction must be corrected in the interests of the U4-RC.*

Reasons for the unevenness in quality may include that the process by which the Helpdesk receives and responds to queries. The TI Helpdesk coordinator has to respond to queries without staff to assist in the acquisition of a clear understanding of the issues region, countries, or larger issues. Accordingly, the Helpdesk coordinator may rely on TI networks for responses to important queries. A lack of staff and dependence on TI networks has been cited by some U4 partners as contributing to an excessive acceptance on a TI (NGO) perspective of explanations, causes, and consequences of corruption. This perspective may sometimes be of an acceptably quality; at others, however, a perceived over-reliance on TI networks may account for some low quality responses.

Second, management at TI-Berlin has chosen to place the sole responsibility for the Helpdesk on one individual. Although the proportion of time the coordinator is supposed to give to the Helpdesk is 80 percent, it appears to be probable that the coordinator is being asked to work on other TI projects at the expense of the Helpdesk. In interviews in Berlin, the Helpdesk coordinator noted other responsibilities at TI-Berlin included preparations of a report on corruption in the judiciary. One question is whether the accumulated pressure of these demands is more than can be expected of one individual. More to the point, if the U4-RC expands to include up to four more donor agencies, demands for information may be expected to increase 40 percent or more. It is reasonable to ask whether TI has a capacity to respond to the increase in queries to avoid the necessity that U4-RC staff members use their time to review carefully responses for quality prior to putting them on the website.

One possible response to increase the efficiency of responses from the Helpdesk might be to develop guidelines that are displayed on the Helpdesk about what questions are appropriate. As currently in operation, no guidelines exist to determine the types of questions that may be posed to the Helpdesk. As a consequence, some of the queries are complex questions that would normally require that the Helpdesk have a substantial staff with significant research skills to find information from a variety of sources in the allotted 10 days. This large staff is currently unavailable for the Helpdesk coordinator at TI-Berlin.

It is the recommendation of this Review that guidelines should be drafted for questions that U4 staff pose to the Helpdesk.

See below an example of a particularly complex set of questions that was posed to the Helpdesk on 28 December 2006:

Could you give me examples of different funding modalities for government agencies that are set up to investigate and prosecute corruption? Are there examples where these are funded by country governments (possibly using budget support funds) or do they tend to be directed supported by donors? In a budget support country, how realistic is it to expect such an agency and its sometimes controversial activities to be financed through a Minister of Finance rather than directly by donors? I realize that the answer will be that it is context specific but examples from different countries would be useful.

I am also interested in the political reality of governments establishing effective agencies to investigate themselves or their political allies. Do you have examples where a government agency supported by that government has taken serious steps and successfully investigated cases of grand corruption committed in their own administrations or a previous administration that is effectively the same government in terms of political make up. The UN Convention would seem to require a government to do this – what is the reality of this?

The questions embedded in this query are unrealistically complex and any response would have suffered from superficiality. The first question on modalities of government agencies might have been usefully answered by a reference to the U4 Issue paper on five African anti-corruption commissions. A more serious problem is present in the second question on budget support since it suggests a poor level of understanding by the interlocutor of problems of fungible budgetary resources. This misunderstanding is continued in the questions that follow. It is not reasonable to expect a Helpdesk coordinator to provide knowledge of what should already be understood by the individual posing the query. What emerges from a consideration of this complex set of question is the need for guidelines that govern the types of questions that may reasonably be posed.

Another less egregious example of an unreasonable expectation for a response is below:

Please can you let me have information on the experience of countries in Africa in ratifying the UN convention on corruption (UNCAC)? Which countries have ratified? Do you have any information on the processes leading up to ratification and the drivers for gaining the political support for ratification? Also, if you have anything on the experience of any country in Africa that has ratified and what differences this has made?

The inquiry about UNCAC and the countries that have ratified the Convention is perfectly reasonable. However, information about processes leading to ratification and drivers for gaining political support is necessarily a country-specific set of conditions. Hence, the Helpdesk coordinator could not be reasonably expected to answer the query without specific country examples and field knowledge. Since the Helpdesk coordinator depends on TI sources for field information, the response is vulnerable to criticisms that it overly relied on a TI perspective. Hence, the posted response fails to address the questions and is overly-reliant on TI sources and reasoning.

One method is to broaden and harmonize answers by developing a set template for responses. Again, guidelines for the types of questions that may be asked would help to prevent some problems. However, a standardized template for the answers the Helpdesk provides would increase the service's efficiency. In that fashion, a level of commonality of responses would follow and the Helpdesk might be better able to field a projected increase in queries from more U4 partners.

A second recommendations for the Helpdesk is that the standardized response already in place be revised and improved to ensure that the coordinator be able to answer in the allotted ten day.

Finally, the issue of cost cannot be ignored as it pertains to the Helpdesk. Since 2005, TI has received £218,585 to provide response for 115 queries (according to TI) of which 101 were deemed useful by the U4-RC. The ratio of quality responses to low quality is overall quite positive. This ratio means that TI received £1,900 per query or that U4-RC paid £2,164 for each response that was useful. If each response takes an average of 10 days, the cost is approximately £216 per day, which hardly excessive. However, the issue is whether the Helpdesk will be able to furnish the same level and overall quality of service if the U4 expands to include 10 donors.

Third, an expansion of the U4 will require an increase in the allocation for the Helpdesk.

A fourth recommendation for the Helpdesk is that the service be either put up for bid or perhaps housed at the U4-RC. However, critical staffing implications arise if the Helpdesk is housed at the U4-RC and these should be considered carefully by the CMI management.

4. Surveys of Agency Users

Surveys of agency users from all six agencies and different geographical locations conducted 2005-07, including headquarters and country offices. This will facilitate an understanding of the current and future needs of users to inform decisions as to the focus of the U4-RC for the next phase of the project in order to ensure this is demand led and operationally useful.

This section provides a brief discussion of the surveys of users from the six agencies. Much of the information has already been raised in Chapter 1. The focus in this chapter is therefore a facilitation of future needs of users to ensure a demand-based U4-RC as it enters the next phase of the project.

4.1 Surveys of Users

The 2005 survey of users is disappointing for its low response rate of 3 percent of the 1,030 registered users. In 2006, a survey was sent to 197 former students of the online course. To this survey, only 22 responded or 11 percent of those solicited for answers. Hence, conclusions about the U4-RC are unavailable.

The method of assessing user satisfaction in 2005 was to ask a series of questions:

- Agency (i.e. DfID, Norad, Sida, etc)
- Geographic location of respondent
- Frequency of visits
- Reason for infrequent visits

Then on a scale of 1 to 5, respondents were asked to rate aspects of the U4-RC

- Perception of usefulness of theme pages
- Perception of usefulness of resources
- Perception of usefulness of services
- Perception of usefulness of partner agency information and project database
- Perception of usefulness of website functionality
- Other (accessibility of documents, how to find website, percentages of respondents who had no opinion on specific perceptions)

Although the survey in 2006 asked many of the same questions, the sample size was so low as to indicate either apathy on the part of users, they do not have time to respond to surveys that are unfunded mandates, or some combination thereof.

It is the recommendation of this Review that a more systematic survey of user satisfaction should be undertaken by a credible survey firm with appropriate follow up for non-response. This survey should be able to differentiate among frequent users, occasional users, users who only visited one or two times; as well as individuals who had “hit” the site, but never entered and users who were registered, but had never accessed the website.

4.2 Future Needs for Users

Future needs for users cannot be adduced from a survey response rate of 22. Hence, the telling statistic is usage of the site that goes beyond hits. Future needs should first reflect priorities that have been articulated at meetings of G-8 leaders. These priorities include themes of health (malaria, AIDS), education, and good governance. Second, U4-RC users will need to understand governance and anti-corruption strategies adopted by both bilateral and multilateral donors.

Impressions that may be gleaned from the 2006 survey include the following:

Question 4: How would you rate the different website components' ability to meet your information needs?

The most highly rated resources and theme pages (4.2 out of 5) were toolkits, the corruption glossary, and the education theme page

These pages were followed by PFM, CES, knowledge management for anti-corruption, African anti-corruption commissions, anti-corruption conventions (all 4.1)

Question 6: On a scale of 1 to 5, how useful are these resources? Both the online training course and the Helpdesk received a 4.7 indicating a trend to support these services.

Question 10: Would you like to see new services (web-based or not) provided by the U4?

The respondents wanted more information on international conferences, workshops, agency events.

Monthly expert panels on practical operational solutions was described as desirable

Discussion groups for operational staff in countries under autocratic governments

A desire was expressed for more advanced training

Question 12: In terms of specialized training, would you prefer online or in-country training (more context specific)? Responses to this question a slight majority for online training. This preference suggests that the six weeks of commitment was seen as a higher value than 2 to 3 days in-country training.

Some strategies for future users might include the following recommendations:

A link to a monthly "Good Practice and Lessons Learned" that might be displayed on the introductory page. This link could be a result of a competition or a rotation among donors who wish to identify and congratulate a particularly effective intervention. Conversely, the link could provide an interactive link for experts (perhaps those external experts engaged for the online course) to discuss practical solutions.

The U4-RC might rotate an example of a particular PFM, CES, or experiences with anti-corruption commissions as strategy or policy that users could consult. These examples could include a single country experiences with a reform in PFM, the education sector, health, CES, or establishing an anti-corruption commission. This link could be a banner on the introductory webpage that is the product of a consideration of policy initiatives in various regions.

A list of events that concern U4 partner agencies as well as multilateral conferences and events. This list could include "upcoming events" so that operational staff members are aware of regional and even international conferences and workshops sponsored by U4 partner agencies. Links to OECD and World Bank websites might deepen the content. An example of this type of information may be found in the WBI governance website.

A list of official donor strategies and policies toward corruption might be a useful addition so that recipient government officials would be able to understand the positions of donor agencies. This list could include official declarations from U4 partner governments, other bilateral donors (USAID, AusAid, France, Japan), and the multilateral donors (IMF, OECD, OSCE, the World Bank, ADB, AfDB, EBRD, and IADB).

5. Assessment of Governance Mechanisms

A general assessment of existing mechanisms of governance for the U4-RC (including logistics and communication) to assess the extent to which these support development of content and management of services of Centre, and recommend changes if deemed necessary.

This chapter is divided into three sections: a discussion of existing governance mechanisms, a consideration of logistics and communication (between the U4-RC, the Lead Donor, and the SC), and a single recommendation.

5.1 Existing Mechanisms for U4 Governance

Three critical actors compose the U4-RC: the Steering Committee, the Lead Donor, and the U4-RC staff based at CMI. In addition, coordination of the U4-RC Helpdesk is provided by TI. Hence, the management is provided by four entities.

5.2 The Steering Committee

The governance of the U4 RC is directed through a Steering Committee (SC) composed of representatives of the Donor Group (DfID, Norad, Sida, Cida, Gtz and BMZ, and MinBuZa), TI, and the U4-RC. Strategic oversight of the U4-RC is provided by the SC, which meets once a year. Decisions are made jointly on plans for research and commissioned work and a prioritization of activities. However, on financial and budgetary matters are made exclusively by the Donor Group.

Steering Committee responsibilities include:

- Approving the budget and action plan
- Approving strategic directions for each annual period
- Reviewing the implementation of U4-RC commitments and outputs
- Determining whether the U4-RC outputs comply with TORs for Phase II
- Determining what concrete actions the U4-RC needs to undertake to correct any problems with outputs and compliance with TORs.

Steering Committee meetings are to take place at least once a year. The Lead Donor (currently Norad) coordinates the SC meetings. During the period under the MOU, the SC has met at regular intervals with participation of U4-RC staff and chaired by the CMI's designated representative. At these meetings, priorities for the U4-RC are identified, problems are discussed, and overall strategic decisions taken.

In this period two meetings occurred:

21 September 2005 – BMZ, Berlin, Germany. The 21 September 2005 meeting was attended by representative of DfID, Gtz/BMZ, Sida, Cida, Norad, CMI/U4-RC, and TI. The topics discussed included:

Finances of the site

A need to achieve a critical mass of staff trained in anti-corruption

Possible reallocations of the budget to carry out in-country training with other donor agencies (e.g. Cida)

The possibility of inviting development agencies of Ireland, Finland, and Switzerland to join the U4.

The SC advocated development of new focus areas including PFM, corruption in conflict and emergency situations, and identified other possible areas to include political will, corruption in procurement, and corruption in the judicial sector.

Training courses, both online and in-country were positive reviewed and the SC supported potential expansion of training course to include aid recipient government officials. Advanced training was discussed and the SC asked the U4-RC to continue its planning.

The SC emphasized its satisfaction with the Helpdesk and questioned whether it might not be opened more widely to the general public.

Finally, problems with the project database were discussed; some U4 partners have encountered difficulty uploading projects onto the site.

20 October 2006. – Norad, Oslo, Norway. This meeting was attended by representative of Cida, DfID, Gtz/BMZ, MinBuZa, Norad, Sida, CMI/U4-RC, and TI. The topics discussed included: U4-RC's satisfactory fulfillment of the TORs for Phase II included successful in-country training workshops, reports on political corruption, and corruption and direct budget support, and the need for updating the project database.

Other areas of emphasis for the SC were improvements in knowledge management with the purpose of collecting experiences from relevant projects, observations by concerned individuals, and how that information relates to the U4 partner agencies.

The SC approved the U4-RC's activity and budget plans for 2007, including reallocations of unused funds, an expansion of training activities, the inclusion of new partner agencies, and the development of two new themes: natural resource management and corruption and the UNCAC.

A decision was taken for the identification of a new Lead Donor either Sida or Norad after 31 December 2006.

Finally, the SC decided to retain the U4 name, but delete the Utstein reference – the name is the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center.

Within 10 days of each SC meeting, the U4-RC staff drafted minutes of SC decisions that were submitted to each donor group.

5.3 The Lead Donor

Oversight of the U4 RC is provided by a *Lead Donor*, who is nominated by the SC Regular meetings between the U4-RC management team and the Lead Donor took place in April, June, and December 2005; in 2006, meetings were held in April, June, and January. In May 2007, Norad assumed the responsibilities of Lead Donor. The Lead Donor serves as an intermediary between U4-RC and the member donor agencies. Considerations of identified priorities are discussed in meetings between the Lead Donor and U4-RC staff. In addition, the meeting in April 2005 was attended by TI's Anna Hakobyan, who presented materials on the Helpdesk. TI was absent from subsequent meetings until June 2006 when Victoria Jennett presented a brief on the Helpdesk usages and the need to define what constitutes a good answer (this exercise was completed with the assistance of U4-RC's Jessica Schultz).

Responsibilities of the Lead Donor include:

- Meeting at least three times a year with U4-RC management to monitor progress against agreed upon timelines, expenditures against budget, and forecasting any possible changes in activities or budget

- Maintaining a record of U4-RC commitments insofar as they are in compliance with strategic directions defined by the SC

- Conferring with U4-RC managers to agree on benchmarks and performance indicators for delivery of Phase II and reporting these agreements to the SC

Making decisions on U4-RC direction and outputs between SC meeting and communicating these decisions to other donors either electronically or by phone

Organizing an Review of Phase II of the project

Maintaining regular communications with U4-RC managers and staff

Chairing pre-SC and SC meetings and provide feedback to CMI/U4-RC management on activities for the period under review.

The Lead Donor has convoked seven meetings with U4-RC management and TI since 2005:

5 April 2005 – DfID offices at East Kilbride, UK. At this meeting new staff members of the Lead Donor, DfID, were introduced. Updates on accounts, new activities (PFM), the Helpdesk, as well as the introduction of a new focus area in political will and corruption in emergency relief and special pages on methodology, lessons learned, and public expenditure tracking surveys. Other topics of discussion included training, both in-country and online.

23 June 2005 – CMI, Bergen, Norway. The key focus of this meeting was a presentation of revisions to the website's appearance and access to its resources by non-U4 donor agencies (Ireland). Updates on activities noted a number of new pages and activities to improve the site (the 2005 survey). Online and in-country training courses with comments that the Nicaragua course had been highly successful. Discussions about the Helpdesk revolved around the types of questions submitted (aid modalities) and limits on the coordinator's ability to deliver responses. DfID reported that they had started to discuss with the SC a possibility of transferring the Lead Donor responsibilities.

15 December 2005 – DfID offices at East Kilbride, UK. Attendees to this meeting commented on progress in specific thematic topics: PFM, CES, and Political Corruption. Participants at the meeting discussed training activities, both online and in-country, as well as the possibility of specialized training in education to be held in Kenya. The Helpdesk had undergone staffing changes with its move from London to Berlin.

14 April 2006 – DfID offices at East Kilbride, UK. This meeting considered the publication of a fourth PFM issue paper, work on political corruption, and the initiative on CES that include a corruption risk mapping exercise (with ODI-London), a risk assessment tool, a study of procurement policies, and a webpage on the role of civil society on emergencies. A new Helpdesk coordinator joined TI. However, TI expressed concerns about the volume of inquiries and their ability to respond. Finally, training activities included online courses, an "Essentials of corruption" in-country training courses in Afghanistan, and planning for a specialized in-country training in Kenya.

8 June 2006 – CMI, Bergen, Norway. The meeting's attendees commented on the increasing number of activities on CES (the risk-mapping study, procurement study, the role of the media in emergencies, and the UN's approach in emergencies). Other thematic work included a fourth paper on PFM and political corruption. Updates on the Helpdesk noted a net increase in the number of queries and commented that the maximum that can be accommodated is four per month. Finally, a decision was reached taken for Norad or Sida to assume responsibilities as Lead Donor.

30 January 2007 – DfID offices at East Kilbride, UK. This meeting followed the SC meeting in October 2006. Topic discussed at this meeting included thematic work, increasing queries to the Helpdesk, online and in-country training courses, the IACC in Guatemala, the possibility of Cida funding, and a need to strengthen the U4-RC team through recruitment.

23 May 2007 – CMI, Bergen, Norway. This meeting was the first at which Norad assumed responsibilities as Lead Donor. It was noted that invitations sent to Denmark, Finland, Ireland, and Switzerland had not resulted in any concrete plans, despite expressions of interest by the Swiss and Irish. Other developments included an announcement for this Review. Activities included two online, two in-country training courses (Ottawa, Tbilisi), and planned workshops in Dar es Salaam and Dhaka. Finally, the meeting discussed continued development of thematic pages and U4 Briefs on political parties and corruption, the UNCAC, and natural resources and corruption.

5.4 Logistics and Communication

The Lead Donor is responsible for arranging logistics for relations between the U4-RC and the SC. In addition, the Lead Donor hosts meetings with the U4-RC team to discuss activities, progress, and future initiatives at the U4-RC. Hence, the Lead Donor functions as the primary interlocutor with staff members of CMI/U4-RC and communications between the U4-RC and the SC. However, a second communication channel is also present between the U4-RC and the SC on which six bilateral donors sit and express their respective priorities. This communication is less frequent. One concern is that a multiplicity of voices might contribute to miscommunications between the Lead Donor, SC members, and the U4-RC team. It should be minimized to ensure the SC maintains a managerial distance from the U4-RC. Finally, U4-RC staff members have responsibilities to CMI, which also poses potential for conflicts of interest and a perception that the U4-RC is being used to further the research interests of particular CMI researchers.

It is the recommendation of this Review that since the U4-RC is housed at a Norwegian research facility and the Lead Donor is Norad, it is crucial to protect an appearance and reality of independence of the Lead Donor from CMI.

6. A Cost-benefit Assessment and Review of Relevance

A cost-benefit assessment of whether the U4-RC offers value for money. The relevance of the U4-RC's topical focus will also be reviewed, with regard to the extent to which the U4-RC's programme is consistent with the donors' anti-corruption requirements and global priorities.

This chapter provides a brief cost-benefit analysis of the U4-RC. Second, it considers the relevance of the U4-RC's topical focus and its coherence with international priorities and anti-corruption priorities.

6.1 A Cost-benefit Assessment of the U4-RC

The value of the U4-RC is evident in its growth in importance and the increase of donor organizations that may potentially join as U4 partners. Costs of the U4-RC are direct costs in the form of budgetary subventions from U4 partner organizations. As the U4-RC has become more integrated into bilateral development assistance programs its thematic pages, publications, training programs, and the helpdesk have increased in their costs. Below is a table showing the costs in terms of budget that the U4-RC represents to the Donor Group. In 2007, the U4-RC received additional funds from the Canadians and the Dutch to fund activities. In addition, Gtz has provided funding to expand work on the UNCAC theme starting from January 2007.

Budget	2005	2006	2007
U4 Grant	£485.116	£455.954	£440.625
Cida	—	—	£130.464
MinBuZa	—	—	£135.888
Total	£485.116	£455.954	£706.977

The benefits for U4 partners are present in the availability of information, training, and the Helpdesk to respond to specific inquiries. A consideration of costs-benefits must consider the alternative of what would be the cost to the U4 partner agencies if these services were unavailable from the U4-RC. Various organizations provide training among them is the World Bank Institute or the NGO training organization CIET. However, a clear benefit is to have training “in house” meaning furnished for specific demands articulated by the donors.

A second benefit is present in the Helpdesk. However, as this Review has discussed above, the cost of the Helpdesk is substantial when measured in per response value. The problem is that for U4 bilateral agency in-country staff to pose questions about corruption and receive professional quality answers in 10 days cannot be discounted. Hence, the Helpdesk’s value is considerable and the issue is to make more cost effective so that as the U4-RC welcomes other bilateral agencies, the Helpdesk will be able to respond.

6.2 An Assessment of Topical Focus

The topics addressed on the U4 website and covered at in-country training sessions are current and relevant for country staff. In 2005, the topical emphasis on education and health were received with strongly positive sentiments. When the U4-RC added the thematic area of PFM, it was complementing international initiatives that were expressed in OECD DAC reports and other donor initiatives. Similarly, the work on UNCAC, private sector development, corruption in resource abundant economies, and corruption in the judiciary reflect priorities of donors as they seek to improve development effectiveness. In this respect, the U4-RC is contributing an immeasurable service for the U4 partners, who are its clients.

7. Possible Future Expansion

For the next period, the current donors have expressed a wish for the U4 RC to expand its training activities. What types of extra resources will this necessitate and through which alternative avenues may such a goal be reached? It is also likely that the U4 resource centre will expand concerning number of donors. Is there a need to revise the governance structures of the U4 if this happens?

Training is among the more innovative services offered by the U4-RC. However, in order to provide more training services for U4 partners, some changes will be necessary for the U4-RC. This chapter addresses the donors’ expressed wish for more training with a focus on the extra resources that will need to be procured to reach such a goal. Second, the chapter considers how an increased number of donors will affect the U4-RC’s governance structure.

7.1 Expanded Training Services

Training courses as furnished by the U4-RC need to be differentiated between online courses and in-country workshops, whether basic anti-corruption workshops or advanced/specialized courses. An expansion of online courses should be straightforward for the U4-RC. More international experts would need to be identified and contacted as resource persons for the different modules. This expansion in the numbers of external experts who would provide teaching for different modules would have a secondary of enlarging the pool of potential experts for the Helpdesk.

The recommendation of this Review is that it is imminently possible, cost-effective, and carries considerable secondary benefits if the U4-RC increases the numbers of online courses it offers.

In-country workshops are more problematic. First, the current staff size of the U4-RC poses a constraint to more training courses. Currently, two research staff members and one administrative staff member are assigned to the U4-RC and selected senior researchers have part time responsibilities. The U4-RC has recently recruited three new staff members at the research level, but still has a deficit in senior researchers assigned to the center. This lack of personnel poses a constraint on CMI/U4-RC's ability to offer many more in-country workshops.

Secondly, in-country basic anti-corruption workshops are highly labor intensive especially at the preparation stage. This degree to which the workshops are labor intensive work is even more apparent for advanced/specialized workshops. Hence, the U4-RC's capacity to deliver more high quality in-country workshops is limited by the size of its staff.

It is the recommendation of this Review that the U4-RC will need to increase its senior research staff (2 senior staff should suffice) that is actively working on corruption and corruption related projects if it is to increase the number of in-country workshops.

7.2 Implications of more U4 partners for the operations of U4-RC

A proposal to include more countries in the U4-RC collides immediately with the staff constraints described above. First, an increase in the numbers of bilateral development agencies will put immediate demand on the online training courses. This demand can be met by the U4-RC as it currently operates. As stated above, the online courses provide the U4-RC with potential, external experts who may then participate in other activities such as the Helpdesk.

The Helpdesk as presently configured would be overtaxed if the U4-RC were to grow by two or more bilateral partners. At the present time the Helpdesk is encountering difficulties in its ability to respond to as many as 35 queries. If the U4 partners increase by 20 percent, it may be anticipated that the Helpdesk will receive 50 queries a year. This volume will compel the Helpdesk to reconsider its mode of operation and as stated above set guidelines, standardize its responses, and increase its staff.

This Review recommends that if the numbers of U4 partner agencies increases, the U4-RC will need to increase its staff at both the level of researchers (five may be sufficient) and senior researchers.

7.3 Implications of more U4 partners for the U4-RC governance structures

The implications for U4-RC governance structures are apparent in demand for increases in the staff size. At the present time, two senior researchers are active in the management of the U4-RC. Both have multiple responsibilities to CMI and the U4-RC actually occupies a relatively small percentage of their professional responsibilities. Hence, staffing implications are the most pressing issue.

For the Lead Donor, the increase in numbers of U4 partners would have immediate implications for an ability to fulfil that responsibility without it infringing on other tasks. One solution if the U4 increases to include eight or even 10 bilateral partners would be to shorten the period of the Lead Donor's service from 6 to 12 months. This would minimize the onerous aspects of being the Lead Donor and divide the responsibilities among members of the U4.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

External Review of the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre Phase II

Background

In late 2004 the four original ‘Utstein Agencies’ (DFID, Norad, GTZ and MinBuZa) decided to support Phase II of the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (“the Project”). Sida and CIDA also decided to support the Project. Following satisfactory performance in implementing Phase I of the Project, the Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway (“CMI”) was appointed by the donor group to implement Phase II of the Project as specified in the Action Plan attached as Annex B. CMI has subcontracted Transparency International (TI) to operate the Help Desk for U4 partner agency staff. The purpose of the Project is to provide an over-arching information management service supporting the donor group’s anti-corruption work in developing and transitional countries as outlined in the detailed Term of reference attached (Annex A). The implementation of the Project started on 1 February 2005 and will end on 31 December 2007.

The task will be carried out by two consultants. Netlife research will focus on the U4 resource centre from a usability perspective within the scope of work detailed below. The main consultant John Heilbrunn will focus on the other aspects of the U4 Anti corruption activities within the scope of work detailed below.

Netlife research will deliver a finished usability report by the end of the workday 11 June to Norad. Mr Heilbrunn will use, synthesise and incorporate the results of this report in the draft report to be presented to CMI 15 June as well as the extended draft to be presented to Norad June 18. .

Purpose, context and intended use

At the Steering Committee Meeting in Oslo 20 October 2006 it was decided to carry out an external review of the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre in 2007 for the following purposes:

1. To inform a decision by the donor group as to whether to:
 - i. renew CMI’s contract to manage the project in January 2008, or
 - ii. put the project out to a new tender, or
 - iii. discontinue the project.
2. To assist potential new donors in deciding whether to support the project
3. To provide the basis for the ToRs for a possible next phase of the project, whether via renewal or tender

Objectives

To assess whether the Resource Centre and its services meet the original specifications (see annexes A, B & C to the MoU) and subsequent agreed changes as recorded in the approved minutes of the Steering Committee meeting.

To assess the extent to which the RC provides content, presentation and services which are relevant and accessible for the users, and not accessible elsewhere.

Scope of work

The review will have seven components:

1. A review of the presentation, functionality and responsiveness and targeting to actual and potential users of the website as a virtual resource centre. This will include an assessment of actual and potential usage of the site, and consequently if appropriate, ways to increase usage.
2. An assessment of the functionality and usefulness of the online and in-country anti-corruption training courses.
3. An assessment of the use and quality of the Help Desk operated by Transparency International (TI).
4. Surveys of users from all six agencies and different geographical locations conducted 2005–2007, including headquarters and country offices. This will facilitate an understanding of the current and future needs of users to inform decisions as to the focus of the U4 resource centre for the next phase of the of the project in order to ensure this is demand led and operationally useful.
5. A general assessment of existing mechanisms of governance for the RC (including logistics and communication). Through consultations with CMI staff in Bergen, the Help Desk team at TI-Berlin and the donor group, the consultant will assess, the extent to which these support development of content and management of services of Centre, and recommend changes if deemed necessary.
6. The consultants will carry out a cost benefit assessment of whether the U4 resource centre's services offers value for money. The relevance of the U4 resource centre's topical focus will also be reviewed, with a regard to the extent to which the U4 resource centre's programme is consistent with the donors anti-corruption requirements and global priorities.
7. For the next period, the current donors have expressed a wish for the U4 RC to expand its training activities. What types of extra recourses will this necessitate and through which alternative avenues may such a goal be reached? It is also likely that the U4 resource centre will expand concerning number of donors. Is there a need to revise the governance structures of the U4 if this happens?

Implementation of the review and reporting

Two consultants will be required for this review combining:

- Proven experience in website design, maintenance and management.
- Proven capacity to manage and synthesise user surveys
- Proven up-to-date knowledge and experience of donor anti-corruption work, including at country level.

The seven components require a combination of desk-based (electronic) review, telephone and e-mail communications with users, donors and CMI/TI staff, and a visit by the main consultant to CMI-Bergen and the current lead donor Norad in Oslo. A lead donor representative may travel to Bergen when then main consultant is in Bergen.

The work will be carried out over 16 consultancy days end May/end June 2007. The usability consultant working on the website will be allotted five working days. The main consultant will be assigned 11 days.

A draft report will be submitted to the lead donor Norad by June 18. Norad will give its comments as Lead Donor and circulate the extended draft to the other donors June 19. By June 25 the draft with eventual additional comments from other donors will be sent to Heilbrunn. Based on these comments

Heilbrunn will forward a final report the Lead Donor June 28, who will send it to the donor group, GTZ, The Netherlands and CIDA no later than June 29.

The report will consist of no more than 20 pages focusing on the key conclusions from the seven components of the review, and recommendations for the future format, content and management of the resource centre (including the helpdesk).

Contracting

The selected consultants will be required to submit a proposal for how to conduct the review within the stipulated resource frame before finalising the contract.

Travel and accommodations

- 1 journey Rochester NY – Bergen – Oslo – Rochester NY
- Norad/CMI responsible for reservations/accommodations on site in Norway

Budget

Consultancy fee

3 857,75 NOK x 11 days = 42 435, 25 NOK

Travel and accommodation:

Maximum 60 000 NOK

Total: 102 435,25 NOK

Recent Sida Evaluations

- 07/11 Collaborative Learning Projects, Final Report**
Emery Brusset, Julian Brett, Tony Vaux, Niels Olesen
Department for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations,
Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management
- 07/12 International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Africa Regional Programme, Mid Term Review Report**
Patricia Machawira, Irene Moyo
Department for Africa
- 07/13 Derecho a la Identidad y la Participación Ciudadana en Bolivia**
Eduardo Ballón Echegaray
Department for Latin America
- 07/14 Palestine International Business Forum, 2005–2006**
Krister Eduards, Åsa Hydén
Asia Department
- 07/15 Improving University Research and Education in Honduras**
Erik W. Thulstrup
Department for Research Cooperation
- 07/16 The African Midwives Research Network**
Kim Forss, Gaynor Maclean
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 07/17 En utvärdering av Sidas ungdomssatsning Zenit**
Birgitta Birkenfalk, Sigge Birkenfalk, Jan Nylund
Informationsavdelningen
- 07/18 Lake Victoria Catchment Environmental Education Programme (LVCEEP), Support to World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Final Report**
Irene Karani, James Ndung'u
Department for Africa
- 07/19 The Social Context Training Cooperation between Sida and the Law, Race and Gender Unit, University of Cape Town**
Suki Goodman
Department for Africa
- 07/20 Sida's Support to Urban Environment and Urban Development in South East Europe**
Svend Erik Sørensen, Bo Andreasson
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 07/20 Sida's Support to Urban Environment and Urban Development in South East Europe**
Svend Erik Sørensen, Bo Andreasson
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 07/21 Proyecto de Reingeniería Institucional de la Superintendencia Forestal de Bolivia (PRINS), 2003–2006**
Lars Eriksson, Hugo Piotti
Department for Latin America

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
SE-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 779 96 50
Fax: +46 (0)8 779 96 10
sida@sida.se

A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

Sida, UTV, SE-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 698 51 63
Fax: +46 (0) 8 698 56 43
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>