

Civil society organizations continue to monitor the integrity of public procurement in Moldova and hold stakeholders accountable

Public associations "Localinvest", "Prospect", "Media-Guard" (in partnership with Ziarul de Gardă), "LEX XXI", "Centrul Contact Cahul" (in partnership with "Cahul 2030"), "AGER", "Părinți Solidari" and the media project "CU SENS" are the civil society organizations in Moldova that currently benefit from grants totaling over US\$185,000 to carry out monitoring of public procurement. A primary goal of the grants program is to make recommendations to relevant authorities to improve the integrity and efficiency of public procurement to support the appropriate use of public budgets, and the capacity for good governance.

"For us it is important that civil society representatives and journalists in Moldova monitor the procurement process and provide recommendations for improving communication with authorities and strengthening the integrity of public procurement", said Carolina Ungureanu, Deputy Director of IDIS "Viitorul" and manager of the project "Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement".

For his part, Hady Fink of PTF and overall Project Director, said *"The results of these monitoring projects can potentially have a meaningful impact on the transparency and fairness of public procurement through recommendations for authorities that will contribute to the improvement of the public procurement system and legislation".*

The organizations, selected on the basis of a competitive process, receive financial support between \$17,000 and \$25,000, as well as assistance and advice from and experts in the procurement monitoring process. Grant recipients implement projects that monitor procurement carried out by public authorities, such as municipalities and district councils, publicly owned enterprises, or other state entities. The results of the monitoring are reflected in journalistic articles, infographics, analytical materials, public discussions, and training events.

Thus, from the journalists of the media project "Cu Sens" we can find out through the video materials (Investigation: [Why don't I hear?](#)) why the procurement procedure for hearing implants is delayed, [who can challenge public tenders](#) and how, and [how you can access public tenders](#). *"Our main goal is to track public money and, through our work, to motivate authorities to be more accountable for the way they manage public resources. We have open databases and tools in Moldova that can be used for this purpose. We follow red flags and analyze purchases involving large amounts of money, including urgent or health-related purchases because they involve very large amounts of money",* stressed journalist Olga Ceaglei. At the same time, 15 young people from the country's regions learned how to promote transparency in public procurement, how the procurement system is built, how to identify corruption risks, how to check data and how to communicate these issues, as well as how to write articles in the field during the [summer camp "Public procurement in the eyes of young people" organized by the Media-Guard Association on 4-6 August](#). The Association has published two investigations, completed the documentation of the third one and published

two video explanations and is about to publish three more, such as (Video explainer: [How we check the purchases of state-owned enterprises](#) or [The companies of a district councilor from Călărași "subscribers" to the public budget](#)). *"State-owned enterprises do not publish procurement information so we have focused on monitoring procurement by state-owned enterprises linked to state dignitaries who win contracts with such enterprises and where conflicts of interest are attested. In mid-December we will have the final event, presenting the results and conclusions of our project"*, said Mariana Colun.

Also, from the six sets of materials produced by the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) this semester we can learn more about sectoral public procurement, such as [the low-value purchase of 22,000 1.5 l bottles of drinking water by "Apă - Canal Chișinău"](#), why the ["Regia Transport Electric" Municipal Enterprise concluded a procurement contract while an appeal was pending at the NACS or other cases related to the application of Law no. 74/2020](#). *"One of the problems identified is the lack of standard documentation in sectoral procurement, or the lack of the 'banned' list, or not conducting these types of procurement in the MTender system. At the same time, we organized a round table where we discussed the problems faced by contracting entities in the process of sectoral procurement, but also formulated recommendations for streamlining the legal framework"*, stressed Olga Diaconu, AGER project coordinator.

The Association "Părinți Solidari" has set out to keep an eye on public procurement carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research and nine other institutions subordinated to the Ministry. To this end, the organization has in recent months monitored 14 procurement procedures carried out by seven institutions, has monitored how information is published on the Ministry of Education's website, e.g. procurement plans and their evaluation, has published [two infographics](#) and conducted a [Facebook live broadcast](#) on public procurement carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research. *"The Ministry of Education continues to be non-transparent because it does not monitor how its institutions use public money,"* said the association's director, Ala Revenco.

At the regional level, the Association for Human Rights "LEX XXI" from Bălți municipality is proud of two analyses, such as the [City Hall of Bălți municipality vs. "Tehnologica Construct" LLC: what interests hide the procurement procedure for "Capital repair of the road part of Independenței street, Bălți municipality"?](#), two infographics, as well as a [public dialogue](#) on the energy crisis in the annual procurement plan in the municipality of Bălți. *"Some of the recommendations we have submitted are related to the notification of the contractor about breaches of the contract, the imposition of penalties or the request to include the operator in the ban list"*, said Daniela Răileanu, assistant in the association.

[Several press reports and articles](#), broadcasts, as well as public seminars on the conduct of public procurement in the Cimișlia district have been prepared by the public association "Prospect". It should be noted that through the project for the first time in the working group on public procurement conducted by the local District Council were included representatives of civil society, namely the public association "Prospect".

Asked by Sabine Engelhard, PTF Senior Advisor and Legal and Regulatory Expert how the authorities were persuaded to let them join the procurement working group, Andrei Bargan, director of Prospect, argued *"I think they were simply surprised at first and tried to justify their reluctance by saying that the working group proceedings are confidential. But we agreed to sign a confidentiality agreement and told them that we were monitoring procurement in accordance with the law on a project basis. When they understood our intention, they gradually accepted the situation. In general, people don't know what the working group's role is, what it does and how they can get involved."*

"The association is an excellent example of an open, solution-oriented, cooperative and constructive organization in dialogue with the authorities. These elements are also the key to success," noted Sabine Engelhard. She was also interested to find out whether contracting authorities are sanctioned for non-compliance with public procurement legislation or what dangers lurk in very small or unreasonably large contracts.

In the same context, Lars Jeurling, Senior Project Advisor, wanted to know from the participating organizations which are the most suitable tools for monitoring public procurement in Moldova, and also how effective the MTender system is for this purpose. At the same time, public procurements carried out by the District Council and the District Hospital of Rîșcani, especially the execution of contracts, are monitored within the project implemented by "[Localinvest](#)". The total value of procurement monitored by the association this quarter is almost 24 million lei. A product of the project is also the report [Repair as usual, only without sockets](#), on a procurement where only after the completion of repair works, the Rîșcani District Council realized that the electricity system had not been installed.

In Cahul district, [for example, public procurement is monitored by citizens and local media with the support of the Center "Contact-Cahul"](#). Thus, six public procurement procedures were monitored, a working group on procurement monitoring was created and eight articles were published in the local press, such as [When will the access road to Alexanderfeld village, Cahul district be repaired](#) or [Two health centers in Cahul district will be repaired by the company that built the ATLANT Stadium](#). "In recent months we have made a number of field visits together with members of the working group and we have also hired a technical expert to help us understand what is happening in the field of procurement of construction works. Another objective of our project is to raise public awareness of the need to get involved in the public procurement monitoring process," said the association's director Mihai Cucereanu.

For more information, please contact the project's press officer, Ana-Maria Veveriță: ana.veverita@viitorul.org/veverita.maria@gmail.com or phone (0 22) 221844.

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The project "[Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement](#)" is implemented by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", in partnership with the Partnership for Transparency Fund (USA). The project aims to support public procurement reforms in Moldova that will increase transparency and fairness in public procurement by empowering citizens to hold relevant institutions accountable.

[IDIS "Viitorul"](#) is an independent think tank established in 1993 that combines social, political and economic research with strong advocacy components. The institution conducts applied monitoring research on several areas: economics, social policy, EU policies, regional development, but also security and foreign policy risks.

[The Partnership for Transparency Fund \(PTF\)](#) is based in Washington DC and its mission is to promote innovative civil society-led approaches to improve governance, increase transparency, promote the rule of law and reduce corruption in developing and emerging countries. Since 2000, PTF has supported over 250 projects aimed at promoting NGO involvement in decisions, processes and laws that enforce transparency and accountability in public procurement.