INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN AFRICA (ISDA) PROJECT
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE 2024 MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION
This management response outlines Transparency International’s response to the findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the TI Inclusive Service Delivery in Africa project. The ISDA project, which runs from April 2022 to March 2026, is funded by Global Affairs Canada and is implemented by TI-S and national Chapters in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. It seeks to improve access to education and health services for women, girls, and other groups at risk of discrimination by addressing corruption related barriers.

The independent evaluation of the project was commissioned by TI-S and conducted by Blomeyer and Sanz between February and June 2024 with the intention of assessing the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project at the mid-point of implementation’ and informing adjustments to our approach in the second half of the project to increase its longer-term impact.

OVERALL RESPONSE TO FINDINGS
Overall, despite the acknowledged delays in implementation, we welcome the overall evaluation findings that at its mid-term stage, the project is characterised by its strong performance against the relevance and coherence evaluation criteria, and is showing promising initial indications of effectiveness, positive developments in terms of efficiency and good prospects in terms of sustainability. The report has provided useful feedback and recommendations on ISDA’s strengths as well as areas that can be further strengthened in its remaining two years of implementation and offers practical recommendations for consideration in future programming and project planning at TI-S.

- **Relevance and coherence**: the evaluation has found that ISDA’s objectives and activities are highly relevant to the current needs of the five implementing countries. The project significantly contributes to all key TI strategies, aligns well with Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and complements other initiatives in education and health service delivery at national and regional levels with its specific anti-corruption focus.
• **Effectiveness**: despite some delays in implementation constraining the scope of outputs available to the evaluators to assess in relation to the likely achievement of longer-term outcomes, the evaluation recognised that ISDA shows promising initial signs of effectiveness, with stakeholders recognizing the importance of addressing corruption in education and health sectors; increased awareness and engagement from public sector stakeholders in several countries, and an improved understanding of specific target group needs, leading to new collaborations between Chapters and CSOs advocating for these groups.

• **Efficiency**: the evaluation identified positive and improved developments in terms of efficiency. The project budget is underutilised primarily because of implementation delays and resource constraints, especially in Ghana and Zimbabwe. Overall schedule challenges were noted in relation to (1) efficient project coordination and implementation at the inception phase caused by recruitment delays and (2) research activity delays caused by external factors specific to each country.

• **Sustainability**: the evaluation noted the overall absence of an exit strategy for the project but found promising prospects for sustainability, with Chapters demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability efforts, but also noted challenges included turnover among public sector staff and resource constraints among Chapters and local CSOs to maintain post-project activities. This will be an area of added emphasis by the project teams during the remaining implementation time of the project.

TI-S will make concerted efforts to implement the specific recommendation responses below and provide additional support to Chapters to address identified issues specific to their national implementation.

**Specific recommendation responses for TI-S**

*Develop activities specifically addressing corruption's roots in resource scarcity among public servants and service users.*

**Accepted**

We accept this recommendation and recognise that drivers of corruption need to be better considered and for the remainder of the project will:

i. develop a plan with targeted interventions to ensure that engagement with direct public servants and rights-holders is not overlooked.
ii. liaise with other stakeholders working on performance management targeting root causes of corruption to amplify our actions to address resource-based challenge.

iii. use media campaigns at national level to create awareness on corruption threats stemming from resource-based challenges.

Provide the NCs with a standardized set of broader categories of priority areas within education and healthcare service delivery. Partially Accepted

We accept this recommendation but note it cannot be fully considered for the current phase of the ISDA project since the research methodology has already been implemented. In relation to the current research under ISDA, we have analysed the national research reports and consolidated common themes, decision points and advocacy topics from the findings, which will be used for regional and global advocacy.

However, we will take this recommendation forward for other future programming involving corruption risk assessments. We will jointly develop, validate and adopt the methodology with implementing partners, while setting out clear parameters for priority areas, to ensure comparability across all project countries, such that regional trends and patterns can be drawn easily for advocacy purposes. Where donor priorities allow, we will select countries with similar issues for specific projects to enhance opportunities for comparability and targeted advocacy.

Continue targeted capacity development for national chapters. Accepted

We accept this recommendation. This was embedded in ISDA's design and is already included in our 2024 workplan, focusing on chapters' specific needs and contexts. Gender and inclusion and MEL and results-based management workshops will be organised in a staggered fashion both virtually and in-person over the remaining period of the project. Peer-learning chapter exchanges are also embedded within the project design.

We will work with project partners to link these actions to other engagements, collaborations and joint actions with other stakeholders at national level which have expertise on gender and inclusion.

Recommendations for National Chapters

Maintain the specific focus on vulnerable groups. Accepted

We accept this recommendation. ISDA's activities already target women and girls, particularly under its second pillar. With the new gender and equality strategy, we will
from now introduce processes to include target groups in the design and implementation of project activities at the national level, maintaining focus on these groups, and complemented by the above capacity support to chapters.

**Ensure regular and frequent updates to local and national stakeholders on project activities.**

We accept this recommendation. With the research phase now completed, Chapters will pick up engagement with beneficiaries, community and local stakeholders again from Q3 2024, both in line with project activities and the implementation of the new gender and equality strategy. They will also establish effective and accessible communication mechanisms with stakeholders and increase project visibility by maximising the use of campaigns, media outreach and social media platforms.

**Maintain the approach of implementing activities in close cooperation with local CSOs.**

We accept this recommendation. Chapters will identify local CSOs and representatives of beneficiary groups to be part of steering committees or working groups, which will be engaged and consulted for activity design and implementation, to better capture, understand and consider their needs during design and implementation. Multi-stakeholder coalitions are also envisaged and will promote partnerships for joint implementation with local CSOs, as has already started in Madagascar, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

**Scale up partnerships at national, regional, and international levels in formal settings.**

We accept this recommendation. Wherever possible, Chapters will invite representatives from the other ISDA chapters to remotely share their experiences and best practices during formal meetings with public officials. To further support this engagement, TI-S will liaise with Chapters ahead of time to track those meetings and events at national level, facilitate communication to the other country teams and promote cross-country engagements aimed at amplifying ISDA’s messages.

**Carefully consider their approaches to communicating cases of corruption.**

We accept this recommendation. In terms of messaging and communicating research findings, TI-S will support chapters in Q3 2024 to develop national advocacy plans, which will include targeted stakeholders and key messages. This process will promote the use
of tailored and contextually applicable approaches to communicate with the identified stakeholders, while increasing the chances of sustained interest and collaboration on the project.

**Communicate project outcomes via local media (radio and TV) and social media to reach a broader range of stakeholders.**

Accepted

We accept this recommendation. Chapters will promote project findings and updates at the national level using various media platforms, particularly social media, as the most accessible format for several groups. The project will also develop video documentaries capturing key findings and messages for relevant advocacy events on national, regional and international platforms.

**Recommendations for TI-S and National Chapters**

**Implement mitigation measures aimed at improving collaboration with public authorities and institutions.**

Partially accepted

We partially accept this recommendation, recognising the localised make-up of the TI movement means that willingness of government to engage in the fight against corruption differs between countries. However, chapters will continue leveraging Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with public institutions wherever appropriate and feasible. Through the multi-stakeholder coalitions and other platforms, they will cooperate with like-minded CSOs on joint actions at national level. Across both sectors, we will continue to foster collaborations with other allies and intermediary institutions better placed to exert influence on government engagement. We will also review chapters’ existing and future partnerships as part of advocacy planning and identifying entry points for lobbying, including strategic partnerships with institutions active in government spaces in both sectors at the national level, and developing positive messaging around the advantages of addressing corruption-related issues for any given country.

**Explore collaboration and engagement with organizations running projects that are complemented by the ISDA project.**

Accepted

We accept this recommendation. As part of the new gender and equality strategy, we will finalise a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and work with chapters to include CSOs and international organisations implementing similar initiatives and then reach out to assess their interest in collaboration. Leveraging the multi-stakeholder coalitions across
both sectors and at all levels will enable broader collaboration with organisations working on health systems strengthening and educational quality improvement.

**Design exit strategies for the project.**

We accept this recommendation and will work with chapters and project partners to design more detailed project exit plans and sustainability strategies, including reflections on resourcing and ISDA’s components that could be mainstreamed in their overall programming. As we consider the findings of the evaluation, we will discuss the possible benefits of a no-cost extension with GAC, to ensure that the project’s initial delays are sustainably addressed to achieve the desired effectiveness and impact of the ISDA activities.

**Final remarks**

TI gratefully acknowledges Global Affairs Canada as an important partner in our work and appreciate the support given to document and address corruption-related barriers in education and health service delivery in Sub-Saharan Africa. We look forward to discussing the findings of the evaluation with our donor and partners, particularly in relation to the proposed actions for improved implementation and effectiveness towards achieving project goals.

TI-S is also grateful to the evaluation team of Blomeyer & Sanz for a comprehensive and constructive report that will enhance ISDA’s future effectiveness and efficiency.