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Promoting Transparency and Accountability

in Public Administration in North Macedonia



ProTRACCO

Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

EuropeAid/139891/DH/SER/MK

INTEGRITY CAMPAIGN

EU- funded Project “Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration of North Macedonia” (ProTRACCO)



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Project implemented by:



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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

“INTEGRITY CAMPAIGN”

ProTRACCO Project

I. Executive Summary

Integrity campaign is the activity planned within the ProTRACCO Project Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration, EuropeAid/139891/DH/SER/MK, financed by the European Union.

The Integrity Campaign has two clients, beneficiaries – State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (hereinafter SCPC) and the Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (hereinafter APRFAPI).

The Communication strategy related to Integrity Campaign is based on the requirements of the Project, the findings from the three surveys executed within the Project, which define the perception of the respondents about the Integrity, Anti-corruption, Whistleblowing, Protection of Whistleblowers and the Right for free access to public information. At the same time the communication strategy and action plan are planned to promote among the relevant stakeholders the outcomes and activities of the project “Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration of North Macedonia” (ProTRACCO) and their sustainable use within and beyond project’s duration by the key beneficiaries.

The reports of the EU, from NGOs, and the activities overtaken by both beneficiaries, does not mirror the perception of the public which is lower in general. Thereby, the Integrity campaign is directed to emphasize the role of the beneficiaries within general public, state owned companies and public employees, business community, civil society by rising awareness of the importance of the ethical conduct, as well as to promote the available tools and procedures to prevent and report corruption and conflict of interest, as well as utilizing the right of free access to public information.

Communication Strategy for Integrity campaign is elaborated into 3 pillars: 1st pillar refers to campaigns activities that cover both beneficiaries State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information at the same time; 2nd pillar covers the activities to be led by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption; 3rd pillar covers the activities to be led by the Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information

The integrated communication approach is foreseen for the entire Integrity campaign, delivering same direction of messages, within all communication channels and towards all target audiences. The communication is integrating all communication channels aiming to strengthen the messages and increase the reach to the target groups.

II. Landscape

For delivering the right communication strategy on the topic of Integrity, connected to corruption, whistle-blowing, as well as the mechanism for free access to public information it's essential to have in consideration the entire environment in society, as well as the actual context to be communicated. The desk research was committed and analysis was done on environment, as well as the findings from the dedicated surveys from the Project were used to develop the strategy. The detailed landscape is given in Annex 1 to this this document and takes into consideration:

- The political background connected to EU report on progress of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the progress in Judicial System of the country;
- Economic landscape in relations to new economic trends connected to Covid-19 crisis and measure;
- EU membership status;
- EU Reports about the Corruption and Access to Public Information in North Macedonia;
- Risks of corruption in public procurement as assessed by the NGOs;
- Transparency of institutions as assessed by the NGOs;
- Corruption and Transparency Topic in Covid-19 Environment;
- Institutional Dedication to Anticorruption, Integrity and Transparency;
- Whistleblowing topic in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- The communication strategy is also taking into consideration and is led by the key findings from the Surveys committed within ProTRACCO Project:
 - General Findings from the Survey about Whistleblowing,
 - Findings Public Opinion Survey on Corruption and Integrity Perception, and
 - General Findings from the Survey about the Free Access to Public Information.

III. Communication Strategy for “Integrity Campaign”

1. Situation analysis

Based on the background information as stated above, as well as the findings from the surveys committed regarding the Integrity, whistleblowing and free access to public information the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are identified and mirrored in the communication strategy.

Strengths

- EU Commission¹ is recognizing the work of SCPC and the progress in the issue of anti-corruption efforts.
- According EU report the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption has been particularly pro-active in preventing corruption and opened a high number of cases, including those involving high-level officials from across the political spectrum.
- The fiscal transparency tool is seen as one of the mayor steps in providing transparency of the public expenditures.
- Passing of the freedom of access to information law in the Macedonian parliament in 2019 as well as the reforming of the commission for protection of the right to free access to public information into an agency.
- Constitution of the sanctions committee within the Agency for protection of free access to public information, gives a huge boost to the effort of free and easy access to information to any interested party. This is strength, but also opportunity in communication while spreading the word of sanctioning the misconduct according the Law for free access to public information.
- The transformation managed to “unclog” the system of backed up information access delays, and most important of all gave the authority to the agency to sanction those parties that deny access to any information of public interest.
- Significant progress is made in relation to acceptance of the whistleblowers in the period of three years. The overall conclusions from the survey² findings from 2020 compared to 2017 are quite encouraging, as positive perception of whistleblowers and support to disclosing wrongdoings increased, in some topics quite significantly.

Weaknesses

¹ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795, last accessed 19th of October 2020.

² Source document “Analysis of the whistleblowers perception survey from the point of view of public campaign”, September 2020, By Premyslaw Musialkowski

- Opposite of the recognition of the work of the SCPS and APRFAPI by EU commission, NGOs and actual situation, the surveys committed within the project showed that the respondents are not familiar with the work and activities of both beneficiaries, as well as they are not aware in general where and how to report misuse or to ask for public information.
- EU report states that corruption is prevalent in many areas and a more proactive approach from all actors engaged in preventing and fighting corruption needs to be ensured.
- Also, the NGOs' conclusions in the reports states that the institutions should work more to meet the needs of the requestors of information. In June 2020, The Centre for Civil Communications published the ranking of the institutions according the Index for active transparency³, i.e. according their proactive publishing of public information executed in March 2020 and which includes all ministries. The index showed the following key aspects: the active transparency of all 98 included institutions for 2020 was 58,2%, and is slightly improved for 2,2% compared to last year. Upon the requests for free access to public information, the municipalities answered in average for 24 days (last year for 21 days), and the ministries for 26 days (last year for 34 days), although the legal period for answering is 20 days. In this timeframe only 40% of the institutions answered, while the rest of 60% did not respect the legal deadline.
- Covid-19 crisis is influencing transparency and anticorruption. Data shows that in every third case for emergency procurement the negotiation was done with only one supplier. Also, during the pandemic, it is important to ensure that the public's unobstructed access to information of which they are rightful owners must not be overlooked.
- The term whistleblower is not familiar within the public. Only 1/3 of all respondent is well familiar with the term "whistleblower" and its meaning, and over 52% of the respondents do not have basic knowledge on whistleblowers' protection. 40% of the respondent do not know to which institution they could report punishable unethical behaviour.
- Both reports from the EU, NGOs, and survey report on perception emphasizes the problem of non-reaction and non-acting or unsuccessful completion of the corruption cases. In the public perception there is great disbelief in effectiveness of the action taken and it is a strong demotivator against whistleblowing. 44% of the respondents believe that appropriate steps would be taken if they disclosed the wrongdoing, only 24% expressed strong believe, while disbelievers also increased significantly from 17% in 2017 to 43% in 2020. Therefore, the public campaign should publicize positive cases, where whistle-blowing caused serious steps.
- Disbelief in effective protection within organization is also serious demotivator for whistle-blowing. One third of the respondents believe that people who report wrongdoings have problem afterwards.
- According to surveys very low number of people know that they have right according the Constitution and according the Law to request the access to public information. 4 out of 10 citizens think that the free access to public information is guaranteed by the Constitution, while 3 out of 10 don't share that opinion. More than one quarter of the citizens (27%) don't know how to respond to this question.
- Almost half of the citizens are not informed, either know where to find information about the procedure for requesting the public information.

³ Source: <https://www.ccc.org.mk/images/stories/ia2020mk.pdf>, last accessed 15th of October 2020.

Opportunities

- New web page of SCPC and new web/ mobile application for whistle-blowers' protection and anticorruption, new e-learning tool, are good opportunity for their promotion, but also to rising awareness and encouraging people to action.
- The new Government members in the Government Program Agenda 2020-2024⁴, sets the ground for anticorruption and dedication to transparency, with the support of Zero corruption and active transparency approach. Such approach is putting "wind at back" in Integrity campaign.
- The rising awareness of considering whistleblowers as heroes as according the surveys most of the respondents perceived the whistle-blowers as heroes or rather positive (59.5%), and report notes that this positive perception of those who react to irregularities and wrongdoings needs to be further developed in the information campaign.
- Majority of respondents found themselves to be ethical. Over 55% of respondents declared that ethical standards are important to them and 43% apply them in their personal and professional life, while 12% try to apply them as much as they can.
- Although every third citizen knows that there is a Law for protection of the right for free access to public information, 44% of the respondents stated that this law sounds familiar to them, but are not sure, while 22% stated that they don't know if such Law exist. In general males, citizens at age of 25-34 years. This is good point in enlarging the knowledge about the right to access to public information.

Threats

- Part of the respondents/ citizens think that whistle-blowers related to internal information are snitches and are not in favour of them, as according to the survey findings, 54% of those who try to apply ethical standards and 35% of those who say apply them, would rather punish revealing inside information even at the price of not disclosing a serious wrongdoing. Within this group 29% have negative attitude towards whistle-blowers, which include 19% who call them snitches.
- Opening of corruption cases and not closing the existing ones, the improper unethical behaviour from officials and lack of court completion of the processes can affect the campaign and therefore the strategy should be flexible in addressing such topics during the implementation phase of the campaign.
- The probable changes in Laws (referring to operations of both beneficiaries) can influence the campaign, as well as possible pre-term start of the local elections (currently planned for October 2021, but there is possibility to be held during first half of the year), whereby the tools and communication channels of the beneficiaries could be misused for placing the accusations for officials or the political opponents.
- The indifference of the people regarding providing the public information. Even, according the survey, respondents don't know that APRFAPI can help them in providing the public information, high 74.6% don't want to be contacted or get more information by APRFAPI.

⁴Source: https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenty/programa-na-vlada-agenda2024-finalno_programa_1.pdf, last accessed 16th of October 2020.

The communication strategy is created to support and further improve the strengths, and is addressing the burning points and weaknesses to be overpassed. The topics under opportunities are to be communicated to support the good perception of the beneficiaries and raise awareness about the focus topics - whistleblowers and protection, available tools and ways for reporting misuse and being protected, having right to access the public information and the ways to utilize this right, the role of integrity and ethical behaviour for society. The main focus, in particular in the first phase of the campaign, should be on issues highlighted as problematic in the EU report⁵. However, other areas will not be neglected as there is still high proportion of highly negative attitudes, which shows that the foundations on which the improvements have been build are not very solid yet. The campaign is enforcing them.

Although the communication strategy is created to address the burning topics and promote the work and activities of the beneficiaries, still the attitudes and work of other public institutions, can largely influence the final results of the follow-up surveys, as the results of the surveys indicate that the respondents are not generally satisfied in anti-corruption topics and access to public information including the active transparency related to performances of the public state and local institutions, and in general don't believe that the procedures they would take or report will be with satisfactory results or don't want to be contacted for further information.

2. Objectives

Based on the Project Requirements⁶, findings from the Surveys as mentioned above, as well as having in mind the overall landscape of the country, the communication strategy was defined. The overall objectives of the communication strategy and action plan are to create foundation and communication actions in order to promote the integrity as a key fundament of the society and democracy and one of the basic EU values, and to create and propose communication tools that will remain to be used by the public institutions, as well as inform and engage the citizens to utilize their right to be informed and to contribute towards erasing corruption, thus influencing the transparency and integrity of relevant public stakeholders and society in general.

At the same time the communication strategy and action plans should promote among the relevant stakeholders the outcomes and activities of the project "Promoting Transparency and

⁵ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf, last assessed 17th of October 2020.

⁶ Ref. ProTRACCO – Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration, ref. Concept Note "Integrity promotion campaign and its elements: A holistic approach to surveys and campaigns foreseen in the TOR, 12 October 2020, v.2., Prepared by Przemysław Musiałkowski, Team Leader and AC Expert.

Accountability in Public Administration of North Macedonia” (ProTRACCO) and their sustainable use within and beyond project’s duration by the key beneficiaries.

All communication materials including visuals of the entire Integrity campaign will incorporate and refer to EU visibility rules.⁷

Note: Due to challenging circumstances connected to the actual situation in the country connected to political issues (EU accession and political crisis), health topics (Covid-19 crisis and changing of rules), as well as possible risks of appearing the corruption cases, the communication strategy shall be flexible and adaptable to the new circumstances and new reality that will be incorporated and addressed throughout the strategy.

3. Target Groups

Based on surveys and the inputs received from the beneficiaries the communication strategy is recognizing and is created to address the following target groups:

- General public – which means public of all ethnics, religions, nationality, gender, age, education, employed and unemployed, which means communication that could be widely spread and widely understandable.
- Media representatives - journalists, editors and media owners, and special attention should be given to investigative journalists and media. Although media are in a way communication channel, they are also considered to be the target group as the communication materials to media should be more straight-forward and fact based, with data, facts, analysis, in order to be properly passed to wider general public. The special training for media would in favour for the execution of the strategy, as it would help them in large extend to understand their active role in raising awareness and influencing the public opinion about the Integrity topic.
- Students and youngsters – students in primary education, high – schools, with special attention to university students, as future creators of the policies, businessmen, experts, scientists, artists and active part of society. This target group in addition to the general communication, will be directly addressed by special events, children shows and on-line competitions for youngsters. Special targeted communication is foreseen for university students.
- Business Community: owners of companies, businessmen, decision-makers, Chambers of Commerce and different associations of industries. This target group in addition to the campaign for the general group, will be addressed by the channels they are accepting well – during Business events and via Chambers of Commerce, as well as the interviews and articles in business magazines, business on-line portals.
- Public decision-makers and policy creators, as well as Public employees in: Government, Ministries, Governmental institutions, state owned companies, agencies, institutions, local self-government – municipalities, companies owned by the municipalities, as well as in courts. The communication activities are indirectly addressing this group of public employees. Nevertheless, direct communication is also foreseen to this target group, which foresees direct mails, their engagement in

⁷ Ref. https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/comm-visibility-requirements_en, last accessed 3rd of November 2020.

spreading the campaign, communication tools to be further proceeded and used by the institutions.

- Civil sector: Non-governmental institutions – especially the ones dealing with anti-corruption and transparency and the human rights, citizens' organizations, oorganizations distributing funds within different national and international programs. This target group will not be directly addressed, but will be engaged in communication activities, as communicated as supporter of the process of erasing corruption and increasing the transparency of the institutions.

4. Tone and Language

Due to current circumstances of having health and economic crisis, and the overall concern and insecurity of the citizens, the communication on the topic of Integrity should be well balanced in order to reach desired groups.

The Tone of Communication of the entire campaign should be positive, and addresses on emotional level the understanding of the concerns and fears of the individuals of the overall situation in the country. The approach of the communication especially connected to PR and media statements should be based on facts, and should always emphasize in positive context the role of the two beneficiaries towards proactive disclosure and publication of information of public interest. The communication should always be encouraging and engaging, calling into action the general public and all groups to do more.

As the findings from the surveys show that there is lower understanding of the topics within ethnic Albanians, as well as in order to reach the wider target group, language of the campaign should be both in Macedonian and Albanian aimed for different ethnic groups. The content should be the same – only the language should be applied in accordance with the language of the media. The press conferences and media statements should be on the language of the speaker (Macedonian or Albanian) with provided translation if needed.

5. Integrated Communication Approach

The integrated communication approach is foreseen for the entire Integrity campaign, delivering same direction of messages. The communication is integrating all communication channels aiming to strengthen the messages and increase the reach to the target groups.

In order to achieve this the recommendation is to have all materials upfront prepared one month in advance and approved by the project team. The beneficiaries need to have the person responsible for communication to coordinate the approval and information gathering within the institution. It's recommendable to have one external PR/marketing/ creative agency to implement the Strategy, or in case few agencies are selected the coordination is essential to have the integrated and uninterrupted communication flow.



6. Duration of the communication campaign

Project timeline foresees the campaign to last around 10 – 12 months, it should be more focused from December to June and during summer period to repeat and keep the communication flow on own communication channels and internet on lower scale. After summing up results of the follow-up survey and other indicators important for the campaign the results should be also communicated publicly, and if the Project is extended, a new wave of the campaign would be prepared based on the needs of the client, or the communication should be continued by the beneficiaries by themselves.

Proposed start day is 9th of December – Anti-corruption Day. The Right to Access to Public Information should be connected to The International Day for Universal Access to Information – 28th of September.

7. Communication Strategy is elaborated into 3 pillars:

- 1st pillar refers to campaign's activities that cover both beneficiaries State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information at the same time.
- 2nd pillar covers the activities to be led by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption.
- 3rd pillar covers the activities to be led by the Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information.

Integrity campaign

Raising awareness of the importance of ethical conduct and integrity and of the available tools to prevent and report corruption and conflict of interest within the public administration, business community, state-owned companies and civil society. Raising awareness within the general public for the Integrity topic as one of the core values in EU.

- Whistleblowing importance,
- Whistleblowers protection tools and rights,
- e-learning platform.

State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

- Importance of public information
- Process of requesting the public information.
- Promoting the public interest.

Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information

Pillar 1 – umbrella Integrity campaign

Goal:

Raising awareness of the importance of ethical conduct and integrity and of the available tools to prevent and report corruption and conflict of interest within the public administration, free access to public information obligations stipulated in the Law for information holders and general public right to free access to public information, business community, state-owned companies and civil society. Raising awareness within the general public for the Integrity topic by:

- Creating the recognizable general identity – visual identity, logo, name of the Integrity campaign, slogan. The Integrity web would be also designed for communication of all topics, and/ or special parts on the web pages of the beneficiaries can be used to communicate all Integrity topics.
- Production and broadcasting of video spots for both institutions aimed for:
- Raising public awareness about the importance of the two institutions and their competences, as well as emphasizing the role of the two beneficiaries in the process of diminishing corruption and increasing transparency of the public institutions in North Macedonia.
- Raising the public awareness about the two institutions and their contacts - the phones, e-mails, web pages whereby the citizen can report corruption or non-transparency, and assistance in the processes and procedures.

Target Group:

- General Public, media, young people, students,
- Public institutions' employees, state, regional and local institutions.

Communication channels: Visual identity, animated video spot emphasizing main message and the two beneficiaries, posters, flyers, internet banners, social media posts and visuals, press conferences (or if Covid-19 situation is not allowing pre-recorded video statements), media statements, interviews, guerrilla actions – outdoor placement of elements to attract the attention and raise the awareness.

General visual campaign:

The entire Integrity campaign should have the unique value proposition as the “umbrella” message and slogan for the entire campaign, as well as “umbrella” visual identity. Separate mini-campaigns should also have their own messages, but the visual identity should be the same with smaller adaptation of the designs.

The visual identity and symbol is also sending the message, so hereby some symbols are proposed, but should be finalized and visually designed by the creative agency within the implementation phase. The campaign materials should also always have logos of the beneficiaries, as well as the logo of the “EU for you” (as required and described by the Communication Guidelines of the Project).

General note for all visuals and slogans proposed within this Communication Strategy: The final slogans, messages and slogans will be defined by the Project team/ beneficiaries and the selected creative agency during the implementation phase.

Proposed visual symbols and slogans to choose from for Integrity as umbrella identity:

Traffic sign **One Way**, as the mandatory direction that everyone has to go, as the way that is safe and will bring us to desired destination – efficient, modern and transparent public

institutions with zero corruption, satisfied citizens, healthy society and accession to EU.
Proposed slogan:

“Изберете го вистинскиот начин/пат” – “Choose the tight way
„Секогаш во вистинската насока.“ “Always on the right way (direction).”

Compass – always showing the right way giving the feeling of safety during the journey.
Proposed slogan: Секогаш избери ја вистинската насока. Always chose the right way (direction).

Shield as the ones of super-heroes can be used as symbol of protection – protection of the society, protection of budget, protection of misuse, protection against corruption, protecting the rights to public information, protection of transparency, and protection of whistleblowers.
Proposed slogan: “Protect all, you got the power.” – ШТИТИ ги сите, силата е во тебе.

The symbol proposed by the Project team also included a leaf of **Spinach** as the symbol of strength, health and protection of immunity. Proposed slogan: “The strength is in our hands.”
- Силата е во наши раце/ во нас. Спанак (spinach) is also an acronym for **спречување на корупција** (corruption prevention)

Main messages to be communicated during the campaign together with the slogan:

Messages about the importance of the Integrity:

- The only way is the right way. –Integrity is behaving and acting the right way. “The time is always right to do what is right.” Единствен начин на работење е правилниот. Делувај и работи чесно и со интегритет. И сега е време да постапиш правилно.
- Every individual contributes and fights against corruption and uses its right for gaining public information, act with integrity – together we can contribute for better society. Секој може да придонесе. Избори се против корупцијата - пријави. Имаш право да знаеш – прашај (-искористи го). Ако ти треба информација, слободно побарај! користејќи го Законот за слободен пристап до информации од јавен карактер. Интегритетот е важен – заедно придонесуваме за подобро општество.
- The public officials who sanction the misuse, who act with integrity and with high ethical norms contribute to fill the budget and to have better conditions in schools, proper equipment for all students, better health care, more parks, higher pensions for pensioners, more meals for socially vulnerable, safer roads and streets, satisfied citizens. And by submitting requests for free access to public information the general public will be informed where the state money are allocated and spent for. Државните институции кои санкционираат злоупотреба придонесуваат за подобри услови во училиштата, за подобра опрема за учениците. Државните институции кои работат со интегритет придонесуваат за подобри здравствени услуги за сите. Локалните институции кои работат етички издвојуваат повеќе средства за повеќе

паркови, за нови улици. А со поднесување на Барања за слободен приспат до информации од јавен карактер, граѓаните ќе дознаат каде се трошат јавните пари. Act, notify, report the misuse, even small things can do better for the ones that need it more – every paid penalty for parking ticket can provide basic IT equipment for one child; public information about the polluter can save many lives in local community; Always keep your hands clean – you can stop spreading the corruption; Love and war needs two persons, so the corruption – act ethically, be the change you want to see. И од тебе зависи – пријави злоупотреба, дури и малите нешта прават разлика. Поништувањето на една просечна казна за сообраќаен прекршок значи еден таблет помалку за ученик кому му е неопходен за настава. Вистинската информација за степенот на загадување може да спаси животи – побарај информација ти, имаш право да знаеш, може да спасиш живот. За љубов и кавга потребни се двајца – исто и за корупција, делувај етички, пријави биди промената во општеството што сакаш да ја видиш.

Messages connected to strengthening the image of the two beneficiaries as relevant stakeholders in the society and as key contributors towards erasing corruption and providing transparency in the public institutions, connecting and helping the NGOs, Media, citizens to influence in creating public policies and democratic environment.

- We (the beneficiaries) work hard to erase corruption and provide transparency in the public institutions. We support the citizens, media, NGOs, businesses to utilize their right for fair and transparent public services. We strive and act towards reaching EU values and spread them into effective actions. Ние работиме целосно во насока на сузбивање на корупцијата и зголемување на транспарентноста на јавните институции. Ги поддржуваме граѓаните, медиумите, невладиниот сектор, бизнисите за да го искористат своето право за правични и транспарентни јавни услуги. Се стремиме и работиме кон постигнување на вредностите на ЕУ и ги претвораме во дела.
- We (meaning the beneficiaries) care for the proper spending of money by the public institutions, it is the money the people give to budget by paying taxes, we are accountable and responsible to keep it safe and use it for the good cause. The goal of the public awareness campaign will be achieved by encouraging and informing the public about their fundamental constitutional right to free access to information held by state institutions and by communicating how to submit a Request to an information holder, or a Complaint to APRFAP. Се грижиме за правилно трошење на средствата од јавните институции – тоа се пари кои граѓаните ги плаќаат преку даноци. Се грижиме да ги заштитиме парите на граѓаните и да ги користиме за добри дела
- We provide tools and experts for the public institutions to fully comply with the highest integrity and ethical working standards. We support the citizens in realization of their rights. Обезбедуваме алатки и експерти за да ги поддржиме јавните институции целосно да работат во согласност со највисоките етички стандарди. Преку поттикнување и информирање на јавноста за уставното фундаментално право на слободен пристап до информации кои ги создале и со кои располагаат државните институции и комуницирање на начинот како да се поднесе Барање до имател, или Жалба до Агенцијата (АЗПСИЈК) ќе се постигне целта на кампањата за подигнување на јавната свест.
- We, the public employees are stewards and guardians of the public resources. Each and every of us act with integrity and ethics in compliance to the Code of Conduct. Everyone can be Integrity Hero! We support the citizens in realization of their rights. Ние, вработените во јавни институции управуваме и ги чуваме јавните добра и ресурси. Секој од нас работи етички и со интегритет во согласност со Етичкиот кодекс. Секој може да биде Херој за интегритет! Ние ги поддржуваме граѓаните во остварувањето на нивните права.

Stages of the campaign

Stage 0 – Preparatory Phase

At this phase the Creative agency and PR agency should be chosen to lead the implementation of the campaign and for the production of creative and PR materials.

- Before announcing of the campaign visual identity of the umbrella Integrity campaign and the smaller campaigns that will run under the same visuals should be prepared.
- The functional web pages of the beneficiaries are needed, with finally defined URLs as all communication material should also refer to their pages. The social media channels of the beneficiaries should also be active and enabled for content placement before starting- up the campaign.
- Internet banner and animated short video spot with the general campaign – promoting the slogan, main message and the beneficiaries.
- The press conference or material for video statements, speeches, presentations and first press releases and social media posts should be prepared.

Note: All communication activities shall include/ emphasize within given context the beneficiaries, their competences, legal frameworks, and services that the two institutions provide for the general public for their use and purpose.

Stage 1 – Launching of the Campaign

Launching of the campaign with mutual press conference of project team leader and President of SCPC on the occasion of 9th of December – Anti-corruption Day.

If the situation with Covid-19 is not allowing to have press conference – it is recommended to have pre-recorded statement from all speakers to be sent to all media together with press release and visual of the campaign.

Publishing campaign video on social media, if budget allows publishing on national TV stations, internet pages of beneficiaries, to agree of publishing the banner on most visited web pages of the ministries, government, public institutions – such as Ministry for Interior, Cadastre, Ministry of Justice and to all others.

Distribution to media outlets that promote the transparency and anticorruption – the media pages of investigative journalism might be willing to publish them free of charge – meta.mk, irl.mk, prizma.mk, as well as media buying at independent internet portals for the period of 2 weeks – time.mk (news aggregator), e-magazin.mk, sdk.mk, almakos.com.

Interview on TV station – National TV of the President of SCPC - 9th of December, presenting the work of SCPC, results achieved and what it stands for, how it helps citizens and institutions to act on the right direction, presenting the short video.

Stage 2 – regular campaign activities that will run during the entire duration of the campaign

Publishing and sponsoring (boosting) the creative solutions with sub-messages explaining to Integrity and Ethics in general on social media channels emphasizing that everyone can contribute and be the example (2 messages/ posts per month during the lasting of campaign).

These messages will be proposed by the Agency implementer, and will be defined on monthly base mirroring the actual reality within society (actual holidays, International days, actual cases if any, actual problems and challenges.)

Video or written statements by the EU representative or Ambassador about Integrity as EU value, statement from Journalists about Integrity of media, from NGO representative about importance of the Integrity of institutions for society, from Ombudsman about importance for human rights, from citizens, students how they see the integrity (2 statements per month during the lasting of campaign).

Meet our Integrity team – brief working profile of the employees in SCPC and APRFAPI, stating what they do to protect the public interest and how these two institutions care for the society, democracy, integrity, and human rights. (2 profiles per month during the lasting of campaign).

During the duration of the campaign – good positive examples from Europe or the world can be used and shared via social media, adapted or translated into Macedonian (relevant videos, illustrations, articles, stories).

Stage 3 – attracting the students

Announcement of the activity of organizing the debate clubs in University related to Integrity, corruption, whistle blowing and protection, as well as about the importance of the free access to public information. The announcement will be by press release, also the photos and press releases will be send after each of the events stressing the themes and the speakers, the points of view of the students, statements from SCPC and APRFAPI.

Organizing debate clubs (if not possible in Universities due to Covid-19) to organize it on-line – 3-4 events about corruption and how to stop it within the universities, with guest speakers and experts. Also, bringing the importance of the free access to public information and its

usage for student research while doing papers as well as building up of an educated requester base for free access to public information in the state.

The final event could be organized as orator evening themed “Corruption at universities and how to stop it” and “Using free access to information tools” for students. The orator evening will be broadcasted as live event of social media of both beneficiaries, and the media will be invited to follow. The press release will also be produced from this event.

Stage 4 – Addressing the institutions and public employees

Reviving the values from the Code of conduct⁸ that is officially accepted by the relevant bodies and published on web sites. The Code of Conduct should set standards for behaviour (clear integrity statements, like swearing that they are going to obey) for all public employees and should be the statements of universal values to govern the performance of public duties, flexible enough to apply to all policy domains, institutional environments and individual responsibilities. The Code of Conduct should apply to anyone who works as a public employee. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, and courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies, and in the health, education, social and care services, as well as employees in courts. The institutions (Integrity Officers) should remind about the Code of conducts all public employees within their organization, and ask them to sign the statements if they have not. If there is IT possibility or within the e-learning course it can be incorporated in addition to final certificate, a personal promise to Integrity by each individual and can be obtained on-line.

Creating a special campaign for promoting the defined values within the organizations/institutions for spreading the Integrity values from the Code of Conduct within the institutions. Creating the posters with the values from Code of Conduct, showing the silhouette of superhero indicating that each public employee acting according the values, to be placed in gathering places of the institutions. To create a model of each institution for selection of the public employee of the institution respecting the values (box where the nominations by the employees of the institutions should be placed anonymously and the one with the most nominations would be selected as the Integrity Hero). This kind of selection of Integrity heroes can be organized on Annual base, so the Code of Conduct values will be reaffirmed and the public employees will be stimulated to act according the Code of Conduct.

Creating and distributing Creative visual materials for transparency, anti-corruption, EU values etc. – that would be easy to adapt for the institutions and to be published on their channels – web pages, social media, whereby they can publish their contacts, but also the contacts of the SCPC and APRFAPI.

Stage 5 – Repeating the messages during summer and adding new more fun note

⁸ Ref. document Code of conduct of public administration employees, Source https://aa.mk/content/pdf/Drugi%20dokumenti/ZAS/podzakonski%20akti/kodeks_za_administrativni_sluzbenici.pdf

During the summer the activities of posts to social media should continue as planned.

Launching the guerrilla campaign in cooperation with municipalities to dedicate ruined, but visible walls and engaging local young artists to paint the walls with artistic works and messages that will attract attention to citizens.

The action can be organized in one week period and to be communicated on-line and with press releases, visit to murals by local TV houses and promotion of the authors, the campaign and the Integrity topic. Time-lapse videos and photo archive before and after would be used to pass the message to general public.

During the summer period to ask and to share on social media the parts of existing episodes from TV show Prespav in relation to integrity, anti-corruption and transparency. It would fit great if with new season in autumn the special episode would be dedicated to Integrity.

Stage 6 – Wrap – up

Mutual event of the project team and the Director of APRFAPI that should be connected to The International Day for Universal Access to Information – 28th of September.

Distribution of the produced material, press release and video material to media outlets that promote the transparency and anticorruption – the media pages of investigative journalism might be willing to publish them free of charge – meta.mk, irl.mk, prizma.mk, as well as media buying at independent internet portals for the period of 2 weeks – time.mk (news aggregator), e-magazin.mk, sdk.mk, almakos.com.

The interview on TV station of Director of APRFAPI – National TV – 28th of September, promoting the work of the Agency, why is important in for the citizens to use their right for information, where and how to ask for information, promoting the Integrity project and right to information as the basic human right for public information about the Constitutional right for access to information created by the state institutions and the way of requesting the public information from the holders of public information, as well as how to proceed with claim to APRFAPI if not satisfied with the response by the information holder.

Press conference announcing the results of the campaign – improving the perception and awareness about the topic, about the beneficiaries and announcing the new plans if the project continues.

Pillar 2 – Communication to be led by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

The communication lead by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption has main themes Whistleblowing, Whistleblowers protection and launching of e-learning platform.

Whistleblowing

Goal: Promotion in positive context of whistleblowers' protection by⁹ :

- Highlight the progress already made in the whistleblowing topic, raise awareness of the fact that support to whistleblowers has been growing.
- Popularize the term “whistleblower” in its both Macedonian versions.
- Highlight positive whistleblowing cases;
- Increase the awareness of protection guaranteed to whistleblowers by increasing the awareness of the value of the protected whistleblowing, about the rights of the citizens within the Law for protection of whistleblowers, related also to protection against revenge, court protection and remuneration of damages, the role of citizens in the process of reaching Zero tolerance to corruption and non-sanctioning.

Target groups:

- General public, Students/ Youngsters, Children, Media
- Integrity Officers, authorized persons for whistleblowing, public institutions employees.

Communication channels: direct mailing, social media, press releases, competition for students, stories, interviews, media statements, TV and internet reportage, infographic, event for children, press conference.

Key messages:

- Be a hero for a better society, for better institutions, for the public benefit. Report misuse. You are protected. Биди херој за подобро општество, за подобри институции, за јавно добро. Пријави злоупотреба. Те штитиме.
- What's the difference between свиркач and укажувач? The whistleblower is the one that reports the misuse of the public servants, public officials, of misbehaviors that can harm the environment, the state budget, bring unfair benefits, or threaten the human rights. Everyone can contribute to stop misbehaviors. The first step is reporting. The second is up to institutions to act. Што е укажувач или свиркач? Тоа е лице кое пријавува злоупотреба од страна на јавни службеници, одговорни лица или несоодветни постапки кои може да и наштетат на животната средина, државниот буџет, да донесат противзаконска корист, или да загорзат човекови права. Секој може да придонесе да се запре корупцијата и злоупотребата. Првиот чекор е направен кога ќе пријавиш. Следно е на институциите да процесираат,
- You are protected, the laws and institutions stand for you and protect you from revenge or personal damage – you can even anonymously report the misbehaviour. Те штитиме, законите и институциите „ти го чуваат грбот“ од озмазда или лична штета – можеш да пријавиш и анонимно.
- Reporting/ speaking about abuse of position opposite of laws and human rights is our duty, our responsibility for the wellbeing of the society, for protection of the people and properties. Пријавите за злоупотреба на позиција кои се спротивни на закон и ги загрозуваат човековите права се наша должност, наша обврска за доброто

⁹ This sub-goal is referred also to Strategy for promotion of system for protection of whistleblowers in Republic of North Macedonia. Ref. https://www.dksk.mk/fileadmin/user_upload/Strategija.pdf , last assessed 19th of October 2020.

на оптеството, за заштита на граѓаните, имотот и бизнисите. Ние сме тука за вас.

- Zero tolerance to corruption and non-sanctioning – whistleblowers help identifying cases. Нула толеранција за корупцијата и несанкционирањето – укажувачите помагаат да се откријат случаите.

Visual sub-logo within the entire Integrity campaign: For whistleblowing the symbol of **referee whistle** is often being used, but the suggestion is to use the symbol of **little bird** as “Little bird told me” (Пилето ми шепна...) as the phrase in Macedonian is being used when someone is reporting the misuse or secret by you are not disclosing the source of information.

Slogan for whistleblowing:

„Укажи, покажи грижа!“ “Blow the whistle, show you care!”

Communication activities

Stage – 1 - Connecting to general integrity campaign – Integrity, Ethics and Anti-corruption

Information e-mail to all integrity officers about the starting of the campaign, to ask them to follow the campaign on social media and web page of SCPC, also to send them the banner so they can share/ publish it on the web pages of the institutions as support of the campaign.

Starting with creative slogans for anti-corruption with visuals for Integrity campaign for really relevant topics in December e.g. - 1. Keep your hands clean! Stop Covid-19! Always on the right way! Stop Corruption! 2. Stop pollution! Stop corrupting the environment! Always on the right way! 3. Give presents only from the heart! Always on the right way! Stop Corruption! 4 . For our common good – keep safe distance from corruption (За наше општо добро -држете растојание од корупција.

Press release before the holidays reminding about rule of giving and receiving gifts to public officials, as part of integrity. Stating that SCPC is taking care for the citizens.

Stage 2 – Whistle blowing campaign and Protection of Whistleblowers

Starting with the press release indicating some of the results from the survey and opening of competition for youngsters and students. Promoting the sub-logo of the Integrity campaign Little Bird.

E-mail to all Integrity Officers and responsible for whistleblowing in institutions with information about the start of completion for student, inviting them at the same time to share the stories/ cases that would be example of good practice of whistle blowing or whistle blowing protection.

Starting the competition – draw or describe in anecdote how do you see “the whistleblower” – укажувач или свиркач.

The call for competition to be send by social media and be promoted within popular kids TV show (5+, Dajte muzika, Zoki Poki), if possible to be send to all schools to be shared as call for action, together with the explanation why is important to report the misuse. At the end of competition, the exhibition of the best works can be organized and special badges and certificates should be given to best works. If it's possible the winner (s) could be guests on this kids TV shows to present their work and their understanding of the terms укажувач and свиркач. Online exhibition should also be published on the Social media channels and web page of SCPC – so the relatives/ families of the students would click and get possibility to read more about the whistleblowing.

Serial of social media posts describing the terms – укажувач / свиркач – description by the employee in SCPC, by whistleblower responsible from institution, by judge, by lawyer, by businessman, by language specialist, by teacher, by doctor.

Story sharing – how whistleblowing helped to solve some burning issues in society – 3-4 stories that actually happened.

The same can be narrated or written down by the Integrity officer in some of the institutions, by employee in SCPC, by judge, by ombudsman, by whistleblower not showing his/her identity. This stories can be recorded and broadcasted by national TV, or can be recorded by the Project and published on social media and web page of SCPC.

Opening the # on social media – Facebook and Twitter #ПилетоМиШепна (#LittleBirdToldMe) inviting all to share their experiences under this hashtag where/ if faced problem if reporting abuse, what happened.

For promotion of this # and action the influencers would be used – basically connected to people fighting for good causes like and making changes in society – like representatives from

Ne bidi gjubre, Retvitni obrok, Association for woman rights, Shepasti entuzijasti, but also and young vloggers and TikTok influencers, also within Twitter Community.

Regular following of the published stories will be made and the most remarkable/ convenient will be shared on Facebook page and web page of SCPC after receiving approval of the authors.

Four weeks after promoting the Hashtag, the analysis of the stories should be made thank you note for all that shared stories will be published. The Hashtag can continue after that also.

LittleBird weekend in Skopje Zoo – weekend events in Skopje Zoo whereby the kids can draw birds and get to know birds better, while actors from the Theatre for Children and Youth can explain via short performances about the integrity and whistleblowing in simple way, the kids would get balloons with little birds, and their parents will receive info flyers about whistleblowing and where they can report misuse or corruption. This kind of event is good for communication as the invitation via social media can be send, video material and the number of kids being present there can be recorded and published on social media. The press release with photos would be sent to media.

Similar smaller events can be organized in four other cities e.g. – Bitola, Tetovo, Kumanovo and Shtip.

Stage 3 – Protection of Whistleblowers

The topic of protection of whistleblowers will be communicated via the promotion of the law for protection of whistleblowers and the software for the protection of the whistle-blowers identity.

The special short clip demonstrating how to access and how to report via the application will be prepared and published and promoted on social media, as well will be promoted during the interviews, press release and the special reportage in order to raise awareness that anyone can safely report misuse through a website/ mobile application while safeguarding their identity.

Interviews, press releases, about the whistle blowing and about the law for protection of whistle blowers with data about the right for reporting and protection of the whistle blowers promoting the institutions, channels and tools how to report misuse and how to ask for protection, emphasizing the role of the SCPC in this process.

Dedicated TV or internet reportage about the process of protecting whistleblowers. Detailed explanation of the process of reporting, simulation of the process, statements from institutions where the people can report the misuse.

Publishing an infographic on web page and social media on the process of reporting, about protection of whistleblowers, institutions they can report, the legal rights of the whistleblowers.

Sending the material to Integrity Officers in institutions to cascade it and share it via their institutions.

Press conference for International Whistle Blowers Day – end of June (23rd of June), wrapping-up the efforts of the SCPC to promote the whistleblowing and whistleblowers' protection, giving the overview of the campaign (s) implemented, the results reached up to date and the future plans, thanking the Integrity Officers and the responsible persons for whistleblowing for their efforts to promote integrity within their organization.

Stage 4 - Promoting the e-learning platform

Goal: Promotion of e-learning platform among public administration, business entities and the general public (connected to activity 1.5. of the Project) by:

- Promotion of e-learning platform among public administration by positive and competitive approach to the employees to motivate them to participate.
- Raising awareness within the business community about the integrity, rights and obligations of the businesses towards creating ethical, fair and effective public institutions.
- Raising awareness about the platform, about the need of its using by the public institutions and the impact it could make to improve the quality of services of the public institutions.

Target Groups: Integrity officers, public sector employees, business community – Chambers of commerce and businessmen, as well as general public.

Communication channels: tutorials, direct mailing, press conferences, press releases, internet advertising, social media, interview for business portals, presentation on the events of the Chamber of Commerce or business conferences.

Key messages:

- Learn better, develop yourself, keep on acting with integrity – be a part of modern, honest and effective administration – join the e-learning platform to certify your knowledge. Учи за подобро, вложи во својот развој, продолжи да работиш со интегритет – биди дел од модерна, чесна и ефикасна администрација – приклучи се на платформата за електронско учење и добиј сертификат за твоето знаење.
- Every business and every industry has the right to get the effective and efficient public services. The e-learning platform will show you how your business can contribute to creating ethical, fair and effective public institutions. Секој бизнис и секоја индустрија има право да добие ефикасни и ефективни јавни услуги. Платформата за е-учење ќе му помогне на вашиот бизнис во создавање и користење на услуги од етични, пратедни и ефикасни јавни институции.
- No matter if you are student, if you are working, or you are pensioner, you have the right to know and you are accountable to act – visit the e-learning course and see what

your rights are and how you can contribute for effective, fair and transparent public institutions. Без разлика дали сте студент, вработен, невработен или пензионер имате право да знаете и обврска да делувате – посетете ја платформата за е-учење и видете кои се вашите права и како може да придонесете кон ефикасни, правични и отчетни јавни институции.

Visual sub-logo within entire Integrity campaign: the symbol of **academic hat with Personal Computer or mouse- cursor arrow** could be used.

Communication activities

1. Communication activities towards integrity officers and public sector employees:
 - Recording short video tutorial how to use the e-learning platform. Preparing the Frequently asked questions and answers.
 - E-mail to all Integrity Officers about the new e-learning platform. Inviting them to be the first to finish the courses and ask for their feedback for the courses and usability in order to collect all possible questions that could arise.
 - Preparing the e-mail to all institutions that they need to forward/ cascade it to their employees with invitation and link to complete the e-learning course, together with tutorial how to use the platform and the link to frequently asked questions. During the start-up of the platform it is good to have also open call centre for support.
 - Follow up e-mails every week thanking all who finished the course and announcing the top 5 and worst 5 institutions according the percentage of the response, inviting again all to participate.
2. Communications activities towards general public:
 - Press conference about the Launching the e-learning platform. Informing the public what they can learn, why it is important, for whom it would be obliged to use and why, to whom it would be useful and informative.
 - Internet advertising of the e-learning platform (only internet, as the people need to click to go to platform), promotion on social media by creating mini quizzes with the topics from the e-learning platform in order to show the content and the relevance of the topics for all group and all citizens.
 - Regular - Once a month an informative press release about the number of users of the e-learning course and their feedback.
3. Communications activities towards business community:
 - Interviews and articles about the e-learning platform in business magazines (Kapital, Ekonomija i Biznis, faktor.mk) and internet portals specified for technology and IT (it.com.mk, usb.mk, smartportal) as well as portals for students (fakulteti.mk, radiomof.mk). The promo of the e-learning platform could have a good uptake on employment portals (vrabotuvanje.mk, kariera.mk, av.mk).
 - Connecting to Chambers of Commerce and participating on their events for promoting the e-learning platform life at this business events. Utilizing the info channels of the Chambers of Commerce to promote the e-learning platform within business community.

Pillar 3 – Communication to be led by the Agency for protection of the right to free access to public information

Goals

Raising awareness of the general public on their constitutional and fundamental right to free access to public information by:

- Promoting the general results of the survey within general public to promote the topic.
- Creating three video-clips about the importance of asking for public information and about the benefits of the same for the citizens (requestors of information), students and journalists, the way/ process of requesting the public information, where to ask for public information and where to report the misconduct by the holder of information.
- Promotion of the process of filing requests under the law, promoting the Agency as supporter and contributor in the process of exercising the right for free access to information.
- Produce a video spot under Pillar 1

Target groups:

General public, media, students/ youngsters

Public information holders, public institutions officials and officers

Communication channels: direct mails, social media, press releases, media statements, inside bus branding – informing, video spots, radio spot, social media contest.

Messages:

„Имаш право да знаеш!“ “You have the right to know!”

- You have the right to know – the institutions have the obligation to publish public information. Use your right, spread the word. Имаш право да знаеш – институциите имаат обврска да информираат. Искористи го твоето право, треба да се знае.
- How many times you said that you did not know something and you didn't act accordingly? Ask for public information – it is your right to be informed. Applying the request is easy and simple, the difference can be big. Колку пати сте рекле дека не сте знаеле нешто и затоа не сте постапиле соодветно? Побарајте ги информациите од јавен карактер – ваше е правото да бидете информирани.

Барањето на информации е лесно и едноставно, а разликата со вистинска информација може да биде голема.

- It is easy to request the public information of your interest, you can even do this on-line in few steps. Info how to... Лесно е да се побара информација од јавен карактер, можете да го направите тоа и онлајн во неколку чекори – видете како.
- The right information in right time can make a huge difference and can protect the public interest – use your right to access the public information – the right is for all. Вистинската информација во вистинско време може да направи разлика и да го заштити јавниот интерес – искористи го твоето право за пристап до информации од јавен карактер – право имаат сите.
- You have the right to know, we are here to support you – to get the right information, to exercise your right. Имаш право да знаеш, тука сме за да ти помогнеме да го добиеш вистинската информација, да го искористиш своето право.

Visual sub-logo within entire Integrity campaign: For free access to public information the **unlocked lock** can be used or **reading magnifier**. Opened keychain is universal symbol for free access to public information in the system

The slogan of the campaign should be: “You have the right to know!” Имаш право да знаеш! or “The key to open state documents is in our hands.” - Клучот за пристап до информации од јавен карактер е во наши раце/ во нас. “

Communication activities

Stage – 1 - Connecting to general integrity campaign – Transparency of public institutions, importance of having available the public information

Information e-mail to all responsible persons for the public information in institutions about the starting of the campaign, to ask them to follow the campaign on social media and web page of APRFAPI, also to send them the banner so they can share/ publish it on the web pages of the institutions as support of the campaign. The information can also include the findings from the survey as the responsible persons are the ones that need to take care for proper execution of the access to public information, and ask all to contribute to have better results in future.

Starting with creative slogans for transparency with visuals for Integrity campaign for really relevant topics in December e.g. - 1. Wearing a mask can save you from virus! Right information can save your community! You have the right to know! Always on the right way! 2. You have the right to know about the air quality! Ask for public information about the environment! Always on the right way! 3. You have the right to know! We are here to support you! Always on the right way!

Stage – 2 – Raising awareness about the right and need to access of public information

The series of the social media posts with visuals can be created connected to the results of the survey and providing the answers and information about the important topic.

The series of posts with info for e.g. Do you know that the holder of information should reply within 20 days? – You have the right to know! Do you know that you can ask public information from more than 1400 institutions? – You the right to know! Do you know that every individual has the right to ask for public information? – You have the right to know!

Creating visuals of this messages for placing within public buses, so the people get to know the Agency and to ask the source of information.

Creating the animated video clip with explaining the process of requesting the public information – how to fill the request, where to ask for help.

In March 2021, event for video promotion for free access to public information shall be organized. The video clip to be sent to be broadcasted by national TV, on the web page and sponsored on social media, as well as and to be distributed to all holders of public information in order to share it on their web pages or within their institution. And other animated videos to be produced for media, students and officials of public institutions.

Series of social media posts preferably short video statements whereby different stakeholders speak about the importance of using the right for access to public information, how it helps the public interest and for public benefit.

Story – statement from journalists (Ognen Cancarevic, Aleksandar Dimitriev) how the access to public information helped them in creating their stories, statement from NGO dealing with environmental issue how public information can help to locate the polluter, the statement from citizen how the access to public information helped to stop illegal building, statement from employee from the Agency how the Agency is supporting using the right for public information, statement from lawyer to help finish the case of vulnerable group of people, statement from expert why the transparency of public institutions is important to save money and utilize it for good cause, statement from student how the access to public information helped him/her to complete a task.

The brief answers of these storytellers about the way access to public information helps people can be compiled into one video-clip to be sponsored and boosted on internet and social media.

In April the event panel discussion with NGO representatives, different stakeholders, media representatives should be organized, t whereby the general overview of the work of the Agency will be covered, the report of the work and the results of the survey will be presented,

as well as the efforts to raise awareness of the public to utilize their right to access to public information.

Press release about the report from the 2020 about the requests for access to public information from information holders, thanking them for the support. Giving the role of the Agency in solving the critical issues, emphasizing the role of the Agency in providing support to public information.

Serial of social media posts about the kind of information citizens can ask from institutions and why is important to know. Statements from employees of the Agency on different topics in order to show the expertise and willingness of the Agency to help people reaching the needed information.

Creating short radio spot that can be broadcasted on National Radio before the news – “You have the right to know! Agency for protection of the right to free access to public information www.aspi.mk”, and now follows the news.

Stage 3 – Social media contest

Social media contest – create the video “You have the right to know” who is protecting the right for free access to public information.

Press release announcing the contest for amateur video all students can participate. The call for competition to be send by social media and be promoted within internet portals for students, if possible to be send to all schools to be shared as call for action, together with the explanation why is important to use the right to public information. All videos will be shared on Agency’s web and social media channels and the winner video would be advertised and sent also to all information holders. For the winner symbolic gift that associates to information access can be prepared such as speaker, tablet notepad or to be awarded with voucher for some educational course. Press release announcing the winner and reminding about the role of the Agency in providing the public information.

IV. Measuring the success/ deliverables of the Campaign

Several Key Performance Indicators are important to measure the impact of the campaign:

- Realization of all planned activities within timeframes and within planned budget.
- Increasing the awareness of the topics of importance within general public – comparing the survey results before and after the campaign.

- Increasing the interest for reporting the corruption, access for public information – increased number of reports and of requests.
- Transparency and accountability of public administration;
- Contacting for information of the main beneficiaries – increased number of emails or calls. The good KPI in such case is increasing the number of visits of the web pages of the beneficiaries by comparing the number of visits before, during and after the campaign. This KPI is not valid if the web pages don't function properly.
- Number of articles published in media about the topics and beneficiaries in positive context – for the period of six months with intensive campaign it's about to be expected to have about 100 positive articles.

V. Action Plan

In order to start realization and implementation of the Communication Strategy the action plan is proposed with the specific activities, channels, timing, and organization of works.

Responsible for implementation of the Strategy:

The Project Team will lead and approve the overall activities of the Strategy, possible changes and adaptations, as well as final approval of all communication activities and material.

The selected creative/ PR/ marketing agency or agencies will be responsible for preparation of all communication materials, changes and finalization of the materials, as well as for social media management of the social media channels of the beneficiaries during the lasting of the campaign. The agency implementer will propose and elaborate the changes of the strategy if needed, and implement the same within foreseen budget.

As the beneficiaries don't have person responsible for communication it is recommended to employ a person or to dedicate a person within their teams to be responsible for communication during the campaign, that will coordinate the inputs needed from the different departments within the organization, will coordinate publishing on the web site of the organization, will coordinate the sending of the materials to third parties by the organization (e.g. to Integrity officers, responsible persons for whistleblowing, responsible persons for access to public information), will coordinate media questions and requests and will facilitate the process of approval of the materials within the organization and project team.

The timing of the activities

Although the activities are given in a logical order, if the prerequisite for starting a communication activity is not fulfilled, it can be postponed and switch the place with other.

The activities are planned so to have good coverage during the duration of the campaigns, and almost all the time the campaigns are running at the same time. But as the visual identity will be in line for all the campaigns, this is not a problem at all.

The activities are planned to comply with the season, holidays and timing of the school year.

Covid-19

The actual situation with the virus indicates that during the winter no events will be recommended, so the alternative solution would be to have recorded statements for media distribution instead of press conference or to invite the journalists for press conference on-line.

Dedicated persons from beneficiaries

For the beginning of the implementation of the activities it is important that during the communication campaign both beneficiaries have the dedicated person to coordinate the communication activities with the creative and/ or PR agencies that will be selected and to coordinate the approval of the communication within their organization.

Functional web pages and defined web addresses

Before start of implementation of the campaign both beneficiaries need to have functional web pages and to have defined URL, as the web address will be communicated in communication materials.

Selection of the Agency/ies

The implementation of the communication strategy should be given to professional agencies and according the proposed scope and type of activities the Project can engage:

- one contractor – one Agency that by need will engage subcontractors, or
- split the work to: creative agency for visuals, production agency for videos, PR Agency for media relations (events, press releases, interviews, press conferences, media statements) and social media agency, in which case the Project team will need to coordinate and harmonize the work of agencies.

Organization of works

At the beginning of the campaign (at preparatory phase) together with the logo, visual identity of the campaign, the following elements of the campaign should be prepared for – social media frames for different type of social media, to define exactly which colours and which fonts will be used during the campaign, as well as video frames. It will save a lot of time for approval of each visual if the pre-set frames and elements are predefined and approved.

Within the preparatory phase the materials for the first month should be prepared, and during the realization of the activities, the materials for the second month would be prepared.

Organization of work is proposed so to prepare the detailed communication plan and organization of works once a month in order to define the precise dates and needed materials to be produced. The materials (that do not require printing or video editing) are being prepared a week in advance. That's why the coordination of the project team should be once a month for brief to give overview of the completed activities for the previous month and concluding the dates for the activities. Every week the coordination is held for practical realization of the materials. The coordination can be done by e-mail, phone, online.

VI. Defining the budget for the proposed activities

The budget foreseen within the Project is defined to amount of EUR

VII. List of abbreviations and terms

EU – European Union

SCPC – State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

APRFAPI – Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

TOR – Term of Reference

PR – Public Relations

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

ProTRACCO – Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

Project - Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration Project financed by the EU

Action plan per communication activities**Communication activities of Pillar 1 – Umbrella Integrity Campaign**

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 0 - Preparatory phase					
Selection of Creative agency and PR agency			Project team		December
Creating and defining visual identity of Integrity campaign and the other campaigns			Project team		December
Web pages and Social media channels activation			Project team		December
Short video spots with the general campaign (1 for SCPC and 1 for APRFAPI)			Project team		December
Preparation of press conferences or material for video statements, speeches, presentations and first press releases and social media. (1 for SCPC and 1 for APRFAPI)			PR agency		December
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?

Stage 1 – Launching of the of the campaign					
Launching of the campaign with mutual press conference. If the situation with Covid-19 is not allowing - pre-recorded statement from all speakers to be sent to all media together with press release and visual of the campaign.	media, general public	introduction of the campaign , Anti-corruption day/	project team leader, president of SCPC	press conference	9 th December/
Press release following the press conference	media, general public	introduction of the campaign , Anti-corruption day	project team leader, president of SCPC/	press release	9 th December
Publishing campaign video on own social media and web	general public	integrity campaign	Project team	web and SM of beneficiaries	9th of December
Distribution of spot to media and institutions	media, general public		Project team	TV houses and internet portals, web pages of institutions	9th of December
Interview on TV station	general public	Anti-corruption, activities of SCPC, Integrity campaign	President of SCPC	TV interview	9th of December
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 2 - Regular campaign activities that will run during the entire duration of the campaign					

Creative solutions with sub-messages explaining to Integrity and Ethics	general public	Integrity and ethics how everyone can contribute	general messages	SM and internet pages of beneficiaries	entire campaign
Video or written statements	general public	Integrity as EU value, in media, in courts, in institutions...	EU representative, journalists, teacher, doctor, NGOs etc.	SM and internet pages of beneficiaries	entire campaign
Meet our Integrity team	general public	what they do to protect the public interest and how these two institutions act	employees in SCPC and APRFAPI	SM and internet pages of beneficiaries	entire campaign
Positive examples sharing from Europe	general public	different topics connected to integrity	project team	SM and internet pages of beneficiaries	entire campaign
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 3 - Attracting the students					
Announcement of the activity of organizing the debate clubs	students and general public	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and protection, access to public information	statements from SCPC and APRFAPI	press release, photo, SM	May, 2021
Debate clubs at Universities or on-line	students and professors	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and	SCPC and APRFAPI	event (live or online)	May-June, 2021

		protection, access to public information			
Orator evening	students and professors, general public	corruption at universities and how to stop it	students	live broadcast on social media	June,2021
Wrap-up of the activities with students	general public	how the students see the integrity	PR agency/ project team	press release, photo, SM	June,2021
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 4 – Addressing the institutions and public employees					
Special campaign for promoting Code of Conduct within the institutions	Integrity officers, public employees	Code of conduct, Integrity hero	Project team	Posters, mini-flyers, boxes for voting	May, June 2020
Creating the communication tool-kit	Integrity officers, responsible persons for public information	report corruption, ask for information, contacts	creative agency/ project team	electronic document files	May, 2021
Distribution of communication tool-kit and follow-up	Integrity officers, responsible persons for	report corruption, ask for information, contacts	project team	e-mail, electronic document files	May, 2021

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 5 - Repeating the messages during summer and adding new more fun note					
local young artists to paint the walls in municipalities	local communities in municipalities	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and protection, access to public information	municipalities, project team	visual street art - murals	July,2021
Media statements about the art works	local media, local community	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and protection, access to public information	municipalities, project team	press release, media statements, time-lapse videos, SM	July,2021
Cut-offs from existing Prespav show	general public	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and protection, access to public information	project team	social media	July-September 2021
Dedicated Prespav show	general public	Integrity, anti-corruption, whistle blowing and protection, access to public information	project team	TV show	October, 2021

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage – 6 Wrap-up of the campaign					
Mutual event of the project team leader, KE 2 and the Director of APRFAPI that should be connected to The International Day for Universal Access to Information – 28th of September	media, general public	Access to public information in relation to Integrity and the achievement of the previous year	project team leader, KE 2 and director of AFPRFAPI	press conference	28 th of September 2021
Press release following the press conference	media, general public	Access to public information in relation to Integrity and the achievement of the previous year	project team leader, KE 2 and director of AFPRFAPI	press release	28 th of September 2021
Distribution of video material to media and institutions	media, general public		Project team	TV houses and internet portals, web pages of institutions	28 th of September 2021
Interview on TV station	general public	Right to access to information, the role of AFPRFAPI, Integrity campaign	Director of AFPRFAPI	TV interview	28th of September 2021
The results of the campaign	general public	Improving the perception and awareness about the topic, about the	project team leader, president of SCPC	press conference and press release, SM	November, 2021

		beneficiaries and announcing the new plans	and director of APRFAPI		
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Communication activities of Pillar 2 – Communication to be led by SCPC

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 1 - Connecting to general integrity campaign – Integrity, Ethics and Anti-corruption					
Slogans for anti-corruption with visuals for Integrity campaign	general public	anti-corruption, possible situations	SCPC	social media and web	December, 2020
Reminding about rule of giving and receiving gifts to public officials, as part of integrity.	general public and indirect public employees	holidays, gifts for public employees	SCPC	press release, SM, web	end of December 2020
Information e-mail to all integrity officers about the campaign	integrity officers, responsible persons for whistleblowing	invitation to follow and share	President of SCPC	e-mail, IT communication tool	April, 2021
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 2 - Whistleblowing					

Informing the results from the survey and opening of competition for youngsters and students	general public, youngsters and their parents	promoting the terms укажувач and свиркач	SCPC	press release, SM, web	end of January, 2021
Starting the competition – draw or describe in anecdote how do you see “the whistleblower” – укажувач или свиркач	students, youngsters, school kids, their parents, general public	promoting the terms укажувач and свиркач	SCPC	SM competition	end of January – during February, 2021
promotion of the competition	students, youngsters, school kids, their parents, general public	promoting the terms укажувач and свиркач	SCPC	TV show 5+ or similar, promotion within schools	end of January – during February, 2021
online exhibition	students, youngsters, school kids, their parents, general public	promoting the terms укажувач and свиркач	SCPC	Social media	February, 2021

Invitation to share the stories/ cases that would be example of good practice of whistle blowing or whistle blowing protection.	Integrity Officers, responsible for whistleblowing in institutions	whistleblowing stories	SCPC	e-mail, IT communication tool	April, 2021
Serial of social media posts describing the terms – укажувач / свиркач	general public	promoting the terms укажувач and свиркач	employee in SCPC, responsible for whistleblowing. from institution, by judge, by lawyer, by businessman, by language specialist, by teacher, by doctor	social media	mid-March/April, 2021
Story sharing – how whistleblowing helped to solve some burning issues in society	general public, public institutions employees	how whistleblowing helps	Integrity officer in some of the institutions, by employee in SCPC, by judge, by ombudsman, by whistleblower	statements on dedicated TV show, social media	April, 2021
#ПилетоМиШепна (#LittleBirdToldMe) inviting all to share their experiences reporting abuses	general public, young progressive people	reporting misuse is normal, everyone should be involved	SCPC, influencers	Facebook and Twitter, sharing of stories	March, April 2021

LittleBird weekend in Skopje Zoo	kids and their parents	integrity and whistleblowing	Actors from Children Theatre	event in Skopje Zoo + balloons, flyers, SM, internet + SM of Skopje Zoo	May, 2021
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 3 - Protection of Whistleblowers					
Information about the Law on protection of whistleblowers	general public	protection of whistle blowers	SCPC	interview on portal, press releases	April 2021
The special short clip demonstrating how to access and how to report via the application	general public	protection of whistle blowers	SCPC	TV, SM	April/ May 2021
Dedicated TV or internet reportage about the process of protecting whistleblowers	general public	protection of whistle blowers	speakers from institutions where the misuse can be reported	TV program, internet, SM	May, 2021
infographic on web page and social media on the process of reporting and protection	general public, Integrity Officers	protection of whistle blowers	SCPC	web, SM, web pages of the institutions	May, 2021
International Whistle Blowers Day	general public	whistleblowing as topic, protection of whistleblowers	President of SCPC	press conference, press release	end of June, 2021
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?

Stage 4 - The e-learning platform					
Tutorial how to use the e-learning platform	Integrity Officers	e-learning platform	SCPC	video tutorial + document file	April, 2021
FAQs and answers	Integrity Officers	e-learning platform	SCPC	document	April, 2021
Invitation first to finish the courses and ask for their feedback	Integrity Officers	e-learning platform	President of SCPC	e-mail, IT communication tool	April, 2021
Invitation and link to complete the e-learning course, together with tutorial how to use the platform and the link to frequently asked questions.	All Public institutions	e-learning platform	SCPC	e-mail, IT communication tool	April, 2021
Follow up e-mails, top 5 and worst 5 institutions according the percentage of the response	All Public institutions	e-learning platform	SCPC	e-mail, IT communication tool	April- May, 2021
Informing the public about the e-learning platform	general public, media	e-learning platform	SCPC	press conference, press release	May, 2021
Mini quizzes	general public, media	e-learning platform	SCPC	social media, internet advertising	May - June, 2021
informative press release about the number of users of the e-learning course and their feedback	general public	e-learning platform	SCPC	press release, social media, web	May-November 2021

Interviews and articles about the e-learning platform	business community, students,	e-learning platform	SCPC	interviews, press releases, statements	May - June, 2021
Promoting the e-learning platform life at this business events	business community,	e-learning platform	SCPC	event promo, presentation	June,2021

Communication activities Pillar 3 – Communication to be led by APRFAPI

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 1 - Connecting to general integrity campaign – Transparency of public institutions, importance of having available the public information					
Thanking for cooperation, information about the findings from the survey as the responsible, and ask all to contribute to improvements.	responsible persons for the public information	integrity and access to public information	Director of APRFAPI	e-mail	December, 2020
Creative slogans for transparency with visuals for Integrity campaign for really	general public	integrity and access to public information	APRFAPI	social media	December, 2020
One year from forming of the Agency	general public	the general overview of the work of the Agency will be covered, the results of the survey	Director of APRFAPI	media statements, press release	December, 2020

What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 2 - Raising awareness about the right and need to access of public information					
series of the social media posts with visuals can be created connected to the results of the survey	general public	where to ask for information. Do you know that...? You have the right to know!	APRFAPI	social media	January - February, 2021
Creating visuals of this messages for placing within public buses	urban population, students	Where to ask for information. Do you know that...? You have the right to know!	APRFAPI	in-side bus branding	February - March, 2021
Creating the animated video clips with explaining the process of requesting information for different target groups	General public, media, students and public officials	process of requesting information	APRFAPI	video clip, national TV and SM, to web pages of holders of public information	February - April 2021
Event for promotion of video clips/s	General public, media, students and public officials	process of requesting information	APRFAPI	Media event	May 2021

Series of social media posts preferably short video statements about benefits of using the public information	general, media, NGOs	how PI helps the public interest and for public benefit	storytellers - different users of public information	video stories on SM	March, April 2021
Short video clip as compilation of the video statements	general, media, NGOs	how PI helps the public interest and for public benefit	storytellers - different users of public information	video clip on SM	April, 2021
Report from the 2020 about the requests for access to public information	general, public information holders	Emphasizing the role of the Agency in providing support to public information.	APRFAPI	Panel discussion, media event, press release, SM, web, e-mail to responsible persons	April 2021
Serial of social media posts about the kind of information citizens can ask	general	kind of information that can be asked for	APRFAPI	social media	April and May, 2021
Creating short radio spot	general	Where to ask for information. You have the right to know.	APRFAPI	national radio before the news	March - May, 2021
Video spot how to access and submit request via the application	general public	protection of the right to access to information	APRFAPI	TV, social media	April/ May 2021
What?	To whom?	Why?	Who?	How?	When?
Stage 3 - Social media contest					

Social media contest – create the video “You have the right to know”	Youngsters/ students	Agency is protecting the right for free access to public information.	APRFAPI	social media contest	May-June, 2021
promotion of the competition	Youngsters/ students, general public	Agency is protecting the right for free access to public information.	APRFAPI	press release, internet advertising, promotion via schools	May-June, 2021
Announcing the winner and reminding about the role of the Agency in providing the public information.	Youngsters/ students, general public	Agency is protecting the right for free access to public information.	APRFAPI	press release, photo, SM	June,2021
Videos from the contest	Youngsters/ students, general public	Agency is protecting the right for free access to public information.	APRFAPI	publishing of videos on SM during summer period	July-September 2021
Promotion of the transparency standards	general public, public information holders	Agency is protecting the right for free access to public information	APRFAPI	Press release, SM, web, e-mail to responsible persons, list of the most transparent and non-transparent institutions	September 2021

Time-scheme - Pillar 1

Activity	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21
INTEGRITY CAMPAIGN													
Preparatory phase													
Selection of Creative agency and PR agency													
Creating and defining visual identity of Integrity campaign and the other campaigns													
Web pages and Social media channels activation													
Animated short video spot with the general campaign													
Preparation of press conference or material for video statements, speeches, presentations and first press releases and social media.													
Starting of the campaign													
Mutual press conference project and SCPC . or pre-recorded statement from all speakers to be sent to all media together with press release and visual of the campaign.													
Press release following the press conference													
Publishing campaign video on own social media and web													
Distribution of spot to media and institutions													
Interview on TV station SCPS													
Regular campaign activities that will run during the entire duration of the campaign													
Creative solutions with sub-messages explaining to Integrity and Ethics													
Video or written statements													
Meet our Integrity team													
Positive examples sharing from Europe													
Attracting the students													
Announcement of the activity of organizing the debate clubs													
Debate clubs at Universities or on-line													
Orator evening													
Wrap-up of the activities with students													
Communication tool-kit for the institutions													
Creating the communication tool-kit													
Distribution of communication tool-kit and follow-up													
Repeating the messages during summer and adding new more fun note													
local young artists to paint the walls in municipalities													
media statements about the art works													
cut-offs from Prespav show													
dedicated Prespav show													
Wrap-up of the campaign													
Mutual press conference project and APRFAP1 or pre-recorded statement from all speakers to be sent to all media together with press release and visual of the campaign.													
Press release following the press conference													
Distribution of spot to media and institutions													
Interview on TV station APRFAP1													
Results of the campaign press conference													

Time scheme – Pillar 2

Activity	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21
Connecting to general integrity campaign – Integrity, Ethics and Anti-corruption													
slogans for anti-corruption with visuals for Integrity campaign													
reminding about rule of giving and receiving gifts to public officials, as part of integrity.													
Information e-mail to all integrity officers about the starting of the campaign													
Whistle blowing													
Informing the results from the survey and opening of competition for youngsters and students													
Competition – draw or describe in anecdote how do you see “the whistleblower” – укажувач или свиркач													
promotion of the competition													
online exhibition													
invitation to share the stories/ cases that would be example of good practice of whistle blowing or whistle blowing protection.													
Serial of social media posts describing the terms – укажувач / свиркач													
Story sharing – how whistleblowing helped to solve some burning issues in society													
#ПилетоМиШенна (#LittleBirdToldMe) inviting all to share their experiences reporting misuseage LittleBird weekend in Skopje Zoo													
Protection of Whistleblowers													
Information about the Law on protection of whistleblowers													
Video clip from promotion of IT tools													
Dedicated TV or internet reportage about the process of protecting whistleblowers													
infographic on web page and social media on the process of reporting and protection													
International WhistleBlowers Day press release													
The e-learning platform													
Tutorial how to use the e-learning platform													
FAQs and answers													
Invitation to Integrity Officers first to finish the courses and ask for their feedback													
invitation and link to complete the e-learning course, together with tutorial how to use the platform and the link to frequently asked questions.													
Follow up e-mails, top 5 and worst 5 institutions according the percentage of the response													
Informing the public about the e-learning platform													
Mini quizzes													
informative press release about the number of users of the e-learning course and their feedback													
Interviews and articles about the e-learning platform													
Promoting the e-learning platform life at this business events													

Time scheme – Pillar 3

Activity	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21
Connecting to general integrity campaign – Transparency of public institutions, importance of having available the public information													
Thanking for cooperation, information about the findings from the survey as the responsible , and ask all to contribute to improvements.													
creative slogans for transparency with visuals for Integrity campaign for really one year from forming of the Agency													
Raising awareness about the right and need to access of public information													
series of the social media posts with visuals can be created connected to the results of the survey													
Creating visuals of this messages for placing within public buses													
Creating the animated video clips with explaining the process of requesting information													
Event for promotion of the video spots													
Series of social media posts preferably short video statements about benefits of using the public information													
Short video clip as compilation of the video statements													
Pannel discussion - Report from the 2020 about the requests for access to public information													
Serial of social media posts about the kind of information citizens can ask													
Creating short radio spot													
Video spot how to access and submit request via the application													
Social media contest													
Social media contest – create the video “You have the right to know”													
promotion of the competition													
Announcing the winner and reminding about the role of the Agency in providing the public information.													
Videos from the contest													
Promotion of the transparency standards													



This project is funded by the European Union



Promoting Transparency and Accountability

in Public Administration in North Macedonia



VIII. ANNEX 1

to COMMUNICATION STRATEGY“INTEGRITY CAMPAIGN” ProTRACCO Project

1. Political Background

The latest EU report¹⁰ on progress states that North Macedonia continued to implement EU-related reforms. Efforts continued to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, including by activating existing checks and balances and through discussions and debates in key policy and legislative issues. Opposition parties remained engaged in the Parliament and supported key issues of common national interest, such as EU-related reforms and the NATO integration process, which North Macedonia joined in March 2020. Following the outcome of the European Council in October 2019, political parties decided in common agreement to hold early parliamentary elections on 12 April 2020. In line with the national legislation, a technical government, with Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the main opposition party, was appointed in January 2020. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a state of emergency was declared between March and June 2020, which enabled the technical government to rule by decree. The early parliamentary elections were postponed to July 2020. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) assessed that these elections were generally well run and the campaign was genuinely competitive, but legal stability was undermined by substantial revisions of the legal framework and subsequent government decrees. The significant increase of the use of fast track procedures raises concerns and should be limited. The Parliament operated in greater transparency and used its oversight functions, restoring checks and balances over the executive. The Parliament dissolved in February 2020, in anticipation of early elections, and the Speaker's view was that it could not reconvene. Following the July 2020 elections, the newly constituted Parliament elected the government in August 2020, led by Prime Minister Zoran Zaev of the Social Democratic SDSM Party with coalition of the Albanian DUI party and enjoys a thin majority of 62 out of 120 members. Civil society remains active and plays a key role in policy and decision-making processes. Measures have been taken to implement the 2018-2020 Strategy and Action Plan for the Cooperation between Government and Civil Society. However, efforts are needed to ensure a more meaningful and timely consultation process.

2. Progress Report in Judicial System in North Macedonia

The **judicial system** of North Macedonia has some level of preparation/is moderately prepared. There was good progress in the implementation of the judicial reform strategy, thereby addressing the 'Urgent Reform Priorities' and recommendations from the Venice Commission and the Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues. Efforts are still

¹⁰Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/COUNTRY_20_1795, last accessed 19th of October 2020.

Project implemented by:



needed to ensure systematic implementation of the updated action plan of the judicial reform strategy. Judicial institutions are implementing new rules for appointment, promotion, discipline and dismissal of judges and the Judicial Council has been exercising its role more proactively. As a result of its reform efforts in recent years, North Macedonia has established mechanisms to ensure judicial independence and accountability, such as rules on merit-based appointments, checking assets and conflicts of interest and disciplinary procedures. It should ensure their determined and consistent use before envisaging further changes in this area. Effective implementation of the legal framework as well as increased efforts by all stakeholders to demonstrate their exemplarity will contribute to increasing public trust in the judiciary.

3. Economic Landscape in North Macedonia

According to the World Bank¹¹ the robust growth of 2019 was swiftly reversed by mid-2020 as the pandemic unfolded. Growth declined by 6.4 percent by June; manufacturing fell by 16.1 percent year-on-year (y-o-y), with only a handful of sectors observing growth. Trade, tourism, and transport, the main drivers of growth over the past several years, fell by 12.3 percent y-o-y. The decline in private construction was offset by public investment in roads. Agriculture and information and communications technology (ICT) observed a robust growth. Despite government support to cushion the pandemic's impact on the labour market, by June, 17,690 people had lost their jobs. The unemployment rate, at 16.7 percent, increased for the first time since end-2011.

The fiscal deficit tripled to 4.7 percent of GDP by July. Spending increased by more than 10 percent y-o-y, as health expenditures and subsidy schemes, aimed at employment retention, surged. Spending on wages and pensions also increased, while capital spending declined by one-third. The Government was able to secure financing to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis and refinance payments that had come due. Public and publicly guaranteed debt increased to 59.5 percent of GDP in June 2020.

The economy is facing a recession of 4.1 percent in 2020. The contraction in demand and disruptions in the supply chains caused by the prolonged pandemic and containment measures have been worse than anticipated. Unemployment is set to grow despite government support schemes, while private investment has been severely affected as investors struggle with demand losses and liquidity shortages. Services continued to be affected by travel bans.

World Bank projects that the combined effect of lower labour incomes will increase poverty to pre-2015 levels of approximately 23 percent in 2020. Many of those falling into poverty were not benefiting from any social protection programs before the pandemic. Support programs introduced by the Government will likely alleviate the poverty impact of the crisis.

Over the medium term, growth is expected to return as the outbreak loses force. Political stability after the general elections and the launch of EU accession negotiations should boost reforms and investor confidence so that once the crisis is over, growth can rebound more quickly. In this scenario of a gradual recovery, growth in 2021 is expected to reach 3.6 percent, as restored consumer and investor confidence pushes up personal consumption, private investment, and exports.

4. EU Membership

North Macedonia has made some progress and is moderately prepared to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU. Integration with the EU in trade and

¹¹Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/northmacedonia/overview>, last accessed 16th of October 2020.

investment deepened further. Exports and manufacturing output diversified further towards higher-value products. However, skills shortages, reflecting shortcomings in the education system and the outflow of skilled workers, as well as infrastructure investment gaps impair labour productivity and the competitiveness of the economy. While measures to mitigate the immediate adverse impact of the COVID-19 crisis on growth and employment are currently prevalent, addressing these structural needs in a timely manner would support a swift post-crisis economic recovery.

As regards its ability to assume **the obligations of membership**, the country continues to be moderately prepared in most areas, including in the areas of competition, public procurement, statistics, financial control, transport, energy. The country shows a good level of preparation in areas such as company law, customs union, trans-European networks and science and research. The country is at an early stage of preparation in areas such as free movement of workers as well as financial and budgetary provisions. Over the coming period, more focus is also needed on administrative capacity and effective implementation. The country has continued to improve its alignment with the EU common foreign and security policy.

Corruption and Transparency

5. EU Reports about the Corruption and Free Access to Public Information in North Macedonia

5.1. Corruption is generally viewed as a common issue in North Macedonia and in the region. According to OSCE publication (December, 2012) 43% of citizens believe that corruption is widespread in public administration in North Macedonia and this percentage is even larger in other regions of the Balkan Peninsula. However, studies since then confirm that as transparency grows, corruption is seemingly decreasing.

5.2. EU commission progress report on North Macedonia (2019) confirms that the new legal framework for preventing corruption has improved. However, corruption is prevalent in many areas and remains an issue of concern in the country. The report also notes progress in improving budget transparency and increased transparency of most central government institutions. EU salutes the open data mechanism set up, but emphasizes the need for commitment by all state institutions to regularly provide and update data. As efforts for transparency and accountability in North Macedonia continue, they need to be complemented by an effective and timely control mechanism for public procurement, concessions, public-private partnerships and execution of public contracts. Moreover, national integrity should be embedded and extended to all stakeholders in the social life, primarily in the system of government, independent institutions, local self-government, private and civil sector and media, states the EU Commission.

5.3. On 6 October 2020 the Commission adopted its "Enlargement package"¹² - a set of documents explaining its policy on EU enlargement. Most importantly, this package includes a Communication on enlargement which sets out the way forward and takes stock of the situation in the candidate countries and potential candidates. This report also refers the topic of improving transparency and anticorruption where good progress in noted especially related to SCPC.

5.3.1. North Macedonia is moderately prepared with the reform of its **public administration**. Some progress was made in improving transparency, with the adoption of the 2019-2021 Transparency Strategy, the operationalization of the open government data portal and the publication of data on government spending. The monitoring reports on implementation of the

¹²Source: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf, last assessed 17th of October 2020.

Public Administration Reform Strategy and the Public Financial Management Reform Programme were produced and accompanied by adequate visibility actions. Ensuring respect for the principles of transparency, merit and equitable representation remains essential. The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption continued to address allegations of nepotism, cronyism and political influence in the process of recruitment of public sector employees. A proper follow-up to the reports and recommendations of the State Commission needs to be ensured.

5.3.2. In regards the **fight against corruption**, North Macedonia has some level of preparation/is moderately prepared. Good progress was made through consolidating its track record on investigating, prosecuting and trying high level corruption cases. The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption has been particularly pro-active in preventing corruption and opened a high number of cases, including those involving high-level officials from across the political spectrum, in line with last year's recommendation. Efforts continue to move forward with the Special Prosecutor's Office cases and establish accountability for the illegal wiretaps. The former Chief Special Prosecutor was convicted in June 2020 in the first instance verdict in the so-called 'racket case' concerning alleged extortion and abuse of office in relation to a case of the Special Prosecutor's Office. Corruption is prevalent in many areas and a more proactive approach from all actors engaged in preventing and fighting corruption needs to be ensured.

5.3.3. The country has some level of preparation in the **fight against organized crime**. The legislative framework is broadly in line with European standards, and efforts to implement strategies against organized crime must continue. Some progress was made in meeting last year's recommendation to establish an asset recovery office in line with the EU *acquis*. The office will now have to demonstrate its capacity to support a proactive policy of asset confiscation. The country is engaged in threat assessment at the regional level, and will have to broaden its scope in line with the EU practices. There is some progress at the operational level, but more needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement in fighting specific forms of crime, such as money laundering and financial crimes. The cooperation with Europol is increasing across the different criminal areas. Coordination remains crucial for all stakeholders involved in fighting organized crime.

5.3.4. Citizens' right to access public information further improved thanks to the 2019-2021 transparency strategy adopted in November 2019, which includes setting up an open government data portal and **Citizens' right to access public information** further improved thanks to the 2019-2021 transparency strategy adopted in November 2019, which includes setting up an open government data portal and publishing data on government finances. To ensure the system's smooth functioning, all institutions need to regularly provide and update the data. A new Law on Free Access to Public Information, adopted in May 2019, authorises the Agency for Protection of Free Access to Public Information to monitor compliance with the rules on proactive disclosure of information, and reduces the grounds upon which requests for public information can be refused. **The Agency's capacity to implement the new law needs to be strengthened.** Being without a director from May 2018 until January 2020, the Agency did not respond to appeals during that period, leading to an increase in unanswered requests for public information from public information providers. The director and deputy director were finally appointed in January 2020. The COVID-19 crisis has led to further delays in responding to requests for public information by many institutions. The country has some level of preparation / is moderately prepared in the area of **freedom of expression** and has made limited progress during the reporting period. The overall situation and climate in which media operates remain generally conducive to media freedom and allow for critical media reporting, although there have been some increased tensions during the COVID-19 crisis and in the context of the elections. Self-regulation efforts need to be intensified to support advancement in professional standards and the quality of journalism. It is important to ensure greater transparency of media advertising by state institutions, political parties and public enterprises. Sustainable solutions to ensure the public service broadcaster's

independence, professional standards and financial sustainability are needed. It is essential to continue supporting media pluralism, promoting professionalism, unbiased reporting and investigative journalism, and building resilience to effectively combat disinformation. The financial sustainability of independent media and working conditions of journalists remain a challenge.

6. Risks of Corruption in Public Procurement

On October 6th, The Centre for Civil Communications published the report of the survey “Mapping of the risks of corruption in public procurement in state owned companies and local-government owned companies”¹³ realized in the period between 1st of October 2019 and 30th of September 2020. The corruption risks were mapped based on the monitoring of the tender procedures of 37 joint stock companies and firms founded by the Government, City of Skopje and the municipalities of Kavadarci, Gostivar and Struga. During 2019 these companies made contracts for public procurements in the amount of 247 million EUR, amounting 27% of the total public procurements in the country. The key findings are connected to not realization of the plans for public procurements – lower than 50%. The highest level of realization is noted in AD MIA -96%, the lowest – AD Vodostopanstvo – Only 1%. The highest level for possibility of corruption is noted according the fact that at almost one third of the companies, 40% the procurement was done by one company. Also, one third of the companies did not executed the transparent procurement procedure, but done that by direct negotiating. At 20 of total 37 target companies the proportion of the cancelled procedures is higher than 20%. Big differences are also noted in prices for same kind of product or service in the scope from 20 to 120%.

7. The Transparency of the Institutions

Several steps were taken in order to increase transparency among the public institutions. Most notably the promotion and ongoing implementation of the financial transparency tool rolled out to give the media and the public constant free access to public spending. The tool is upgraded in phases - each phase adding a new layer of government officials being added to the monitored list. The other significant milestone is the passing of the Law on free access to public information in the Macedonian Assembly in 2019 as well as the reforming of the Commission for protection of the right to free access to public information into an Agency. This, as well as the creation of the Misdemeanour commission within the Agency, gave a huge boost to the effort of free and easy access to information to any interested party. The transformation managed to “unclog” the system of backed up information access delays, and most important of all gave the authority to the Agency to impose misdemeanour measures to those parties (information holders) that deny access to any information of public interest. In addition, it is important to stress that within the first months of the work of the Agency, 146 new public information holders were added to the List of information holders, now comprising of 1403 holders of public information. The List of information holders contains all the public institutions with listed contact details of the appointed information officer. The same is constancy updated and available on the web page of the Agency. Nevertheless, it seems that the institutions should work more to meet the needs of the requestors of information.

For that reason, in the Action Plan of the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2018 - 2022 , the Commission is the bearer of activities listed in Special Goal 3.4, "Strengthening the transparency of institutions and improving communication between institutions and citizens and the business community," for Activity 3.4.1.5 and Activity 3.4.1.6. According to the Action

¹³Source: <https://www.ccc.org.mk/index.php?lang=en>, last accessed 15th of October 2020.

Plan for implementation of the Strategy for PAR 2018-2020, in the special goal 3.4., It is envisaged Measure 3.4.1.6 Strengthening the mechanisms for access to public information.

In 2018 and 2019, the Commission monitored the websites of information holders of state administration bodies, agencies and central government inspection services. The total number, according to the Catalog of Institutions is 128 holders, of which 7 institutions are not holders of information, because the source of data will be the Catalog of Institutions, not the List of Holders of Information of the Commission. The monitoring was conducted according to a pre-determined methodology by reviewing all documents that the institutions are competent to publish in accordance with Article 9 and Article 10 paragraph 1 of the previous Law on Free Access to Information. In 2019, the scoring results of the three groups for 121 information holders / institutions of state administration bodies, agencies and inspection services are as follows:

- 85 institutions that have published 7 to 10 documents from the above 10;
- 17 institutions that have published 4 to 6 documents from the above 10;
- 0 institutions that have published from 1 to 3 documents from the above 10.
- While 19 institutions are scored with = 0 points of which: - 9 institutions do not have their own websites are holders - (constituent bodies) for which another holder submits an Annual Report to the Agency, most often the line Ministry - while, 10 holders do not have their own websites and are scored with 0.

The difference between 2018 and 2019 is that this year there are no institutions from the 3rd group with 1 to 3 documents published. Also, a comparative analysis was made between 2018 and 2019 in which institutions were noted that showed a declining trend in publishing information on their websites. Out of the monitored 121 institutions, in a total of 21 institutions in 2019, during the monitoring, a declining trend of publishing information was ascertained, 10 of which are at the top of the list with a decrease in scoring by 2-3 points from the previous monitoring. While in a total of 16 institutions, 8 institutions demonstrated a growing trend of published information in 2019 on their websites. These results were published in the Agency Annual Report in March 2020.

In June 2020, The Centre for Civil Communications published the ranging of the institutions according the Index for active transparency¹⁴, i.e. according their proactive publishing of public information executed in March 2020 and which includes all ministries. The index showed the following key aspects: the active transparency of all 98 included institutions for 2020 was 58,2%, and is slightly improved for 2,2% compared to last year. At Ministries, after 3 years of continuous growth, the stagnation is noted and a slight decrease of the active transparency of 77,1% in 2020 (77,6% last year). Nevertheless, the active transparency at the ministries is still better than the one of the municipalities which amounts 54,2% and grows over the years. Both ministries and municipalities at least publish information about the finances (ministries 42% and municipalities 36% of the information they need to publish). Upon the requests for free access to public information, the municipalities answered in average for 24 days (last year for 21 days), and the ministries for 26 days (last year for 34 days), although the legal period for answering is 20 days. In this timeframe only 40% of the institutions answered, while the rest of 60% did not respect the legal deadline.

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.ccc.org.mk/images/stories/ia2020mk.pdf>, last accessed 15th of October 2020.

8. Corruption and Transparency Topic in Covid-19 Environment

Although few NGOs published the recommendations for public procurements concerning the procurements for protective equipment and medical equipment for meeting the needs connected to protection of Covid-19, also having in mind that the worldwide requirements largely increased, the procurements needed to be in line with the laws and to keep it transparent as much as possible. “During the extraordinary situation, incoordination in public announcements, the differences in the information distributed to public; lack of information for the results of the working of the public institutions, especially regarding the way of collection and spending the money by the institutions of the health sector; giving the opportunities for budgetary redistribution by the budget user without public announcement of the need...; contribute towards increasing the possibility for misuse of public assets. With this way of operation, it is not possible to follow the work ad expenditures of the public institutions and to call for accountability from the public officials. In addition, this kind of approach is giving the Government right to bring the decisions and the possibility to set the needs and priorities of the citizens without consultations and suggestions. The situation is even more concerning that in the solely control mechanism of the Government and its institutions in the Government itself” – states the document presenting the Survey by CIJ SCOOP¹⁵ that was presents the situation with the public spending during Covid-19 crises up to 5th of May.

On 30th of September the Centre for Civil Communications published the survey¹⁶ and the data base of the public procurement contracts by emergency procedure with negotiation without publishing a call connected to Covid-19. The key findings were as follows: 6.7 million EUR was the amount of all contracts connected to procurements for protection against Covid-19, for the period of six months; one third of the amount of the contracts is connected to Ministry of Interior in the amount of 2.2 million EUR. 43% of the total amount of all tenders was distributed between 5 companies, although 186 companies won the contracts connected to coronavirus. In 68% of the signed contracts, the institutions broke the legal procedure of publishing the contracts within 10 days from signing. In every third case for emergency procurement the negotiation was done with only one supplier. There are noted significant differences in the prices for procured masks, gowns and gloves, also part of the contracts did not contained precise description of the purchased items, which leaves spaces for abuse during their realization. The aim of this activity was to increase of the effectiveness of the public expenditures by decreasing corruption and increasing the transparency.

Transparency International in North Macedonia published¹⁷: Access to information is a key tool for investigative journalists and NGOs to monitor the work of government institutions. With widespread examples of corruption and poor, often non-inclusive, policies undermining COVID-19 responses and recoveries around the world, open and transparent government matters now more than ever. Humanitarian aid and trillions of dollars of emergency financing must not be left open to abuse while citizens remain in “the dark” about its use and allocation. Lessons learned from the first six months of the pandemic show that trust in public officials is crucial for effective government-led responses that minimize the impact of COVID-

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Source:

<http://antikorupcija.mk/uploads/records/file/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%20%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20%D1%81%D0%BE%20COVID.pdf> , last accessed 15th of October 2020.

¹⁶Source: <https://www.ccc.org.mk/images/stories/sumarencovid19.pdf> , last accessed 15th of October 2020.

¹⁷ Source: https://www.transparency.mk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=590&Itemid=30 , last accessed 15th of October 2020.

19 on lives and livelihoods. This trust will be lost if governments do not openly share information with citizens, thereby undermining compliance with public health directives and other measures to stop the spread of the disease. Citizens cannot participate in governance without access to information. Access to information is essential for empowering citizens to hold governments accountable. Freedom of press, freedom of expression, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be ensured without access to information. As countries (re-)introduce restrictions on public life due to COVID-19, preparation for such measures should always include mechanisms to allow the continuation of government functions that are crucial for citizens' democratic rights. Ensuring the public's unobstructed access to information of which they are rightful owners must not be overlooked and it should be strengthened in the state.

Governments must immediately restore laws and practical systems for implementing access to information to pre-pandemic levels and improve them in line with international standards and best practice.

9. Institutional Dedication to Anticorruption, Integrity and Transparency

SCPC has prepared the first National Strategy for Fight against Corruption and the Conflict of Interest of the Republic of North Macedonia¹⁸ and is coordinating the implementation of the Strategy, while the active role is given to all stakeholders in the public sector, private and non-governmental sector. As the National Strategy is voted and accepted by the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, thus giving the highest importance of the anti-corruption fight in the country.

Republic of North Macedonia has signed all important international and European conventions and protocols against corruption, which sets obligations for acting in this field, but also providing the possibilities for support of the fight against corruption by other countries and the international community.

The new Government set the ground for fight against corruption and for increasing transparency, as at the constitutional meeting all ministers signed the Code of Conduct, aimed to provide public and transparent working of the officials of the government, meaning building a system of integrity and good governance. At the occasion the President of the Government, Zaev stated that the signing of the Code of Conduct mean respecting the Constitution, Laws, professional integrity, efficiency, loyalty, accountability and transparency of the Government and all governmental institutions. The new deputy-president of the Government for fight against corruption and criminal, for sustainable development and human resources was assigned. All Ministers in the Government were handed Mandatory Letters whereby the transparency, anti-corruption, integrity and accountability were incorporated as key responsibilities of the Ministers and their teams.

The new Government in the Government Program Agenda 2020-2024¹⁹, sets the ground for anticorruption and dedication to transparency. "Stop for misusing! The corruption and the political abuse are the biggest enemies of the citizens and institutions.... The justice, equality and freedom are the first victims of the political abuse and corruption. The Government of the

¹⁸ Source: <https://dsk.mk/index.php?id=118&L=798>, last accessed 6th of November 2020.

¹⁹Source:https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/programa-na-vlada-agenda2024-finalno_programa_1.pdf, last accessed 16th of October 2020.

Republic of North Macedonia will lead the fight via wide and mandatory transparency, protection of media freedom, institutional support of strong and independent SCPC and zero tolerance for discovered abuses. Our aim is to build system that destructs from abuses and clearly locates the responsibility.... We will set changes in the Laws increasing the penalty policy for acts typically connected to public officials...

Within the first six months, we will modernize the web-sites of the Ministries and the Government and we will increase the number and the data quality. The approach will be to further develop so called active transparency.” – is stated in the document. Further on – the Program of the Government foresees also the implementation of system for personal responsibility and accountability.

10. Whistleblowing

Transparency International Macedonia has opened the special web page dedicated to whistleblowers – www.whistleblowers.mk whereby there is a special online form for whistle blowing anonymously, as well as the list of persons and institutions for whistle blowing, and all information connected to the laws, protection of whistleblowers and examples from the world. This web site was founded within the Project focused on the crating platform for support of the protection of whistleblowers that will serve as an informative tool and will provide transparency in the implementation of the Law for protection of whistleblowers by the state institutions.

The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption has a special part of its web page dedicated to whistleblowers, but needs to be updated and misses the reports and examples of the positive experience with whistleblowing and practicing of laws for whistleblowers and for their protection, as well as there is no on-line tool for whistle blowing.

11. General Findings from the Survey about Whistleblowing ²⁰

Survey was undertaken under the ProTRACCO project on a representative sample of 1000 people all over North Macedonia in August 2020 with main purpose to identify the main issues related to whistleblowers and to serve as a baseline to assess the success of the Communication campaign, as the survey will be repeated after the campaign. The survey was partly based on a regional study published in 2017, so the situation comparison can be seen.

The overall conclusions from 2020 compared to 2017 are quite encouraging, as positive perception of whistleblowers and support to disclosing wrongdoings increased, in some topics quite significantly. On average the total number of respondents showed positive attitudes (highly positive + fairly positive) which increased from nearly 35% in 2017 to nearly 56% in 2020. Notable decrease in neutral or indifferent attitudes or lack of knowledge was shown (from 41% in 2017 to 9.6% in 2020), and in the extreme case (from 44% to 5% respectively). Important to mention is that the twofold increase from 36% to 75% of respondents who would feel personally obliged to report the wrongdoing to somebody in organization, and the increase of the ones who would strongly obliged to do so is even higher from 10% to 49%, and the

²⁰ Source document "Analysis of the whistleblowers perception survey from the point of view of public campaign", September 2020, By Premyslaw Musialkowski

number of those who strongly disagree is significantly higher from 5.4% to 11.8%, opposite of the movement in undecided from 44% in 2017 to 5% in 2020.

The number of respondents who think that people disclosing wrongdoings should be supported, even if inside information revealed increased, but it's also slightly higher than the number of those who believe to be punished for revealing inside information even if disclosing serious wrongdoing. Most of the respondents perceived the whistle-blowers as heroes or rather positive (59.5%), and report notes that this positive perception of those who react to irregularities and wrongdoings needs to be further developed in the information campaign.

Only 1/3 of all respondent is well familiar with the term "whistleblower" and its meaning, and over 52% of the respondents do not have basic knowledge on whistleblowers' protection. 40% of the respondent do not know to which institution they could report punishable unethical behaviour. That means that both the term *укажувач* and the legal protection should be fully emphasized in the public campaign. It would be also important to explain that *укажувач* and *свиркач* are the same thing.

The comparison of results shows clearly that the need for transparency grew in the society of North Macedonia and the number of respondents who think that too much information is kept secret by institutions increased from 24,7% to 43%, while the number of undecided halved. This is also the positive factor for promotion of transparency and the right to access to public information.

The significant overall increase in positive perceptions of whistleblowers observed between 2017 and 2020 may be difficult to further improve equally spectacularly in just one year. The campaign should seek to meet the following indicators: Maintain the overall upward trend and prevent any drops in positive attitudes; Improve the results on questions where the increase was less evident and where increase of positive attitudes was accompanied by parallel increase at the negative end; Improve the results on issues which were not tested in 2017; Further increase highly positive attitudes at the expense of fairly positive and or fairly and highly negative ones.

The main focus, in particular in the first phase of the campaign, should be on issues highlighted as problematic in the report. However, other areas cannot be neglected as there is still high proportion of highly negative attitudes, which shows that the foundations on which the improvements have been build are not very solid yet. The campaign should enforce them.

44% of the respondents believe that appropriate steps would be taken if they disclosed the wrongdoing, only 24% expressed strong believe, while disbelievers also increased significantly from 17% in 2017 to 43% in 2020. Disbelief in effectiveness of the action taken is a strong demotivator. Therefore, the public campaign should publicize positive cases, where whistle-blowing caused serious steps.

Disbelief in effective protection within organization is also serious demotivator for whistle-blowing. Public campaign should also take the challenge of weakening this demotivator.

One third of the respondents believe that people who report wrongdoings have problem afterwards. This demotivator is stronger in public than in private sector. Large proportion of

respondents also think that the wrongdoer would not be punished anyway. Also notable are the answers that these cases are hard to prove and that they do not know where to report.

Over 55% of respondents declared that ethical standards are important to them and 43% apply them in their personal and professional life, while 12% try to apply them as much as they can. These results are higher for respondents in private and public sector than the average which indicates high working ethics, and particularly higher in public sector.

59.9% of those for whom ethical norms are important and apply them in a personal and professional life believe that people should be encouraged to reveal illegal actions, and 62.1% of them declare that whistleblowers are heroes or something positive. In opposite, 54% of those who try to apply ethical standards and 35% of those who say apply them would rather punish revealing inside information even at the price of not disclosing a serious wrongdoing. Within this group 29% have negative attitude towards whistle-blowers, which include 19% who call them snitches.

12. Findings Public Opinion Survey on Corruption and Integrity Perception²¹

Within the Project scope the Public Opinion Survey on Corruption and Integrity Perception was committed “Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration”, financed by the European Union, during the period from 6th to 12th October, 2020, TIM Institute conducted a public opinion survey for citizens perception on corruption and integrity, through a CATI telephone survey with 1023 respondents in Republic of North Macedonia. The key findings are that in general, the citizens’ overall impression is that all institutions in the country are only slightly transparent in their work. The political parties and judiciary system are assessed as the least transparent in their work, while the educational institutions and health facilities are assessed as more transparent when compared to other institutions. Extremely low percentage of the citizens believes the central level authorities are very transparent in terms of below mentioned processes. The authorities on central level are assessed as the least transparent in terms of: Public procurement and Allocation of public funds, where 8 out of 10 citizens think these authorities are slightly or absolutely non-transparent. Slightly higher percentage of citizens (round one fifth) assesses the process of informing broad public as very transparent in terms of the activities and in terms of decision-making on central level.

A low level of citizens thinks the bodies on local level are very transparent in terms of these processes. The authorities on local level are assessed as slightly or absolutely non-transparent in terms of public procurement (80%) and the allocation of public funds (79%), while the transparency is considered higher in terms of informing the public about activities and decision-making on local level.

Only 3% of the citizens notice a significant decrease in the overall level of corruption in the country compared to the previous 3 years, while 10% of the citizens believe there is a decrease, but assess it as insignificant. 41% of the citizens do not notice any change in the

²¹ Source - document: “Key Findings Analysis from Public Opinion Survey on Corruption and Integrity Perception within the Project “Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration” Financed by the European Union.” October 2020.

level of corruption, 23% said that it has increased insignificantly, while 24% notice a significant increase in the level of corruption in our country. The percent of Ethnic Macedonians, residents of urban settlements and citizens with higher education in higher percentage believe there is a significant or insignificant decrease of corruption compared to the previous 3 years.

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = they are not effective at all and 10 = they highly effective, the citizens give an average grade of 3.7 for the effectiveness of the laws in our country.

Additionally, half of the citizens give the grade 4 or less than 4.

The percentage of citizens who think the laws in our country are not effective for all citizens is significantly higher and they give the lowest grade (30%), compared to those who give the highest grade for the effectiveness of the laws for all citizens (1%).

The citizens believe in the independence of the Police the most and in the independence of the courts the least. Still, the data show that very small part of the citizens (every tenth citizen) believes that any institution is fully independent in its action.

About 42% of the citizens perceive the courts of justice as fully dependent in their action:

32% of the citizens think the Public Prosecutor's Office is fully dependent, 31% of them think DKSK is fully dependent in its action, while 29% of the interviewed citizens think the work of the Police is fully dependent.

More than half of the citizens (53%) completely agree that corruption is a major problem in our country, while only 2% of the citizens think that corruption is not a problem at all in Macedonia.

The absence of punishments for those who deal with corruptive actions is the most frequently stated reason for corruption in our country. The following more frequently mentioned reasons for corruption are: lenient penalties which do not deter infringers from act of corruption, the mentality of our people who embrace solicitation and giving bribery and the gaps in the laws which make the corruption deeds possible.

13. General Findings from the Survey about the Free Access to Public Information²²

The survey analysis shows that there is a relatively low awareness of the citizens about the right to access to public/ state documents and information.

3 out of 10 citizens state that they know or absolutely know that they have right to access to state/ public documents and information, owned by the public institutions. On the other hand, 71% of the respondents stated that they know little or don't know at all that they have a right to access to public information.

The citizens with higher level of education are more aware about their right to access to public information. While 51% of the citizens with university education state that are absolutely or fairly aware with the right to access public information, 27% of the respondents with highschool education and 8% of the citizens with lower education, are absolutely or fairly aware with the right to access public information. Regarding the age, respondent older than 55 years are less aware with their right to access public information.

²²Source document: „Анализа на главните наоди од мерење на јавното мислење во однос на слободниот пристап до информации од јавен карактер во рамки на проектот “Промовирање на транспарентност и одговорност во јавната администрација во Северна Македонија” финансиран од Европската Унија, by ТИМ Институт –Истражување, квалитет, развој, October 2020.

4 out of 10 citizens think that the free access to public information is guaranteed by the Constitution, while 3 out of 10 don't share that opinion. More than one quarter of the citizens (27%) don't know how to respond to this question.

Data crosscheck shows that women, citizens over age of 55 years, ethnic Albanians, citizens with lower education and the rural inhabitants in smaller percent believe that the right to free access to public information is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Every third citizen knows that there is a Law for protection of the right for free access to public information. 44% stated that this law sounds familiar to them, but are not sure, while 22% stated that they don't know if such Law exist.

Men, citizens at age of 25-34 years, ethnical Macedonians and the representatives of smaller ethnic minorities as well as citizens with higher level of education in larger percent know that there is a Law for protection of access to public information.

Almost same percent think that they have the right and that don't have right to submit request for public information to public institutions according the Law for protection of the right to free access to public information. The remaining 17% are indifferent to this question.

One fifth of the respondent stated that they are aware of the procedure and the way of submitting the request to public institutions, while less than one third (31%) stated that don't know the procedure, but know where to find it. Nevertheless, almost half of the citizens are not informed, either know where to find information about the procedure.

Only 10% of the respondents stated that they have submitted the request for access to public information to some of the institutions.

About the procedure 19.7% are familiar with the procedure, 31.0% not know precisely but know where to find information, high 49.3% don't know and don't know where to find information

89.8% have not filed a request for access to public information in the last 12 months, and 10.2% have done that.

53.9% don't know that they can file complaint to APRFAP if not satisfied with the response. And 52% are not familiar with the procedure, only 15.7% know the procedure.

The most concerning fact is that 47.2% respondents think that the bodies and institutions of the government are slightly transparent, 26% think that are absolutely not transparent and only 19.6% think that the state institutions are very transparent. Related to courts this negative perception is much higher – 43.6% respondents think that the courts are slightly transparent, 41.5% think that are absolutely not transparent. Local municipalities are perceived similar to state institutions: 47.3% respondents think that the bodies and institutions of the municipalities are slightly transparent, 27.9% think that are absolutely not transparent, and 13.7 think the municipalities are very transparent. Health institutions are perceived by the highest number of respondents as very transparent – 28.6% compared to other institutions. Yet 47.7% respondents think that the health institutions are slightly transparent, 19.3% think they are absolutely not transparent. Educational institutions are perceived similar to health institutions – 27.5% think that are absolutely transparent, 46.0% respondents think that the educational institutions are slightly transparent, 18.7% think they are absolutely not transparent. The

respondents perceive the political parties as the most not transparent 46.6%, and slightly not transparent 37.4%.