



# Integrity Action's 2016-2020 SIDA Grant

MID-TERM EVALUATION

Final Report, V2

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## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADC	Armavir Development Center
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CERC	Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption
CIB	Community Integrity Building
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IFI	Institutional Financial Institution
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan
KCNRN	Kwale County Natural Resource Network
KWEA	Kwale Welfare and Education Association
KYGC	Kwale Youth and Governance Consortium
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
SDDirect	Social Development Direct
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSIP	Seismic Safety Improvement Programme
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
USP	Unique Selling Point
VfM	Value for Money

# Executive Summary

## Overview of methodology and approach

This report presents findings from an independent mid-term evaluation (MTE) of Integrity Action's 2016-2020 Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) grant. Integrity Action is supported by SIDA through a four-year grant (2016-2020) worth approximately £2.4 million, which aims to build the organisation's capacity to deliver on four overarching strategic objectives. The evaluation was carried out over five months (October 2018 to February 2019) by a core team of three consultants from Social Development Direct (SDDirect) based in London.

The main objective of the MTE is to review progress towards the four key strategic objectives of the SIDA grant to date. A further (though lower priority) objective is to review the relevance, effectiveness and overall 'fitness for purpose' of Integrity Action's new five-year strategy (2018-2023) and theory of change (ToC), with the view to making recommendations for the remaining period of the grant. The evaluation team, therefore, undertook an independent assessment of three mutually supporting areas, with different weightings reflecting the key priorities of the evaluation:

- Achievement of results to date and progress towards outcomes (50% weighting)
- Efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of operational performance (40% weighting)
- Effectiveness and relevance of the new ToC and new five-year global strategy for driving results (10% weighting).

Across these three areas, the team considered the extent to which gender and social inclusion (GESI) have been considered, and assessed progress towards the organisation's GESI strategy.

The methodology included four key phases:

- 1) **Inception phase:** where scope and methodology were refined in line with strategic objectives;
- 2) **Desk-based phase:** including a review of key documents; interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with core staff; and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders (including partners and donors);
- 3) **Country field work phase:** Two field visits to Armenia and Kenya, including in-depth interviews and FGDs with key stakeholders;
- 4) **Analysis, report writing and validation:** including an internal presentation with Integrity Action's team to validate findings and recommendations.

## Key findings

The evaluation team find that the organisation is acutely aware of its strengths and weaknesses and are investing resources strategically leading to greater organisational efficiency and effectiveness, with evidence of significant results to date and progress towards the four outcome areas of the SIDA grant. Key findings include:

- **Internal policies, systems and processes have been significantly strengthened over the first two years of the SIDA grant.** Organisational restructuring has led to a more efficient and effective team structure, with the office move enabling a better working environment. The organisation has undergone a successful transition to a new financial system including a full-cost recovery strategy

and more robust operational and funding trackers. Integrity Action has been able to leverage the SIDA grant to diversify its funding streams, reducing the overall proportion of income from SIDA significantly from 75% to just 31% in 2018/2019, which is helping to ensure the organisation is more resilient to sectoral and donor-led shifts.

- **Integrity Action has made significant progress demonstrating the scalability and replicability of the approach to open citizen feedback**, with evidence that progress in this area can be traced back to the new organisational ToC. During the grant period, the organisation has expanded its footprint to work with 13 partners in seven countries.<sup>1</sup> Across a variety of country contexts and sectors, Integrity Action has been able to demonstrate the effectiveness of open citizen feedback to collaboratively achieve solutions to problems discovered during monitoring of development projects. Progress in this outcome area has been enabled by a new approach to partnerships and a new training model – which combined are enabling the organisation to significantly scale up the approach through new forms of partnership, whilst continuing to innovate in new contexts with the potential for scale.
- **Progress towards achieving a sustainable model is mixed.** Whilst the evaluation team finds compelling evidence of sustained outcomes, for example on monitors' personal and professional development, and increased community engagement in public services, there are very practical challenges for sustaining community-based monitoring beyond project funding cycles. Driven by the new ToC and strategy, the organisation is increasingly looking at sustainability as the ability to influence donors to make open accountability feedback mechanisms a requirement of funding. Progress in this area demonstrates Integrity Action's influence in the sector, and is promising in terms of its potential to promote a mode of development that prioritises open feedback and monitoring. The evaluation team proposes that a deeper political economy analysis (PEA) would help to ensure improved donor modalities translate into achieving systemic, national-level change.
- **Integrity Action is a respected leader in the social accountability sector and is perceived as being 'ahead of the curve' in terms of its use of technology and community-driven programming.** Local partners particularly value the organisation's bottom up and problem-solving approach, and international partners respect the organisation's clear area of expertise. Under the grant period, Integrity Action has been actively increasing its visibility and influence in the sector, with a heightened focus on safeguarding since early 2017, creating more opportunities for the organisation to influence sectoral debates and international donor agendas. Whilst a lack of internal capacity in communications has held back progress in this outcome area, communications are now high on the organisation's agenda for 2019 and beyond.
- **Integrity Action has a strong network of well-established and value-adding national partners who share common goals.** The organisation has initiated a much more intensive due diligence process for existing and new partnerships, creating a stronger network of partners fit for purpose and growth. Local partners value Integrity Action's *collaborative* approach to partnerships, and especially value mechanisms for learning and capacity building.
- **Integrity Action has made significant progress towards mainstreaming GESI within internal organisational processes and systems and cascading the approach through local partners.** Buy-

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan, Armenia, DRC, Kenya, Nepal, Palestine, and Tanzania.

in and commitment to GESI is found to be high. However, the organisation's support to partners will be critical in a number of areas going forward, namely: supporting the adaptation of Integrity Action's GESI strategy to partners' contexts and, subsequently, its meaningful implementation; promoting the integration of GESI analysis as a core intervention design tool; and continuing to build partners' understanding of marginalisation and social inclusion beyond gender.

- **The evaluation team find compelling evidence to support the overall effectiveness and relevance of the model.** Integrity Action's genuine commitment to putting community priorities at the heart of its work was praised as both effective and unique by both international and local partners. Local partners consulted concur that the model is highly relevant in their context, with some partners seeking to replicate or draw on aspects of the model in their wider social development work. Integrity Action's use of technology and DevelopmentCheck in particular are unique selling points (USPs). In order to ensure that DevelopmentCheck remains highly relevant to the model moving forward, Integrity Action will need to continue to invest resources to ensure the app remains cutting edge, and in the longer-term answer some key questions around its future direction (including how to make optimal use of data; the feasibility of moving towards a more open source platform; and how to address challenges of use in low resource settings).
- **The evaluation team find that the new five-year strategy (2018-2023) and ToC are fit for purpose and growth,** signalling a step change for the organisation with a much greater emphasis on inclusivity, achieving results at scale, building effective partnerships, and building the evidence base to amplify the impact of Integrity Action's work. The evaluation team finds strong evidence that these organisational documents are already guiding decision-making and progress towards outcomes. Looking forward, it will be important for the organisation to engage partners and generate buy in for the new strategy and ToC, building a shared sense of ownership, momentum and alignment towards common goals.

## Recommendations

The evaluation team make seven overarching recommendations in total for areas of focus and refinement for the remainder of the grant period. The recommendations are summarised below, with practical actions further outlined for each area in Section Four of the report.

1. Refine and strengthen approach to MEL
2. Review the organisational approach to sustainability
3. Refine and enhance the organisational approach to GESI
4. Develop a robust organisational approach to safeguarding
5. Develop a longer-term strategy for the future of DevelopmentCheck
6. Formalise the new approach to partnerships
7. Strengthen the approach to demonstrating VfM.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Background to the SIDA grant and objectives

Integrity Action enables citizens to improve the delivery of essential services, infrastructure, and development projects in some of the world's most challenging environments. They do this through the bottom-up promotion of integrity, using a unique mix of knowledge, tools and approaches to support citizens to monitor projects and services in their own community and hold their governments to account.

Integrity Action has a community-driven, collaborative, problem-solving approach which aims to improve the way services are delivered, especially to the poor and most marginalised in developing countries. The three-pronged approach involves:

- **Monitoring:** Enabling citizens to become monitors of services and development projects. Citizens volunteer to learn how to access information such as infrastructure contracts, and then check that whatever was promised is being delivered. Monitors are typically members of communities where the services and projects are active, giving them a genuine interest in their successful delivery.
- **Technology:** Monitors post their feedback, including any problems, on an easy-to-use and award-winning website and app DevelopmentCheck. Their feedback is visible to anyone, unedited, and posted in real time, all of which makes DevelopmentCheck independent and trusted. To date, over \$1 billion worth of development spending has been monitored through this tool, and it currently works in 12 languages.
- **Solutions:** Monitors don't just report problems; they are actively involved in finding solutions. Monitors convene meetings involving all relevant stakeholders and then work towards finding solutions that work for everyone. These fixes are also posted on DevelopmentCheck.<sup>2</sup>

Integrity Action is currently supported by SIDA through a four-year grant (2016-2020) worth approximately £2.4 million which aims to build the organisation's capacity to deliver on four overarching strategic objectives<sup>3</sup>:

1. Integrity Action is able to deliver small to large-scale interventions by following transparent, open and structured processes and attracting revenues from contracts, grants, consultancies and operational partnerships.
2. Integrity Action's approach proves to be a community-led, scalable and replicable method, sustainable over the years with minimum oversight from headquarters.
3. Integrity Action and our approach are recognised as a leading actor in the social accountability sector.
4. Integrity Action acts as a hub which shares and facilitates learning from all partners across the network.

This mid-term evaluation (MTE) is a core part of the SIDA grant. Initially planned as an end-line evaluation, the scope was shifted to mid-way through the grant period to allow Integrity Action to

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<sup>2</sup> Integrity Action (2017) Annual Report and Financial Statements

<sup>3</sup> As outlined in the SIDA ToC in Annex E

draw maximum learning from the findings and recommendations, with time to adapt and target resources as necessary for the remainder of the grant period.

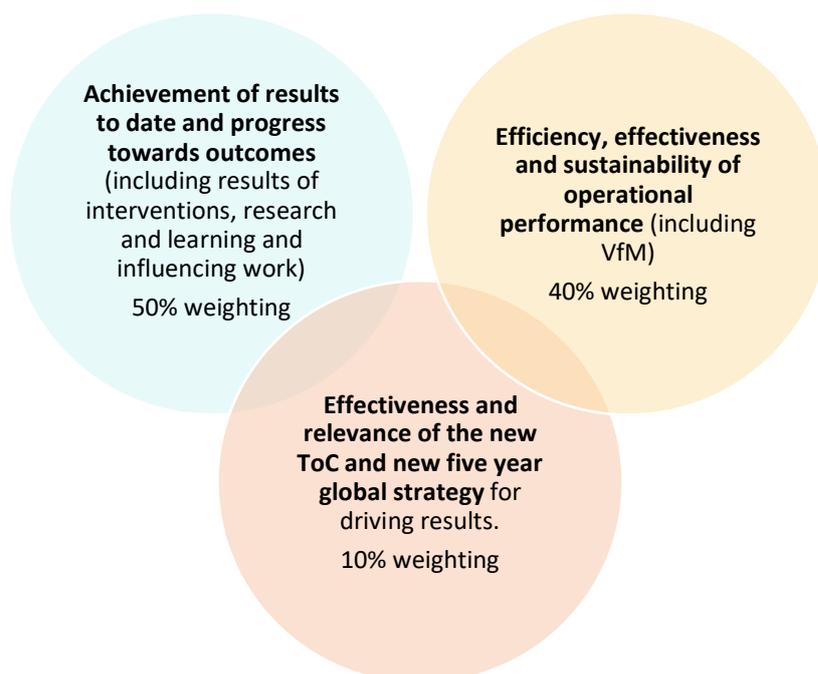
The timing of the MTE coincides with the introduction of a new theory of change (ToC) and five-year strategy (2018-2023) which aims to guide Integrity Action’s business model moving forward, providing a framework for how the organisation, in wider partnership, will achieve greater scale while maintaining high-quality interventions. While the primary focus of the MTE is to assess results to date, in light of key findings, the evaluation team provide a series of reflections on the ‘fitness for purpose’ of the strategy and ToC to drive results for the remainder of the grant period.

## 1.2 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

As stipulated in the terms of reference (ToR) the primary objective of this MTE is to review progress towards the four strategic objectives of the SIDA grant (2016-2020) to date. In line with these objectives, the MTE includes a focus on both results for beneficiaries and communities, as well as Integrity Action’s efforts to strengthen itself as an organisation that is fit for purpose and growth. This includes an exploration of which interventions and activities have worked well, and less well, in achieving these objectives and generating learning to inform decision-making for the remainder of the grant period.

A further (though lower priority) objective of the MTE is to review the relevance, effectiveness and overall ‘fitness for purpose’ of the organisation’s new global strategy and ToC, in the light of MTE findings.

In summary, the MTE aims to independently assess three mutually supporting areas, with different weightings reflecting the key priorities of the evaluation:



Across these three areas, and in line with OECD DAC Criteria, the MTE includes an assessment of the

overall impact of the SIDA grant to date, whilst examining the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of results and the model. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is assessed as a cross cutting theme, with the evaluation team focusing on the extent to which GESI has been considered, and progress to date in implementing the organisation's GESI strategy.

The intended primary users of the evaluation are Integrity Action and SIDA, and the results may also be shared with existing and future partners and donors. Detailed evaluation questions which guided the MTE are included in Annex A.

## **1.3 Methodology**

### **1.3.1. The evaluation team**

The review was carried out by a core team of two consultants from Social Development Direct (SDDirect) based in London. SDDirect is a leading provider of expert technical assistance, research and evaluation services with a focus on gender equality and social inclusion based in London, UK. Quality assurance and technical oversight was provided by SDDirect's Head of Governance, Voice and Accountability.

### **1.3.2. Evaluation approach**

The review was carried out over a period of five months from October 2018 to February 2019. The evaluation team adopted a theory-based approach framed and guided by both the SIDA grant ToC and results framework in the first instance, whilst also reflecting on the effectiveness and relevance of Integrity Action's new five-year strategy (2018-2023) and ToC for guiding results.

Integrity Action welcomed a formative MTE approach, embracing opportunities to strengthen learning and inform decision-making, both for the remainder of the SIDA grant period, and in the longer-term to inform the implementation of the organisation's new five-year strategy. Specifically, the approach aimed to facilitate 'action-reflection' learning, surfacing evidence from practice to improve programme design, performance and strategic alignment. The approach adopted was therefore highly participative and interactive, engaging staff, partners, donors and beneficiaries in a process of participatory appreciative inquiry.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, SDDirect mobilised its' signature experience and expertise around social inclusion, gender equality, voice and empowerment to apply a social inclusion perspective to the evaluation and specifically assess progress around the organisation's GESI strategy. The team drew on innovative facilitation and participation techniques to elicit beneficiary feedback, including participatory workshops, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Integrity Action staff and their partners; and targeted 'deep dialogue interviews' to capture real-time stories and real-life changes that have resulted from interventions and activities.

### **1.3.3. Methodology**

The MTE involved four distinct phases:

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<sup>4</sup> A tool for organisational change - which focuses on what an organisation, group or community does well, rather than what it has problems with.

### **1. Inception phase**

The objectives, scope and methodology were refined during inception in line with a mutual understanding of (i) the key purpose of the MTE and the scope (balance of breadth to depth) that is realistic within available time and resources; and (ii) strategic priorities (both organisational and donor priorities). An inception report was prepared and approved by both Integrity Action and SIDA in October 2019.

### **2. Desk-based phase**

This included a desk-based review of over 40 key documents and related evidence, including organisational strategies, proposals, programme documents, case studies, monitoring frameworks, annual and financial reports, and wherever possible secondary analysis of available data.<sup>5</sup> This phase also included a series of in-depth semi structured interviews and focus group discussions with a cross section of key informants including core staff, partners, and donors/development partners.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Country field work phase**

Field work was undertaken in Armenia and Kenya. The country selection was informed by a number of criteria including relevance of current partnerships and programmes, diversity of approach as well as capacity of in-country partners to host the evaluation team.

Two country field work missions were undertaken in January 2019 including the following key activities:

- **Project visits:** To observe and understand key programme activities.
- **Field-based interviews and focus group discussions** with key stakeholders (including staff from partner civil society organisations (CSOs), 'power holders', monitors and wider beneficiaries).<sup>7</sup>
- A facilitated **participatory multi-stakeholder workshop** with a targeted cross-section of stakeholders (10-15 participants) to undertake a collaborative self-assessment of the effectiveness of the model and results to date.
- A **light touch on-site review of operational systems:** including M&E systems, recruitment and training of monitors, and other internal policies and procedures.
- A **final half-day briefing:** including a presentation and dialogue on headline preliminary findings with key partner staff and monitor representatives. This final stage helped the evaluation team to validate findings and stress test early stage recommendations.

### **4. Analysis, validation and reporting phase**

A detailed **evaluation matrix** was developed and used to code the information from each stage of the MTE associated with each evaluation question and outcome area. Analysis involved an iterative process, triangulating data sources and analysis to draw conclusions and recommendations. After the

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<sup>5</sup> Please see Annex B for a list of documents reviewed.

<sup>6</sup> Please see Annex C for a list of stakeholders interviewed.

<sup>7</sup> Please see Annex D for a list of in-country stakeholders interviewed.

field visit, both consultants consolidated their notes for the final phase of analysis to draft the MTE report. Preliminary results and recommendations were validated during a presentation to Integrity Action staff on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

### **1.3.4. Limitations**

A few limitations were noted by the team over the course of the MTE:

- Remote interviews with local partners were at times affected by connectivity issues, limiting the depth of discussion and degree of follow up in some instances.
- Some local partners and donors were not available for interview during the timeframe and time allocation, due to a combination of connectivity issues (local partners) and the timing of the evaluation which spanned the Christmas holiday period. Where partners or donors were not interviewed, the evaluation team sought to fill any gaps through the desk-based review.
- Due to constraints of time and resources, the MTE team were only able to visit two focal countries – albeit in two very different contexts.
- A number of stakeholders interviewed are engaged on projects that have either not started implementation or that are at an early stage of implementation. As such, the MTE team placed emphasis on being forward-looking during these interviews, but was limited in its ability to cross-check high expectations and opinions on Integrity Action’s model of open citizen feedback with activities implemented or results achieved.

## **2. Findings and analysis**

### **2.1 Achievement of results and progress towards outcomes**

The following section is structured around three of the four priority outcome areas of the SIDA grant (Scale and Sustainability; Visibility and Recognition; Network and Collective Action). Results related to outcome area 1 (Efficiency and Effectiveness) are included under sub section 2.2, which explores organisational strengthening and operational performance in more depth.<sup>8</sup>

#### **2.1.1 Scale and sustainability**

The SIDA grant aims to achieve the following outcome: *‘Integrity Action’s approach proves to be community-led, scalable and replicable method, sustainable over the years with minimum input from headquarters’.*

#### **Achieving results at scale**

The evaluation team find that Integrity Action has made significant progress demonstrating the scalability and replicability of its approach to open citizen feedback, with evidence that progress in this area can be traced back to the new and tightly articulated ToC.

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<sup>8</sup> The ToC for the SIDA grant is included in Annex E.

Under the grant period, Integrity Action has expanded its footprint to work with 13 partners in seven countries<sup>9</sup>, and will be working in a further eight countries with eight partners under a new UK Aid Connect project (see below). Across a variety of country contexts and sectors, the organisation has been able to demonstrate the effectiveness of open citizen feedback to collaboratively achieve solutions to problems discovered during monitoring of development projects. This is demonstrated through projects achieving high average ‘fix rates’ – the unique metric Integrity Action has developed to measure improved outcomes such as the resolution of citizen complaints or improvements in public service delivery based on problems identified through monitoring – with an average rate 46% fix rate achieved for 2017/18 (including 39% for infrastructure projects, 30% for service provision and 68% for home reconstruction)<sup>10</sup>.

**Box 1: Integrity Action’s global footprint at a glance**

**2,197** active monitors

Active in **7** countries with **13** national partners

**828** infrastructure projects and **252** services monitored since 2013

Over **\$1 billion** value of projects monitored

**52%** average fix rate

Source: 2018 Annual Report; [www.DevelopmentCheck.org](http://www.DevelopmentCheck.org)

As of January 2019, Integrity Action has 2,197 active monitors (58% female, 42% male). The number of monitors is due to increase significantly in the next few years with two new notable contracts:

- **UK Aid Connect** – an £8.5 million DFID-funded programme working in eight countries with an estimated 10,000 young monitors from 2018 to 2022. The consortium is led by INGO Restless Development and includes partners Accountable Now; DOT Lebanon; Integrity Action; Intrac; Keep Your Shoes Dirty; United Purpose; War Child; and Y Care. The project will initially be piloted in Uganda, Madagascar and Iraq, before being rolled out in Lebanon, Central African Republic, Palestine, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- **Norad ‘Students acting for Honesty, Integrity and Equality grant’ (SHINE)** – will reach over 10,500 youth monitors in Palestine, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Nepal and Kenya through Integrity Clubs over four years from 2017 to 2021.

This expansion of Integrity Action’s reach and potential impact has been made possible by the organisation’s *new approach to partnerships* which emphasises building strategic partnerships with large international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and consortia with overlapping aims (see section 2.2.1). The evaluation team find that this new approach to partnerships offers an *unparalleled route to scale*, with the UK Aid Connect programme alone accounting for a five-fold increase in monitors from current numbers.

Whilst these new forms of partnership, no doubt, present significant opportunities for Integrity Action to expand its approach, grow and diversify funds, the evaluation team noted concern among some

<sup>9</sup> Afghanistan, Armenia, DRC, Kenya, Nepal, Palestine, and Tanzania.

<sup>10</sup> SIDA Annual Report 2017/2018.

staff about what this new approach means in terms of ownership and the challenges of maintaining high quality delivery with less oversight. It will be important for Integrity Action to capture learning from these new programmes on how to bring the approach to scale (including capturing and learning from challenges).

A notable achievement under this outcome area is the *development and implementation of a new training model* (including a modular curriculum, a Training of Trainers (ToT) certification programme and a monitor toolkit) which is enabling a more *standardised and streamlined replication of the approach* in different contexts. As of December 2018, most core staff are now certified ToTs, as are some partner staff members, and the approach has been rolled out through local and international partners to all new projects. Partners visited during the MTE field work and interviewed remotely were incredibly positive about the quality of these training materials, which have proven to be easily adaptable to local contexts.

Looking forward for the remainder of the grant period, due to significant upgrades (worth approximately £200k) to DevelopmentCheck – Integrity Action’s unique software application for real-time citizen feedback – it will be much easier to bring new projects to market from April 2019 (as well as improving the overall usability and functionality of the app – see section 2.2.1).

Over the grant period, Integrity Action has been driving innovation in community-based monitoring, by strategically piloting and adapting the approach in new contexts with the potential for scale. For example, In Armenia, Integrity Action is partnering with the Armenian Government, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and local partner Armavir Development Center (ADC) to pilot community-based monitoring as a way to reduce potential integrity and safeguard risks in the reconstruction of schools under the Seismic Safety Improvement Programme (SSIP). Whilst the pilot itself is small in scope and scale (monitoring the reconstruction of six schools), if the innovative approach proves successful it may be scaled up to all schools in the SSIP and could potentially be applied to other ADB infrastructure projects in Asia and the Pacific.

The evaluation team have also seen evidence of the approach being scaled more indirectly through local partners and non-partners adapting the model to use on other donor-funded projects. For example, in Armenia, ADC has adapted the model to use on a USAID-funded water management programme, while in Kenya, the Kwale County Natural Resource Network (KCNRN) are working with partners to adapt Integrity Action’s model of open citizen feedback on a four-year DFID-funded water and sanitation programme starting in 2019. In the DRC, the Centre de Recherche sur l’Anti-Corruption [Anti-Corruption Research Centre] (CERC) noted how non-partner CSOs have been inspired to adopt community-based monitoring as a result of seeing the impact of the Integrity Action model through the Norad SHINE programme. There may be interesting learning for the organisation to explore and capture here on how the approach is being adapted by different stakeholders in different contexts.

The SIDA grant’s results framework includes a target to reach 12 million people by 2020, reflecting Integrity Action’s ambition to achieve results at scale. However, in 2018, the organisation undertook a review of its approach to beneficiary counting to ensure that future targets are meaningful and that beneficiary numbers can be verified. The model does not lend itself easily to beneficiary counting due to challenges of identifying who benefits from any given project as well as issues of double counting.

As a result, the new policy commits to being transparent about how beneficiary numbers are calculated, including any methodological weaknesses; wherever feasible to collect sex and disability disaggregated data; and to avoid aggregating numbers of people reached unless there is a clear rationale to do so. The evaluation team concur that this is a positive change in policy, which presents an opportunity for Integrity Action (and SIDA) to demonstrate the reach and impact of the work in a much more meaningful way, including an increased emphasis on monitors as a key beneficiary group.

### *Sustainability of the approach*

Integrity Action currently view the sustainability of their approach in two ways: Firstly, sustainability is seen in terms of continuation of project activities, with the organisation keen to explore (i) whether and how citizens can continue monitoring beyond project support; (ii) whether and how monitoring systems can become embedded within service delivery, (iii) the impact of the model on strengthening existing local level feedback systems. Secondly, driven by the new ToC and strategy, the organisation is increasingly looking at sustainability as the ability to influence or ‘nudge’ donors to make open accountability feedback mechanisms a requirement of funding. These two approaches to sustainability are interrelated as the latter may help to ensure the financial sustainability of the former.

Regarding the former, Integrity Action is very aware of the practical challenges for sustaining community-based monitoring, and there is a lack of evidence that monitoring activities (in their current form) continue beyond project funding cycles. In part, this is due to a lack of financial resources to sustain activities – for example, monitors’ reliance on reimbursement for transport costs, particularly where monitoring requires travelling over significant distances (as is the case for monitors in DRC and Kenya). Linked to this, are practical questions of whether and how DevelopmentCheck can be used beyond project activities, with internal discussions currently exploring the feasibility of moving towards a more open source platform (see section 2.2.1 for further discussion around DevelopmentCheck).

There is also a key question of how activities can be sustained without the crucial role that CSO’s play in facilitating activities and acting as an important intermediary between communities and powerholders. For example, the Kwale Welfare and Education Association (KWEA) noted how Integrity Clubs in Kenya had previously been established across all secondary schools as a government initiative but had fallen dormant due to a lack of technical and financial support. KWEA are therefore concerned that, without its support, the clubs may once again become inactive. In addition, their team noted very valid concerns around whether and how to maintain the quality of community-level monitoring without direct oversight and refresher trainings provided by local partners.

There may be particular opportunities presented in this regard with Integrity Action’s increased engagement with youth volunteers through UK Aid Connect and the Strengthening Accountability through Youth (SAY) project in Tanzania<sup>11</sup>. In Afghanistan, Integrity Watch (IWA) expressed the view that Integrity Clubs are likely to be sustained where they are led by students due to challenges with sustaining teachers on a voluntary basis. In Kenya and Armenia, youth volunteers found monitoring

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<sup>11</sup> The Strengthening Accountability through Youth (SAY) project is funded under DFID’s UK Aid Direct programme, under the leadership of Raleigh International. It will run from April 2018 to April 2022, and will operate in Dodoma, Iringa and Morogoro regions of Tanzania.

particularly empowering as an opportunity to gain relevant technical, communication and leadership skills, and expressed a desire to continue to engage as active citizens beyond project activities.

Sustainability was a real concern for Integrity Action's partner in Armenia ADC at the time of field work, with its current ADB project shortly due to come to a close in February 2019. As a result, a key question has emerged around how they can maintain the significant momentum that has been gained in communities and sustain highly engaged monitors on future projects. Similarly, in Kenya, while partners are optimistic that communities will continue to benefit from the knowledge and awareness that community members and monitors have gained, plans for sustainability are closely tied to project extension, with a longer-term vision less evident. The evaluation team find that Integrity Action could provide more guidance and support to help partners better plan for sustainability at the project design phase (on both short and longer-term projects), including examples of best practice and helping to set realistic expectations and objectives.

The evaluation team saw some promising signs of longer-term improved outcomes for monitors, communities, institutions and public services during the field work. For example, monitors' personal and professional development; improved relationships between communities and local level government; increased community engagement in public services; and even some examples of institutionalised change. Integrity Action could do better at capturing the lasting impact of its work in a more systematic way as part of broader efforts to strengthen internal MEL systems and processes (see sub section on MEL in section 2.2.1).

In terms of Integrity Actions' approach of influencing donors as a route to sustainability, the organisation has made some impressive inroads with DFID, which has committed to review the existing feedback mechanisms under the UK Aid Direct portfolio in line with the Bond<sup>12</sup> Eight Principles for Accountability Mechanisms<sup>13</sup> (co-authored by Integrity Action's HoPD), with the view to piloting embedded open feedback monitoring within project grants. This is an impressive achievement and reflects the organisation's influence within the accountability sector. However, the evaluation team cautions that there are inherent limits to an over-reliance on donor-driven agendas for the achievement of sustainability in the longer-term. Ultimately, donor programmes and priorities are transient. Excessive dependence on external donor agendas and champions can sometimes become a liability in the national or local context.

Sustainable and systemic change at the national level will require sustained engagement and advocacy with national-level bodies and southern champions (especially government and private sector partners). Integrity Action should consider developing and embedding a more robust country-level contextual political economy analysis (PEA) into each of its programmes, working with its international and local partners to conduct this analysis in a light-touch and user-friendly way. Developing this analysis upfront would help Integrity Action to identify opportunities to engage relevant champions

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<sup>12</sup> Bond is a UK based learning network for organisations working in international development, of which IA is an active member.

<sup>13</sup> Skehan, C. & Hughston, L. (2018), 'Eight Principles for Building Trust Through Feedback', with paper introduction by Thorne, D. (2018) "Feedback is Vital for Trust and Effective Safeguarding", <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2018/09/feedback-is-vital-for-trust-and-effective-safeguarding>

from government, the private sector and CSO stakeholders on the benefits of citizen monitoring – with such support crucial to promoting sustainable and systemic change.

Looking forward to the remainder of the grant period and beyond, the evaluation team noted consensus around a lack of evidence to support the organisation's 2016 Tipping Point Strategy,<sup>14</sup> with the new ToC and five-year strategy making this strategy less relevant as a route to scale. However, Integrity Action's experience still points to the merits of a geographic focus of monitoring. The evaluation team propose that more clarity around where Integrity Action will and will not work moving forward, including a clear rationale and criteria (including for example criteria linked to sustainability), would be useful to guide decision-making in this area.

### **2.1.2 Visibility and recognition**

The third objective as outlined in the SIDA grant's ToC aims for *'Integrity Action and its approach to be widely recognised as a leading actor in the social accountability sector'*.

#### *Reputation and niche*

The evaluation team find that Integrity Action is a respected leader in the social accountability sector with an excellent reputation among partners and donors interviewed. Integrity Action is perceived as being 'ahead of the curve' in terms of technology and community-driven programming, with the community integrity building (CIB) approach and DevelopmentCheck in particular seen as unique selling points (USP). Local partners particularly value the organisation's bottom up and problem-solving approach, and international partners respect the organisation's clear area of expertise in the field.

Integrity Action's place in the sector is evidenced by the organisation being an 'in-demand partner' during the recent procurement of DFID's UK Aid Connect programme. After being approached by a number of different consortia, Integrity Action joined a consortium led by Restless Development, which will focus on promoting youth-led civil society strengthening. Restless Development described Integrity Action as *'worth its weight in gold'* in terms of both its technical contribution to the bid, and the centrality of the model to the consortium's overall approach. While both Raleigh International and the Aga Khan Foundation noted that Integrity Action and its model are less well known outside of the UK, in part due to not having any other country offices, Integrity Action has started to take a proactive role in terms of engaging a new range of partners, for example in the US foundation space.

In recognition of Integrity Action's technological innovation, DevelopmentCheck has been nominated for a number of international awards in 2017 including the Tech4Good and Bond Innovation Awards. In 2017, through pro bono support, the organisation achieved an EU IPO trademark for the fix-rate. However, this process was started in 2014, prior to the new strategy, with consensus that having a trademark is now less relevant towards organisational aims.

#### *Visibility and influence*

During the grant period, Integrity Action has been actively increasing its visibility and influence in the sector through proactive and targeted networking of senior leadership with key donors and potential partners (including DFID, the Hewlett Foundation and Comic Relief). Integrity Action has also chosen

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<sup>14</sup> Which emphasises achieving a depth of coverage in single well-defined geographies as a theory of how scale and sustainability might be achieved.

to take part in a number of strategic engagements, including the 2018 DFID Safeguarding Summit, and the 2018 Open Government Partnership Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting (the latter together with local partner ADC in Armenia). Integrity Action staff did note that networking requires significant time from what is a very lean team, with this challenge particularly affecting members of the senior management team (SMT), who can find external networking a drain on their overall capacity.

Integrity Action has been demonstrating leadership in the international development sector and gaining visibility through active engagement and leading roles in cross-organisation working groups including the Bond Feedback and Accountability Learning Group, DFID Safeguarding Group, the Bond Technology and Development Group and the Programmes Working Group of the Gender and Development Network (GADN).

The sector's heightened focus on safeguarding since early 2018, has created enhanced opportunities for Integrity Action to influence sectoral debates and international donor agendas through these platforms. This includes through active consultations on DFID's new safeguarding principles, and contributing to a Bond learning paper outlining key principles for building trust through beneficiary feedback mechanisms.<sup>15</sup>



Despite these achievements, it is clear that a lack of internal capacity in communications to date has held back progress in this outcome area – in particular, and as the team acknowledges, the organisation's website and social media presence are not 'up to scratch' and external communications have not adequately reflected achievements. In 2018, Integrity Action developed a new Communications Strategy rooted in the new ToC, which aims to drive income from flexible funders, influence with international funders and maximise potential for impact with international partners.

As we move into 2019, better communications are high on the agenda, beginning with a newly appointed Communications Manager in January who will lead on strategic recommendations outlined in the Communications Strategy, with significant improvements expected in internal and external communications over the remainder of the grant period.

### **2.1.3 Network and collective action**

This outcome area aims for Integrity Action to act as *'a hub which shares and facilitates learning from all partners across the network'*.

#### **Strength of Integrity Action's network**

Integrity Action has a strong network of well-established and value-adding national partners with common goals. All partners visited during the field work for the MTE were extremely credible with strong track-records working in social accountability, community-driven development and local service

<sup>15</sup> IA's Head of Programme Development co-authored the learning paper and ([https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource/documents/eight\\_principles\\_for\\_building\\_trust\\_through\\_feedback.pdf](https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource/documents/eight_principles_for_building_trust_through_feedback.pdf)) and published a blog <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2018/09/feedback-is-vital-for-trust-and-effective-safeguarding>)

delivery, which Integrity Action is able to leverage to pilot and scale up open citizen feedback mechanisms in different contexts.

In response to an audit of partnerships undertaken in 2017, Integrity Action has initiated a much more intensive due diligence process for existing and new partnerships, with consensus that this has led to a much stronger network of partners – both fit for purpose and growth. The process of local partner selection in Armenia – which involved an open call for proposals, an in-country training workshop for short-listed organisations and accompanied due diligence process before finally selected ADC as the preferred partner – demonstrates the resources Integrity Action are investing in developing new partnerships. The evaluation team find that this process, although intensive, is highly relevant to the demands of the model and approach.

### *Learning platforms*

The evaluation team noted partners value Integrity Action's *collaborative* approach to partnerships, and in particular they value mechanisms for learning and capacity building. These include online webinars, training and social media groups, as well as regular and responsive communication with Integrity Action staff. Partners interviewed reported finding cross-partner working groups very helpful as a forum for sharing learning and good practice. The GESI working group was highlighted by partners in Kenya as a useful learning forum; KWEA, for example, noted finding learning from Nepali partners around inclusive approaches to working with the visually impaired particularly helpful for their own work.

The annual workshop was noted by all partners as valuable both as a learning opportunity and a chance to feel connected to a global network of like-minded organisations, with learning around the Integrity Club model referenced by a number of partners. Integrity Action plan to make the next annual workshop more partner-led, following on from the success of previous sessions such as the Nepali local partner leading on the GESI session at the 2018 workshop. This is a promising development that will offer a valuable opportunity for partners to share and showcase their learning and expertise. Integrity Action may also want to consider further face-to-face opportunities for cross-learning and exchange, for example through exchange visits (as suggested by ADC in Armenia and the Kwale Youth and Governance Consortium (KYGC) in Kenya).

### *Collective action*

In 2018, Integrity Action has helped to coordinate a series of advocacy events with local partners for International Anti-Corruption Day, using the opportunity to release a YouTube video<sup>16</sup> showcasing Integrity Club activities from five countries. However, reflecting back on results to date and the relevance of continuing to support collective action, there appears to be consensus that this type of work is highly resource intensive with little evidence of significant gain, and less overall relevance to the new ToC and strategy. Consequently there is internal agreement that the organisation should step back from its role in supporting local level advocacy, whilst continuing to partner with local level partners for which advocacy is a strength.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6KdUd67HqI>

Whilst the evaluation team agree that supporting local level advocacy efforts may not be the best use of organisational resources, Integrity Action should consider how it might better support local partners to achieve systemic change in national systems. The evaluation team's recommendations regarding ensuring a deeper PEA analysis at the country level (see section 2.1.1) are relevant in this regard.

## **2.2 Efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of operational performance**

### **2.2.1 Efficiency and effectiveness**

The first outcome area of the SIDA ToC encompasses organisational efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, with the intended outcome that *'Integrity Action is able to deliver small to large scale interventions by following transparent, open and structured processes and attracting revenues from contracts, grants, consultancies and operational partnerships'*.

#### *Internal policies, systems and processes*

Internal policies, systems and processes have been significantly strengthened under the first two years of the SIDA grant, putting the organisation in a much stronger footing.

Key improvements include:

- Stronger governance structure
- Organisational restructuring
- Standardised training approach
- New finance system
- Full-cost recovery plan
- GESI strategy and action plan
- IT strategy
- Communications strategy
- Strengthened M&E tools
- Internal review of safeguarding
- Audit of partnerships and new approach to partnerships
- New organisational strategy and ToC.

These improvements have made Integrity Action a much stronger organisation; as one member of the organisation's SMT described *'our house is now in order'*. As a result, in 2018, Integrity Action scored highly in DFID's enhanced due diligence process – an independent assessment of systems and processes of prospective partners and grantees, with a consensus among staff that this would not have been possible two years ago. Furthermore, the most recent organisational audit in 2017 did not identify any areas of weakness in organisational and financial controls.

#### *Organisational restructuring*

Integrity Action embarked on an organisational restructuring process in 2017, and after putting forward a number of different options to the Board, a leaner, more efficient and effective team structure has been put in place. There is a general consensus among both Integrity Action and its partners that the changes have led to less duplication of roles and responsibilities, with clearer lines of

communication that are particularly appreciated by local CSO partners. With the departure of Integrity Action's founder and President, the organisation has reduced the number of executive roles, which has led to further efficiencies. A new Head of Programme Development position has been created, dedicated to programme development and evidencing impact. The closure of the Jerusalem office has led to further efficiencies. There is also a general consensus among staff that the new office move, and application of a more flexible working policy have boosted staff morale and has led to a better work/life balance.

The Board Remuneration and Nominations Committee has undertaken a review of Board effectiveness and, as a result, the governance structure has been reviewed with a Board governance manual introduced including fixed-term limits and a more strategic approach to recruitment of new Board members with skills in sustainable development, technology, communications and fundraising.

### *Approach to partnerships*

Integrity Action has undertaken an audit of CIB partnerships (2013-2017), which reviewed four main areas related to partner management (including partner selection, due diligence, partner management and partner assessment) as the starting point for the development of a new partnership strategy. As a result of this review, several measures were introduced to strengthen the organisation's approach to partnerships including:

- A strengthened approach to partnership selection and due diligence
- More robust partnership agreements
- Standardised training and resources
- Annual tracking of partners
- A matrix-style management of grants and contracts
- Learning forums (including cross-country technical working groups, social media platforms, Moodle learning platform and targeted webinars)
- Trialling more regular check ins with partners to strengthen relationships and respond to challenges/gaps.

#### **Integrity Action's values of partnership**

- Shared values and vision
- Accountability and transparency, autonomy and independence
- Gender equality and social inclusion
- Commitment to learning.

From: Integrity Action's Guide to Partnerships (2017)

Through this process, existing partnerships have been strengthened, some poor performing partners have been dropped and new promising relationships formed.

Integrity Action has defined four key values to guide the approach to partnerships – which were found to underpin all of the partners visited during the field work for this evaluation. (See box above) Partners especially value the organisation's collaborative approach to partnerships and the approach to capacity building in CIB approaches including tools, know-how and expertise in open beneficiary feedback.

As discussed in section 2.1.1, Integrity Action is embarking on developing new strategic partnerships with larger organisations with the capacity to achieve results at scale. Although this approach has yet

to be formalised into a strategy document, several new and promising partnerships have been formed as a result of this shift in ways of working (including as core consortium partners with INGO partner Restless Development on UK Aid Connect).

Integrity Action has been investing resources into building strategic partnerships with like-minded donors (including ADB, Hewlett Foundation, Oak Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation). In Armenia, the local partnership with ADB is an example of a new and complex form of partnership between Integrity Action, a local CSO partner and an international financial institution (IFI), which is working particularly well. ADB representatives were highly positive about the relationship and expressed a desire to expand to other infrastructure projects in the future which – as ADB are one of the most significant investors in development projects in Asia and the Pacific – presents significant opportunities. Hewlett Foundation representatives were similarly positive about their engagement with Integrity Action and expressed a commitment to working with the organisation over the longer-term. This has been demonstrated through the Hewlett Foundation providing Integrity Action with a pro bono lawyer to support an application for equivalency determination (now successfully awarded), which will allow Integrity Action to bid on US-funded projects in the future.

### *DevelopmentCheck*

Integrity Action's use of technology and DevelopmentCheck in particular are undoubtedly USPs for the organisation, contributing significantly to the effectiveness of results. From the field work, it was clear that the app is highly regarded as an important feature of the model, which adds to the approach's credibility and ensures transparency. Whilst the app is generally regarded as being user friendly, a number of technical issues with the present version were reported, including insufficient problem categories, an inability to record the same type of problem twice on one project, limited scope to record process-related progress, and, in Kenya, issues with language for monitors (where DevelopmentCheck uses Tanzanian rather than Kenyan Swahili). Furthermore, there are challenges for uploading the data in remote areas with limited power or internet access. In Kenya, partners noted that this can result in monitors struggling to log in and to upload their reports (please see section 2.2.3 for further discussion on the relevance of DevelopmentCheck to the model).

Integrity Action has responded well to reports of technical issues, working closely with partners to address concerns, whilst feeding in learning to future upgrades. The Armenian ADB pilot has provided an excellent learning platform in this regard for how to adapt DevelopmentCheck to new contexts. However, the evaluation team noted that the above technical issues were resulting in duplication of efforts – with local staff in Armenia effectively managing dual systems (excel and DevCheck) to ensure all problems and fixes are captured and tracked. Similarly, partners in Kenya advise monitors to take written notes and backup photos in case monitoring uploads are lost due to poor connectivity.

There were mixed feelings about the usability of the DevelopmentCheck website, with some concerns about accessibility for ordinary citizens, and in Armenia other social media platforms such as Facebook being preferred platforms for disseminating news about project progress. On the other hand, partners in Kenya said they had used the website as a tool for demonstrating progress – or a lack thereof – when interacting with local government.

Reflecting the pace of change in technology, under the period of the grant, Integrity Action has embarked on *two* rounds of significant upgrades of DevelopmentCheck, with the most recent round of updates due to be complete by March 2019. In theory, this most recent upgrade should address many of the technical issues listed above. However, there will undoubtedly be new and unforeseen technical challenges as new projects in new contexts get underway, so it will be important for the organisation to maintain a high level of oversight and openness to adapt as necessary.

In recognition of the significant challenges inherent in software development, Integrity Action has brought on board a part-time Chief of Technology (CoT) to advise on and manage the current software upgrades in the short-term, and in the longer-term to develop a strategy for DevelopmentCheck. Crucial to this strategy is the question of open source i.e. what exactly is appropriate in terms of making the tool open source? Should DevelopmentCheck be available to any public/private sector group or just to civil society? Should Integrity Action give away the code to allow anyone to adapt or license the product? These strategic questions are currently being worked on internally with the view to bringing suggestions and recommendations to the Board early this year.

### *Monitoring, evaluation and learning*

Integrity Action has made some progress in strengthening M&E tools and systems with the introduction of two new tools: an app-based knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) survey to track change in monitors, the baseline for which has been rolled out to all existing and new projects, and an online excel-based tool for projects, which tracks progress around activities in real-time. The latter has led to much more efficient reporting processes, appreciated by partners.

These are important improvements and will go some way to helping Integrity Action report on results. However, the lack of a clear MEL strategy and plan (both organisationally and for individual projects) means that the organisation is still overly reliant on the fix-rate as its primary metric. This is problematic in that the fix-rate methodology – while it is an effective tool – is not a particularly good metric as it is not possible to baseline, it is by nature dynamic (typically with low fix-rates initially while the model matures) coupled with the sometimes subjective nature of problems and fixes (particularly the case in monitoring service provision where fixes may be ‘unfixed’ very easily).

The lack of an MEL strategy and plan coupled with a lack of resources for data analysis, means that Integrity Action are currently unable to benefit from the significant amounts of data being collected through DevelopmentCheck. In particular, with more resources Integrity Action could use its data more effectively to explore what contributes to achieving a ‘fix’ in different contexts and at what cost. Conducting this form of analysis could also contribute to Integrity Action’s VfM strategy (see section 2.2.4).

Integrity Action currently requests case studies from partners, however the process for this is not particularly systematic. As such, the quality of case studies available varies. The evaluation team found some inconsistencies in what is deemed a project success worthy of reporting and at times a weak analysis of change processes. A more robust approach to case studies is needed. In addition, in line with the new ToC, the organisation needs to develop a more systematic way to capture (most likely qualitative) evidence of institutional-level change.

In terms of learning, the evaluation team have seen evidence of Integrity Action is drawing significant learning from existing projects in a quite systematic way. Feedback loops appear to be effective. Time and resources are dedicated to ensure that learning is fed into existing and new programmes (including for example internal research groups around GESI, technology and accountability; and the online Moodle learning platform; and targeted learning papers). However, this learning is perhaps not captured as well as it could be, with evidence around this area largely anecdotal in nature, and a risk that institutional knowledge could be lost through staff turnover. The new Communications Manager recruitment will be crucial to improvements in this regard.

### *Financial systems and sustainability*

Integrity Action is in a much more financially stable position since 2016, with turnover increasing to approximately £1.5 million in 2018, whilst the overall proportion of income from SIDA reducing significantly from 75% in 2016/2017 to just 31% in 2018/2019.

Integrity Action has been able to leverage the SIDA grant to diversity funding streams, which is helping to ensure the organisation is much more resilient to sectoral and donor-led shifts and in particular pursue income from international foundations, IFIs, corporates and UK-based trusts and foundations through a more targeted approach to fundraising and partnerships. The organisation is achieving a high bid success rate (34% in 2017) and have secured new income from DFID, UNODC, the Pro Victimis Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Apple, ADB and Swiss Solidarity. Integrity action is now able to apply for US-based funds, which has expanded the potential market for future partners significantly.

Integrity Action is also proactively exploring ways of funding the organisation from sources other than traditional institutional and trusts/foundation sources. In 2018, it has tested a new 'Enterprise arm' of the organisation targeting both not-for profit and for-profit organisations offering consultancy support to increase their organisational transparency and accountability. This includes supporting the Terre des Hommes (TDH) team in Iraq to develop their feedback systems for tracking feedback from children and parents.

The new approach to partnerships has reduced the pressure for Integrity Action to lead bids, and allowed the organisation to focus limited internal resources to raise unrestricted funds. However, it continues to play a leading technical role within consortia bidding for restricted funds, with Restless describing Integrity Action's contributions as 'fundamental' in shaping the UK Aid Connect project, and a 'game changer' in terms of its technical contributions to the bid process.

Integrity Action has undergone a successful transition to a new financial system including a full-cost recovery strategy which is being successfully implemented through new grants. For example, the current upgrades to DevelopmentCheck are planned to be fully-funded by project grants. As a result, the organisation has been able to increase the level of unrestricted reserves this year by £32K.

### *Safeguarding*

External events have prompted Integrity Action (and the international development sector as a whole) to reflect on its approach to safeguarding. As mentioned in section 2.1.2, Integrity Action have been extremely engaged in sectoral debates on this issue, contributing learning from their expertise in open

beneficiary feedback. Integrity Action's model of open citizen feedback offers an opportunity to strengthen safeguards on international development projects through a) generating increased trust between communities and international development projects, b) providing a platform on which to report any instances of abuse in real-time through DevelopmentCheck (an online reporting mechanism is being included in the most recent updates to the app).

Integrity Action's work – which includes local implementing partners working with vulnerable children and adults – has significant safeguarding risks associated with it. Moreover, the organisation's increasing commitment to the 'leave no one behind' agenda, and to increase the engagement of marginalised groups through its GESI strategy, will create additional risks with regards to safeguarding and ensuring interventions – at a minimum – do not cause harm.

Internally, Integrity Action has recently undertaken an internal audit of safeguarding policies and processes as well as research on best practice with the view to make recommendations for how organisational policies and procedures. The organisation acknowledges that internal procedures around safeguarding in operations are not sufficiently developed and this is an area that Integrity Action is giving immediate attention and prioritisation. In particular, the organisation is planning to hire a HR specialist in 2019 to conduct an all team training. It will be important that this training, policies and processes are cascaded to partners and communities, including plans to address any capacity gaps in the short and longer-term.

### **2.2.2 GESI**

According to Integrity Action's 2016 – 2020 GESI Strategy, the organisation aims to act as an *'enabler organisation, which creates the conditions for...partner to increase equality and inclusion and meet the agreed objectives under this [GESI] strategy.'* The stated aims of the strategy, as articulated in an overarching GESI ToC, are as follows:

- Integrity Action and partners have mainstreamed GESI in their organisations and programmes
- People at risk of exclusion, especially women and girls are engaged in monitoring activities within their communities
- Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are empowered to be monitors and confidently voice concerns and needs, and influence decisions as individuals and as part of a collective.

### *Organisational processes and systems*

Integrity Action has made significant progress with regards to mainstreaming GESI within internal organisational processes and systems. Progress has been driven by Integrity Action's GESI Strategy, which will run from 2016 to 2021 after which an external evaluation will be commissioned to assess progress towards stated objectives. The Strategy is operationalised through annual Action Plans, which run from September and are regularly assessed against a set of stated indicators. In FY 2017, over 80% of activities set out in the Action Plan were completed, with 65% being completed in FY 2018. This included all staff undertaking a series of training sessions on GESI, focusing on core concepts around equality and equity and moving onto practical training on how to conduct a GESI analysis. Integrity Action now appoints two GESI focal points internally, who rotate on an annual basis.

There is evidence that efforts to build its internal capacity around GESI are now being recognised externally. In 2017, Integrity Action's GESI focal person was appointed as co-chair of the Programmes Working Group of the UK Gender and Development Network. On the Tanzania SAY project, Raleigh have adopted Integrity Action's GESI strategy as the guiding GESI document for the programme and praised the organisation's technical capacity with regards to GESI mainstreaming on social accountability interventions.

### *Building partners' internal capacity*

Integrity Action has made good progress in terms of cascading its own GESI mainstreaming approach to partners. All CSO partners now have a GESI strategy in place (co-developed with Integrity Action), with a number of partners planning to adapt this to fit their own context in 2019, and all have appointed a GESI focal person. Partners have also all received remote training on GESI. GESI focal points are invited to attend quarterly GESI Working Group meetings over skype to both receive 'top-up' training and to learn from partners globally. The GESI training was noted by the Kwale Youth and Governance Consortium (KYGC) in Kenya as being particularly useful regarding programming with specific marginalised groups and KWEA in Kenya referenced the GESI Working Group as being a helpful forum for sharing learning with Nepalese partners on working with monitors who are visually impaired. The evaluation team also noted a generally high level of buy-in for GESI mainstreaming from partners across the board.

As of 2018, all projects are now required to undertake a GESI analysis to inform their programming. The timing of this MTE means that partners have had limited time to incorporate learning from the analysis into their programmes. As such, evidence of full understanding of the purpose of the GESI analysis, or of analysis being used, was not consistent across all partners. That being said, a number of partners are now incorporating the GESI analysis into their programming. In Kenya, for example, KYGC is now using the analysis to request community leaders ensure the attendance of representatives from identified marginalised groups at community meetings. In Nepal, local partner CAHURAST has used its knowledge around conducting GESI analysis to inform training at Integrity Clubs, with students at 17 schools tasked to conduct 'Who Does What' analysis in their own homes as a means of understanding traditional gender roles.

In spite of these achievements, and as recognised by the organisation, challenges remain in increasing partners' capacity around GESI. The evaluation team found that partners primarily associate GESI with gender equality, displaying a less in-depth understanding of marginalisation and social exclusion more broadly. Inclusion was repeatedly referred to as 'including as many people as possible', while marginalised groups were often narrowly conceived – for example, 'people with glasses' and 'older men' being identified as being at risk of exclusion in Armenia. A number of partners did not appear to fully understand the purpose of the GESI analysis, misinterpreting it as an external exercise by Integrity Action to provide them with 'numbers on key at-risk groups' rather than a more nuanced analysis of power dynamics in local communities in which they work. With this in mind, Integrity Action's support to partners will be critical in a number of areas going forward, namely: supporting the adaptation of the GESI strategy to partners' contexts; promoting the integration of GESI analyses as a core intervention design tool; and continuing to build partners' understanding of marginalisation beyond gender, and beyond specific groups, to recognise the barriers that drive exclusion. To avoid confusion,

Integrity Action should consider adapting the language it uses around marginalisation, as people ‘at risk of exclusion’ are in fact typically already marginalised or excluded.

### *Engagement of women and marginalised groups as monitors*

All partners appear to have made a concerted effort to engage women as project monitors with significant gains. KWEA, for example, engages 40% female monitors across its projects through what they described as ongoing engagement with communities and community leaders to encourage female participation. CERC in DRC now engages 50% female monitors, while IWA in Afghanistan cited Integrity Action’s support as critical to efforts to engage female monitors, who were initially hesitant to engage with the programme but whose engagement has now increased through prolonged community outreach.

Partners have made some progress towards engaging marginalised groups as monitors, although the level of progress varies significantly by partner. In several cases, partners have made a concerted effort to engage *specific* marginalised groups. For example, KCNRN (Kenya) has been working with county representatives from the Department of Health to reach out to networks for people living with HIV/AIDS, to encourage their participation as monitors. KCNRN also recognised that it has struggled to engage certain marginalised groups, such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, but that it is now considering strategies for addressing this in 2019. Partners working on the NORAD SHINE project have all actively targeted youth to engage as monitors; this engagement will be continued through the Raleigh SAY project in Tanzania. Around 10% of both KWEA and KYGC’s monitors self-identify as having a disability; KYGC provides sign language interpretation to support one of its monitor during all monitoring activities.

These achievements notwithstanding, some challenges remain regarding the meaningful engagement of women and marginalised groups as monitors. The risks facing female monitors, particularly in fragile settings such as the DRC, are significant: CERC noted that fear of sexual assault is a key reason why women are hesitant to become monitors, which poses a clear risk in terms of safeguarding. In Kenya, partners noted the inaccessibility (actual or perceived) of government offices means that people with disabilities feel they will be unable to fulfil their duties as monitors, and in Armenia inaccessibility of construction sites was felt to hinder participation of people with certain physical impairments. Several partners also noted that monitors from certain marginalised groups – particularly people with disabilities and youth, as well as women – often struggle to engage community members due to the harmful social norms that perpetuate their exclusion in daily life.

Partners’ success in engaging marginalised groups as monitors is further limited by their taking a reactive rather than systematic approach to engagement. As is critical to the community-led nature of Integrity Action’s model, communities themselves are responsible for selecting monitors, with partners then in some instances going back to communities to request additional monitors are selected to represent marginalised groups. Partners therefore face the challenge of, on the one hand, respecting communities’ choices, while on the other retrospectively making additions to their selection. Partners are working to address this tension by sensitising communities on the need to be inclusive during initial engagement meetings. However, while it is commendable that some partners

are taking this initiative, the impact of these efforts on shifting deeply entrenched social norms will be limited.

Integrity Action have committed to collect sex and disability disaggregated data on monitors, in particular applying the Washington Group (WG) questions short set to provide data on impairments. This is a positive action which will be useful to inform programming. The evaluation team further recommend that Integrity Action consider partnering with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) as a route to identify individuals and groups to engage with – both as monitors, but also as key groups to be consulted in the design and delivery of development projects to ensure they are disability inclusive.

### *Evidence of benefits for women and marginalised groups*

One of the significant benefits of Integrity Action's model is the sense of empowerment and purpose reported by the monitors themselves. In Kenya and Armenia, female monitors reported feeling empowered both by the knowledge they gained through monitoring activities and training, and by their position as spokespeople for their communities. As one monitor in Kinango county said 'it's not usual for women to know about construction, building works. I enjoy being able to speak to my community about these issues.' Partners in Kenya, Afghanistan and Nepal all reported seeing an increase in the confidence of female monitors to speak up at community meetings and to challenge government representatives and contractors.

Integrity clubs have served as spaces in which to increase the meaningful engagement of women and marginalised groups. Recognising the barriers to women and girls expressing themselves fully alongside men, both CERC in the DRC and IWA in Afghanistan have established female-only clubs with Integrity Action support. In Nepal, both CAHURAST and Youth Initiatives spoke of feeling more able to engage people with disabilities through ICs as a result of receiving GESI training; both partners reported that young people with disabilities are now included in club activities where they were not before, and that activities are now designed to be accessible to children with disabilities. CERC has also used radio as a means to reach a wider audience on GESI-related issues, with integrity clubs running programmes on topics such as the stigmatisation of girls and children with disabilities in education.

The evaluation team found that projects visited during field work vary in terms of GESI responsiveness. In some cases, projects have been selected that specifically benefit marginalised groups – for example, KYGC's work with the Kwale School for the Deaf. However, in other more 'mainstream' infrastructure projects such as school construction, there may be missed opportunities in terms of ensuring benefits are realised for even the most marginalised. For example, in Armenia, the ADB project is monitoring the construction of 'model schools' which are intended to be accessible for people with disabilities. However, no people with disabilities, DPOs or parents of children with disabilities have been consulted during monitoring activities.

The questions included in DevelopmentCheck, given their uniformity across projects, sectors and countries, are also not necessarily reflective of the issues that would be most relevant to marginalised groups. Further, the responsibility of ensuring inclusive consultation seems to primarily fall to monitors, however comprehensive GESI training is not included in monitors' basic training package. Relying on monitors to undertake inclusive community engagement appears to have limitations, as such engagement often requires specialist skills. There is therefore a risk that monitoring and

community engagement – like the project selection process – can be ‘GESI blind’, in that it reinforces rather than seeks to address the social norms that drive marginalisation.

Overall, the Integrity Action GESI Strategy and annual Action Plans reflect a commitment to being GESI sensitive. This is in line with the minimum level of compliance with the UK Gender Equality Act, and in many cases may be an appropriate level of ambition (particularly recognising the risks of causing harm through interventions that are more ambitious but insensitively implemented). Integrity Action faces an inherent tension between its (effective and respected) prioritisation of community decision-making around the selection of projects and monitors, and the reality that promoting GESI transformation often requires sensitively challenging community-level social norms. The evaluation team suggest that Integrity Action adopt a GESI spectrum approach<sup>17</sup> – as a tool to assess and monitor both level of ambition and achievements in this area – both organisationally, through partners and for project design and monitoring. This would help to promote – where appropriate – more GESI transformative work wherever possible, and at a minimum ensure GESI sensitive operations and programming. Please see Annex F for further details and example ‘markers’ to track progress in this area.

### ***2.2.3 Relevance and effectiveness of the citizen monitoring approach***

#### *Effectiveness of the model*

The evaluation team found compelling evidence to support the overall effectiveness of the model. Integrity Action’s genuine commitment to putting community priorities at the heart of its work was praised as both effective and unique by both international and local partners. The model prioritises a bottom-up approach to engaging communities not only to identifying but also solving problems identified – something that international partners felt was unusual in social accountability programming, and which is a key factor in driving community support for the model (see ‘Relevance’ section below).

The evaluation team find that the citizen monitoring model is effective as a means of ‘joining the dots’ between government (including different levels and areas of government), service providers and CSOs, and of promoting relationship-building and collaboration between those actors. In Kenya and Armenia, monitors and community members both reported being more aware of who to speak to about specific issues affecting their communities. Partners in Kenya noted that the model is timely in its connecting of key stakeholders: the devolution process has both caused confusion as to who is responsible for different services and created a previously overlooked opportunity in bringing duty bearers closer to citizens. The majority of community members interviewed in Kenya had attended a public participation forum recently, and partners note that the level of attendance and quality of debate has increased significantly in Integrity Action focus communities.

Where the model does not yet appear to have had an impact is in highlighting the transferability of the model to projects and sectors outside of Integrity Action’s engagement. For example, community members in Kenya reported feeling more knowledgeable about how to approach addressing problems with education projects, but said they lacked the knowledge and skills to take a similar approach to

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<sup>17</sup> Which assesses organisational outputs, outcomes and impacts in terms of GESI responsiveness on a spectrum from GESI blind – GESI transformative on a five point scale. Please see Annex F for more details.

solving problems with health projects. In order to promote the sustainability of the citizen monitoring model, Integrity Action could now work with partners to consider how to support communities to use their increasing understanding of local systems and accountability structures to laterally engage duty bearers without the (perceived or actual) need for external support. This could be an important strategy for advancing sustainability.

### *Relevance of citizen monitoring approach to communities*

Partners consistently emphasised how relevance to communities is ‘baked-in’ to Integrity Action’s model, in that communities choose which projects they want to monitor based on self-identified needs. Community members in Kenya and Armenia demonstrated ownership over projects being monitored and satisfaction with the progress made. Partners in Kenya reported that community members often took it upon themselves to take up monitoring after seeing its positive impact, including through shadowing monitors or taking it upon themselves to engage with contractors and government officials around projects in their villages. As KYGC noted, ‘officially we have 45 monitors, but unofficially we have maybe 80 or 90’. While this clearly speaks to community members’ endorsement of the monitoring approach, partners also recognised the risks associated with citizens acting as monitors without having received monitoring training and cited this as something Integrity Action could seek to address through community-level training.

Community-level buy-in is fostered by local level mechanisms (including Facebook groups and beneficiary feedback forums) where the wider community are kept abreast of progress, challenges and local level fixes. Where communities can see the progress being made on local projects, their support for the model understandably increases. However, monitors reported that they often struggled to engage communities where progress on projects is slower or less physically obvious (for example, where a meeting with a government official is secured, but the project itself remains unchanged). This was seen as particularly challenging when engaging with communities with low levels of education and literacy. Furthermore, the timing of the model appears to be particularly important. In both Armenia and Kenya, communities felt that the approach would have been more effective had the community been engaged from the beginning; in Armenia, for example, monitoring has identified problems created at the design stage of new schools that can no longer be fixed.

The model promotes local level volunteerism (in contexts where this is often a new concept) and monitors, who are themselves community members, consistently cited a desire to help their communities as their motivation for becoming and continuing as monitors. In Armenia, both students and teachers are engaged as monitors, and report to be pleased to be contributing towards projects that would benefit their own schools and students. In Kenya, several of the monitors interviewed were unemployed, and all said that they felt monitoring had given them a renewed sense of purpose, responsibility and empowerment.

### *Relevance of citizen monitoring approach to partners, government actors and other relevant stakeholders*

Local partners consulted concur that the approach is highly relevant in their context, with some partners seeking to replicate or draw on aspects of the model in their wider social development work. In Armenia, ADC has adapted the model for use on a USAID-funded water management project. In

Kenya, KCNRN is working with its partner, the Kwale Water and Sanitation Network, to adapt the Integrity Action approach to social accountability on a four-year DFID-funded water and sanitation project. Partners in Kenya, Nepal and Afghanistan all spoke about using DevelopmentCheck data on non-Integrity Action projects, while in DRC and Nepal, partners reported that non partners had made efforts to adopt the monitoring model in their own work. Integrity Action could benefit from more systematically tracking such instances as a useful source of evidence as to the relevance of its model beyond its own partners and projects.

The evaluation process has highlighted the relevance of the results achieved, and of the approach, to local-level government officials and institutions. In Kenya, county government representatives described the monitors as 'like having a volunteer workforce' who are filling recognised capacity gaps in the government's own ability to monitor its projects. While partners did report some instances where officials resisted engaging or sharing information with monitors, such issues were noted as being unusual and typically resolved through ongoing engagement from partners and monitors. In Armenia, Heads of Construction have reportedly approached monitors to help solve problems they have identified. County and sub-county officials in Kenya spoke of having struggled to take over projects that had fallen under national jurisdiction prior to the national devolution process and are now benefitting from monitors reporting project delays or issues of which they would otherwise be unaware. Additionally, government actors have recognised the effectiveness of the support provided to Integrity Clubs in Kenya, which existed already as a national government initiative but had fallen largely dormant: the Kwale Anti-Corruption and Ethics Commission is now working with KWEA to support Clubs in four additional primary schools.

The evaluation team found that there is the potential for Integrity Action to do more to support national partners to highlight where the model aligns with national level policies and frameworks, to help further advocacy goals. For example, in Armenia, participatory governance is a national priority which the ADB, Integrity Action and ADC partnership is trying to leverage to gain more national level buy in.

Finally, the model's emphasis on beneficiary ownership and beneficiary-driven problem solving is directly relevant to SIDA, who emphasise the centrality of beneficiary ownership within their own development model.<sup>18</sup>

### *Relevance of DevelopmentCheck within the citizen monitoring model*

Reports on the relevance of DevelopmentCheck to the overall model were mixed. Both monitors and partners praised DevelopmentCheck's real-time monitoring as a tool for motivating communities through demonstrating progress made on projects, and for challenging government where progress is slow. Moreover, monitors in Kenya and Armenia also find the app – in demonstrating progress and with its user-friendly modern feel – a motivating factor to continue monitoring projects.

Where DevelopmentCheck's relevance was less apparent was in relation to its reliance on technology (electricity and internet specifically). Partners in Nepal, Afghanistan, DRC and Kenya all reported struggling to log in to and upload information via the app. Monitors interviewed in Kenya said that

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/about-swedish-development-cooperation/> (accessed 1/2/19)

uploading information was often only possible in the middle of the night or after days of trying to log in or connect to the server, and that this issue was further compounded by the fact that their communities often go days or weeks without power. Monitors and partners in Kenya expressed frustration at the frequency with which reports are seemingly lost: as KYGC noted, 'in January we had 94 monitoring reports logged, yet we know from monitors that over 150 reports have been uploaded'. KYGC and other Kenyan partners did note that Integrity Action are aware of and have been actively seeking to resolve this issue, and there is hope that the coming update to DevelopmentCheck will go some way to finding a solution. KYGC and KWEA also suggested that Integrity Action could consider introducing a paper-based system, where monitors log information on paper forms and information is entered centrally.

Another limitation of the fix rate methodology, and DevelopmentCheck more broadly, is that it is difficult to record less 'technical' progress. For example, in Armenia, the community monitors have identified and been able to help solve a number of non-technical issues which contribute to a more positive school environment, but which are not being logged in the app. In Kenya, one monitor gave the example of progress to secure the delivery of construction materials after a long delay, but that they found it demotivating to not be able to log this on the app; another reported that persuading a government official or contractor to engage positively with monitors is a significant achievement that often takes time and multiple engagements, but that there is not adequate scope to reflect this effort. It was suggested that creating opportunities to log process-based and broader community-level progress would help to maintain motivation levels for monitors, and potentially also serve as an additional means of demonstrating progress to community members where more visible progress on projects has not yet been achieved.

#### **2.2.4 VfM**

Donors (including SIDA) have been increasing the pressure on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to more clearly show how, on the one hand, VfM principles are being considered at the design stage, and, on the other, demonstrate the extent to which VfM objectives were achieved through the measurement of results.

As part of the MTE, the evaluation team undertook a light touch assessment of VfM, applying the four 'E' conceptual framework (Economy; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Equity) to capture VfM of Integrity Action's SIDA grant. A light touch review of policies and processes identified evidence of good performance on several metrics.

Integrity Action has made efforts to achieve better economy and efficiency, notably through organisational restructuring, closure of the non-UK offices, a new approach to partnerships and application of a full cost recovery strategy. Integrity Action has strong financial policies and procedures in place including a procurement policy which take into account quality, timing, ethics and environmental considerations as well as cost and mandates open competition with formal tenders required over £15,000. Partnership agreements typically mirror donor procurement requirements.

DevelopmentCheck represents a significant investment for Integrity Action, although they have managed to ensure upgrades are funded through project grants. Integrity Action's recruitment of a

CTO to manage the supplier of this upgrade is crucial in this respect to ensure the project is kept within budget and delivered on time.

Integrity Action is not able to benchmark costs of key activities across countries due to the different contexts in which they work (for example low versus middle income countries and differences in geography and security situations). Key cost drivers are considered at project design phase and include:

- **Choice of partner** (old versus new), with new partners requiring an initial upfront investment in terms of project visit and training.
- **Residential vs non-residential monitors training.** There are benefits in both approaches and depending on the context the former may be cheaper than the latter or vice-versa.
- **Access to private phones vs phones provided by the project.** In middle-income countries there may not be the need to budget for phones/tablets as monitors will have their personal device.
- **Distance between the monitor and the project to be monitored.** Wherever possible, Integrity Action require that monitors choose to monitor projects that are reachable by foot. However, when this is not possible transportation costs can be significant.
- **Drop-out rate of monitors.** In order to mitigate against the risk of high monitor drop out, Integrity Action train more individuals than needed, to allow for reserves in case of drop out. However, sustaining interest and motivation of these reserve monitors can prove challenging, especially the more time passes.

Implementation of Integrity Action's new GESI strategy goes some way to ensuring the equitable allocation of resources. Integrity Action currently disaggregate data on monitors by sex (currently 58% female) and will soon be able to disaggregate by disability. However, as discussed in section 2.2.2 above, Integrity Action could do more to ensure systematic engagement of women, girls and other marginalised groups both as monitors as well as beneficiaries in the broader sense, recognising that facilitating and sustaining meaningful engagement may require a more systematic approach to navigating (or seeking to sensitively challenge) the harmful social norms that drive marginalisation.

Integrity Action currently struggle to demonstrate rigorous VfM because of challenges in demonstrating – in monetary terms – the effectiveness of its work. The intangible value of many of the organisation's outcomes (e.g. improved relationships between power holders and citizens; increased social engagement etc.) are inherently valuable outcomes in themselves but are difficult to value credibly in monetary terms. Integrity Action are currently exploring the possibility of undertaking a social return on investment (ROI) analysis which could be helpful in this regard.

There are particular challenges in demonstrating rigorous VfM given the challenges of putting a meaningful value on the impact achieved, or difficulty of demonstrating a clear counter-factual (what would have happened if this project had not been run). Integrity Action's Fix-Rate working paper argues that the CIB approach is a cost effective, costing on average less than 1% of the total budget of infrastructure projects with the potential to reduce the loss rate caused by waste, corruption and mismanagement by significantly more than that. This is a compelling argument which in theory means that community monitoring could be self-sustaining, but this is dependent on Integrity Action being able to demonstrate such benefits in a robust way.

At present, in part due to the above challenges, Integrity Action is not yet to be able to demonstrate VfM as well as it could, which represents a significant bottleneck as the organization seeks to grow in scale and influence. It is the opinion of the evaluation team that while defining and measuring VfM for Integrity Action is not necessarily easy, it is possible, and it will help the organisation to tell its own story about the value of open citizen feedback. This should involve developing specific criteria and setting standards for each of the 4 'Es' to be closely tracked (tailored to the scope and scale of in country programmes). Integrity Action's bottom up model should also easily facilitate the engagement of partners, monitors and communities in helping to set criteria, track progress and evaluate performance and VfM. This presents an opportunity for Integrity Action to shape the way that organisational effectiveness is measured – for example clearly articulating and measuring the contribution the organisation is making to the sector (both in terms of learning and influence). In an increasingly competitive market, developing a clearer approach to VfM will be crucial to ensure continued support from like-minded donors.

## 2.3 Effectiveness and relevance of the new ToC and five-year strategy to drive results

Integrity Action's new five-year strategy (2018-23) outlines ambitious targets for growth with three key strategic objectives to drive results:

**Objective 1: Achieve:** Achieve results for citizens that maximise quality, durability and inclusivity

- Lead on developing evidence-driven, innovative pathways for sustained and inclusive community monitoring
- Enable even the most marginalised citizens to act as monitors and benefit from monitoring
- Incentivise institutions to fix at least 50% of problems identified by citizens

**Objective 2: Amplify:** Collaborate to amplify results and fuel further innovation

- Build partnerships to scale up approaches, stress-test them and evidence results
- Take learning and insights from collaborations and feed into future R&D
- Be agile with tech developments to ensure the efficiency, accessibility and local adoption of tools

**Objective 3: Convince:** Build a robust case for open citizen feedback to inspire its mainstreaming

- Lead on evidencing the economic, environmental and social case for open citizen feedback
- Build coalitions to call for the mainstreaming of open citizen feedback
- Convince influencers and institutions to demand open citizen feedback.

Integrity Action has also developed a tightly articulated new ToC which articulates how the model of open beneficiary feedback contributes to the organisation's overall goal of '*Societies in which all citizens can and do – successfully demand integrity from the institutions they rely on*'.

The evaluation team find that overall the new strategy and ToC are fit for purpose and growth, signalling a step change for the organisation with a much greater emphasis on inclusivity, achieving results at scale, building effective partnerships, and building the evidence base to amplify the impact

of Integrity Action's work. These areas of focus can be directly traced to this MTE's findings around key strengths and weaknesses of the model.

In particular, the new strategy and ToC have increased Integrity Action's focus on critical areas including:

- The need to better evidence the impact of its work
- Measuring and tracking change in institutions and power holders
- Focusing on incentives for both citizens and power holders
- A focus on how to achieve more systemic change
- Alignment with the leave no one behind agenda – and emphasis on ensuring the approach is inclusive and that benefits are felt by the most marginalised.

At the same time, these guiding documents have helped to clarify areas of work under the SIDA results framework, of less relevance. For example, the Tipping Point strategy and Integrity Action's role in collective action now appearing to have less strategic relevance. This brings implications for the remainder of the grant period in particular for outcome area 4: Collective action and network, with the likelihood that Integrity Action will be scaling back work supporting local level advocacy, whilst continuing to work with strong local level partners.

The evaluation team have seen significant evidence that the new ToC and strategy are already driving internal decision-making for example around organisational structure and choice of partnerships. The pace of change has been impressive with this MTE finding evidence of significant results midway through the grant period. It will be important for Integrity Action to maintain this pace for the remainder of the grant period, in particular addressing key gaps noted in this review. As part of this, Integrity Action could seek to engage and generate buy-in from partners, whose awareness around these key guiding documents is currently very limited. Engaging partners on these core documents would help to promote both a united vision of what Integrity Action is seeking to achieve through its work, and to support the feeling among partners that they are connected to a global network of organisations working to achieve that vision (something which a number of partners noted as something they value about their involvement with Integrity Action).

### 3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the evaluation team finds significant evidence of results of the SIDA grant mid-way through the grant period, with good progress towards the four key outcome areas. In particular, significant progress has been made in demonstrating the replicability and scalability of the model, in large part enabled by a new standardised training package and new approach to partnerships. Progress around demonstrating the sustainability of the model and approach is more mixed, and Integrity Action will need to review its approach to sustainability for the remainder of the grant period to ensure goals are realistic, and the lasting impact of the work is systematically captured.

Integrity Action is clearly a highly values-driven organisation, focusing on achieving impact rather than growth for growth's sake. This is highly valued by local and international partners and donors. The

organisation has been proactively increasing its visibility and influence in the sector over the grant period to date, and are a well-respected leader in the field of social accountability, clearly influencing sectoral debates. Strengthening external communications is now high on Integrity Action's agenda for 2019 and beyond, which will help to ensure that the organisation's online presence adequately reflects its position in the sector, and that achievements are adequately captured and shared.

Integrity Action has developed a strong network of local partners and are increasingly choosing to work with larger organisations with shared goals. Whilst the organisation may be stepping back its role in supporting local level advocacy, moving forward, it will need to consider how it might better support local partners to achieve systemic change in national systems.

Perhaps the most significant results of the grant to date have been to strengthen internal policies, systems and processes, which have resulted in a much stronger organisation. In particular, organisational restructuring has led to a leaner but more efficient team, and a stronger governance structure necessary to guide the organisation from a conscious move away from Integrity Action as a grant giver towards becoming a 'thought leader'. The organisation is also in a much stronger financial position mid-way through the grant period, much less reliant on SIDA funds.

Integrity Action has made good progress mainstreaming GESI and cascading the approach through partners, although this MTE has highlighted a number of areas where the organisation can further strengthen and refine its approach, and where appropriate, move beyond being GESI sensitive to achieving transformative change.

Critical areas for Integrity Action for the remainder of the grant period will be to continue to strengthen MEL systems to be able to better tell the impact story - beyond the 'fix-rate', as well as capture learning on how to achieve results at scale. Linked to this is the need for the organisation to develop a clear approach and framework to capture VfM. More work is needed to refine the approach to project-level sustainability, and as a priority Integrity Action need to develop and roll out an organisational safeguarding policy and procedures.

The evaluation team is very encouraged by Integrity Action's active engagement in the MTE process – having embraced it as an opportunity to strengthen and learn from what has been working well/less well. The evaluation team find that the organisation is acutely aware of its strengths and weaknesses and are investing resources strategically leading to greater organisational efficiency and effectiveness. The new five-year strategy (2018-2023) and ToC have been driving decision-making and results to date, and Integrity Action will need to maintain this high level of momentum for the remainder of the grant period, whilst continuing to test, refine and learn from implementation.

## 4. Recommendations

Draft recommendations were presented to Integrity Action during the presentation of findings on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019. The recommendations were discussed, and several them were slightly amended based on feedback from Integrity Action staff and management. There are seven recommendation areas in total, presented by suggested order of strategic importance for the remainder of the grant period.

### 1. Refine and strengthen approach to MEL

- a. Prioritise the development of a MEL strategy, and a plan and resources for developing this. The MEL strategy should clearly identify objectives, methods and indicators for how to track and evaluate impact over the longer-term – identifying relevant metrics and methods beyond DevelopmentCheck and the Fix-Rate.
- b. Strengthen MEL systems and tools to capture impact (including unintended and long-term impacts) on monitors, communities, institutions and systems. Develop tools and methodologies to track institutional change in particular.
- c. Strengthen and systematise approach to generating case studies. Consider applying the Most Significant Change Technique or similar approach, to ensure a shared understanding among partners of what success looks like and inform understanding of change processes.
- d. Strategically invest resources to ensure optimal use of DevelopmentCheck data.
- e. Wherever feasible, ensure MEL resources are budgeted and planned for at project design phase (including where budgets and donor requirements allow, resources for robust impact evaluations of the approach in different contexts).
- f. Ensure tight feedback loops are established with M&E partners on new large-scale programmes to ensure maximum learning on what works to scale up the approach.

### 2. Review the organisational approach to sustainability

- a. Work with partners to define potential models or pathways for sustainability, to explore their feasibility in different contexts, and inform planning for sustainability in different contexts.
- b. Develop and track indicators for sustainability at the project level to inform wider learning.
- c. Better systematise/embed PEA analysis at the country level to a) help identify national champions b) to better identify marginalised groups and organisations, working with partners to make this a light-touch, locally-owned process resulting in a user-friendly analytical product.

### 3. Refine and enhance organisational approach to GESI

- a. Explore and pilot how to better embed GESI analysis within the model (for example to be undertaken in collaboration with monitors and communities before initial selection of projects).
- b. Develop minimum standards for disability mainstreaming including at a minimum consultation with DPOs, and adoption of the social model of disability – providing capacity building to partners where necessary.

- c. Review and refine organisational and programmatic approach to inclusion – focusing on how the model can best be used to address barriers to inclusion whilst ensuring meaningful participation of women, girls and marginalised groups.
- d. Consider applying a GESI continuum approach (in cooperation with partners) to assess current appetite and capacity around GESI, ensure all interventions are GESI sensitive as a minimum, and identify opportunities to aim for GESI transformative change.

**4. Develop a robust organisational approach to safeguarding**

- a. Develop and roll out organisational safeguarding policy and procedures.
- b. Continue to learn from the wider sector on best practice.
- c. Undertake due diligence of all partners (prioritising those working with children) and develop clear capacity development plans to address any gaps.
- d. Look for opportunities to demonstrate the relevance of the model to monitoring potential safeguarding concerns and risks.

**5. Develop a long-term strategy for the future of DevelopmentCheck**

- a. Agree at Board level what is feasible and appropriate in the short, medium and longer-term (especially the question of whether and to what extent to make the app open source)
- b. Strengthen tools and guidance for projects on how to use DevelopmentCheck in areas with poor connectivity.
- c. Continue to seek active feedback from partners on technical issues and usability.

**6. Formalise new approach to partnerships**

- a. Develop a partnership strategy identifying preferred donors and partners, and including a rapid sector analysis to inform selection of partnerships.
- b. Consider partnerships with 'unusual suspects' including primes working in the economic development and infrastructure space.

**7. Strengthen approach to demonstrating VfM**

- a. Develop a VfM framework with an organisational specific definition of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity – together with performance standards.
- b. Closely link the VfM framework and MEL systems.
- c. Reconsider commissioning a social ROI analysis as a tool to help demonstrate the value of work to external stakeholders, as well as to help facilitate strategic discussions internally especially regarding how to maximise impact for the most marginalised.
- d. Continue current good practice in controlling costs and overheads, looking for further opportunities to deliver outcomes as efficiently as possible, and achieve the best possible outcomes for the resources available.

## Annex A: Evaluation questions

The evaluation team were guided by the following core evaluation questions and sub-questions for each of the areas under review.

Key area/theme	Key Evaluation Questions
<b>Key evaluation areas</b>	
<b>Achievement of results to date and progress towards outcomes (50%)</b>	<p><b>What have been the impact and results of Integrity Action’s interventions and partnerships under the SIDA grant to date?</b> (including positive/negative/unintended)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which interventions and approaches have been most effective?</li> <li>• To what extent is Integrity Action achieving progress towards key outcome areas (2-4)?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for realising the outcomes and impact?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of operational performance (40%)</b>	<p><b>To what extent is Integrity Action and its partner organisations stronger, more effective and more sustainable organisations as a result of the SIDA grant?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective is Integrity Action’s M&amp;E system at capturing results and evidence of change?</li> <li>• What progress has been made around development and implementation of key strategies and policies (i.e. fundraising strategy, MEAL strategy, local partners’ strategy, full cost recovery policy etc.)?</li> <li>• How has the organisational restructuring impacted on the organisation?</li> <li>• How effective is Integrity Action’s shifting approach to partnerships?</li> <li>• To what extent do the achievements under the grant represent VFM?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness and relevance of the new ToC and new 5-year global strategy for achieving results (10%)</b>	<p><b>How relevant and effective is the ToC and new five-year strategy towards achievement of key outcomes and objectives?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the new strategy and ToC driving progress towards outcomes?</li> <li>• To what extent is there ownership and buy in?</li> <li>• To what extent is the new strategy shifting organisational culture?</li> <li>• Is the pace of change enough to achieve targets?</li> <li>• In which areas is progress being made and where is there still more work to be done?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the results to date and learning demonstrate about key pathways for change and assumptions in the ToC?</li> <li>• What (if any) are the implications of the new strategy on the remainder of the grant period?</li> </ul>
<b>Cross cutting themes</b>	
<b>Relevance and Sustainability</b>	<p><b>How relevant are key results of the SIDA grant to date?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How relevant are results to the lives of beneficiaries?</li> <li>• How do results align with SIDA’s priorities?</li> <li>• How relevant is the ToC and new global strategy to the local context context?</li> <li>• How does the ToC and new global strategy promise to contribute to the sustainability of results?</li> <li>• What steps have been taken to ensure the likelihood that results and outcomes will be sustained?</li> </ul>
<b>GESI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What progress has been made in the implementation of the GESI strategy?</li> <li>• How does Integrity Action address gender and social inclusion through its work?</li> <li>• Has progress towards implementing the GESI strategy been greater in one area (gender or inclusion) as compared to the other?</li> <li>• What level of ambition has Integrity Action targeted through its GESI strategy? (GESI sensitive, GESI transformative) Is the level of ambition relevant to the context?</li> </ul>

## Annex B: List of documents reviewed

1. Agreement of core support to IA 2017-2020
2. SIDA Proposal: Integrity Action: *Towards scale and sustainability in community-based monitoring and anti-corruption 2017-2020*
3. SIDA Results Monitoring Framework 2017-2020
4. 2016 Tipping Point Strategy
5. 2017 Audit of Partnerships
6. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017/2018
7. Business plan 2017/2018
8. FY 2019 Business plan
9. Understanding and influencing local monitors behaviour in Nepal and DRC, AAH report
10. 2018-2023 Strategic Plan (PowerPoint Presentation)
11. Beneficiary Counting Research
12. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy 2016-2021
13. Communication Strategy (PowerPoint)
14. IA's Guide to Partnerships 2017
15. CIB Approach to Partnership Audit 2013-2017
16. Due Diligence Self-Assessment Form for Partners
17. The Fix-Rate a key metric for transparency and accountability
18. Establishing Integrity Clubs: Comparative study Nepal and DRC Learning paper
19. Trainers Checklist
20. Voice and Teeth
21. Case Study 1
22. Case Study 2
23. Case Study 3
24. Case Study 4
25. Enterprise Strategy
26. SIDA AR Yr 1 report for core support
27. IA Learning Questions
28. TOC Strategy Points
29. PPA - Raleigh and IA, SAY project Tanzania
30. Raleigh and IA, SAY Tanzania, UK Aid Direct Impact Application
31. Partner report - CAHURAST/YI Nepal, Monitoring of Swiss Solidarity Programming
32. Partner report - ADB School Reconstruction Armenia, Armavir Development Centre NGO
33. Partner report - Norad SHINE Palestine; DRC; Afghanistan; Kenya; Nepal
34. Proposal - Pro-Victimis
35. Final report, University of Zambia
36. Final report, CM of Swiss Solidarity projects in Nepal
37. Partnership agreement, CAHURAST/Pro-victimis, Nepal
38. Partnership agreement, Youth Initiative/Swiss Solidarity, Nepal
39. 2019 Beneficiary Counting Policy
40. SIDA Annual Report 2017/2018.

## Annex C: List of key stakeholders interviewed

Name	Title	Organisation
<b>Integrity Action Staff</b>		
Jasmina Haynes	CEO	IA (SMT)
Hannah Fox	Head of Finance and Corporate Services	IA (SMT)
Andy Fenton	Chief Technology Officer	IA (SMT)
Derek Thorne	Head of Programme Development	IA (SMT)
Annalisa Renna	Head of Operations	IA (SMT)
Melanie Vaufrey	Finance Assistant	IA
Dimitri Katz	Technology Manager	IA
Beth Turner	Programme Development Coordinator	IA
Nina Watson	Programme Implementation Manager	IA
Ange Richardson	Partnerships and Training Manager	IA
Sean Darby	Programme Implementation Coordinator	IA
<b>Local partners</b>		
Sarala Maharjan	Project Manager	Cahurast (Nepal)
Nikita Manandhar	Project Manager	Youth Initiatives (Nepal)
Ikram Afzali	CEO	Integrity Watch (Afghanistan)
Heri Bitamala	Director	CERC (DRC)
<b>International Partners</b>		
Matt Reeves	Global Lead – Civil Society	Aga Khan Foundation
Julian Olivier	Director of Programmes	Raleigh International
Perry Maddox	CEO	Restless Development
<b>Donors</b>		
Pat Scheid	Programme Officer	Hewlett Foundation

## Annex D: In-country stakeholders interviewed

Name	Title	Partner
<b>Armenia</b>		
Naira Arakelyan	Project Director	ADC
Ani Harutyunyan	Community Mobilisation Specialist	ADC
Ani Tovmasyan	Public Relations Specialist	ADC
Adam Hovsepyan	Engineer	ADC
Hovhannes Sasgysyan	Finance Manager	ADC
Emma Grigoryan	GESI focal point	ADC
Monitors	8 (4 M, 5 F)	ADC
Heads of Construction	2 (M)	ADC
Local Government Official	1 (M)	ADC
School Heads	2 (1 M, 1 F)	ADC
Community members	8 (4 M, 4 F)	ADC
Vahe Khachikyan	Project Coordinator	NGO Center
Stella Miqayelyan	Infrastructure Advisor	ADB
Suren Saryan	Engineer	FFC
Gohar Mousalyan	Project Officer	ADB
Hayk Galstyan	Project Coordinator	ATDF
<b>Kenya</b>		
Jackson Nyawa	Board Secretary	KYGC
Mwanakoma Mwagao	Treasurer	KYGC
Mwanasha Gasenego	Board Member	KYGC
Jawa Mwachupa	Director	KYGC
Faida Eric	Board Member	KYGC
Pendu Jumwa	Board Member	KYGC
El Sheba	Finance Officer, GESI Focal Person	KYGC
Jacob Wambua	Project Officer	KYGC
Jussein Jembe	Technician and ICT Officer	KYGC
Amani Luhogo	Coordinator (monitors)	KYGC
Nesaid Said	Facilitator (monitors)	KYGC
Monitors	15 (11 M, 4 F)	KYGC
Village Administrators	2 (1 M, 1 F)	KYGC
Sub-County Administrators	2 (1M, 1F)	KYGC
Community Members	13 (5M, 8F)	KYGC
Sabina Saiti	Project Manager, NORAD, GESI Focal Person	KWEA
Mwinyi Said	KWEA accountant	KWEA
Fatuma Niazaro	M&E Officer	KWEA
Monitors	2 (1 M, 1F)	KWEA
County Administrators	1 (M)	KWEA
Sub-County Administrators	2 (1M, 1F)	KWEA
Community Members	44 (~15M, ~29F)	KWEA
Deputy Head Teacher	1 (F)	KWEA
Integrity Club Members	~25 (F)	KWEA
Mohamed Salim	Chair, GESI Focal Person	KCNRN
Seif Omari Mwajora	M&E Officer	KCNRN
Monitors	2 (1M, 1F)	KCNRN

## Annex E: SIDA Grant ToC



## Annex F: GESI continuum and example markers

The GESI spectrum allows for the categorisation of GESI responsiveness along a five-point scale<sup>19</sup>:

- **GESI blind:** intentionally or unintentionally fail to acknowledge the role of gender or inclusion. Do not necessarily do harm but may indirectly support the status quo;
- **GESI exploitative:** take advantage of rigid gender or social norms and existing power imbalances to achieve programme objectives, causing harm;
- **GESI sensitive:** include assessment of and action to meet practical needs and vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, involving consultation with these groups and a process that ensures all voices are heard;
- **GESI strategic/empowering:** explicitly address strategic gender and inclusion issues in core accountability focus as well as the process; empowers individuals to make active choices, building their access to information, rights, awareness and pathways to accountability;
- **GESI transformative:** address broader power structures underpinning inequality and exclusion, often through collective action and influencing the enabling environment.

This spectrum can provide a useful framework for assessing organisational and programme progress and aspirations towards GESI. In many cases, GESI sensitive is an appropriate level of ambition for an activity or intervention, particularly given that activities aiming for a higher level of ambition can carry increased risks of causing harm. However, the spectrum can be used as both an intervention design and monitoring tool to first decide on a level of ambition and then track progress towards achieving this.

For example, the spectrum approach could be used to develop GESI ‘markers’ in line with Integrity Action’s ToC on GESI. These markers can be used at the output or outcome level, and would help to a) assess what level of GESI responsiveness is currently being achieved (ensuring no interventions are either GESI blind or GESI exploitative), and b) identify opportunities to (aim to) achieve GESI strategic or GESI transformative outcomes. Example organisational and programmatic level markers are provided below for illustration:

	Blind	Exploitative	Sensitive	Strategic	Transformative
Organisational	No <u>consideration</u> of GESI in organisation or programmes.	Organisational strategies and policies and/or activities <u>exploit</u> (actively or inadvertently) unequal gender relations or power imbalances.	GESI <u>integrated</u> into key organisational and programmatic strategies, frameworks and policies.	GESI <u>integrated</u> into all organisational and programmatic strategies, frameworks and policies, and there is a <u>GESI strategy</u> or policy owned by all staff in IA and partner organisations.	There is a comprehensive GESI strategy in place with <u>clear synergies with other strategies</u> and policies; the GESI strategy is <u>regularly reviewed</u> and used to <u>adapt</u> programming.
Programmatic	No GESI <u>analysis</u>	No GESI <u>analysis</u> undertaken. Project	<u>GESI analysis</u> undertaken and	GESI analysis process includes	As strategic + GESI analysis used to

<sup>19</sup> The GESI markers are based on an adapted version of a gender and inclusion framework developed by Social Development Direct, drawing on best practice from across the development sector.

	<p>undertaken, no awareness of gender and power dynamics, or needs marginalised groups.</p>	<p><u>exploits</u> (actively or unconsciously) unequal power dynamics to achieve project goals.</p>	<p>used to inform project activities to ensure the <u>project does not cause harm</u>.</p>	<p><u>meaningful engagement of women, girls and marginalised groups</u>, and regularly <u>updated</u> and <u>owned</u> by communities and local partners. GESI analysis used to inform design of <u>some</u> programme activities.</p>	<p>inform design of <u>all</u> project activities including <u>targeted interventions to address structural and social barriers</u> to marginalisation.</p>
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