

Lower cost, increased transparency,
and real-time monitoring

Utilizing technology to ensure the success of national endeavors in combating corruption



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In an era where technology applies the principles of governance and accountability, harnessing the power of digital systems to monitor and evaluate anti-corruption strategies is not just an option but a necessity. It works to empower all stakeholders, enhance transparency, and support national efforts against corruption. As we continue technological advancements, adopting digital monitoring and evaluation systems is key to creating a more just, accountable, and corruption-free world.

Corruption poses a significant threat to the social, economic, and political fabric of countries worldwide. It erodes public trust in state institutions, hinders the efficient use of resources, impedes the delivery of essential services to the public, and undermines the rule of law. Recognizing the need to combat this widespread issue, many countries have developed National Anti-Corruption Strategies (NACS) as a comprehensive approach to address corruption at various levels of society.

Monitoring and evaluating these strategies are crucial to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for enhancing anti-corruption capacities. In this digital age, electronic systems have emerged as powerful tools to enhance the monitoring and evaluation process, enabling governments and stakeholders to combat corruption more effectively. This article discusses the importance and benefits of the electronic monitoring system in monitoring and evaluating the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for the period 2023-2030.

Evolution of Stages of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy

The Egyptian state has developed and implemented a systematic, comprehensive, and connected approach to combat corruption since 2014. This initiative is in line with the constitutional commitment to formulate a strategic plan for fighting corruption through coordination among national entities. The first phase was executed from 2014 to 2018, utilizing all its outputs to enhance the second phase from 2019 to 2022. Despite facing challenges and difficulties, the second phase successfully achieved its objectives at a rate of 86%. This progress led to the establishment of an advanced approach, incorporating radical changes in structure, objectives, and communication points (coordinators from various entities to monitor the strategy's implementation). The concerned points of contact increased from 84 in the first phase to 120 in the third phase across different state entities. Moreover, the capacity-building of all contact points was achieved through training at the Egyptian Anti-Corruption Academy, focusing on coordinating within their representing entities and using the electronic system, which provides a secure and sustainable environment for government data exchange.

Assessment of the Performance of State Administrative Apparatuses in Preventing and Combating Corruption

The newly designed and nationally implemented electronic assessment system provides an innovative mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the third phase of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2030. Supported by "evidence-based" verification means, this system evaluates the performance of entities involved in preventing and combating corruption. It is the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa and one of the latest globally.

The electronic system, named "Performance Management and Monitoring System" (PMM System), was innovatively created through the collaborative efforts of specialists in management, public policy, law, programming, statistics, monitoring, and evaluation. This collaboration was under the continuous supervision of the Administrative Control Authority, in coordination with supervisory and judicial authorities and law enforcement authorities, members of the Sub-Coordinating National Committee for Corruption Combat and Prevention. This effort is part of the executive plan for the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2030.

Out of challenges, successes are born. In the recent past, the world experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and similar disruptions, leading to the halt or slowdown of work cycles. Many government employees and citizens were exposed to the virus, prompting various governments to resort to remote work or activate flexible work systems. In response to these challenges and in adherence to its national, regional, and international commitments, the Egyptian state insisted on overcoming the crisis by utilizing technology securely and effectively to monitor the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2030.

The Role of Technology in Monitoring

Electronic systems play a pivotal role in the modern monitoring and evaluation process of national strategies. Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental elements in these strategies because they enable the assessment of progress in achieving goals, identification of deficiencies, and evaluation of implementation mechanisms. These systems leverage technology to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accuracy in data collection, analysis, and report preparation. They facilitate real-time progress tracking, enhance data accessibility, and provide the necessary means for comprehensive assessments. Electronic systems also allow simplified data collection related to anti-corruption efforts. The system enables the use of mobile applications, online reporting portals, and data input for efficient information gathering. The advantage of electronic data collection lies in its ability to ensure the consistency and accuracy of data, a genuine challenge faced by manual reporting systems.

System Operation

The monitoring process begins with defining goals and key performance indicators (KPIs). In the third phase of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2030, 219 indicators were selected to measure performance. These indicators were clearly



Several user-friendly screens have been developed through a secure digital platform, enabling decision-makers and the Administrative Control Authority to have anytime access for monitoring and evaluating the performance of all entities across the Republic's provinces in implementing the strategy according to the set targets. The platform presents information clearly through diagrams, charts, and tables

and realistically chosen and described in a way that facilitates handling by non-specialists. The calculation method for each was also defined for measuring progress and success, such as the number of training programs incorporating anti-corruption components or the number of beneficiaries of an awareness initiative related to corruption prevention.

Next is the data collection process from various sources, including government data on efforts by each entity according to its jurisdiction. Results of indicators measuring citizen and investor satisfaction are also collected by specialized national entities, including law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations.

Finally, data integration and analysis occur in a unified system, ensuring its quality and consistency. In addition, several user-friendly interfaces have been developed through a secure digital platform. Decision-makers and the Administrative Control Authority can access these interfaces at any time to monitor and evaluate the performance of all entities in all provinces nationwide in implementing the strategy according to the targeted achievements. The platform offers an easy-to-use interface that clearly presents information through charts, graphs, and tables. It also allows the creation of reports as required.

Real-time Monitoring without Delay

One of the most significant advantages of electronic systems is their ability to provide real-time monitoring of anti-corruption efforts. For example, the strategy includes initiatives to improve government transparency and responsiveness. Data can be tracked and displayed in real-time around progress, allowing decision-makers a clear view to design and adjust policies flexibly and implement reforms promptly.

Transparency and Accountability

Electronic systems enhance transparency and accountability by providing data accessibility to senior management. This allows for daily monitoring of the extent to which commitments in the field of anti-corruption are fulfilled. Additionally, electron-

ic systems can provide a real assessment of the seriousness of officials in various entities in implementing specific measures for each goal of the strategy. Therefore, it can be used to evaluate the performance of institutions and individuals alike.

Data Analysis

Integrating advanced data analysis tools into monitoring systems and electronic evaluation systems provides clear reports and trends. This can help identify corruption patterns, focal points, and potential areas of concern. By using data analysis, attention can be focused on better and lower-performing aspects. Regulatory bodies can also concentrate on specific aspects of corruption in a particular entity or shared among several entities to curb and eliminate it.

Improving Data Accuracy and Consistency

One of the core advantages of using digital monitoring and evaluation systems is enhancing the accuracy and consistency of data collection. Human errors, such as data entry mistakes or misinterpretations of handwritten reports, can be significantly reduced when electronic systems are employed. This ensures that the data used to assess progress in anti-corruption efforts is reliable and error-free to the extent possible. This makes it easier for decision-makers to formulate effective policies. The responsible entity for monitoring execution can continually verify the accuracy and realism of implementation rates.

Accessibility

Electronic monitoring and evaluation systems can be accessed from anywhere, allowing contact points in charge of implementation to log in and enter data under any conditions. Additionally, senior management can check the performance of their responsible entities at any time.

Cost Reduction

While implementing digital monitoring and evaluation systems may require initial investment, they often lead to long-term cost reduction. Simplified data collection and analysis

The newly developed and nationally implemented electronic evaluation system provides an advanced mechanism for assessing and monitoring the third phase of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2030. Supported by means of verifying the performance of relevant entities involved in corruption prevention and combat, this system becomes the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa and one of the latest globally

One of the key advantages of utilizing digital monitoring and evaluation systems is enhancing accuracy and significantly reducing human errors such as data entry mistakes or misinterpretations of handwritten reports, ensuring that the data used to assess the progress in anti-corruption efforts is reliable and free from errors

operations reduce the need for manual labor and intensive paperwork, resulting in lower operating costs. Moreover, the ability to identify and address corruption more quickly can lead to significant financial savings by preventing further losses from corrupt practices.

Environmentally Friendly

There was a significant environmental dimension resulting from monitoring the results of the first and second phases. Monitoring continued over eight years for a total of 188 entities, including 84 contact points during the period from 2014 to 2018, and 104 contact points during the period from 2019 to 2022. Approximately 1,500 reports were prepared. Considering the resources needed for preparing, printing, and collecting these reports in terms of ink, paper, and logistics, digitalizing the monitoring and evaluation processes transformed them into simple procedures taking a few minutes from anywhere, achieving efficiency and effectiveness in the monitoring process.

Enhancing International Cooperation

Digital systems facilitate the exchange of data and insights related to combating corruption on a global scale. This enhances international cooperation in the fight against corruption, allowing specialized agencies in different countries to learn from each other's experiences and adapt successful strategies to their specific contexts. Additionally, international organizations and donor entities can better understand the progress made in anti-corruption efforts and provide targeted support when needed.

Challenges and Considerations

While electronic systems offer numerous benefits in monitoring and evaluating national anti-corruption strategies, there are challenges and considerations that must be addressed:

Digital Divide: There may be a significant digital divide, making it challenging for some stakeholders in monitoring to smoothly interact with and utilize electronic monitoring and evaluation systems. Efforts should be made to ensure a complete understanding of how to use the system, providing continuous technical support.

Data Security: Dealing with government data related to corruption requires handling data with sensitivity and implementing strong measures for data security to prevent unauthorized access and potential misuse.

Capacity Building: Sustaining the efficiency of the monitoring system requires investment in training and capacity building to ensure that stakeholders in monitoring (contact points) acquire the necessary skills to effectively use electronic systems for monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion

Corruption is a highly dangerous phenomenon that requires a comprehensive response from all entities and parties to confront it. National anti-corruption strategies play a crucial role in this endeavor and their success requires an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. Electronic systems provide a powerful means to enhance the monitoring and evaluation process, providing real-time data without delay, achieving transparency, accountability, and cost reduction, and being environmentally friendly. The digital transformation in monitoring and evaluation systems has a genuine positive impact on those overseeing it.

Moreover, ideas derived from digital monitoring and evaluation systems aid in making informed decisions based on evidence. The government and stakeholders can focus on the most needed areas, improve anti-corruption policies based on data-driven recommendations; this does not only enhance the effectiveness of the national anti-corruption strategy but also ensures efficient resource utilization and bolster the decision-making process.