

## Addressing the system of professionalization and certification of public procurement specialists at the fifth meeting of the National Platform for Public Procurement

April 10, 2025: The members of the National Platform for Public Procurement (NPPP) met for the fifth working session, where they discussed the draft regulation on the certification of specialists in public procurement. The event was held in partnership with the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova, in the framework of the project "Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement", implemented by IDIS "Viitorul", in collaboration with the US-based Partnership for Transparency (PTF).

**Ana Luca**, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, said at the opening of the meeting that the regulation on the certification of specialists in the field of public procurement has been eagerly anticipated by civil society. To meet these expectations, she added, it was advocated that the draft law should be presented to civil society before being approved by the government. The idea was to let all actors in the field of public procurement receive and present constructive and qualitative feedback to improve the regulation. "The recommendations coming from you will help us to update this regulation before submitting it for endorsement. Also by then we need to develop the Study Plan for certification. Our target is that this year, the draft regulation will be endorsed by the Government, and that it will enter into force on January 1, 2026. We plan to certify 250 specialists in 2026. It's an ambitious figure, but we need to train professionals to conduct fair public procurement," said Ana Luca.

**Carolina Ungureanu**, deputy director of IDIS "Viitorul", project manager, thanked the Ministry of Finance for its openness in cooperating with civil society to discuss important reforms in the field of public procurement. Carolina Ungureanu recalled that even before the start of the NPPP sessions IDIS "Viitorul" has collected data on a number of challenges faced by the procurement system, among which was the issue of professionalization and certification of specialists in the field. According to Carolina Ungureanu, the need for professionalization and certification system in public procurement IDIS "Viitorul" has been requested by civil society since the previous reform strategy of the sector, and it is additionally a topic that is included in the European Commission report, SIGMA report, and MAPS report, among others. "In a decentralized system, where there are many contracting authorities, this segment needs to be strengthened in order to have use of public money in the national interest, with respect for several principles, including transparency," said Carolina Ungureanu.

**Hady Fink**, Project Director of the Partnership for Transparency (PTF), on a working visit to the Republic of Moldova, emphasized that the idea of creating the NPPP was not part of the project from the beginning, but emerged along the way. In his opinion, the current stage of the platform demonstrates important achievements of the project and the implementation team. "The contribution of the Ministry of Finance is essential for the success of the platform and public procurement reforms in the Republic of Moldova," said Hady Fink.

During the event, **Lilia Radul**, senior consultant of the Public Procurement Directorate of the Ministry of Finance, presented the draft regulation on professionalization and certification in procurement, which aims to make the use of public funds more efficient through a well-trained network of

specialists in the field, by: organizing the certification mechanism, the certification procedure, the work of the certification committee, the criteria for admission to the program, the evaluation, the issuance and withdrawal of certificates, etc. "Certification would be carried out in two stages: the training program and the knowledge assessment exam. The program is organized by the Training Center designated by the Ministry of Finance, which issues a certificate of participation in the program. The Ministry of Finance will approve the list of trainers of the program," said Lilia Radul.

IDIS "Viitorul" experts Diana Enachi and Viorel Pîrvan presented an analytical note that assesses the need for a professionalization and certification system in public procurement, the existing policies at the national and international level, the analysis of practices in Croatia, Austria, and Malta, the solutions for the certification system to be implemented in the Republic of Moldova to meet the needs of qualified specialists and professional expertise in procurement, as well as best European practices.

**Viorel Pîrvan** recalled the various attempts in recent years to set up a professionalization and certification mechanism in procurement, that were ultimately not successful. According to Viorel Pîrvan, studies show that the lack of professional skills in procurement is considered to be a bigger problem than corruption. Thus, 83% of wasted resources in public procurement are due to lack of professionalization and only 17% to corruption. In his opinion, professionalization and certification is necessary in order to provide the public procurement system with qualified staff, as well as to carry out efficient and effective procurement. "The benefits of adopting such a system will increase transparency, ethics, strengthen accountability, and promote innovation and sustainability in the public sector," Viorel Pîrvan said.

**Diana Enachi** underlined that the public procurement system in the Republic of Moldova operates in a decentralized framework, involving more than 2,800 contracting authorities that carry out public procurement procedures. However, the lack of qualified staff and of complete official data on the number and competences of public procurers hinders the efficient management of this system. In terms of European best practice, Croatia, for example, has introduced certification in public procurement with European integration. The training program for certification includes a 50-hour course, followed by a certificate valid for three years, which needs to be renewed through additional courses. The results are remarkable: more than 5,000 certified purchasers, of whom about 35 are highly professional and highly reputed experts whose services are in demand by the authorities.

In terms of solutions for the implementation of an effective certification system, the following were listed: establishing the set of competences for procurement specialists, following the ProcurCompEU European Competence Framework, official recognition of the profession of procurement specialist, setting up a working group, including on the NPPP platform, to develop the certification mechanism, including a civil society representative in the certification commission, creating a public register of certified specialists, and linking procurement certification with the system of recruitment, evaluation and promotion in the public sector, among others.

During the meeting, the members of the NPPP came up with a number of recommendations, which are to be integrated into a note with proposals. NPPP members recommended, among other things, to liberalize the training process by accrediting several educational institutions or training centers that will meet the required conditions. Also, ensuring the transparency of the list of questions for the

certification exam, the involvement of civil society in the composition of the certification committee, dropping the requirement to demonstrate professional experience in order to be certified, and setting up a mechanism for validation/recognition of international certifications in procurement.

[The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives \(IDIS\) "Viitorul"](#), in collaboration with the US-based [Partnership for Transparency \(PTF\)](#), launched the National Platform for Public Procurement (NPPP) in December 2023 within the framework of the project "[Increasing the Integrity of Public Procurement](#)". The NPPP is a national discussion forum, serving as a permanent communication and dialogue mechanism for all actors in the public procurement sector: policy, oversight, regulatory, contracting authorities/entities, economic operators, and civil society representatives. NPPP members represent public authorities and civil society organizations interested in the functioning and sustainability of the national public procurement system.

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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 American organization 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, and security and foreign policy risks.*

*[Partnership for Transparency \(PTF\)](#) is based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to promote innovative civil society-led approaches to improving governance, increasing transparency, promoting the rule of law, and reducing 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.*