

## Transforming strategic institutions

Some institutions are strategic due to their visibility in the public eye, for instance border control units or institutions issuing permits.

These institutions are also “hot spots” of corruption. If the fruit of corrupt institutions is visible in the public eye (e.g. bribery or pay-offs), they offer leverage points for reducing corruption by transforming them.

Klitgaard (2010) called the process of transforming such strategic leverage points “Picking visible low-hanging fruit”. These are, in terms of this article, the most “annoying” organisational units or components in a public sector resisting transformation, e.g. tax and customs offices, budgeting and accounting offices (e.g. stocks); procurement (e.g. public works and tendering especially in the case of increasing tender exemptions in Namibia) and social benefits (e.g. pension, social security and motor vehicle accident fund) programmes.

### BREAKING NEGATIVE LOOPS

The purpose is to break the recurring negative loops of self and mutual-serving behaviour of those engaged in the network of reciprocal obligations of these institutions.

Other Namibian “hot-spots” of administrative and regulatory control units, where one is most likely to find corrup-



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tion, include the following: quotas and licences (e.g. fishing, transport, import and export, prospecting and mining), permits and regulations (e.g. environmental, occupational health and safety, and labour), inspections (e.g. taxation and construction), and subsidies (e.g. infant industry protection, drought and housing). The process of applying for permits and licences needs special mention, because public servants create delays to make such services appear to be scarce (e.g. a fixed supply), thereby increasing the demand for the service and for applicants to bribe them.

These hotspots and/or strategic institutions that co-produce corruption should be dealt with within a relatively short period of 24 months. Such successful transformation of strategic institutions can create momentum for sustaining the change process and broaden it to the rest of the public sector.

#### • References

Klitgaard, R. 2010. *Addressing Corruption in Haiti*.

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