

Public procurements, carried out by some authorities and contracting entities, under the supervision of several NGOs, which received funding for monitoring activities

Five civil society organizations from the Republic of Moldova will benefit from grants worth 115 thousand dollars for monitoring public procurement carried out by central and local public authorities of 1st and 2nd tier, as well as sectoral procurement. The grant contracts have been signed at the end of August, and the implementation of the projects started on 01.09.2023.

The organizations were selected as a result of the evaluation of the files submitted in the 2nd round of sub-grants, within a call for proposals launched in the framework of the "Strengthening integrity in public procurement" project, implemented by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", in partnership with the US organisation Partnership for Transparency Fund. The purpose of the project is to support the reform of the public procurement sector in the Republic of Moldova, and to increase the transparency and equity of public procurement procedures by strengthening the capacity of citizens to make the relevant institutions accountable.

The selected organizations are the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER); Association of Independent Press (API); Transparency International-Moldova (TI-Moldova); The Association for Human Rights Lex XXI" (ADO Lex XXI) NGO and the "Părinți Solidari " Association. The project proposals have been evaluated based on evaluation criteria assessing their relevance, impact, expertise, and the efficiency of the budgeted resources, all of which were published in the Funding Guide of the call for proposals.

The organizations have undertaken to monitor the public procurement carried out by contracting authorities/entities such as the General Directorates of Social Assistance in the Northern regions and those within the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection; local authorities involved in the implementation of the "European Village" National Program; municipal departments and enterprises of the Chisinau City Hall, the five Education Directorates within the General Education Directorate of Chisinau Municipality, etc.

The selected organizations, after carrying out the analyses, journalistic investigations, and monitoring, will formulate and submit recommendations to contracting authorities/entities, decision-makers, and control/law/anti-corruption bodies, as appropriate. At the end of the project, the selected organizations will also prepare monitoring reports.

Carolina Ungureanu, project coordinator, vice director of IDIS "Viitorul": *"We are glad that several non-governmental organizations from all over the territory of the Republic of Moldova, for.. ex. Șoldănești, Bălți, Chișinău, Orhei, Ungheni, Criuleni, Basarabasca, Cimișlia, etc., applied for the second round of our sub-granting program. It was difficult to select the winners because all the applications were good, and interesting and included proposals for monitoring activities that met our expectations. We expect to work productively with the five organizations selected to monitor public procurement at the national, central, local (APL level I and APL level II), sectoral levels, using a variety of tools, and have results and*

recommendations for decision-makers in view of supporting the reform of the public procurement sector in the Republic of Moldova, in order to increase transparency, efficiency and responsibility in the use of public money".

Lilia Zaharia-Cravenco, the executive director of TI-Moldova: *"The field of public procurement was and is a problematic one in the Republic of Moldova. For several years, civil society organizations, together with investigative journalists, have been trying to bring to the surface the irregularities and deviations resorted to by some public authorities, but also by some economic agents, who often work in collusion with the contracting authorities to commit illegalities in the public procurement process. We decided to apply to this project to monitor the procurement procedures carried out by Chişinău City Hall and municipal enterprises. In our materials, we would like to see if there are situations when some public procurement is reported as a success of one official or another, especially since we are in an election year, the local elections are close, and some candidates could use public money in this way so as to polish his or her image".*

Maria Covalciuc, executive director of AGER: *"We applied for the second round of grants to have continuity in the activity we started. In the first project, we sought to make a recommendation for the amendment of Law 74/2020, namely on the utilities sector. This bill already exists at the Ministry of Finance, and along the way, we will see the related documents that will emerge and react to them if necessary. There are still things in the field that require or attention. Therefore we have proposed to continue this effort, within this project, in such a way that we have tangible results".*

Ala Revenco, president of the "Părinți Solidari" Association: *"In the municipality of Chişinău, the volumes of purchases at the level of education directorates are very high, only on small value purchases more than 10 million lei are granted per year, and to make more than 100 small value purchases within each directorate, and small value purchases often do not have the necessary transparency, I have seen how purchases are divided, how several contracts of small value are concluded with the same economic agents, in a short period of time, and it is obvious that these procedures are abused to favor someone. Our first round of monitoring had a general character, and, as we detected this problem now we want to observe how the new regulation on small-value purchases, which has been approved, will be respected. We want to see what illegalities we can detect regarding the conduct of small value purchases and how we can improve this area".*

Petru Macovei, executive director of API: *"Monitoring public procurement is a very important process for the democratic development of the country and the fight against corruption in the country. We previously implemented projects regarding the monitoring of public procurement, through which we tried to coagulate the efforts of journalists, and local activists in monitoring. For example, we wanted to see how public procurement contracts are fulfilled in different fields. This project will be a continuation of our previous efforts. The "European Village" National Program is a very big investment and effort by the government of the Republic of Moldova and its donors. We believe that is important that the funding provided*

for the development of communities in the country must be transparent. The contracting procedures of service providers must also be transparent. Through the planned monitoring, through the investigations that will be written, through the articles promoting the principle of transparency in the activity of LPAs, we will contribute to this".

Diana Grosu, president of Association for Human Rights Lex XXI" (ADO Lex XXI) NGO:
"Our organization is very dedicated to the existing problems in the public procurement and transparency sector in the north of the Republic of Moldova. Through our activity, we contribute to the reduction of corruption in the field of public procurement, as we keep an eye on public money and monitor, and hold public authorities accountable. We applied for the second round of grants against the background of these circumstances. We have good results from the first round and we want to continue. Until now, only the municipality of Bălți was in our focus, in the second round we will look at the northern districts".

The first round of sub-grants took place between April 2022 and June 2023, with eight projects being implemented and financed. The second round will be implemented between September 2023 and July 2024. During the competition, two information sessions were organized, where the Funding Guide and the objectives of the grant program were presented in detail and answers to the participants' questions were provided. In total, 15 applications have been submitted (3 - North; 10 - Center; 2 - South).

The „[Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement](#)” project is implemented by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) Viitorul, in partnership with Partnership for Transparency. 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 in several areas: economics, social policy, EU policies, regional development, security, and foreign policy risks.

[Partnership for Transparency \(PTF\)](#) 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.