

OUTPUT 1.1 - Efficient monitoring, co-ordination and management of the anti-corruption strategy ensured and annual action plans available

While the Monitoring Group improved its working methods by conducting thematic controls inside the public institutions, the procedure of conducting such controls has more an ad hoc nature without ensuring proper follow up and transparency of the process. The transparency is also undermined by the fact that only 3 out of 24 members of the monitoring group are representatives of the civil society and that there is no clear relation between the monitoring group and the coordinative council established under the President of the Republic. Furthermore, the efficiency of the monitoring process may be seriously affected by the creation of similar parallel structures designed to monitor progress achieved under the action plans implemented by other donors. In particular, the Threshold Country Plan (TCP) was approved by the Government. Decision N32/2007 established a monitoring group to assess the implementation of the TCP. For the moment, there are no communication and coordination mechanisms in place to ensure that the two monitoring processes do not overlap and duplicate. At the end of the 3rd National Anticorruption Conference (6-7 December 2007) a group of NGOs and representatives of mass media addressed a petition to the President of the country, President of the Parliament, Prime Minister, Chairman of the Monitoring Group, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and to the USAID Program Coordinator from Millennium Challenge Account. The petition requests that the "process of separate updating and adoption of the two action plans is stopped and a unique implementation and monitoring mechanism is established, ensuring the interconnection of all anticorruption components and designation of a single responsible and consolidated structure for monitoring and reporting". Special Representative of the Secretary General together with the MOLICO team obtained support from the Chairman of the Monitoring Group to address the matter as a top priority on a high political level.

Although received with reserve by the members of the Monitoring Group, an independent survey carried out by IMAS inc. at national level, in April 2007, provided substantial data reflecting the perception of the public and the progress from the previous similar exercise conducted under PACO Moldova Project in 2005. The 2007 IMAS survey shows that corruption remains among the first five major problems for the Republic of Moldova, after poverty, high prices, unemployment and low salaries. The results of the survey were discussed by the Monitoring Group in July 2007. A press conference was organised by MOLICO project in 24 July and the report was widely disseminated to the public institutions civil society and resident international organisations. In September 2007 Transparency International issued a new Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which is consistent with the findings of the IMAS survey showing a high level of perceived corruption in the Republic of Moldova. A comparative analysis of the results demonstrates that the Republic of Moldova is the only country in the South Eastern Europe that recorded a considerable negative evolution on the CPI rating (0.4 points).

On 25 May, the first training for the members of the monitoring group was organised on the methodology of self risk assessments for central and local public administration. (action 4.2 of the National Anticorruption Action Plan). The event revealed the absence of a common understanding among the Monitoring Group members with regard to what risk assessment

means and how to develop an action plan based on evaluations. Although, 10 reports on risk assessment were presented by the national authorities. The absence of the generally adopted methodology for conducting such assessments, made this exercise inefficient. The training curricula for high ranking officials of the law enforcement institutions on risk assessment methodology was developed (additional info available under Output 1.6) In the framework of the training, the Monitoring Group received assistance to further improve its capacity to interact with the public, to ensure the active participation of the civil society in the monitoring process and to inform the public about its work and the latest developments in the anti-corruption field. In this regard, in December 2006 and 2007, the Annual Anticorruption Conferences were organised, bringing together all national key actors involved in the fight against corruption, both from public and private sector, as well as international partners. MOLICO Project supported the creation of a new dedicated web site that was launched during 2007 Anticorruption annual conference in order to promote and ensure the full publicity of the Monitoring Group meetings. The MG Web site is expected to be fully operational in the first quarter of 2008.

Since December 2007, limited progress was reached by the National Anti-corruption Monitoring Group (MG) in implementing the Council of Europe recommendations for reinforcing the MG Institutional Capacity to Monitor and Co-ordinate the Anti-corruption Efforts in the Republic of Moldova. On 27 December 2007, the Parliament adopted the Decision for updating the National Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan. The revised Anti-corruption Strategy and Action plan offers limited answers to the co-ordination issue between various existing monitoring mechanisms. The adopted amendments envisage that the Chairman of the Threshold Country Plan (MCC programme) will submit just two reports per year to the MG meeting. In addition, in February 2008, the President of the Republic of Moldova signed a new Decree for appointing the new members of the Monitoring Group, without substantial changes regarding the level of participation of civil society representatives.

The Monitoring Group continued to receive assistance from the MOLICO project to further improve its capacity to interact with the public, ensure the active participation of the civil society in the monitoring process, and inform the public about its work and the latest developments in the fight against corruption. The MG and its Secretariat supported the organisation in February 2008 of the public debate that marked the conclusion of the seminars on risk assessment for high level officials from law enforcement agencies and justice sector institutions.

April 2008 marked the launch of the new website of the Monitoring Group – part of the CCCEC official website – produced with the support of the MOLICO Project. The section dedicated to the MG hosts detailed information regarding its mission, background documents, members, activities carried out and reports. Although media representatives are invited to and attend MG meetings on regular basis, the activity of the MG was only reflected on a few occasions. The access of media representatives, as well as the public reflection of MG activities, may be further improved by identifying a larger conference room and also by organising periodic briefings and press conferences.

In May 2008, a series of bilateral and working group meetings were organised with the support of the MG Secretariat and participation of MG Chairman of Council of Europe experts in order to speed up the process for strategically revising the documents of the Monitoring Group. As a main outcome, an agreement was reached that the basic documents of the Monitoring Group must be redrafted in order to further ensure a standardised working procedure for the Monitoring Group, both with regard to the progress reporting and audit components. Subsequently, in June 2008, the MG approved the creation of an expert group

tasked to elaborate the first draft amendments of the MG regulations and working methods. Unfortunately, the composition of this workgroup fails to ensure a wide involvement of all relevant stakeholders from both governmental and non-governmental sectors. As a short term priority, the composition of the workgroup needs to be further considered, especially by involving high level national experts. The product of the expert group will be reviewed in September – October 2008 by national and CoE experts, as well as being subject to a wide high-level public debate. Also, the clarification of institutional relations between the Monitoring Group and Coordinative Council on the one hand, and in relation with other Monitoring Groups, on the other hand, still remains unaddressed and requires further attention. On 14 July 2008, during a bilateral meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary General, the Chairman of the MG reconfirmed once again his personal support for undertaking substantial changes to the current state of affairs and set September 2008, as the deadline for a review of all existing ongoing AC activities in the Republic of Moldova, and also for finishing the first draft amendments to the MG regulations. The issue of relations between Coordinative Council and Monitoring Group is also expected to be addressed at the highest political levels in the following months.

An important highlight of the MG activities in 2008 is the effort for ensuring synergies between the Anti-corruption Strategy and the Public Administration Reform. Representatives of the specialised governmental unit co-ordinating the implementation of the public administration reform periodically attended the MG meetings and delivered updated reports on progress reached, as well as advance proposals for joint efforts in promoting the newly adopted code of ethics for public servants. This approach is in line with a specific GRECO recommendation made under the second evaluation round for Republic of Moldova. In this respect, the MOLICO project is supporting the launch of an anti-corruption module for training trainers within local public administration, which is envisaged to be carried out in the second half of 2008. Additional activities to promote the implementation of the new code of ethics for public servants will be implemented, including dissemination of new rules of ethics.

According to its action plan, during the first half of 2008, the MG held four meetings and reviewed progress reports presented by top management of Ministry of Defence, Border Guards Service, Material Reserves, Public Acquisitions and Humanitarian Aid Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Economy and Commerce. In addition, MG members reviewed the control report elaborated by the multidisciplinary workgroup that completed the on-site evaluation visit to the Ministry of Transport and Road Management. Two new multidisciplinary workgroups were formed and tasked to conduct an on-site evaluation visit to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and Ministry of Defence.

In addition, MG meetings hosted brief presentations from various NGOs and international organisations on anti-corruption related issues: reports on the status of GRECO evaluations on Moldova regional co-operation under the Anti-corruption Initiative; status quo in implementing the MOLICO Action Plan for 2008; new programme for reducing corruption in local public administration implemented by the UNDP; an evaluation of the impact of anti-corruption hot lines hosted by public authorities – report prepared by CAPC.

- The organisation of the Annual National Anticorruption Conferences (9 December 2006, and 6-7 December 2007);
- The first training for the members of the monitoring group was organised on implementing the methodology for risk assessments within central and local administration (25 May 2007);
- The results of the second IMAS survey were made available on 9 July 2007. On 19 July 2007, the Anticorruption Monitoring Group organised a meeting dedicated to the

presentation of the survey. Furthermore, the results of the survey were presented on 24 July 2007, during a press conference organised, at MOLDPRESS, in co-operation with the Information Office of the COE in Moldova;

- National Anticorruption Action Plan for 2007 – 2009, approved in December 2006, was published in February 2007. In December 2007 the Government approved the revised action plan and submitted to the Parliament for adoption;
 - The web site of the Anticorruption Monitoring Group was officially presented during the Annual Anticorruption Conference on 6 December, 2007. The page is expected to be fully operational in January 2008;
 - The MOLICO project supported the publication of the Anticorruption Strategy and Action Plan 2007 – 2009; two progress reports of the Monitoring Group (2006 and 2007), Booklet of the 2006 Annual Anticorruption Conference;
- The MOLICO long term anticorruption advisor attended 4 out of 7 meetings of the Monitor Group and closely observed the status of the implementation of the Action plan. Upon request permanent specialised advice was available for the members of the Monitoring Group. "Reinforcing the Institutional Capacity of the Monitoring Group to Monitor and Coordinate the Anticorruption Efforts in the Republic of Moldova" (December 2007).
- A major public debate was organised in February 2008, in co-operation with the National Anti-corruption Monitoring Group, in order to mark the conclusion of the seminars on risk assessment for law enforcement agencies and justice sector institutions.
 - In April 2008 the new website of the CCCEC was launched. The new website includes one distinct and visible section dedicated to Monitoring Group activities.
 - With the support of the MG Secretariat, in May 2008, the MOLICO project organised bilateral and group expert meetings on measures to strengthen the capacity of the National Anti-corruption Monitoring Group to co-ordinate and assess the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy.

The MOLICO long term anti-corruption advisor attended all four meetings of the Monitoring Group and closely observed the status of the implementation of the Action Plan. Upon request, permanent specialised advice was available to the members of the Monitoring Group.