

ANNUAL OPERATION REPORT

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2015

December, 2015

SUMMARY

The year 2015 is the eleventh year in the operation of our organization and a third of the implementation of the current five-year strategy (2013-2017). The dynamic operation from the last year continued under with the same pace throughout 2015, as confirmed by the following summary results:

- » 15 research studies conducted;
- » 330 tender procedures monitored;
- » 25 training events organized and implemented;
- » over 300 microenterprises, local civil servants, civil activists and journalists trained;
- » 5 publications printed (reports, manuals, analyses and policy papers) in total circulation of 1,500 copies;
- » More than 10,000 downloads of CCC's reports, recommendations, researches and handbooks from our website www.ccc.org.mk;
- » around hundred specific measures recommended and aimed to enable more transparent operation and reduce space for corruptive practices;
- » direct cooperation established with more than 40 municipalities and 300 local state institutions country-wide;
- » 2 regional centers for support of microenterprises in the East and Vardar regions provided day-to-day assistance for more than 300 microenterprises and facilitated their entry on the market of public procurements;
- » more than 100 news articles published in numerous media outlets throughout the country, covering our activities and results thereof;
- » results and recommendations from monitoring of public procurements copied and quoted in relevant reports of several international organizations (EU, SIGMA, etc.).

In 2015, CCC continued its activities on regular monitoring of public procurements in the country, indicating shortcomings and problems in the system of public procurements and proposing measures aimed at reducing possibilities for malpractices and corruption. These activities were implemented within USAID Civil Society Project.

The proved methodology applied by CCC in monitoring of public procurements for the past seven years served as basis for implementation of similar activities at regional level, i.e. within the project on monitoring of public procurements in the Western Balkan countries that are candidates for EU membership.

Moreover, as part of its work in the field of public procurements, CCC intensified activities aimed at facilitating access of small and microenterprises to public procurements, as precondition for reviving local economic development in the country, but also with regard to recommendations made by the European Union related to implementation of such measures by Member States, as well as by candidate countries for EU membership.

In the field of media, which is another key area of operation for CCC, 2015 was an important year due to the series of activities aimed at strengthening investigative journalism and cooperation between the media and non-governmental organizations in attainment of the shared role they play in society. In addition, CCC continued to provide regular assistance to journalists in exercising their right to free access to public information, as a tool for citizen information of better quality. In that regard, CCC initiated a series of research studies targeting important phenomena, issues and areas that have been developed as part USAID's Program on Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia, results of which are published on the website www.prizma.mk and will be available for further use by journalists and non-governmental organization.

In addition, a series of data bases and sets have been prepared to be published on organization's new web portal opendata.mk which will be functional next year.

In 2015, CCC's three year program 2015-2018 was awarded with an institutional support within Civica Mobilitas program, financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), a implemented by NIRAS, MCIC and SIPU. The institutional support is focused on organizational development based on self-evaluation and roadmap for the next three years.

In 2015, CCC implemented activities as part of five projects, financially supported by: USAID Macedonia, the European Union, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and realized in partnership with dozen non-governmental organizations from the country, the region and the EU.

Detailed information about the projects, partners, implementation, activities, results and achievements can be obtained on the following websites: www.ccc.org.mk, www.zabavki.mk and www.balkantenderwatch.eu.

VISION OF CCC

Center for Civil Communications is an established societal factor in the democratization of the Macedonian society, better informing of the citizens and transparent and accountable governance.

MISSION OF CCC

Center for Civil Communications develops and improves communications among all societal factors in Macedonia in relation to processes of broader meaning, as well as monitors, analyses and strengthens societal processes in the country and in the region related to anticorruption and good governance, the media and economic development.

ABOUT US

Center for Civic Communications was established in April 2005 as non-governmental, non-profit and non-partisan association of citizens. In its ten years of operation, CCC focused its work on two groups of interrelated activities: (1) monitoring of state institutions and on that basis, recommending measures and policies to improve their performance and reduce possibilities for corruption; and (2) promoting ability of journalists and the special role of media and non-governmental organizations in the fight against corruption.

For that purpose, CCC has drafted and proposed several hundreds of specific recommendations for measures aimed at promoting the legislation and practices for more transparent, more accountable and more responsible operation on the part of central and local level authorities. More than half of recommended measures have been implemented, while around ten recommendations for specific legal changes have been adopted and integrated in the applicable legislation. CCC has trained more than 250 journalists from national and local media outlets on investigating and reporting corruption cases and more than 500 representatives from non-governmental organizations and local state institutions.

Representatives from CCC regularly attend workshops and expert groups tasked to develop strategies and measures in the field of anticorruption, but also in other fields of operation where CCC holds relevant expertise. To present, tens of research studies and manuals have been published and concern operation of stakeholders in all fields of operation of CCC.

CCC's activities are primarily targeted at employees in state institutions and bodies at central and local level, journalists, businessmen and their associations, representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as citizens at local and central level, as final beneficiaries of our work.

CCC staff is comprised of eight employees and several standing associates – experts in CCC's fields of operation, and we regularly cooperate with other experts (domestic, regional or international). CCC established two regional centers in Veles and Stip for the purpose of supporting microenterprises in the East and Vardar regions, in cooperation with local partner organizations.

CCC executive and management bodies include: the Assembly, the Executive Board and President of the Association.

PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Monitoring of Public Procurements (2008 - 2016), financially supported by USAID Macedonia within the USAID Civil Society Project, in partnership with FOSM

Direct monitoring of public procurements results in identification of main shortcomings in implementation of tender procedures and recommendation of specific measures aimed at addressing the problems, irrational public spending and narrowing the space for corruptive practices.

In the course of 2015:

- » 330 tender procedures organized and implemented by state institutions at national and local level were monitored.
- » Five reports from monitoring of public procurements were published and contained overview of the situation, identified shortcomings and space for malpractices and corruption in public procurements.
- » More than 80 specific measures were recommended for implementation with a view to improve the system of public procurements in the country, irrespective whether it is matter of legislative changes or changes in implementing practices.
- » The Index of Rationality was developed, which includes comparison of prices at which different institutions have procured same goods or services, based on 10 goods/services and relevant prices thereof attained by more than hundred state institutions. This report identified significant deviations in prices, thus indicating the need for more cost-effective public spending by means of more efficient procurement procedures, more comprehensive market research and better cooperation and communication among state institutions.
- » Two analyses were developed in the field of legal protection in public procurements.

USAID Project for Microenterprise Access to Public Procurements (2012 - 2017), financially supported by USAID Macedonia and implemented in partnership with the "Focus" Foundation from Veles and "EHO" from Stip

Facilitation of entry and participation of microenterprises on the market of public procurements contributes to their sustainable development and better utilization of their potential for creating jobs, growth and innovations.

In the course of 2015:

- » 311 microenterprises from 28 municipalities in the East, Vardar, Northeast and Southeast regions benefited from more than 900 assistances for participation in public procurement procedures, which resulted in signing of over 300 public procurement contracts in total value of more than 2 million EUR (32% of microenterprises assisted are run/owned by women).
- » 15 training events were organized for 195 microenterprises' representatives and incapacitated them to participate in public procurements.
- » Revised edition of the Recommendations for contracting authorities on facilitating microenterprises' easier access to public procurements was developed and broadly distributed, being previously jointly agreed and accepted.
- » 7 workshops were organized with 100 representatives from contracting authorities across Macedonia concerning the measures to be implemented for greater participation of microenterprises in public procurements.
- » Specially designated website www.zanabavki.mk uploaded and hosted annual plans for public procurements, grouped per business activity, of almost 300 local institutions from 36 municipalities in four regions, as well as almost 3,500 procurement notices announced by these institutions.
- » A public policy brief has been produced with an state-of-affairs analysis and recommendations for improvements of the implementation of the public procurement in the country.

Towards Efficient Public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (Potential) Candidate Countries (2013 - 2016), Regional IPA Project financially supported by the EU and implemented in partnership with five non-governmental organizations from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Slovakia

Enhancing civil society's pressure on governments in the Western Balkans to eliminate weaknesses in the process of creating efficient system of public procurements, to be accountable for public spending and to establish communications with stakeholders and the public, for the purpose of increasing understanding of EU's requirements in the field of public procurements.

In the course of 2015:

- » Detailed comparative analysis was conducted on case studies related to monitoring of public procurements in the Western Balkans, i.e. (potential) candidate countries for EU membership (Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- » Revised edition was developed for the analysis of scope of public procurements, legislative and institutional framework, assessment of corruption-related risks, recommendations for improvements and comparison of practices in EU Member States for each country participating in the project.
- » Shadow report for the state-of-affairs on the public procurement was prepared, along with the recommendations for measures that need to be taken for more effective public procurement system.
- » A series of trainings and workshops were organized for CCC staff, as well as for country's leading journalists and CSOs representative for and assessment of the purposefulness in public procurement.

Investigative Journalism and Cooperation between Media and Civil Society, USAID's Program on Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia (2013 - 2016), implemented in partnership with BIRN Macedonia and TV magazine "KOD"

Improving cooperation between journalists and civil society by means of joint debates and workshops and contributing to more independent investigative journalist stories through grant-making and mentorship for investigative journalists.

In the course of 2015:

- » Researches were conducted and published on the following issues:
 - Ranking of top 100 tenders in the country for 2014;
 - Financial results of the state public enterprises for 2014;
 - Ranking all 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje by the number of employees, budgets and salaries share;
 - Ranking of the cities by the quality of the environment;
 - Ranking of the municipalities by their public procurement spending for 2014.
- » Support was provided for ten journalists (financial and mentorship) for developing their investigative stories on topics of broad societal interest.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the previous project activities during 2015 the following major activities and achievements were realized:

- » Part of the CCC's findings on current state in public procurement and recommendations for improving the overall public procurement system were included in the so-called White Book of the Foreign Investors Council within the Economic Chamber of Macedonia for doing business conditions in the country for 2014;
- » Detailed proposals for amendments to the Law on Public Procurement were prepared and submitted to the country's authorities;
- » The implementation of the CCC's recommended measures for contracting authorities to publish a series of important documents to improve transparency in public procurement within the implementation of the Action Plan 2014-2016, Initiative for Open Government Partnership has started;
- » The findings of the CCC's monitoring of public procurement were cited on the plenary sessions of the Parliament during discussion about the amendments to the legislation in the field of public procurement;
- » CCC contributed with its proposals, most of which were accepted, in the creation of the new National Programme for Prevention and Repression of Corruption (2016-2019), organized by the State Commission Against Corruption;
- » Some of the most significant problems indicated by CCC, as well as proposals for overcoming those problems in various areas of CCC's work were recognized and included in reports of significant domestic and international institutions.