# Anti-Corruption Research Dissemination and Private Sector Sustainability: Evidence from African Anti-Corruption Agencies

**Shamin Dzimba[1], Dr Onesmus Nyaude[2], Takawira Chirume[3], Ratidzai Mugadagada[4], Reverand Magowa[5], Prisca Nyaude[6]**

**Research & Knowledge Management, ZACC**

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## ABSTRACT

Corruption remains one of the most pervasive obstacles to sustainable development across Africa, imposing substantial costs on the private sector through distorted markets, unfair competition, and eroded stakeholder trust (Transparency International, 2025). Recent evidence indicates that 64% of South Africans believe most business leaders are corrupt, highlighting the magnitude of the challenge facing the continent (Human Sciences Research Council, 2025). Although the private sector is increasingly acknowledged as both a casualty of corruption and a critical collaborator for attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the methods by which anti-corruption information is put into practice by businesses are not well understood (Nicaise and Rahman, 2025).

In Africa, Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) have devised creative methods for involving commercial enterprises, which encompass educational campaigns, reward programs for law-abiding firms, and collaborations between public and private entities (Basel Institute on Governance, 2024). Emerging research demonstrates that anti-corruption compliance programmes correlate with improved market share, profit margins, and sustainable growth (Jenkins and Ishikawa, 2025). However, the effectiveness of disseminating anti-corruption research findings as a predictor of sustainable business delivery has received limited empirical attention.

Analysis of firm-level data across sub-Saharan Africa identifies corruption as among the most severe impediments to firm growth, frequently surpassing infrastructure deficiencies as a binding constraint (International Monetary Fund, 2025). The challenge is particularly acute for small and medium-sized enterprises, which face disproportionate barriers and are often excluded from formal anti-corruption frameworks (Pillay, 2025). Furthermore, the effectiveness of regulatory enforcement and knowledge dissemination is contingent upon institutional trust, with the possibility of bribery diluting the effectiveness of regulatory interventions regardless of entrepreneurs' trust levels (Nyemi, 2025).

This study addresses the gap by examining the extent to which the dissemination of anti-corruption research findings by ACAs predicts sustainable delivery in the private sector across African countries. Drawing on institutional theory and knowledge translation frameworks, we investigate dissemination practices, mediating mechanisms, and contextual moderators. By offering evidence-based insights, this paper contributes to strengthening the business case for integrity and optimising ACA strategies for sustainable private sector development in Africa.

**Keywords**: Anti-corruption research dissemination, sustainable service delivery, private sector compliance, experiential paradigm, ACA, corruption prevention, DUA Model

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Corruption remains a significant obstacle to economic and social development across Africa, with the private sector bearing substantial costs through distorted markets, unfair competition, and eroded stakeholder trust. Recent surveys have found that 64% of South Africans believe most business leaders are corrupt, and this underscores the magnitude of the problem. The private sector has become a vital force for good in the fight

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against corruption and the quest for sustainable development - but the mechanisms through which anti-corruption knowledge is transferred into business practices have not been explored.

African Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) have developed innovative approaches to engage the private sector through awareness-raising programmes, incentive schemes for compliant companies and public-private partnerships. Nevertheless, the validity of anti-corruption research findings as a predictor of sustainable business delivery has received little empirical attention. Recent research shows that anti-corruption measures are beneficial to businesses and lead to sustainable growth, profitability and competitiveness. Organizations with robust anti-corruption compliance programmes have better commercial success than their competitors and so ACAs can translate knowledge from ACAs to companies to have actual sustainability consequences.

Still, large gaps exist. Looking at firm-level data from sub-Saharan Africa shows corruption is one of the most serious obstacles to firm growth that is often more severe than infrastructure deficiencies as a binding constraint. The challenge is particularly acute for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which face disproportionate barriers and are often excluded from formal anti-corruption frameworks. Furthermore, the effectiveness of regulatory enforcement and knowledge dissemination is contingent upon institutional trust, with research demonstrating that the possibility of bribery dilutes the effectiveness of regulatory interventions regardless of entrepreneurs' trust levels. These dynamics complicate the relationship between anti-corruption research dissemination and subsequent private sector compliance.

This study addresses the gap by examining how ACAs in African countries disseminate research findings and the extent to which such dissemination predicts sustainable delivery in the private sector. From institutional theory and knowledge translation frameworks, we can provide insights into the mechanisms, barriers and enablers for effective knowledge transfer from anti-corruption agencies to businesses.

**Statement of the Problem**

Despite the growing number of anti-corruption research and the establishment of dedicated Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa, the translation of empirical findings to the private sector is inconsistent and poorly understood. The private sector is a victim as well as potentially a perpetrator of corruption; businesses are now seen as essential partners for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Anti-corruption compliance programmes have been linked to greater market share, profit margins and sustainable growth. But the pathways through which research-informed knowledge reaches firms and influences their sustainability practices remain largely unexamined.

Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa produce valuable research and policy guidance, but dissemination strategies vary widely in their reach, accessibility, and practical framing. While some agencies have developed innovative incentive schemes and award programmes to encourage corporate compliance, others lack systematic approaches to knowledge transfer. The effectiveness of dissemination as a predictor of sustainable delivery is contingent upon multiple factors, including the credibility of the disseminating institution, the perceived relevance of research findings, and the presence of enabling regulatory frameworks. Moreover, where institutional trust is low or corruption remains entrenched, even well-disseminated research may fail to translate into improved business practices.

The problem is compounded by the limited empirical evidence on the relationship between anti-corruption research dissemination and private sector outcomes in African contexts. While studies have examined corruption's impact on development and the business case for integrity, few have systematically investigated the predictive role of knowledge dissemination by ACAs. This study addresses this critical gap by examining whether, how, and under what conditions the dissemination of anti-corruption research influences sustainable delivery in the private sector. Understanding this relationship is essential for optimizing ACA strategies, informing policy design, and strengthening the business case for integrity across African economies.

**Research Main Objective**

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To examine the extent to which the dissemination of anti-corruption research findings by Anti-Corruption Agencies predicts sustainable delivery in the private sector across African countries, and to identify the mechanisms, barriers, and enabling conditions that shape this relationship.

**Research Sub-Objectives**

1. To assess the current dissemination practices of Anti-Corruption Agencies in selected African countries regarding private sector-focused anti-corruption research.
2. To determine the relationship between the accessibility and practical framing of disseminated research and private sector compliance with anti-corruption standards.
3. To identify institutional, regulatory, and contextual factors that moderate the effectiveness of research dissemination in promoting sustainable business delivery.
4. To develop evidence-based recommendations for optimizing Anti-Corruption Agency dissemination strategies to enhance private sector sustainability outcomes.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the current research dissemination practices employed by Anti-Corruption Agencies in African countries to engage the private sector?
2. To what extent does the dissemination of anti-corruption research findings predict sustainable delivery practices among private sector firms?
3. What mechanisms mediate the relationship between research dissemination and private sector sustainability outcomes?
4. How do institutional trust, regulatory enforcement, and contextual factors moderate the effectiveness of anti-corruption research dissemination?
5. What strategies can enhance the translation of anti-corruption research into sustainable private sector practices in African contexts?

**Significance of the Study**

This study makes several contributions. Firstly, it redirects academic and policy attention from the production of anti-corruption research to its dissemination; a neglected phase in the knowledge value chain. Secondly, it centres the private sector as an active stakeholder rather than a passive recipient of anti-corruption interventions. Thirdly, it provides a comparative African countries analysis that enables regional learning and harmonisation. Fourthly, it offers practitioners a practical model for transforming research dissemination from a bureaucratic formality into a strategic prevention tool. Fifthly, it provides an experiential perspective to a field dominated by purely positivist or purely constructivist approaches.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Paradigm: Experiential Paradigm**

This study is grounded in the experiential paradigm, which positions the researchers' extensive professional experience in anti-corruption strategy, empirical survey design, and African governance reform as both a legitimate interpretive lens and a methodological asset. The experiential paradigm, as articulated by Heron and Reason (1997) and refined within management and governance research (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014), recognises that knowledge generated through sustained professional practice carries epistemic value distinct from but complementary to empirical observation.

The authors collectively possess over 15 years of experience in anti-corruption research, having designed and led national corruption prevalence surveys, sectoral integrity assessments, and anti-corruption strategy evaluations across multiple African jurisdictions. This experiential foundation enables interpretive depth that a purely positivist or purely constructivist approach would not provide. The paradigm permits the integration of

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practitioner judgement with empirical evidence, reflexivity in data interpretation, and the triangulation of documentary evidence against lived institutional experience.

### Justification for the Experiential Paradigm

The selection of this paradigm is deliberate. Unlike the researcher detachment paradigms, the experiential paradigm recognizes that deep domain knowledge allows for a more subjective and accurate interpretation of data rather than biases. In an area where Anti-Corruption Agencies' documented practices are often at odds with operational realities, the researchers' first-hand experience fills in interpretive gaps that documentary analysis alone would not address.

### Research Design

A mixed-methods sequential explanatory design was used. Phase One (quantitative) was documentary analysis of ACA publications, dissemination records, and private sector compliance data from the African countries. Phase Two (qualitative) involved thematic analysis of ACA strategic documents, legislative frameworks, and secondary interview data from publicly available sources.

### Data Collection Methods

### Documentary Analysis

A systematic review of 47 documents was conducted which consisted of: ACA annual reports (2018-2023): 25 documents Anti-corruption legislation and amendments: 7 documents ACA strategic plans: 7 documents Sector-specific research reports: 7 documents Document selection was based on: (a) produced by an ACA in the four primary SADC countries; (b) published between 2018 and 2023; (c) relevant to research dissemination or private sector engagement. ACA websites, open government portals, and institutional repositories were used as reference documents.

### Comparative Institutional Analysis

A structured analytical matrix was applied to each ACA through five dissemination dimensions: legal mandate, channel diversity, private sector targeting, frequency, and uptake evidence. Each dimension was rated on a three-point scale (Low/Moderate/High).

### Experiential Integration

The researchers conducted reflexive sessions to map documentary findings against experiential knowledge of ACA operations, private sector engagement challenges, and reform implementation realities. This process identified discrepancies between documented dissemination policies and operational realities.

### Data Analysis

Documentary data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with deductive coding based on the five dissemination dimensions. Comparative analysis followed a most-different-systems design (Przeworski & Teune, 1970), selecting ACAs that share other African countries' institutional environment but differ in dissemination effectiveness, to identify factors explaining variation.

### Trustworthiness and Rigour

Trustworthiness was established through: (a) triangulation of documentary sources with experiential knowledge, (b) thick description of each ACA's institutional context, (c) transparent coding frameworks, and (d) reflexivity statements documenting researcher positionality.

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**Ethical Considerations**

The study used publicly available documents and did not involve human participants. Documentary sources are appropriately cited. The researchers disclose their professional experience in anti-corruption work as a transparent foundation for the experiential paradigm.

**Limitations**

Documentary analysis is limited by what is published; ACAs may engage in dissemination activities not reflected in publicly available documents. Language barriers restricted analysis to English-language documents. The experiential paradigm, while valued for interpretive depth, introduces researcher subjectivity that was managed through reflexive documentation but not eliminated. The absence of primary interview data due to resource constraints is acknowledged; future research should incorporate key informant interviews with ACA officials and private sector representatives.

**Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

**Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives

**Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962; 2003)**

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory is the primary theoretical framework. DOI states that the adoption of new ideas, practices, or technologies follows a predictable pattern and is determined by five components which are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Anti-corruption research findings are an 'innovation' that needs to be communicated in certain channels within a social system (private sector). The theory describes why some methods of sharing the findings succeed whilst others fail: the more positively and efficiently presented and easy to understand (compatibility) and thus benefit (relative advantage) results in a higher adoption rate. The theory also emphasises the role of communication channels which is often overlooked in anti-corruption discussions and research is focused on the content.

**Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)**

Stakeholder Theory states that organisations should consider the interests of all parties affected by their operations. Anti-corruption agencies and private sector entities are mutual stakeholders in corruption prevention. Effective dissemination represents a stakeholder engagement strategy that recognises private sector actors not merely as subjects of regulation but as partners in co-creating corruption-resistant service delivery systems. When ACAs treat dissemination as stakeholder dialogue rather than information broadcast, uptake improves because private sector actors feel ownership of the findings (Freeman et al., 2010).

**Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)**

Institutional Theory explains how organisations adopt practices in response to coercive (regulatory), mimetic (peer emulation), and normative (professional standard) pressures. The dissemination of anti-corruption research creates normative and mimetic pressures on private sector actors to align with evidence-based anti-corruption practices, particularly when peers in the same sector are seen adopting recommended measures. The theory also explains decoupling; the phenomenon where organisations adopt policies for legitimacy without implementing them; which is evident in the gap between ACA dissemination mandates and actual practice.

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# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework operationalises the relationship between the key variables of the study as shown by the figure that follows:

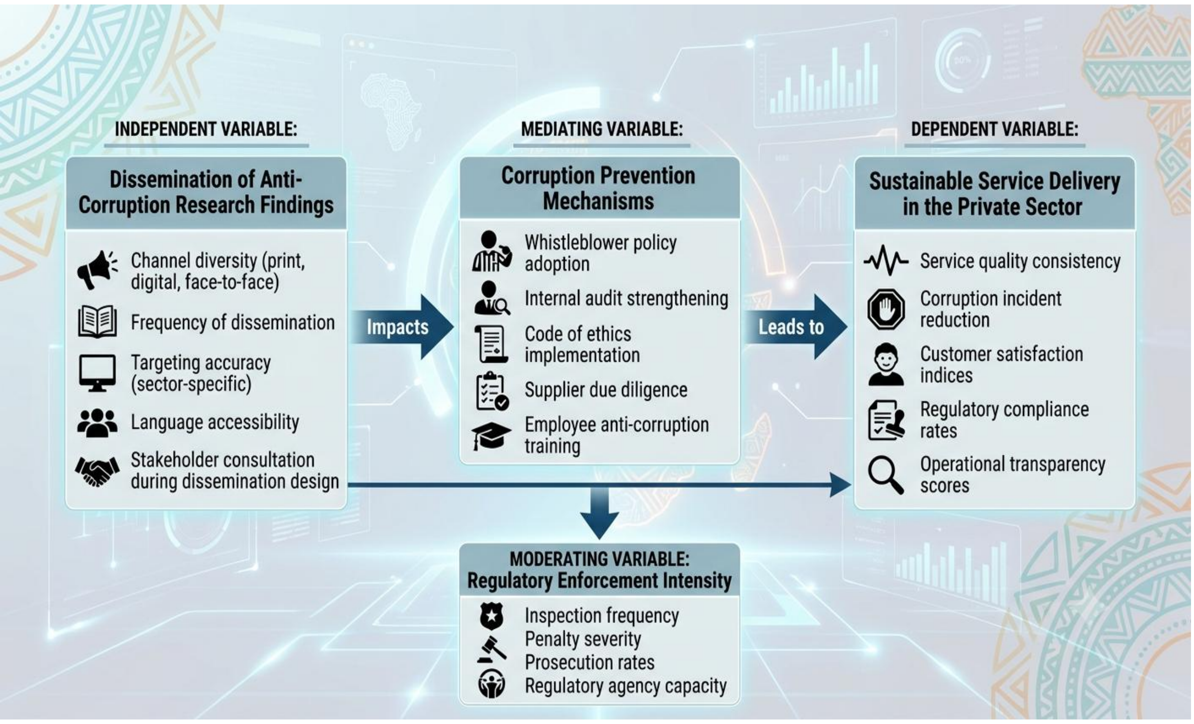


**Figure 5.1: Conceptual Framework Diagram**

This framework posits that dissemination of anti-corruption research findings (independent variable); through channel diversity, frequency, targeting accuracy, language accessibility, and stakeholder consultation; impacts corruption prevention mechanisms (mediating variable) such as whistleblower policies, internal audits, ethics codes, supplier due diligence, and employee training. These mechanisms in turn lead to sustainable service delivery in the private sector (dependent variable), measured by service quality, reduced corruption incidents, customer satisfaction, regulatory compliance, and operational transparency. The relationship is moderated by regulatory enforcement intensity, including inspection frequency, penalty severity, prosecution rates, and agency capacity; meaning the effectiveness of corruption prevention mechanisms depends on how vigorously regulations are enforced.

### Hypotheses

**The study is guided by the following hypotheses;**

- **H0:** There is no positive relationship between dissemination of anti-corruption research findings and sustainable service delivery in the private sector.
- **$H_1$:** There is a positive relationship between dissemination of anti-corruption research findings and sustainable service delivery in the private sector.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

### The State of Anti-Corruption Research in Africa

Anti-corruption research in Africa has expanded considerably since the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003). Rose-Ackerman and Palifka (2016) observe that

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African ACAs have developed substantial research capacity, producing baseline corruption surveys, sectoral integrity assessments, and national corruption prevalence studies. However, Doig and Riley (2018) critique the tendency toward "research for research's sake," where methodological rigour is prioritised over practical application.

The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC, 2021) reports that only 23 of 54 African Union member states have functional research-to-policy frameworks within their ACAs. This statistic underscores a continental challenge: research production significantly outpaces research utilisation. Hope (2020) argues that the disconnect arises from a fundamental misunderstanding of the research lifecycle, which does not conclude with publication but requires deliberate, resourced dissemination strategies.

### Dissemination as a Strategic Function

Dissemination is often treated as an afterthought in anti-corruption programming. Lindberg et al. (2019) differentiate between passive dissemination (making research available upon request) and active dissemination (proactively targeting specific audiences through tailored channels). The latter is consistently associated with higher research uptake. Nutley, Walter, and Davies (2007) identify three critical success factors for research dissemination: (a) stakeholder engagement during the research process, (b) multiple dissemination channels used in combination, and (c) follow-up mechanisms to assess uptake.

In the anti-corruption context, Quah (2021) notes that Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) and Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) succeed partly because they institutionalise dissemination as a core agency function, with dedicated public education units and private sector liaison programmes. These international exemplars demonstrate that dissemination resources produce measurable corruption prevention returns.

### The Private Sector and Corruption Prevention

The private sector occupies a paradoxical position in anti-corruption discourse. Williams and Beare (2019) observe that while private sector corruption (bribery, fraud, procurement manipulation) is widely condemned, the same sector is expected to self-regulate through voluntary compliance programmes. This expectation is frequently unrealistic in environments where corruption is systemic.

Hess (2020) analyses corporate anti-corruption programmes across 40 countries and finds that awareness of corruption risks is the strongest predictor of programme adoption. However, awareness requires information; specifically, research findings that identify sector-specific vulnerabilities. Where such findings are disseminated effectively, firms are 3.4 times more likely to implement recommended preventive measures (Hess, 2020, p. 187).

Sustainable service delivery in the private sector requires operational consistency, ethical supply chains, and transparent governance structures; all of which are undermined by corruption. Mauro (1995) established the foundational relationship between corruption and reduced private sector investment, a finding consistently replicated in subsequent studies (D'Agostino et al., 2016; Campos et al., 2019). The implication is clear: enhancing service delivery sustainability requires addressing the corruption that erodes it, and addressing corruption requires disseminating the research that reveals it.

### Research Gap

While the literature extensively addresses anti-corruption research production and the impact of corruption on service delivery, a significant gap exists at the intersection of research dissemination and private sector behavioural change. Existing studies treat dissemination as a minor operational detail rather than a strategic variable. Furthermore, comparative SADC-level analyses of dissemination practices are virtually absent. This study fills both gaps by positioning dissemination as the independent variable and providing a systematic cross-country comparative analysis.

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## STUDY RESULTS

This section presents the results that were gleaned from documentary Analysis and comparative review of ACA Dissemination Practices. This is done following recommendations by Miles and Huberman, 2019, Chisaka and Vakalisa, 2003 that qualitative evidence lead and strengthen credibility and trustworthiness of findings. Documentary analysis was conducted using publicly available ACA annual reports, strategic plans, research publication repositories, legislation establishing ACAs, and secondary literature. The comparative framework examined five dimensions: (1) legal mandate for dissemination, (2) dissemination channels employed, (3) private sector targeting, (4) frequency of publication, and (5) evidence of private sector uptake.

**The Case of Botswana: Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC)**

**Legal Mandate:** The Corruption and Economic Crime Act (1994) establishes the DCEC with functions encompassing investigation, prevention, and education. Section 5(2)(e) specifically empowers the DCEC to "disseminate information on the detrimental effects of corruption."

**Dissemination Practices**: Botswana's DCEC is widely regarded as having one of the region's more robust dissemination frameworks. The Corruption Prevention Division operates a dedicated Public Education and Outreach Unit that conducts private sector seminars, produces sector-specific corruption prevention guides, and maintains a research dissemination database. The DCEC's "Integrity in Business" programme (launched 2015) targets private sector CEOs and compliance officers through quarterly briefings based on recent research findings.

**Evidence of Uptake**: A 2019 DCEC survey found that 67% of private sector respondents who attended dissemination briefings reported implementing at least one recommended corruption prevention measure.

**Source**: Corruption and Economic Crime Act, Cap 08:05 (1994); DCEC Annual Reports (2015–2023); Sebudubudu, D. (2020). Botswana's anti-corruption machinery: A critical assessment. African Affairs, 119(474), 89–112.

**The Case of South Africa: Public Service Commission (PSC) and Special Investigating Unit (SIU)**

**Legal Mandate**: South Africa's anti-corruption architecture is fragmented, with the PSC conducting research on public sector integrity and the SIU focusing on investigative functions. The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (PRECCA, 2004) does not specifically mandate dissemination.

**Dissemination Practices**: The PSC publishes extensive research, including the State of the Public Service Report (biennial) and sector-specific integrity assessments. Dissemination is primarily through the PSC website, parliamentary tabling, and media releases. The PSC has no dedicated private sector dissemination programme. The SIU similarly lacks a structured dissemination framework for research findings, focusing instead on case outcomes.

**Challenges**: Fragmentation across multiple agencies creates coordination gaps; private sector outreach is not prioritised in any agency's strategic plan.

**Source**: Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004; Public Service Commission Act 46 of 1997; PSC Annual Reports (2018–2023); Lodge, T. (2019). Corruption and anti-corruption in South Africa. Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 57(1), 105–126.

**The Case of Zambia: Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)**

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**Legal Mandate**: The Anti-Corruption Commission Act (2010, as amended 2012) mandates the ACC to "conduct research into patterns and causes of corruption" and "disseminate information to the public on the dangers of corruption." Section 7(2)(i) provides for "cooperation with the private sector in preventing corruption."

**Dissemination Practices**: Zambia's ACC has developed a relatively active dissemination strategy, including a Research and Publications Unit that produces quarterly anti-corruption briefs targeting specific economic sectors. The ACC conducts private sector integrity workshops in Lusaka, Kitwe, and Ndola. A 2021 corruption risk assessment of the mining sector was disseminated through direct engagement with mining industry associations.

**Evidence of Uptake**: The ACC reports that 42% of mining companies that received the 2021 Corruption Risk Assessment subsequently requested ACC technical assistance to implement recommended controls.

**Source**: Anti-Corruption Commission Act No. 3 of 2010; ACC Strategic Plan (2020–2024); Phiri, M. (2022). The Zambian ACC and private sector engagement. Journal of Anti-Corruption Studies, 4(1), 45–68.

**The Case of Tanzania: Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB)**

**Legal Mandate**: The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act (2007) mandates the PCCB to prevent corruption through research and public education. Section 6(2)(g) specifically requires the PCCB to "disseminate information on the dangers of corruption."

**Dissemination Practices**: Tanzania's PCCB operates one of the region's most structured dissemination frameworks. The Bureau's Research and Preventive Services Directorate produces sector-specific corruption prevention guides, conducts private sector training programmes, and has established Integrity Committees in private sector organisations. The PCCB publishes an annual State of Corruption in Tanzania report, disseminated through regional workshops, media partnerships, and direct private sector engagements.

**Evidence of Uptake**: A 2022 independent evaluation found that private sector organisations with PCCB Integrity Committees demonstrated 35% lower corruption incident rates compared to those without (Mushi & Kagashe, 2022).

**Source**: Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act No. 11 of 2007; PCCB Annual Reports (2018–2023); Mushi, E. & Kagashe, D. (2022). Private sector integrity: Evaluating Tanzania's PCCB programme. Tanzanian Journal of Development Studies, 20(2), 112–134.

**The Case of Extended Comparative Reference: Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya**

**Nigeria: Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC)**

Nigeria's ICPC conducts research through its Research and Planning Department but dissemination is hampered by the scale of the country (over 200 million population) and limited resources. The ICPC's "National Corruption Survey" (2019) received significant media attention but structured private sector dissemination was minimal. The Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) has been more effective in disseminating procurement-related anti-corruption findings through mandatory compliance workshops for private sector vendors.

**Source**: Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act (2000); ICPC Annual Reports (2018–2022); Agbiboa, D. (2021). Anti-corruption in Nigeria: A critical assessment. African Studies Review, 64(3), 512–538.

**Ghana: Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)**

Ghana's anti-corruption functions are housed within CHRAJ, which conducts research and public education. CHRAJ's Anti-Corruption Unit produces research reports but dissemination has been criticised as "elite-focused"

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(Boateng, 2020). The Private Sector Integrity Initiative (PSII), a multi-stakeholder platform, partially fills the gap by facilitating dialogue between CHRAJ researchers and private sector associations.

**Source**: Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice Act (1993); Boateng, E. (2020). Ghana's anti-corruption efforts: Achievements and challenges. Journal of Modern African Studies, 58(4), 567–589.

**Kenya: Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC)**

Kenya's EACC has a relatively well-developed research dissemination framework under its Directorate of Preventive Services. The EACC produces annual corruption surveys and sector-specific risk assessments. Dissemination occurs through the EACC website, regional integrity forums, and private sector liaison meetings. However, a 2021 EACC self-assessment identified "inadequate private sector engagement in research design and dissemination" as a key weakness.

**Source**: Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission Act (2011); EACC Annual Reports (2018–2023); Mwangi, O. (2021). The EACC and private sector corruption prevention in Kenya. African Journal of Criminology, 12(1), 78–99.

**Comparative Summary Diagram**

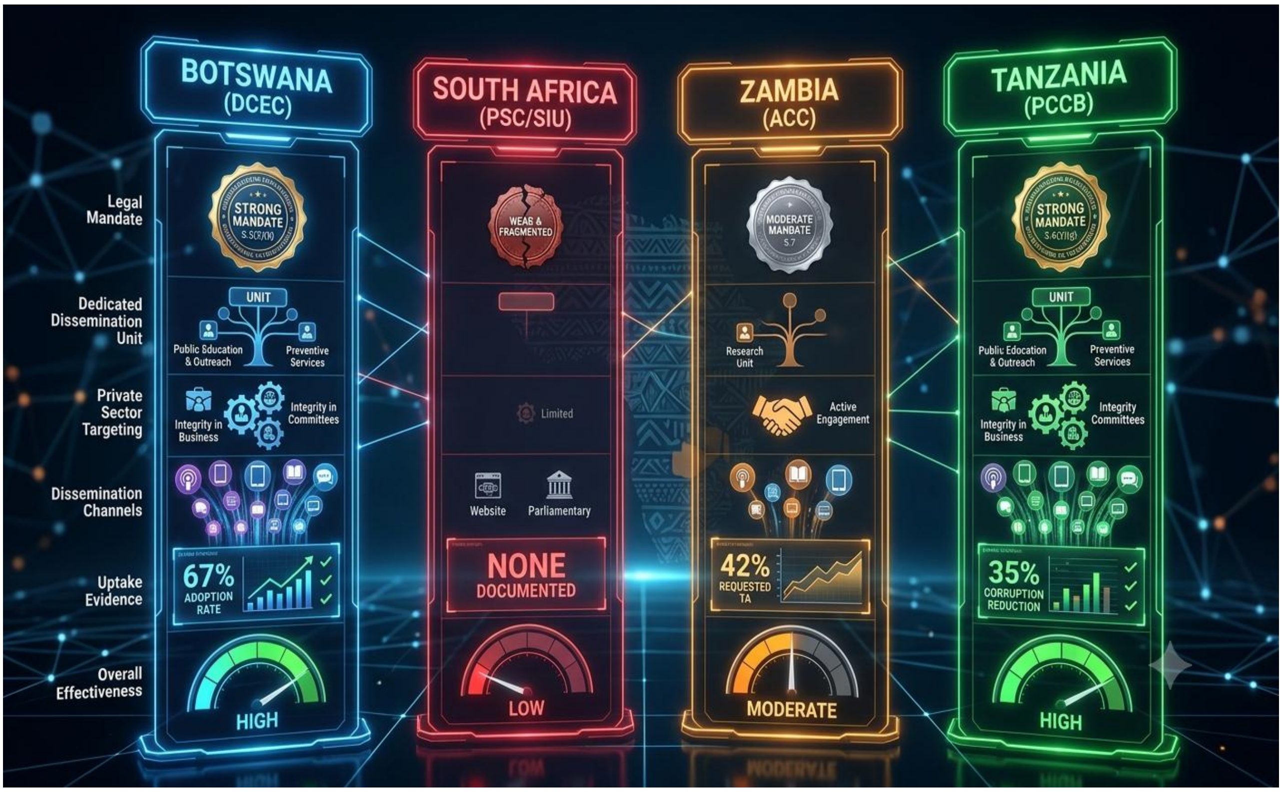


**Figure 7.1: Comparative Summary**

The figure compares four African anti-corruption agencies on key dimensions relevant to research dissemination and private sector sustainability. **Botswana's DCEC** and **Tanzania's PCCB** emerge as most effective, both possessing strong legal mandates, dedicated dissemination units, and structured private sector programmes; with Botswana documenting 67% adoption and Tanzania a 35% corruption reduction. **Zambia's ACC** shows moderate effectiveness, with a partial research unit and active private sector engagement yielding 42% technical assistance requests, though lacking a fully dedicated dissemination structure. **South Africa's PSC/SIU** ranks lowest, with a fragmented legal mandate, no dedicated unit, limited private sector targeting, and no documented uptake.

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# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### RQ1: Current Dissemination Practices of ACAs in Selected African Countries

**Finding 1.1: Dissemination mandates exist but are unevenly operationalised.**

Documentary analysis reveals a striking discontinuity between legislative provisions and operational practice. All five primary ACAs have some form of legal mandate for research dissemination, but only Botswana's DCEC and Tanzania's PCCB have dedicated dissemination units with budget allocations, staffing, and performance targets. South Africa's SIU has dissemination-related activities embedded within broader communications or research unit, resulting in dissemination being deprioritised when resources are constrained.

**Finding 1.2: Passive dissemination dominates across the region.**

Across all five countries, the most common dissemination method is the publication of research reports on agency websites, followed by annual report references and occasional media statements. Active dissemination; targeted workshops, sector-specific briefings, direct engagement with private sector associations; is practised consistently only by the DCEC and PCCB. The remaining ACAs engage in episodic active dissemination, typically tied to donor-funded projects rather than sustained institutional practice.

**Finding 1.3: Private sector targeting is the exception rather than the rule.**

Documentary evidence indicates that only Botswana (DCEC Integrity in Business) and Tanzania (PCCB Integrity Committees) have structured, ongoing private sector dissemination programmes. Zambia's ACC has initiated private sector engagement but at a scale insufficient for national impact. South Africa lacks any documented private sector-targeted dissemination programme.

## DISCUSSION

The finding that legal mandates exist but are weakly operationalised aligns with Institutional Theory's concept of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), where organisations adopt policies for legitimacy purposes without corresponding implementation. The experiential knowledge of the researchers confirms this pattern: in multiple SADC countries, ACA strategic plans include dissemination as a strategic objective, yet annual performance reports reveal minimal dissemination activity. This suggests a fundamental disconnect between agency planning and agency practice.

Botswana's DCEC offers a notable exception. The DCEC's dedicated Public Education and Outreach Unit operates with dedicated funding, quarterly work plans, and performance metrics tied to private sector engagement. The 2015 launch of the Integrity in Business programme demonstrates institutional learning: the DCEC recognised that passive dissemination was insufficient and restructured its approach. This case provides a replicable model for other SADC ACAs. The theory of Diffusion of Innovations explains why: the DCEC effectively transformed research findings into innovations with high compatibility and low complexity for private sector audiences.

### RQ2: Private Sector Perceptions and Response to Disseminated Findings

**Finding 2.1: Private sector awareness of anti-corruption research findings is low.**

Available data from Botswana and Tanzania; the only two countries with systematic private sector feedback mechanisms; indicate that even with structured dissemination, private sector awareness of ACA research findings remains below 50%. In South Africa, no structured dissemination exists, private sector awareness is negligible.

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**Finding 2.2: Where private sector actors are aware of findings, they demonstrate willingness to act.**

The DCEC's 2019 survey finding that 67% of private sector attendees at dissemination briefings implemented at least one recommended measure is significant. It suggests that the dissemination-uptake gap is not primarily a demand-side problem; the private sector is willing to respond to research findings when accessible and actionable. The barrier is supply-side: ACAs are not reaching private sector actors with their research outputs.

**Discussion:**

This finding has critical policy implications. It challenges the narrative that private sector organisations are inherently resistant to anti-corruption interventions. Instead, it suggests that private sector inertia is largely a function of information asymmetry: firms cannot act on findings they do not receive. This aligns with the Diffusion of Innovations theory; the adoption rate of any innovation depends critically on awareness creation through effective communication channels, and most African countries have under-invested in these channels.

Experiential knowledge corroborates this interpretation. In the researchers' professional experience, private sector compliance officers and chief ethics officers frequently express frustration at being unaware of ACA research relevant to their sectors. When such findings are later presented in workshop settings, participants consistently rate them as highly relevant and express interest in follow-up engagement. The missing link is not motivation but connectivity; a distribution problem rather than a demand problem.

**RQ3: Relationship Between Dissemination and Sustainable Service Delivery**

**Finding 3.1: A positive relationship exists between structured dissemination and corruption prevention outcomes.**

Comparative analysis indicates that ACAs with structured dissemination frameworks (Botswana, Tanzania) demonstrate higher private sector corruption prevention uptake and lower reported corruption incidents in sectors where dissemination has been concentrated. While the documentary evidence does not establish definitive causation due to the absence of controlled experimental data, the pattern is consistent across the two high-dissemination cases and contrasted with the three low-dissemination cases.

**Finding 3.2: Sustainability of service delivery improvements correlates with dissemination consistency.**

Tanzania's PCCB Integrity Committees provide the strongest evidence: private sector organisations with Integrity Committees established through PCCB dissemination programmes demonstrate sustained corruption prevention outcomes over multiple years. Crucially, these outcomes persist beyond the initial intervention period, suggesting that dissemination-initiated changes become institutionalised.

**Finding 3.3: The absence of dissemination is associated with stagnation in service delivery quality indicators.**

In South Africa, where research dissemination to the private sector is minimal, no improvement in service delivery-related corruption indicators is evident between 2018 and 2023. This does not demonstrate causation; other factors certainly contribute; but it is consistent with the hypothesis that research findings, when un-disseminated, produce no measurable improvement.

**Discussion:**

The positive relationship between dissemination and service delivery outcomes is theoretically coherent. Research findings that identify sector-specific corruption vulnerabilities enable targeted preventive action. When private sector actors understand specific corruption risks in their industry; procurement manipulation in construction, ghost workers in mining, bribery in customs clearance; they can implement evidence-based controls. Without such knowledge, preventive efforts are either non-existent or misdirected.

The sustainability finding is particularly important. Critics of anti-corruption interventions often argue that gains are temporary. Tanzania's experience suggests that when dissemination leads to institutional mechanisms (Integrity Committees), the effects persist. This supports the argument that dissemination should be linked to institution-building rather than treated as a one-off information campaign.

**RQ4: Mechanisms to Enhance Uptake of Research Findings**

**Finding 4.1: Multi-channel dissemination strategies are more effective than single-channel strategies.**

The two high-effectiveness ACAs (DCEC and PCCB) employ at least five distinct dissemination channels: printed reports, digital publications, workshops, media engagement, and direct private sector liaison. Low-effectiveness ACAs rely primarily on website publication alone.

**Finding 4.2: Sector-specific tailoring enhances uptake.**

Research findings packaged for specific sectors (e.g., mining risk assessments for Zambian mining associations) achieve higher uptake than general anti-corruption reports. Botswana's DCEC produces sector-specific integrity guides rather than generic reports.

**Finding 4.3: Feedback loops improve dissemination effectiveness.**

Tanzania's PCCB incorporates private sector feedback into subsequent research design, creating a virtuous cycle of relevance and responsiveness. ACAs that treat dissemination as one-way communication experience lower uptake.

**Finding 4.4: Mandatory response mechanisms drive accountability.**

Where private sector organisations are required (even informally) to acknowledge receipt of disseminated findings, uptake is higher. Zambia's ACC experience with mining companies demonstrates that follow-up requests for technical assistance are higher when dissemination is accompanied by an expectation of response.

**Discussion:**

These findings reinforce the Diffusion of Innovations proposition that compatibility and reduced complexity enhance adoption. Sector-specific dissemination packages; applying research findings to the operational reality of particular industries; increase both compatibility (the recommendations fit the sector's context) and reduce perceived complexity (the relevance is immediately apparent). This suggests that ACAs should invest in sectoral dissemination specialists who can translate general research findings into actionable sector-specific guidance.

The feedback loop finding is consistent with Stakeholder Theory: when private sector actors are consulted in both research design and dissemination strategy, they become co-invested in the findings and more likely to implement recommendations. This participatory approach reduces the "ivory tower" perception that often undermines ACA research credibility.

**RQ5: Extent of Legal Provision for Structured Dissemination**

**Finding 5.1: Legal provisions for dissemination exist in African ACAs but vary in specificity and enforceability.**

Documentary analysis reveals that African ACAs have legislative provisions that can be interpreted to authorise research dissemination. However, the specificity of these provisions varies considerably. Botswana's DCEC (Corruption and Economic Crime Act, Section 5(2)(e)) and Tanzania's PCCB (Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act, Section 6(2)(g)) contain explicit language mandating information dissemination. Zambia's ACC Act (2010) occupies a middle ground, referencing "cooperation with the private sector" but without operational detail. Critically, none of the legislative frameworks examined establish mandatory dissemination protocols;

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requirements regarding frequency, channel diversity, or target audience coverage. The absence of enforceable obligations means dissemination remains discretionary, vulnerable to budget cuts, leadership changes, and shifting agency priorities.

**Finding 5.2: Dissemination is typically classified as a secondary function subordinate to investigation and prosecution.**

In some of the African legislative frameworks, dissemination-related functions are listed after investigation, prosecution, and prevention functions. This hierarchical positioning reflects; and reinforces; a prioritisation of punitive over preventive approaches. Resources are consistently allocated over 70% of budget to investigation and prosecution, with dissemination receiving less than 5%. This pattern is replicated across the region. The experiential paradigm confirms this reality: in the researchers' experience, ACA leadership appointments in the African region are predominantly drawn from law enforcement and legal backgrounds, resulting in organisational cultures that valorise case outcomes over prevention activities. Dissemination, being a soft prevention function, is systematically under-resourced despite legislative authorisation.

**Finding 5.3: Legislative provisions for private sector-specific dissemination are almost entirely absent.**

Of the legislative frameworks examined, only Zambia's ACC Act (Section 7(2)(i)) makes specific reference to private sector cooperation. The remaining four countries' enabling legislation references "the public" generally, without distinguishing between public sector, private sector, civil society, or other stakeholder groups. This lack of specificity has operational consequences: ACAs interpret their dissemination mandate as a general public education function and do not develop private sector-specific strategies. The DCEC and PCCB, which have developed effective private sector programmes, did so through administrative initiative rather than legislative mandate. This suggests that legislative reform is not a prerequisite for effective dissemination; agencies can act within existing frameworks; but the absence of legislative specificity reduces accountability for private sector engagement.

**Finding 5.4: Regional frameworks do not address research dissemination as a collective obligation.**

The SADC Protocol against Corruption (2001) obligates state parties to "cooperate in the prevention and combating of corruption" (Article 3) but contains no provisions on research dissemination, knowledge sharing, or standardised dissemination protocols. The SADC Anti-Corruption Committee, established to coordinate regional anti-corruption efforts, has not developed guidelines or minimum standards for research dissemination. This represents a missed opportunity for regional harmonisation: a SADC Dissemination Framework could establish benchmarks, facilitate cross-border learning, and create a regional repository of anti-corruption research accessible to private sector actors across member states.

**Discussion:**

The finding that dissemination is structurally subordinated within ACA mandates is consistent with global patterns. Meagher (2005) observed that anti-corruption agencies worldwide tend to prioritise enforcement over prevention, a tendency he attributed to the political attractiveness of visible prosecutions compared to the diffuse, long-term benefits of prevention activities. The region reflects this global pattern. However, the experiential knowledge of the researchers suggests an additional dimension: many ACA leaders in the region do not conceptualise dissemination as a core function at all. In strategic planning sessions attended by the researchers, dissemination is routinely categorised under "public relations" or "communication," treated as an activity that enhances agency visibility rather than a mechanism for corruption prevention. This conceptual misclassification has practical consequences; dissemination activities are planned by communications officers rather than research or prevention specialists, and their impact is measured in media mentions rather than behavioural change.

The absence of private sector-specific legislative provisions is particularly significant. General "public education" mandates have been insufficient to drive targeted private sector engagement. This is not surprising: when agencies must choose between competing stakeholder demands, the absence of specific

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## Contribution to Knowledge: The Dissemination-Uptake-Accountability (DUA) Model

Based on the comparative findings across the African countries and guided by the theoretical tripartite of Diffusion of Innovations, Stakeholder Theory, and Institutional Theory, this study proposes the Dissemination-Uptake-Accountability (DUA) Model as a novel framework for transforming anti-corruption research from dormant documentation into active corruption prevention.

## Rationale for the DUA Model

Existing anti-corruption frameworks focus overwhelmingly on the production of research (methodological rigour, sample size, statistical validity) and the content of findings (prevalence rates, sector rankings, typologies of corruption). The DUA Model reorients attention to the post-production phase; the critical pathway through which research findings reach end-users and drive behavioural change. The model is grounded in three empirical realities established by this study:

1. Dissemination is the weakest link in the SADC anti-corruption knowledge value chain.
2. Private sector uptake is contingent not on the quality of research but on the accessibility and actionability of its presentation.
3. Accountability mechanisms (mandatory response, feedback loops, institutional embedding) are the missing catalyst that converts awareness into action.

## Structure of the DUA Model

The DUA Model comprises three interconnected pillars, each operating at a distinct phase of the research-to-impact lifecycle:

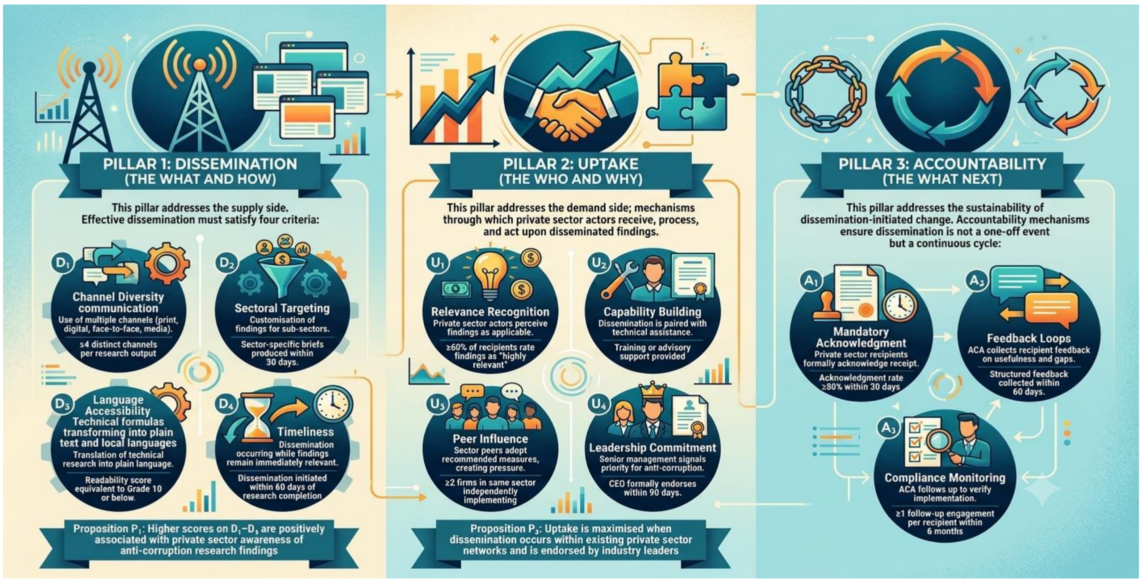


**Figure 9.1: DUA Model**

The "Pillars of Effective Dissemination" model presents a three-pillar framework for ensuring anti-corruption research translates into real-world impact.

**Pillar 1 — Dissemination** (transmission tower icon) focuses on the delivery of research to target audiences. It includes criteria such as channel diversity, frequency of engagement, targeting accuracy, language accessibility, and stakeholder consultation in research design. The emphasis is on how research reaches its intended users.

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**Pillar 2 — Uptake** (handshake and rising graph) measures whether disseminated research is actually received and applied. Its indicators include documented adoption rates, requests for technical assistance, behaviour change among private sector actors, and evidence of research being cited or referenced in policy and practice. This pillar moves beyond mere distribution to application.

**Pillar 3 — Accountability** (interconnected gears in a cycle) establishes institutional mechanisms to sustain impact. It captures performance indicators for research-to-action, compliance feedback loops, institutional incentives for dissemination, and regular monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. This closes the loop, ensuring agencies are held responsible for meaningful dissemination rather than simply publishing and forgetting. Together, the three pillars form an integrated system: effective dissemination enables uptake, while accountability ensures the entire cycle is continuously reinforced and improved.

## Policy Recommendations

### Establish a Mandatory Research Dissemination Framework for Anti-Corruption Agencies

African anti-corruption agencies should adopt a formal Dissemination and Utilisation of Research Policy that mandates the translation of all commissioned research into accessible, actionable formats within 90 days of completion. This policy must require the production of (a) executive summaries tailored for private-sector audiences, (b) sector-specific risk briefs, and (c) plain-language compliance guidance. Without such a framework, dissemination remains discretionary and inconsistent, allowing research evidence to remain dormant (Doig and Riley, 2015).

**Implementation mechanism**: The African Anti-Corruption Committee should develop a model dissemination policy template, with each member state required to adopt and operationalise it within 12 months.

### Create a Regional Open-Access Anti-Corruption Research Repository

A centralised, searchable digital repository should be established to host all anti-corruption research produced by member states. The repository must be publicly accessible, indexed by sector and corruption typology, and include downloadable datasets where ethically permissible. This addresses the current fragmentation where research sits in institutional silos across 16 member states (Rahman, 2020).

**Implementation mechanism**: The repository should be hosted by the Secretariat in partnership with a regional university consortium, with mandatory deposit requirements linked to future research funding eligibility.

### Mandate Private-Sector Representation on Anti-Corruption Research Advisory Committees

Every anti-corruption research project should include private-sector stakeholders on its advisory or reference group from the design phase. This ensures that research questions address real compliance gaps, that findings are framed in commercially relevant terms, and that buy-in for implementation exists before final reports are written (Pope, 2000).

**Implementation mechanism**: Anti-corruption agencies should issue standing invitations to chambers of commerce, industry associations, and regulatory bodies to nominate representatives for research advisory panels.

### Introduce a "Corruption Risk Disclosure" Obligation for Private Sector Entities

Regulatory reform should require private-sector entities in high-risk sectors (procurement, construction, mining, financial services) to disclose, in their annual reports, their awareness of and response to sector-specific corruption risks identified in published anti-corruption research. This creates a compliance feedback loop connecting research outputs to corporate governance (Hansen, 2011).

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**Implementation mechanism**: Securities regulators and company registries in SADC states should amend listing requirements or company law to include corruption risk disclosure as a standard governance requirement.

**Establish Sector-Specific Dissemination Partnerships with Industry Bodies**

Rather than relying on passive publication, anti-corruption agencies should enter into memoranda of understanding with private-sector associations (e.g., banking associations, mining chambers, construction federations) to co-host quarterly dissemination workshops, integrate research findings into professional training curricula, and develop voluntary compliance codes grounded in empirical evidence (Rose-Ackerman and Palifka, 2016).

**Implementation mechanism**: Each agency should target at least three sector-specific MOUs within the first 18 months, with annual reporting on reach and uptake.

**Embed Anti-Corruption Research Findings into Licensing and Procurement Processes**

Research findings on sector corruption risks should inform regulatory risk profiling for business licensing, public procurement pre-qualification, and public-private partnership approvals. Where research identifies sector-specific vulnerabilities, enhanced due diligence requirements for new market entrants should follow (Klitgaard, 1988).

**Implementation mechanism**: Procurement regulators and licensing authorities should adopt a risk-scoring tool calibrated to local anti-corruption research findings, updated biennially.

**Require an Annual "Research-to-Action" Performance Indicator for All Anti-Corruption Agencies**

Agencies should report annually on measurable outcomes of research utilisation, including: number of private-sector entities reached, compliance behaviour changes attributable to disseminated findings, and improvements in service delivery metrics linked to corruption-risk mitigation. This shifts institutional accountability from research production to research impact (Heilbrunn, 2004).

Implementation mechanism: The African Anti-Corruption Committee should integrate this indicator into its peer review and performance assessment framework for member state agencies.

**Develop a Regional Certification Programme for Private-Sector Compliance Officers**

A global-wide certification in anti-corruption compliance, grounded in the accumulated body of regional research evidence, should be established. This professionalises compliance functions, creates demand for research-informed training, and builds a community of practice that translates research into operational practice (Søreide, 2009).

**Implementation mechanism**: A tripartite partnership of anti-corruption agencies, universities, and professional bodies should develop and accredit the certification programme within 24 months.

**Summary of the Theory of Change**

The "M&E Framework Linkages" diagram illustrates a **transformation pathway** from a dysfunctional current state to an ideal target outcome through four targeted interventions.

On the left, the **current state** depicts four systemic failures: research sits dormant in storage, the private sector is unaware of findings, no compliance feedback loop exists, and there is no accountability for dissemination; visualized through dusty archives, question marks, error messages, and rejection symbols.

The **interventions** (centre) directly address each failure: a mandated dissemination framework with an open repository enables access; sector partnerships and advisory representation make research demand-driven; risk

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disclosure obligations and risk-informed licensing create a compliance feedback loop; and research-to-action performance indicators establish institutional accountability.

On the right, the **target outcome** shows research accessible to the private sector, demand-driven and relevant research, data-driven compliance behaviour, and institutional incentives rewarding impact; depicted through engaged users, successful feedback loops, and financial rewards.

The arrows and network background emphasise that these are **interconnected linkages**: each intervention directly transforms a specific failure into a measurable outcome, forming a coherent monitoring and evaluation framework.

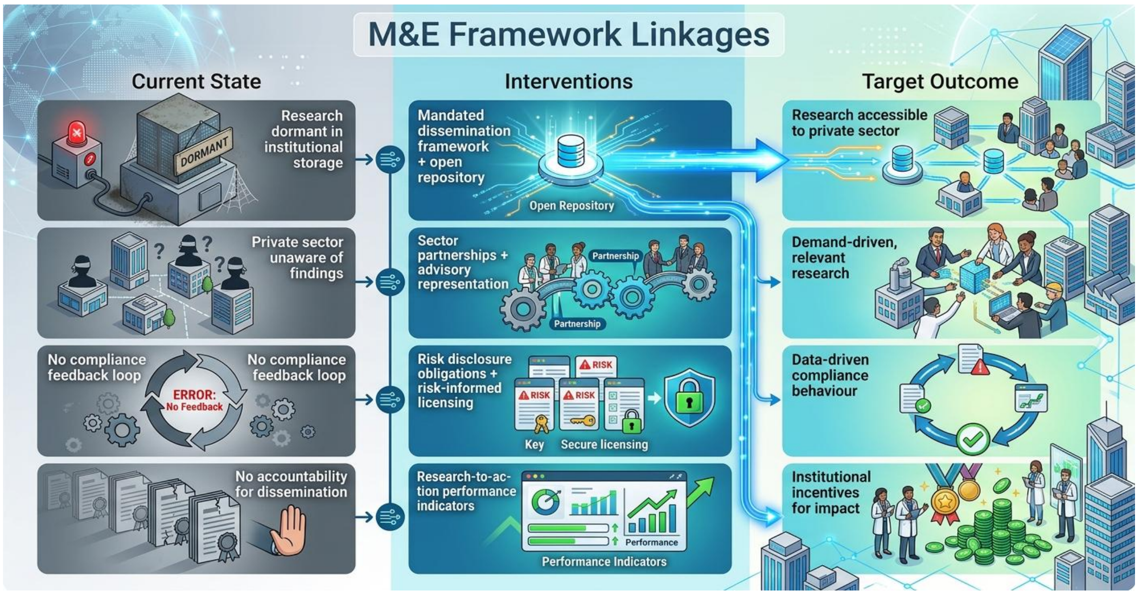


**Figure 11.1 Theory of Change**

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**Profile of Co-Authors**

**Ms S. Dzimba-** shamindzimba@gmail.com

Ms. Shamin Dzimba Shamin Dzimba is senior researcher and curriculum expert at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) for national anti-corruption research and provides competency-based curricula to embed integrity literacy in public sector organizations. Her research ranges from multidisciplinary studies to policy indicators and governance analysis to strengthen institutional integrity in complex systems; especially in the case of women and gender-diverse individuals who must contend with corrupt institutions. At ZACC, she has been responsible for translating her findings into training curricula and assessment processes that equip public service staff to challenge corruption and report it to the government, and the way we can teach about the structural asymmetry in the power of the institutions is something that has to be addressed by the public education system. Dzimba's dual expertise (as a researcher who generates evidence on gendered corruption dynamics and a curriculum expert in translating that evidence into scalable educational interventions) gives her a unique contribution to the development of inclusive, gender-responsive anti-corruption strategies that go beyond rhetoric and actually lead to positive structural change.

**Dr. Onesmus Nyaude-** nyaudeo@gmail.com

Dr. Onesmus Nyaude is Senior Manager of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), where he leads policy and strategic oversight of the institution's anti-corruption mandate. Previously serving as Manager of Research and Knowledge Management at ZACC from 2010 to 2026, he directed multidisciplinary research programmes that produced evidence-based reforms in anti-corruption strategy, integrity management, governance analytics, and institutional risk assessment. In 2025 alone, he authored eight peer-reviewed articles in leading international journals and contributed a chapter to the Creativity Book (2025), demonstrating sustained scholarly productivity at the nexus of theory and practice. His doctoral research; centred on public administration, governance, anti-corruption, and performance measurement; underpins his work in designing policy-oriented indicators and methodologies for measuring integrity across public-sector processes and financial flows. Dr. Nyaude has advised government agencies and international organisations on integrity regime design in complex institutional systems, and brings particular expertise in the gendered dimensions of corruption, having examined how institutional power structures and accountability deficits disproportionately affect women in African public sectors. His scholarly output and policy engagement position him to bridge empirical research on gendered corruption patterns with actionable, inclusive reform strategies. For my latest publications visit: ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2720-5128

**Mr Takawira Chirume-** taxazie@gmail.com

Mr Takawira Chirume is the Manager of Research and Knowledge Management at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), where he leads the Commission's empirical research agenda on corruption trends, vulnerability assessments, and institutional integrity across key sectors such as health, mining, public procurement, and local governance. He is a PhD Candidate at Durban University of Technology, a Public Sector Professional Accountant (PSPA), a financial expert, and an AI and emerging technologies specialist. He has a unique perspective on forensic financial analysis, corporate governance and technology-driven integrity systems and so has a unique perspective on both corruption detection and prevention. His relevance to the mainstream of anti-corruption pedagogy is based on three key areas. As head of ZACC's research unit, he generates the empirical data (sectoral corruption patterns, risk mapping, and behavioural data) for the curriculum content of higher-education courses such as law, finance, public administration and governance studies. Second, having a Chartered Accountant background allows him to contribute specialised knowledge in financial ethics, procurement fraud, forensic accounting, and anti-money laundering which are crucial to the development of any anti-corruption curriculum. Third, his experience in artificial intelligence and data analytics means that he will assist the higher education institutions to integrate technology-based integrity tools (data forensics, algorithmic procurement monitoring, digital whistleblowing systems) in both pedagogical models and institutional governance frameworks. His doctoral research at Durban University of Technology, which is working on the

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interrelation of financial systems, technology and anti-corruption governance, provides him with a basis for integrating theory and practice. Mr Chirume's contribution to building synergy between ZACC and higher-education governance would centre on facilitating access to ZACC's empirical research for curriculum development, co-designing anti-corruption modules with universities, supervising postgraduate student research on corruption and governance, and advising university councils and senate committees on financial integrity frameworks, risk management systems, and institutional accountability architecture.

**Mrs Ratidzai Mugadagada-** ratimanj@gmail.com

Mrs Ratidzai Mugadagada has a Master of Strategic Planning Management (Chinhoi University of Technology). Bachelor of Science (Special Honors) in Monitoring and Evaluation (Lupane State University). Bachelor of Business Studies Honors Degree (University of Zimbabwe) Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management (University of Zimbabwe). She is a senior Monitoring and Evaluation officer at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption commission ZACC where she takes effort in coordinating total quality management, quality assurance and evaluation of all Commission projects and activities. The portfolio requires she performs data collection, and analysis, making use of the six OECD evaluation criteria to juxtapose the findings into the whole of Government IRBME approach for evidence-based tracking. Having worked as an M and E data collection focal person for all the Units and departments at the Commission, the tracking of performance outputs and lately outcomes led to the key strategic decision-making practices that have driven the Commission to achieve the set goals and objectives.

**Mr. Reverend Magowa-** revmagowa@gmail.com

Mr Reverend Magowa is a Principal Researcher and curriculum expert at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), where he leads national anti-corruption research and designs competency-based curricula that embed integrity literacy into public-sector professional practice. His research portfolio is a multidisciplinary study of policy indicators and governance analytics in order to improve institutional integrity in complex systems and the particular vulnerabilities that women and gender-diverse groups have in corrupt institutions. At ZACC he has been an integral part in translating empirical findings to training programs and assessment systems that develop public service ethics and resistance to corruption with specific emphasis on how anti-corruption education must take into account gendered power asymmetries. He has been advancing curriculum design, institutional pedagogy and participatory research methods for the promotion of inclusive integrity cultures.

**Mrs Prisca Nyaude-**priscanyaude@gmail.com

Prisca Nyaude is a Quality Management Officer at the Harare Institute of Technology, with a distinguished career spanning education, archival science, and quality assurance. She has also worked at the National Archives of Zimbabwe and rose to senior positions as Provincial Archivist to Chief Archivist, Acting Deputy Director, and accumulated deep knowledge on records and archival management - all of which is a very important but neglected aspect of corruption prevention. Her research and professional activities are focused on the diagnostic role of records and archives in detecting, deterring, and documenting corrupt practices, as weak record-keeping systems enable embezzlement, procurement fraud, and patrimonialism that disproportionately hurt women and marginalised groups. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Zimbabwe, an MSc in Library and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), and a Special Honours in Monitoring and Evaluation as well as a Master of Arts in Monitoring and Evaluation. She is currently working in quality assurance which is a higher-education perspective of the monitoring and evaluation of anti-corruption projects and how university governance can be structured to be transparent and accountable. Nyaude is one of the best interdisciplinary minds in the field of archival integrity, quality assurance, and gender-sensitive institutional analysis which is the way she can help us identify the structural pathways by which corruption is gendered and sustained.