U4 ANTI-CORRUPTION RESOURCES CENTRE

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U4 ANTI-CORRUPTION RESOURCES CENTRE

2012 – 2016 STRATEGY

MID TERM REVIEW

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<center>**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**</center>

In 2011, the U4 Anti-Corruption Resources Centre developed a new strategy to develop its work and widen its impact over the following five years. This was agreed by the U4 Steering Committee and CMI Board in late 2011, and has formed the basis for U4's work priorities over the past three years.

This report summarises the findings and recommendations of an independent mid-term review of this strategy.

U4 RELEVANCE AND FOCUS

Over the last three years, there has been growing high level political attention to international anti-corruption issues, sustaining high levels of interest in anti-corruption initiatives in general, and growing focus on international drivers of corruption. With high levels of awareness and recognition of the issue around the world, the focus of anti-corruption work in the development sector continues to shift from awareness raising towards the design and implementation of effective anti-corruption interventions and institutions, and the role of civil society in holding governments to account.

For aid donors, this has meant a growing focus on sector-specific interventions and developing practical responses with partner governments and non-state actors. The growing pressure on aid budgets has also reinforced the focus of donors on ensuring that aid funds are properly used and on measuring the results of anti-corruption initiatives.

Over the last three years, U4 has evolved its priority areas of focus in line with these changing needs, including development of new areas of focus on people's engagement, evaluation and measurement of corruption, and justice reform. There is solid evidence of continuing high demand for the resources and services provided by U4, both from partner agencies and from the wider community of development practitioners.

U4 is recognised externally as playing a distinctive role in working closely with donor agencies to spread good practice on anti-corruption issues within and amongst aid donors, while also sharing the learning with the wider global community of development practitioners.

Over the past three years, U4 has consolidated its strong reputation amongst anti-corruption and governance specialists in the sector, but has made less progress in reaching out to specialists in other sectors of development work who are seeking support to tackle corruption issues in their own programmes and partners.

PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC GOALS

Since 2011, U4 has continued to develop its core thematic areas of expertise, evolving its range of publications and courses in line with changing priorities and issues. User feedback on the quality of U4 publications and services continues to be very positive, with high levels of user satisfaction. U4 has also made conscious steps to make more regular visits to the HQs of partner agencies, which have been welcomed. However, the planned expansion in the reach of U4 services amongst the staff of partner agencies has stalled in the last two years. The portfolio of core services will need to be refreshed and more effectively promoted within partner agencies in order to reach planned targets, including U4 developing its convening role, as envisaged in the strategy.

The U4 website continues to be the primary channel for reaching out to the wider community of development practitioners. In 2012, U4 refreshed and updated its website. While this has produced a more positive experience for those using the website, the transition to the new website resulted in a major drop in website visitors, primarily due to lost profile on search engines. While usage is now growing again, it is still well below 2011 levels. To restore its profile in the wider community, U4 will need focus more clearly on online promotion and dissemination of U4 resources to its target audiences.

U4 has sought to develop its profile within the sector through growing the number of presentations at anti-corruption conferences and events – this has been welcomed, although many stakeholders feel that U4's profile in the sector is still relatively low, partly due to the lack of continuity in the U4 Director role over the past two years.

U4 continues to be strongly supported by most of its partner agencies, and has attracted two new partners over the past two years (Denmark and Finland), with a third in advanced negotiations. However, major cutbacks in aid budgets in some donor countries have led to the loss of two partner agencies (Netherlands and Canada) over the last two years. Greater stability has been achieved in U4 budgets through negotiating multi-year funding agreements with most partners, and greater flexibility for partners to supplement their core contributions where possible. However, there has been little progress in the planned diversification of funding sources envisaged in the strategy. As a result of these factors, there has been limited growth in U4 income over the past two years, constraining the scope to grow and develop services and outreach as planned in the strategy.

CONCLUSION

U4 continues to deliver high quality research and services that are valued by its partners, and has developed its areas of thematic expertise in line with changing needs in the sector. To achieve its strategic goals by 2016, U4 will need to focus on more effective promotion and dissemination (both within partner agencies and in the broader community), refresh its portfolio of services, and grow and diversify its funding base.

MAIN REPORT – CONTENTS

A. CONTEXT, SCOPE AND APPROACH

In 2011, the U4 Anti-Corruption Resources Centre developed a new strategy to develop its work and widen its impact over the following five years. This was agreed by the U4 Steering Committee and CMI Board in late 2011, and has formed the basis for U4's work priorities over the past three years.

The strategy committed U4 to develop a performance monitoring framework in the first year of the strategy, and this was agreed in late 2012.

At the time the strategy was approved, U4 made a commitment to undertake a midterm review of the strategy, to assess progress and identify any changes needed to align to changing needs in the sector over the next 2-3 years, or to deliver the strategic goals set for 2016. Caldwell Consulting was commissioned by U4 to undertake this review in August 2014.

The review findings are based on six main sources:

- A review of relevant internal documents and reports, and recent external reports on developments in the anti-corruption sector
- Analysis of management information related to strategic plan targets and the U4 performance framework indicators
- Telephone interviews with U4 partners (8)
- Telephone interviews with a cross section of U4 external stakeholders (9)
- Interviews with U4 staff and CMI management
- Case studies on two recent U4 publications

We would like to express our thanks for the strong cooperation and support from the U4 team and U4 partners in undertaking this review.

This report presents our finding and recommendations.

B. RELEVANCE OF U4

The 2011 strategy identified 8 key trends affecting corruption in development that would influence the priorities of U4 over the following five years. All these trends have continued over the past three years, and many have influenced the evolving priorities of U4 research and training. In particular, the continuing shift of anti-corruption efforts from awareness raising and understanding to practical implementation and solutions was highlighted by many of those interviewed for this review.

The consultations for this review identified four additional trends that have emerged or evolved since the 2011 strategy:

- *Political Visibility*: Corruption has become more visible on the agenda of world leaders – e.g. through G20 engagement and the SDGs. This is reinforcing moves to look more at the political drivers of corruption, and to more joined-up working across different departments of government in donor countries to combat corruption
- *Illicit Financial Flows*: Greater focus on the international drivers of corruption, in particular on illicit financial flows, and the strengthening of international anti-bribery laws in some G7 countries. These have been reinforced by the emergence

of specialist international NGOs focusing on specific corruption issues – e.g. Global Financial Integrity, Revenue Watch, TAI, OGP, NRGI – some of whom are now becoming the leading source of anti-corruption resources for their specific issue. The anti-bribery laws are also focusing the attention of major global companies and accounting firms on anti-corruption issues.

- *Social Accountability*: Growing focus on the role of national and local NGOs in holding their governments to account, and to transparency laws and mechanisms that can help them to do so. There is also growing interest in the rapidly expanding range of online and mobile apps that can help citizens to report corruption.
- *Aid Budget Scrutiny*: Since 2011, pressures on public expenditures in donor countries have intensified, resulting in greater public scrutiny of aid budgets, and in ensuring that the money is spent as intended. This is leading to new processes and controls in many donor agencies to combat corruption, engaging managerial, professional, and financial staff across all sectors of development programming.

Beyond responding to these trends in the selection of publication topics and in the content of training courses, these trends bring three specific challenges for U4:

- *Reaching out to Other Sector Specialists*: While U4 is widely felt to have consolidated its strong reputation amongst anti-corruption and governance specialists, it is felt to have made only limited progress over the past few years in reaching out to specialists in other sectors in partner agencies (e.g. health, education, natural resources, private sector development)
- *Comparing Practical Solutions*: There is a growing demand for comparative case studies of how particular anti-corruption issues have been tackled in different developing countries, and which approaches have worked best. Many external stakeholders see U4 as particularly well placed to capture these. This may involve rebalancing the research priorities of U4 to give greater weight to this type of publication.
- *International Drivers of Corruption*: The emerging specialist INGOs in this field will require U4 to be clearer about its distinctive role in this thematic programme, and how it can best add value or complement their work

Provided U4 continues evolve in response to these changes, U4's vision, mission, and strategic focus (as laid out in the strategy) remain relevant, and demand for U4 services is likely to remain strong over the years ahead.

C. PROGRESS ON U4 STRATEGIC GOALS

This section reviews progress against each of the five strategic objectives set out in the 2011 strategy:
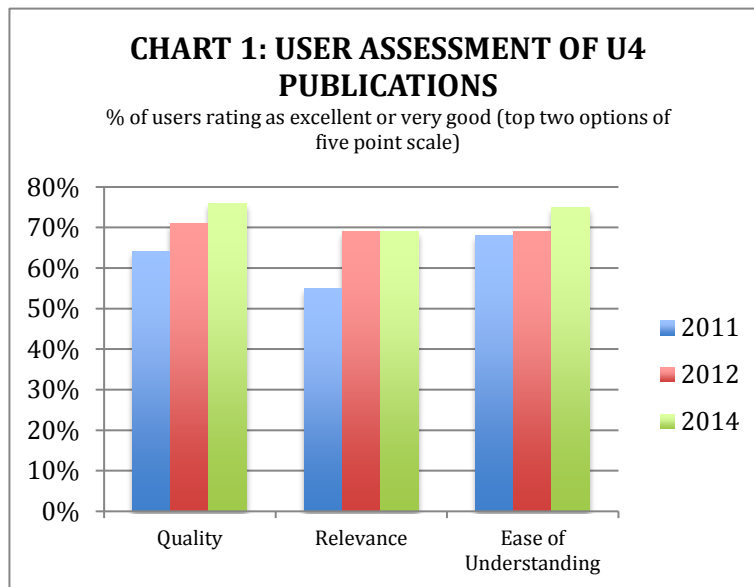
Strategic Objective 1: Expand Expertise and Portfolio of Knowledge Resources

There has been good progress over the past three years on the following aspects of this objective:

- U4 continues produce a flow of over 20 topical publications each year, maintaining a strong reputation for the quality of research, relevance, and ease of understanding of its publications (see Chart 1). In total, there are around 50,000 downloads of U4 publications each year. Over the past two years, this has been

supported by further strengthening of U4's quality control processes, and closer collaboration with CMI researchers on relevant projects

- U4 has developed new areas of thematic focus over the past three years in response to changing priorities of partners, including REDD, Evaluation and Measurement, People's Engagement, and Justice. Some partner agencies would like to see wider engagement of partner agency staff in shaping evolving priorities over the coming years.
- U4 has refreshed the thematic pages of the website to make them easier to use and align them to current U4 priorities

CHART 1: USER ASSESSMENT OF U4 PUBLICATIONS

% of users rating as excellent or very good (top two options of five point scale)

Source: U4 User surveys of people on U4 mailing lists. Respondents 340 in 2011, 430 in 2012, 330 in 2014. No survey conducted in 2013.

As part of this review, we undertook two case studies of the use of U4 publications. While the user samples were small, they provided encouraging indications of the variety of uses of U4 publications, and of the outcomes to which they had contributed. See Box 1 on next page for further details.

There has been limited progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- While U4 publications continue to be popular, the rapid growth in downloads achieved up to 2011 has not been sustained, and has reached a plateau over the past two years (Chart 2). The website re-launch in 2012 may have contributed to this (see Section C2 below for details), but it also reflects limited online promotion activity. There are encouraging signs of an upturn in 2014, with downloads on track to exceed 50,000 for the first time, but U4 will need to focus more on online promotion and dissemination of publications if it is to reach its strategic goals by 2016.
- As indicated under Section B above, while U4 is seen as having consolidated its reputation amongst anti-corruption and governance specialists, it appears to have made limited progress in reaching out to other (non-governance) specialists in partner agencies. This may be one of the keys to restoring growth in the reach of U4 publications.
- To strengthen southern perspectives in U4 research, the current strategy aims to develop strategic partnerships with regional institutes in developing regions of the world. While there have been some links with institutes in the South on specific

projects, there has been limited progress towards strategic partnerships to date. Amongst partners and external stakeholders, there are

BOX 1: USE OF U4 PUBLICATIONS: TWO CASE STUDIES

As part of this review, two case studies were selected to explore the use and outcomes of U4 publications. These were selected from publications launched 12-18 months ago (to have time for some results to have been achieved, but still be in the minds of users), and from amongst the more popular U4 publications (to enable us to see what a successful publication can achieve). We selected one case study that is primarily focused on a public policy issue in developing countries, and one that is more focused on needs of U4 partner staff, from two different areas of thematic focus. The two publications selected were:

- 'Rule of Law and Environmental Justice in Forests': Published in June 2013
- The Proxy Challenge: Why bespoke proxy indicators can help solve the anti-corruption measurement problem': Published in July 2013

Both publications have been downloaded more than 400 times since publication.

A short online survey was sent to a sample of 30 people for each publication, selected from those to whom U4 staff have sent the publication. We received 11 responses for the Forests publication and 18 for the Proxy Challenge publication. The respondents are likely to be amongst the most active users, and should not be seen as representative of the wider use of the publication amongst all who downloaded the publication. However, the responses provide an illustration of how the more popular U4 publications are used, and what outcomes they contribute to.

USES: Most respondents to both publications were able to identify multiple ways in which they had used the publication, with an average of 3 uses identified – see Chart below left for details. As would be expected, the more internally focused Proxy Challenge publication was more used as input to events, while the more externally focused Forests publication was more used in policy discussions with partner governments.

OUTCOMES: Most respondents were also able to identify at least one positive outcome to which the publication had contributed. These included influencing the policies of their own organisation and partner government departments, and raising public or media attention to the issue – see Chart below right for details. As would be expected, the Forests publication contributed more to external policies, while the Proxy Challenge publication contributed more to internal policies.

USES OF PUBLICATIONS

OUTCOMES OF PUBLICATIONS
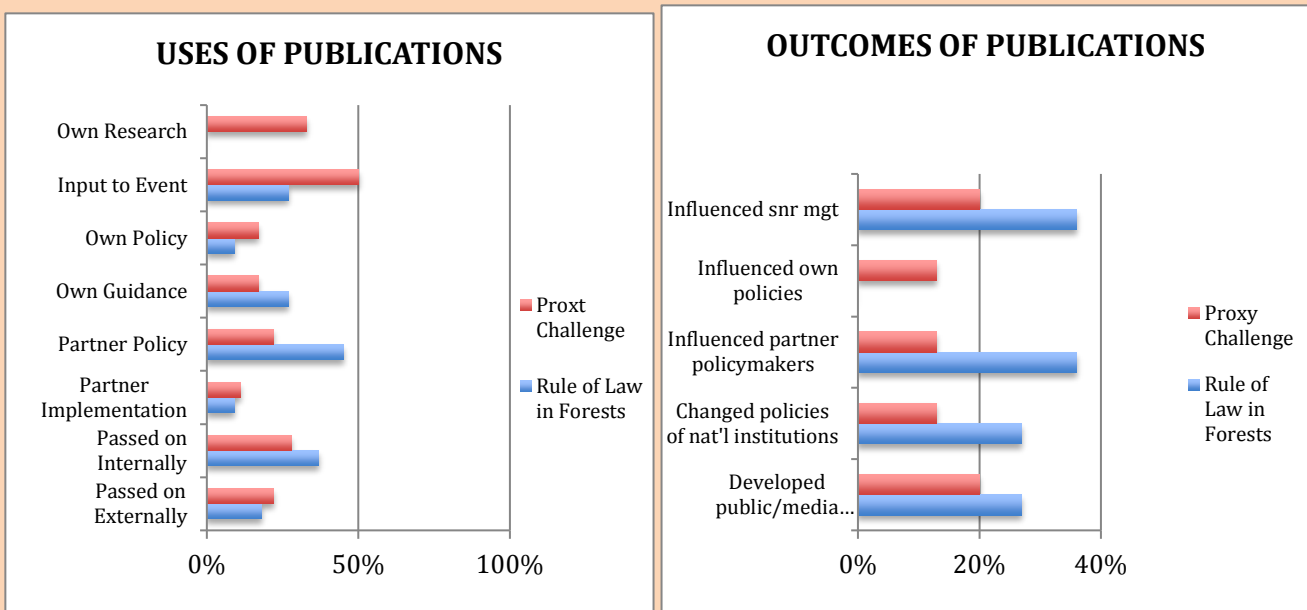
differing views about whether suitable partner institutes exist, but this has yet to be tested by U4.

- The strategy commits U4 to initiate a programme of updating the most popular U4 publications and Helpdesk answers. This has yet to get underway.

CHART 2: DOWNLOADS OF U4 PUBLICATIONS
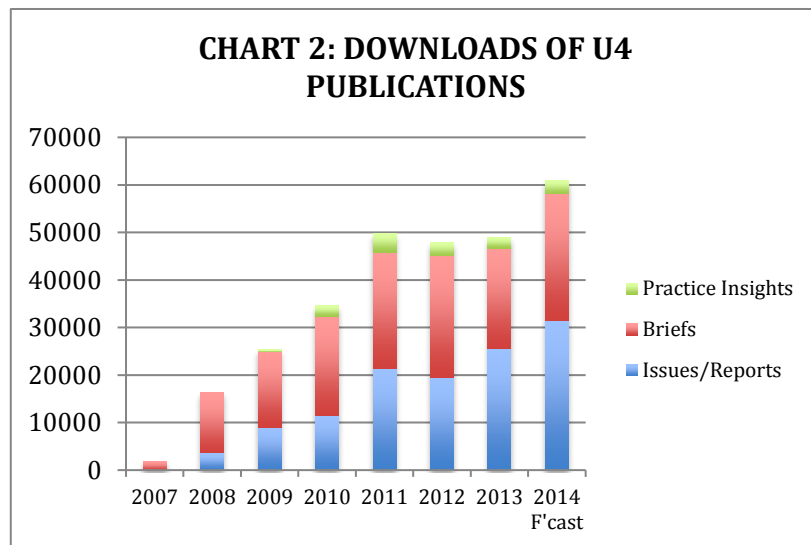
The strategy set two specific targets for 2016 under this objective:

- *To be a recognised source of expertise in at least five thematic areas that are priorities for the donor community*: While there is no objective measure of this goal, the partner and external interviews conducted for this review indicate that U4 has established a strong reputation for its expertise in Corruption in Aid, NRM/REDD, Evaluation and Measurement, and Corruption in Health. With newer areas of expertise being developed, U4 looks on track to achieve this goal by 2016, provided U4 can maintain good continuity of staffing in these core areas of expertise
- *To have developed at least two strategic partnerships with institutes in priority regions*: This is not yet on track.

Objective 1 Conclusions and Recommendations:

U4 has made good progress in evolving and deepening its areas of thematic expertise, and continues to produce high quality publications that are valued by their core users. To achieve the strategic goal, it now needs to complement this with steps to broaden its reach into non-governance specialists, and widen inputs into shaping research and publication priorities.

Recommendations:
  a. *U4 should develop active communities of practice (or support existing communities led by others) amongst donor agency professional staff in selected sectors (e.g. health, education, natural resources, private sector development), to act as a bridge to wider engagement beyond governance specialists. These networks should be used to inform selection of topics for publications, contribute case studies, inform content of specialist courses, and disseminate relevant publications*
  b. *U4 should rebalance its mix of publications to give greater weight to comparisons of how different developing countries are tackling specific anti-corruption challenges*

c. *U4 should widen partner agency engagement in updating and evolving priority topics, perhaps through an annual survey of country offices and relevant HQ teams in partner agencies*
d. *U4 should undertake a review of potential strategic partners in developing regions, to assess whether this is a viable ways of increasing southern perspectives in U4 work*
e. *U4 should commit to a programme of updating its most popular publications and Helpdesk answers, as part of the annual work programme*

Strategic Objective 2: Disseminate More Widely and Actively

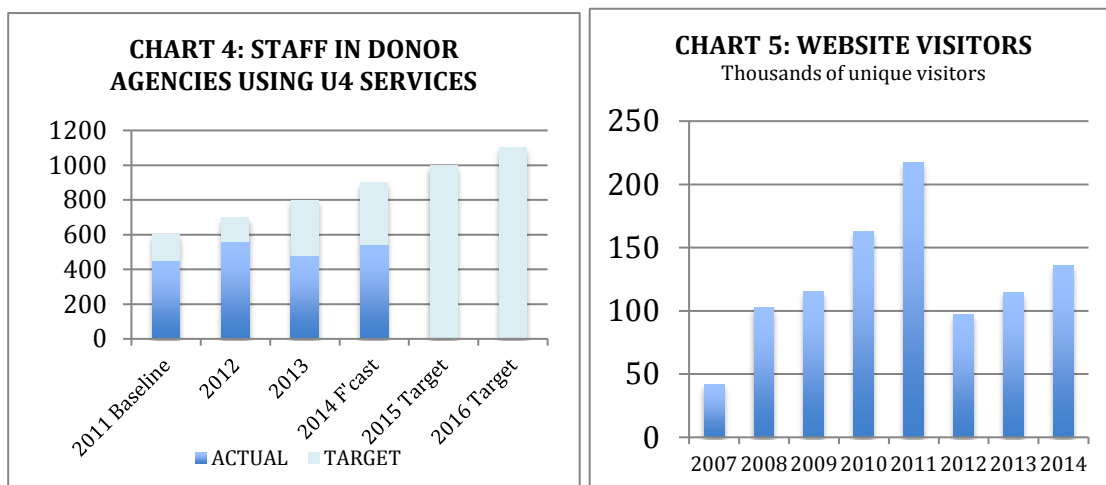There has been good progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- U4 has increased the number of presentations it is making in partner agency HQs and in relevant anti-corruption sector conferences and seminars (Chart 3)
- The new U4 website has been launched, with refreshed content and new features
- U4 has experimented with new ways of reaching their target audiences, including social media and online presentation tools
- The U4 newsletter continues to be published regularly, and remains a key channel for users to hear about new publications and upcoming courses and events

CHART 3: U4 STAFF PRESENTATIONS AT NON-U4 EVENTS
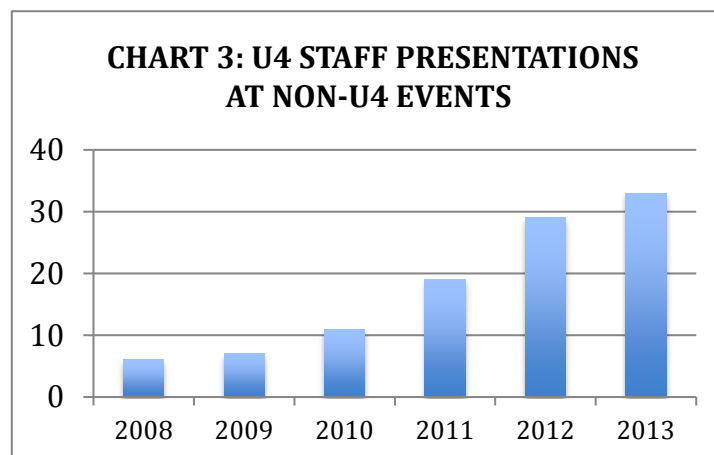
There has been limited progress in the following aspects of this objective:

- While U4 has undertaken more visits to donor agency HQs, there has been limited focus over the past two years on promoting U4 services within partner agencies. Take up of services in new partner agencies is growing slowly, and lead contacts in existing partner agencies sometimes have the impression that U4 does not want to promote additional demand for core services, due to short term supply constraints. As a result, the total number of staff in partner agencies using U4 services has not grown as planned over the past two years (see Chart 4).
- While the new website launched in 2012 brought in significant improvements in layout and ease of use, it also led to a drop of more than 50% in the number of people using the U4 website (see Box 2 for further details). While the number of users of the new website has been growing at 10-20% pa since 2012, it is from a much lower base, and total users have yet to recover to 2011 levels (see Chart 5)
- There has continued to be good work done on the layout and editing of U4 publications and website pages, and production of the regular newsletter, but there has been very little proactive promotion of the U4 website through online channels or building links with other intermediaries.

- The strategy commits U4 to finding out more about the users of its website, providing incentives for users to register and identify their interests. There has been no significant progress on this to date, with the total number of subscribers declining slowly from its 2011 peak of over 6000. U4 still has no means of identifying how many staff of partner agencies are using its website

CHART 4: STAFF IN DONOR AGENCIES USING U4 SERVICES	CHART 5: WEBSITE VISITORS Thousands of unique visitors

Note: Includes partner staff participating in U4 courses, workshops, and events, and users of the Helpdesk service. No allowance made for duplication of users.

The strategy set three specific targets for 2016 under this objective:

- *Double number of staff in donor agencies using U4 services*: The total number of staff in donor agencies using U4 services grew healthily in 2012, but has declined slightly since. Forecast usage in 2014 is still 20% up on 2011, but is not on track to reach the 2016 target.
- *At least 45,000 development practitioners regularly using the U4 website*: This target was set from a baseline of 16,000 regular users in 2011, with a forecast annual average growth rate of 20-25% pa (in line with the trend up to 2011). However, the source of data for this indicator has proved to be unreliable. Based on available surrogate indicators, it is likely that the number of regular users dropped in 2012 due to the website re-launch, and has been growing at around 15-20% pa since that time. (New tracking software is required to develop an accurate picture of progress on this issue.)
- *At least 475,000 downloads of U4 publications (including Helpdesk answers) per year*: This target was set from a baseline of 260,000 in 2011, with a forecast average annual growth rate of 13%. Due to changes in how publications and Helpdesk answers are accessed through the new website, many users now view Helpdesk answers online rather than downloading them. Taking both viewings and downloads together, there was a 47% drop in usage of Helpdesk answers in 2012 following the introduction of the new website, while downloads of U4 publications dropped by 5%. Following this setback, total downloads and viewings of publications and Helpdesk answers have been growing at 10-15% per year . This is in line with planned growth rates in the strategy, albeit from a much lower base.

Objective 2 Conclusions and Recommendations

While there have been some areas of good progress on this objective, overall progress in broadening the reach of U4 is well short of planned levels in the first half of the strategy. If U4 is to get close to planned levels by the end of the strategy, it will need to focus much more clearly on promotion and dissemination, both within partner agencies and in the wider development community.

Recommendations:
   a. *U4 should develop a dedicated specialist role focusing on promotion and dissemination of U4 resources and services, supported by the other members of the U4 team*
   b. *U4 should scale up its online promotional activities, including through active planned programmes of search engine optimisation, promoting online registration, developing online links with key intermediaries, developing newsletter audiences, and exploring effective ways to use social media*
   c. *U4 should develop a menu of support options for main contacts in partner agencies, to help them to promote U4 services and publications more widely in their agencies*
   d. *U4 should further develop its visibility at key anti-corruption conferences and events, especially through the new Director*
   e. *U4 should regularly monitor usage and download indicators at management meetings, backed by upgraded web tracking software*

BOX 2: LEARNING FROM THE WEBSITE RELAUNCH

The U4 website was redesigned and relaunched at the end of 2011. The new site updated the thematic pages in line with current U4 priorities, refreshed the layout and design of pages, and introduced some new features to improve ease of use. The new site was well received by most regular users, and the "bounce rate" (people leaving the site from the first page they landed on) reduced.

However, the updating of pages resulted in several very popular pages being dropped from the site (as they were no longer aligned to U4 current priorities), and the new page references and content meant that most continuing pages lost profile on leading search engines. Changes to the method of accessing Helpdesk answers (which are amongst the most popular pages on the site) improved ease of access, but also led to profile being lost on search engines and loss of links from other sites and citations.

As a result, there was a drop of over 50% in the number of people using the U4 website in 2012. While some of these will be casual users not amongst U4's priority target groups, it is likely that it included many people that U4 is seeking to reach

Future website changes need to be carefully planned to minimise loss of users, through:

- Designing page changes to minimise loss of profile on search engines
- Actively monitoring page hits and search engine profile when pages are changed, and taking prompt action to recover profile when required
- Retaining core pages on themes that U4 no longer prioritises, so that users can still find and access past publications and Helpdesk answers on these topics

This is likely to require U4 to have regular access to expertise and advice on search engine optimisation.

Strategic Objective 3: Diversify Opportunities for Learning

There has been good progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- Online courses have been rebalanced in line with changing demand, to focus more on specialist courses, and less on basic courses
- U4's approach to in-country workshops has been further developed, with improved selection processes, and preparatory visits to selected countries
- There are continuing high levels of satisfaction from users of Helpdesk services (Chart 6) and from participants in U4 courses and workshops (Chart 7)
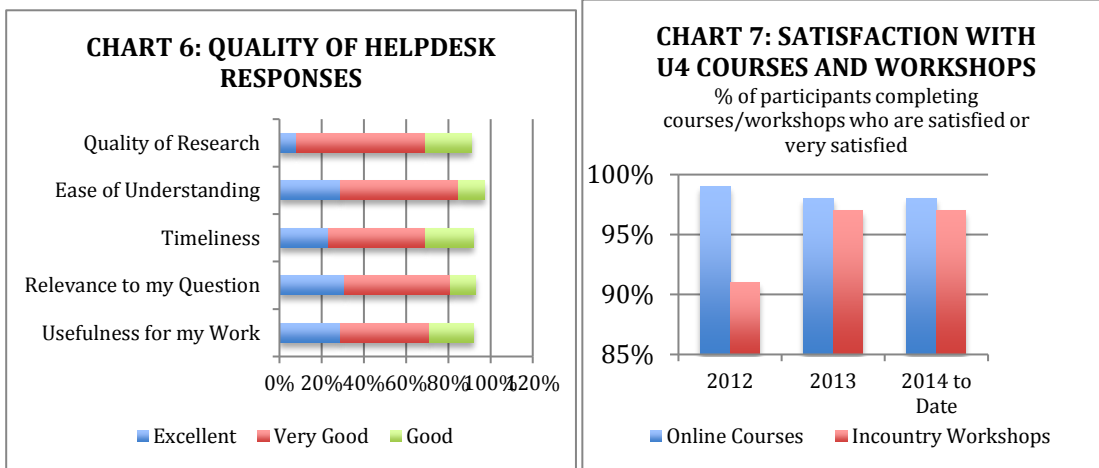

Source: User surveys 2011-2013. 100% = 52 responses   Source: U4 end of course surveys

There has been limited progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- Total participants in online courses have fallen by around 20% from their peak in 2012, with the reduction in basic courses not yet offset by growth in numbers on specialist courses – see Chart 8. (Two new specialist courses are starting in 2014, which should help to address this.)
- There has been no progress yet in developing shorter courses in different formats tailored to the needs of more senior staff in partner agencies. This gap remains a high priority for many of the partner agencies.
- Despite high levels of user satisfaction, the demand for the Helpdesk enquiry service remains flat, with some partner agencies making only very occasional use of the service. There has been very little promotion of the Helpdesk service, partly fuelled by concerns about short term capacity or budget constraints. Plans in the strategy to explore alternative forms of enquiry service to handle enquiries that do not need a fully documented response have not yet been taken forward. As a result, the planned growth in the enquiry service has not yet been achieved.
- There has been limited progress in exploring new funding and delivery models for in-country workshops, to enable more requests to be met.

CHART 8: PARTICIPANTS IN U4 ONLINE COURSES
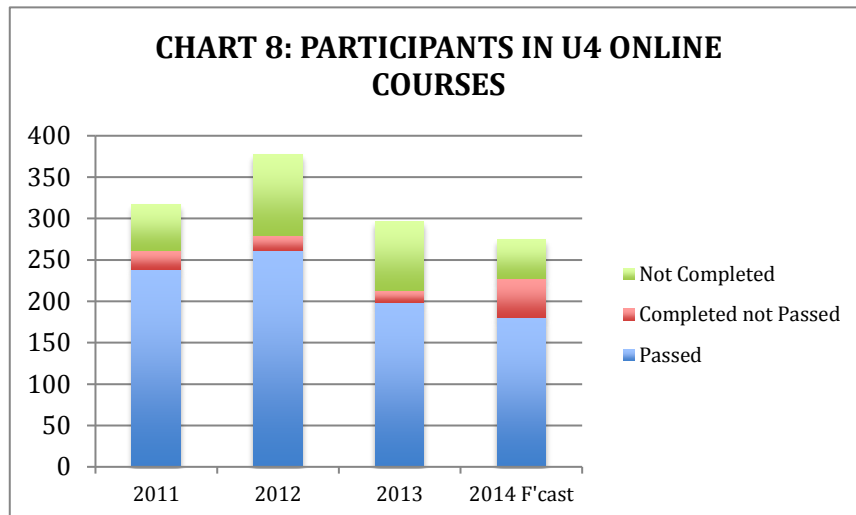
The strategy set two specific targets for 2016 under this objective:

- *At least 400 people successfully completing U4 online courses per year*: The number of participants passing courses rose in 2012, but has dropped by 30% over the past two years, to a forecast of 180 in 2014
- *To be responding to at least 100 Helpdesk enquiries a year*: Helpdesk enquiries rose in 2012, but have remained flat since, at around 35 per year

Objective 3 Conclusions and Recommendations:

U4 core services for partner agencies continue to generate high levels of user satisfaction. However, the portfolio will need to be refreshed and promoted more effectively to reach planned growth rates.

Recommendations:
   a. *U4 should continue to develop its portfolio of online courses aligned to core areas of expertise, and research the potential size of the market for each specialist course across partner agencies, to identify those that could be run more regularly*
   b. *U4 should develop and pilot shorter courses for senior managers in partner agencies. These are likely to be a different style of training from U4's established online courses*
   c. *U4 should support lead contacts in partner agencies to promote the Helpdesk service more widely, and work with TI to develop response options to handle enquiries that do not need a full written briefing in response*
   d. *U4 should explore and test alternative models for delivery and funding of in-country workshops*

Strategic Objective 4: Widen Opportunities for User Interaction

There has been good progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- There has been a significant expansion in U4 presentations and workshops in HQs of partner agencies, and in U4 leading workshops at wider sector events.
- There have been some good examples of U4 convening agencies on specific topics of current interest in the sector, which are expected to reach over 60 people in partner agencies in 2014 for the first time.

There has been limited progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- U4 has not yet developed a coherent approach or programme for convening seminars on topics of current policy interest
- U4 has not yet found a replicable model for promoting online discussion forums amongst users with shared interests

The strategy set two specific targets for 2016 under this objective:

- *To be convening face-to-face and online workshops and discussion forums in which at least 400 people a year are participating*: Participation at U4 convened events (excluding U4 engagement in events convened by others) has grown slowly over the past three years, and is expected to reach around 60 in 2014. However, this will need to be developed more actively in the remaining two years to reach the 2016 target.
- *To be seen by thought leaders and policymakers in development circles as a leading convenor for exploring current and topical issues relating to corruption, aid and development*: On the basis of the interviews for this review, U4 is not yet widely seen in this role.

Objective 4 Conclusions and Recommendations:

While U4 has taken some modest steps towards this goal, it has not yet developed a coherent programme of seminars and workshops bringing together policymakers from across donor agencies on topics of current interest.

Recommendations:
a. *U4 should, as part of its 2015 plan, develop a programme of 3-4 pilot workshops convened by U4, in locations and dates to suit targeted policymakers for each event, possibly co-hosted with partners who can help reach targeted participants and speakers, and inviting leading academics in the field to contribute. Topics to be set 3-6 months in advance, to focus on current live issues.*
b. *U4 should support each workshop with a U4 publication, drawing together the best available research and case studies on the topic. This may need to be handled separately from the mainstream publishing process, so that it can be scoped, commissioned, written, edited, and published within a 3-4 month period from the time the topic is selected*
c. *U4 should test alternative models for online webinars in core thematic areas in 2015 – linking in to emerging communities of practice (see recommendation a. under objective 1 above)*

Strategic Objective 5: Expand donor community participation in U4

There has been good progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- Denmark and Finland have been welcomed as new U4 partners
- There have been several good examples of specific U4 partners arranging with U4 to provide additional services, under a supplementary contract

There has been limited progress on the following aspects of this objective:

- The loss of Netherlands and Canada as U4 partners due to funding cuts in their aid budgets has offset the arrival of new members, resulting in no net growth in U4 members since 2011
- There has been limited engagement with targeted like-minded agencies to encourage them to get involved in U4 – U4 has yet to offer any paying places on online courses to non-partner donor agencies, as envisaged in the strategy.

The strategy set two specific targets for 2016 under this objective:

- *At least 10 donor agencies as full partners, and at least 2 as associate partners*: At outlined above, the number of partners has not yet grown beyond 2011 levels.
- *At least 4 other donor agencies participating in U4 courses and workshops*: Other donors have occasionally participated in in-country workshops, but not yet in online courses. U4 has not yet developed a coherent approach to working with donor agencies who are not partners.

Objective 5: Conclusions and Recommendations:

U4 continues to be highly valued by most of its partner agencies, and is attracting new participants. However, the loss of two existing partners due to aid budget cuts has set back U4's plans to expand donor community participation, and U4 has yet to find effective channels for prospective partners to experience U4 services. With a coordinated programme of outreach, there is still a good prospect of reaching the targets set for this goal by 2016.

Recommendations:
a. *U4 should build on its visits to donor agency HQs, setting up a regular programme of visits to each HQ, including discussions with senior management of the agency on current corruption challenges*
b. *U4 should identify 3-4 high priorities amongst potential partner agencies, and proactively develop their engagement with U4*
c. *U4 should offer up to 20% of places on online courses to selected donor agencies who are not partners, to be charged at full cost per place*

D. SUPPORTING ACTIONS

This section reviews progress on the key supporting actions needed to deliver the strategy.

1. Funding

The strategy envisages U4 continuing to be funded primarily from core contributions from partner agencies, and sets out a six point plan to develop income to fund the plans set out in the strategy. Key elements of progress to date are:

- Following the agreement of the new strategy, U4 partners agreed a 14% increase in core funding contributions from 2012, the first increase in three years. It was envisaged that the core contribution level would rise at least in line with inflation each year, but there has been no increase in 2013 or 2014
- U4 has moved to variable multi-year funding agreements with partners, with flexibility for additional core contributions. The phasing of different renewal dates

has led to a more stable funding position for U4, and three partners have been able to make additional core contributions to date
- In line with the strategy, U4 also negotiated some additional project funding in 2012, linked to additional services to specific partners. However, there has been no significant project funding in 2013 or 2014 to date.
- The loss of two partner agencies (Netherlands and Canada) in 2012 has been offset by Finland joining in 2012 and Denmark in 2014
- While a framework for Associate Partners has been developed and agreed as a means of engaging smaller donors, this has yet to be used
- While some agencies hosting in-country workshops have been able to supplement the budgets for in-country workshops, there has been no significant progress in finding other ways to fund the core costs
- No income has yet been received from non-partner donor agencies for places on online courses

The net effect of these changes is that U4 income has grown from €1.5m in 2011 to €1.8m in 2014, against a forecast in the strategy of €3.1m by 2014.

The limited growth in funding has constrained U4's ability to develop in line with the strategy.

The main areas of potential for growth in funding remain as outlined in the strategy:

- Attracting new full or associate partners, while retaining existing partners
- Increasing core partner contribution rates at least in line with inflation (subject to the timing of new multi-year contracts with specific partners)
- Additional contracts for projects or workshops for specific partners
- User charges to other donor agencies for access to online courses and other events

2. Organisation

While internal organisation is beyond the scope of this review, we noted two key organisational issues that have had a significant impact on progress to date on the strategy:

- For most of 2013 and 2014, U4 has been without a permanent Director. While the team has continued to deliver its core outputs to a high quality, the gap has contributed to slower progress on some of the new developments planned in the strategy, and some loss of visibility of U4 in the sector. The arrival of the new Director in September 2014 provides the opportunity for fresh momentum behind these areas.
- Over the last three years, U4 has been able to undertake a gradual expansion of its core team to support the development of additional areas of thematic expertise. However, there have been significant changes in the staff team each year (partly due to parental leave), which have sometimes made it difficult to maintain momentum on specific thematic programmes. This will remain a challenge in a small team.

G. PROGRESS AGAINST KEY SUCCESS INDICATORS

The strategy highlighted four key success indicators against which to track the progress of the strategy. These focused on the aspirations for growing outreach of U4 amongst its key target groups of users, on the basis that quality standards were already high. They have all been covered in the sections above, but for clarity are summarised here:

	Baseline 2011	Current F'cast 2014	Strategy F'cast 2014	Strategy Target 2016
KSI1: No. of donor agency staff using U4 services	450	540	900	1100
KSI2: No of regular users of U4 website*	16k	16-18k	32k	45k
KS3: No of downloads of U4 publications**	260k	137k	410k	465k
KS4: Annual income***	€1.5m	€1.8m	€3.1m	€3.7m

Notes:
* The main source of data to support this indicator has been discovered to be unreliable. The current forecast for 2014 is a rough estimate based on surrogate indicators
**Includes published Helpdesk answers, includes viewings as well as downloads
***Excluding funds carried over

After the setback to online usage in 2012, the results to date reflect some progress towards the 2016 outreach targets, but not yet at the expected rate.

These KSIs do not include quality indicators. The available data for the quality of U4 publications and services indicates continuing high quality of research and services throughout the last three years (see relevant sections for further details).

The U4 team developed a robust performance framework in 2012, building on the strategic plan indicators, but management information is not yet being collected on all indicators, and targets have not yet been set for many of these indicators over the strategy period. It is recommended that monitoring of these indicators should be embedded in the regular planning and management reporting processes within U4 (quarterly internally and annually for the Steering Committee).

H. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

U4 continues to deliver high quality research and services, valued by its partners, and has developed its areas of thematic expertise in line with changing needs in the sector.

However, it has not yet been able to achieve the planned levels of growth in reach of U4 services and resources amongst either partner agency staff or the wider audience of development practitioners.

While many of the original growth targets set for 2016 now look unrealistic to achieve in two years, there is a good prospect of achieving the planned rates of growth over the next two years, with focused attention on the key aspects of the strategy.

It is recommended that U4 should focus on six key actions to achieve this:

- Develop or engage in communities of practice amongst other (non-governance) specialists in donor agencies (see Section C1 for details)
- Develop a specialist role in the U4 team focused on promotion and dissemination of U4 resources and services (especially online), with support from all members of the U4 team and from lead contacts in partner agencies (see Section C2 for details)
- Refresh the current portfolio of U4 training and Helpdesk services to reach a wider audience within partner agencies (see Section C3 for details)
- Develop a programme of seminars on current high profile anti-corruption issues, to bring together policymakers from different donor agencies with leading experts (see Section C4 for details)
- Establish regular high level visits to existing partner agencies to strengthen links, and to targeted new partners to build their interest and engagement (see Section C5 for details)
- Include specific outreach goals and activities in annual plans, track progress in regular management reporting, and report on results at year end alongside existing output and quality indicators.

Taken together, these steps can enable U4 to have a much wider impact in helping donor agencies and development practitioners to tackle corruption issues that are inhibiting progress in international development.

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