

ANNUAL OPERATION REPORT

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2014

December, 2014

SUMMARY

The year 2014 marked the organization's tenth jubilee and the second implementing year under the current strategy covering the period 2013-2017. Dynamic operation from the last year continued under with the same pace throughout 2014, as confirmed by the following summary results:

- » 10 research studies conducted;
- » 340 tender procedures monitored;
- » around 30 training events organized and implemented;
- » more than 450 microenterprises, local civil servants, civil activists and journalists trained;
- » 14 publications printed (reports, manuals, analyses and policy papers) in total circulation of 4,050 copies;
- » around hundred specific measures recommended and aimed to enable more transparent operation and reduce space for corruptive practices;
- » several recommendations for legal changes adopted and integrated in the legislation governing public procurements;
- » direct cooperation established with more than 40 municipalities and 300 local state institutions country-wide;
- » 2 regional centres 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 journalist 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 2014, 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. The project under which monitoring of public procurements is implemented (USAID Civil Society Project) was extended until 30 August 2016.

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, 2014 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 will be developed as part USAID's Program on Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia, results of which will be published on the website www.prizma.mk and will be available for further use by journalists and non-governmental organization. This project was extended until December 2016.

By the end of 2014, retreat workshop was organized with the employees and served the purpose of assessing the method and dynamics of implementing the Strategic Plan, and preparations for submission of application for an institutional grant on the open call announced by Civica Mobilitas.

In 2014, CCC implemented activities as part of four projects, financially supported by three donors, those being: USAID Macedonia, the European Union and the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, and realized in partnership with nine 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 a societal actor with track records in democratization of the Macedonian society, transparent and accountable governance and better information for the citizens.

MISSION OF CCC

Center for Civil Communications develops and improves communications among all societal factors in Macedonia in relation to processes of broader meaning. It monitors, analyses and strengthens societal processes in the country and in the region, especially those 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 eight 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 seven 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 centres 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 - 2015), 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 2014:

- » More than 300 tender procedures organized and implemented by state institutions at national and local level were monitored.
- » Eight 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 11 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.
- » Three analyses were developed in the field of public procurements: two of them concern appeal procedures and one comparative analysis related to legal protection in public procurements.
- » Policy brief was drafted for improving legal protection in public procurements.

USAID Project for Microenterprise Access to Public Procurements (2012 - 2015), 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 2014:

- » 312 microenterprises from 36 municipalities in the East, Vardar, Northeast and Southeast regions benefited from more than 1,300 assistances for participation in public procurement procedures, which resulted in signing of 180 public procurement contracts in total value of more than 1 million EUR.
- » 10 training events were organized for 100 microenterprises and incapacitated them to participate in public procurements.
- » Revised edition of the Manual for microenterprises to participate in public procurements was developed and broadly distributed.
- » Revised edition of the Catalogue of companies with data about their business activity, location and contact information for more than 300 companies participating in the project was prepared and distributed.
- » 14 workshops were organized with 232 representatives from contracting authorities across Macedonia concerning the measures to be implemented for greater participation of microenterprises in public procurements.
- » More than 300 local institutions were presented with recommendations on facilitating access of microenterprises to public procurements, which have been jointly agreed and accepted.
- » 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 3,000 procurement notices announced by these institutions.
- » Annual conference on public procurements was organized with 90 representatives from microenterprises from the East, Vardar, Northeast and Southeast regions, to discuss problems faced by these companies and manners to address them.
- » Experiences were exchanged about measures that guarantee greater participation of microenterprises in public procurements with EU Member States and countries in the neighbourhood.

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 2014:

- » 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.
- » National conference was organized under the title "Public Procurements in Macedonia between the Reality, the Law and New EU Directives"

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, as the leading organization, SCOOP 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 2014:

- » Results were published from the monitoring of manners in which the media reported about the most important issues of broad societal interest identified by NGOs and journalists.
- » Series of workshops were organized with journalists and representatives from non-governmental organization to improve their mutual cooperation.
- » Support was provided for ten journalists (financial and mentorship) for developing their investigative stories on topics of broad societal interest.
- » Research was conducted and published on economic possibilities of the regions in Macedonia.