

The FCPA Blog

Mark Pyman: More anti-corruption leadership from business, please

- Mark Pyman
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Last month the international business community, in the form of the business B20 group, put out a call for G20 nations to develop national-level anti-corruption strategies (June 22, 2018, B20 and C20 [joint statement](#) on implementation of national anti-corruption strategies). They see this as a necessary complement to the efforts by G20 nations on asset recovery, beneficial ownership transparency, asset disclosure, open data and public procurement integrity.

This is welcome and represents a good example of business engaging on the wider stage, taking a stance on an important gap that could materially advance anti-corruption efforts worldwide.

And it is quite a gap. In a detailed analysis earlier this year, I and several collaborators [published an analysis](#) of the anti-corruption strategies of the 26 top-ranked countries, as measured by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2017.

The 26 countries are: Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Singapore, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, UK, Australia, Iceland, Belgium, Hong Kong, Austria, USA, Ireland, Japan, Uruguay, Estonia, France, Bahamas, Chile and United Arab Emirates.

This follows on from a 2017 analysis of the [anti-corruption strategies](#) of 41 mid-ranked countries.

What we found was unexpected. While almost all of the 26 countries participate in one or more of the major transnational anti-corruption initiatives (the exception is the Bahamas), only three of the 26 (Estonia, Finland (still in draft), UK) have national-level anti-corruption strategies.

Participation in transnational initiatives is important and positive, but it does not equate to a national strategy. Both countries and the international community will benefit significantly if each government develops its own national anti-corruption strategy, one that considers and integrates transnational, national, sectoral and local government priorities. Formalizing the strategy means that each part of government agrees on the objectives, the rationale and the priorities. They play a role too in signalling the government's ambition in fighting corruption and they make it easier for civil society and other stakeholders to hold governments to account.

Of the three countries that have strategies, the [UK strategy](#) is the most recent and the most comprehensive. It is clear from speaking to those involved in developing the UK approach that the effort has indeed had quite an effect in cross-government coordination. Their three objectives are serious: reducing threats to national security from corrupt insiders, stronger economic opportunities, and greater public trust in UK institutions.

They define six priorities: reducing insider threats in high risk areas, defined as borders and ports, prisons, policing and defense; strengthening the integrity of the UK as a financial center; promoting integrity across the public and private sectors; reducing corruption in public procurement and grants; improving the business environment globally; and working closely with other countries to combat corruption.

The specificity of both the objectives and the priorities is commendable, as are the proposed actions, and I think this strategy could be used as a template by other countries for their strategies.

I am not alone in believing that the anti-corruption agenda in the next decade will turn from “admiring the problem” of corruption to examining and

implementing pieces that contribute to solutions. Business needs to be an active part of advancing this new agenda, not just at the micro level of good compliance and ethics. Increasingly the solutions will be found sector by sector — from the health sector to telecommunications to sport — and, in each sector, business can collectively exert more influence than nations.

Dr. Mark Pyman (pictured above) is a Senior Fellow (Anti-corruption, Security and Defense) at the [London Institute for Statecraft](#). He previously served as Commissioner of the Afghanistan Joint Independent Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. He's the founder of the Transparency International Defense & Security program.

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