

## The Coalition of Monitors in Public Procurement had its Second Working Session

On Friday, September 29, 2023, the Coalition of Monitors in public procurement had its second working session. The Coalition was created by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) Viitorul as part of the Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement in Moldova project, implemented in partnership with Partnership for Transparency. At the meeting, members of the coalition addressed several topics, themes, and issues in the field of public procurement, including the National Programme on Development of Public Procurements System for 2023-2026, transparency and reporting surrounding low-value purchase, and bid rigging.

**Diana Enachi**, the procurement expert at IDIS Viitorul, spoke about the National Programme on Development of Public Procurements System for 2023-2026, which was approved in August 2023. She said, *“this is the most important strategic document in the field of public procurement and has been expected since 2020. It is welcome because it shows that the government has a vision, plans, and goals. It is an ambitious but necessary program. On the one hand, representatives of civil society and the government can work together to identify ways to collaborate and implement planned actions. On the other hand, it is necessary for representatives of civil society to monitor the implementation of the program, its progress at its different stages, what is being achieved, and what is not. If even sixty percent of this program is achieved, we will finally see some results from the public procurement reforms that began in 2016 but which are still only a little bit visible.”*

**Ala Revenco**, president of the Părinți Solidari Association (in English, “Parents in Solidarity”), analyzed how low value public procurements are made through the MTedner system under the regulation in force since July 1, 2023. Revenco said, *“we have seen a fifty percent increase in the thresholds for low-value public procurement and we have seen new ideas and methods for conducting low-value public procurement. It seems like transparency is improving, but there is still much to be done. The good thing about this regulation is that it requires that small value purchases be carried out through SIA RSAP MTender, which makes them a bit more transparent. Părinți Solidari analyzed the low-value purchases carried out by the Education Department of the municipality of Chisinau and noticed that the new regulation did not change the behavior of the authorities. It is good to see more bidders for these low-value public procurements, but it remains difficult to extract automated data on low-value public procurements for civil society representatives.”*

**Olga Diaconu**, project coordinator at the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER), presented some examples of anti-competitive practices in the field of public procurement. Diaconu said, *“during the monitoring we at AGER carried out, we identified instances where contracting authorities described specifications which were so ambiguous as to exclude some contractors from the competition. At the same time, we identified not only some instances in which the contract was awarded to contractors who submitted a non-compliant offer, but also instances of anti-competitive agreements and bid rigging in public procurements. Although we notified several state institutions about these anti-competitive practices, the institutions did not consider these events notable enough to investigate, despite the fact that they clearly indicated bid rigging. The*

*authorities passed their responsibility for investigation from one to the other and have not determined whether or not bid rigging was actually involved.”*

**Carolina Ungureanu**, project coordinator and deputy director of IDIS Viitorul, addressed the members of the Coalition, stating, *“the agenda for the Coalition’s discussions can include topics that you consider necessary and important to discuss as well as items that need to be clarified. One of the objectives of the coalition is to use the experience and expertise that we have developed during our monitoring efforts to identify common problems so that we can later bring that knowledge to meetings of the National Public Procurement Platform, a forum that includes not only civil society representatives but also decision-makers. These discussions will add value to the field of public procurement.”*

The [Coalition of Monitors in Public Procurement](#) is composed of civil society organizations, journalists, experts, and independent monitors from the Republic of Moldova who joined together in a common effort to monitor public procurement. The Coalition will be active until the summer of 2024, with the possibility of extension with the consent of the members.

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*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.*