



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Co-ordinator of Economic and
Environmental Activities**

Presence in Albania

“Strengthening the capacities of watchdogs in the SEE in monitoring and investigation of the use of public funds through open data”

Date: 24 – 25 November 2022

Modality: blended format

Venue: Tirana International Hotel

Good economic governance through transparency, accountability, the use of open data as well as effective economic policies are fundamental to economic growth, political stability and security. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works to enhance security and stability in the OSCE region by promoting regional and international co-operation on economic issues, strengthening good governance and assisting participating States (pS) in combating corruption. In view of this, OSCE participating States have long stressed the need for the OSCE executive structures to apply a whole of society approach and involve the private sector and civil society in their activities on strengthening good governance, promoting transparency, and improving the business and investment climate.

In the last decade, the use of open government data has been recognized as a key tool in the prevention and combatting of corruption. If used properly, open data is instrumental in oversight mechanisms for governments and citizens to ensure that public funds are used efficiently and as intended, guaranteeing high quality of service delivery and safeguarding the public interest. Open Data platforms and other digital tools have proved useful for civil-society organizations and journalists investigating and analyzing public spending. Watchdog activities play a critical role in ensuring transparency and efficiency in public institutions’ functions, promoting democratic values. It is important that such watchdog groups have up-to-date knowledge on innovative tools and instruments to identify, monitor, analyze, use and re-use government disclosures on its decisions and expenditures of public funds, allowing thus to better monitor their use.

Government procurement is a high-risk area for corruption given its size in the global market which amounts, according to the World Bank, to an estimated \$11 trillion. COVID-19 has presented enormous challenges to transparent public procurement due to the need for emergency procurement processes that required the circumvention of standard controls. In view of this, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) in the framework of a cross-regional project on *Promoting good governance and a positive business climate in the OSCE region through digitalization and the use of open data* and the OSCE Presence in Albania have organized a number of activities aimed at promoting better understanding of the use of open data in the oversight of public procurement processes. During the implementation of these activities, the need emerged to further enhance technical capacities and foster regional discussions and knowledge sharing among civil society organizations, activists, journalists on especially open contracting, transparent procurement and effective anti-corruption measures, including in the investigation of public fund misappropriation.

Objective of the regional training is (i) to enhance capacities of civil society organizations and active civil actors, such as investigative journalists working in the South Eastern Europe region (SEE) on

innovative technologies deployed to independently monitor direct contracting and procurement as well as (ii) to encourage knowledge exchange, fostering mutual learning and networking among regional CSOs working in the anti-corruption area.

Audience and Stakeholders: civil society organizations, activists, journalists, from the countries of the SEE region as well as other international organizations, and policymakers. The event will be held in a blended format with either physical presence in Tirana or virtual participation via Zoom. The working language is English with simultaneous interpretation in Albanian and Bosnian/ Croatian/ Montenegrin/Serbian (BCMS).

Administrative Arrangements:

The OSCE will cover cost of (i) travel to Tirana through the most feasible connection, (ii) accommodations (for three overnights), (iii) coffee and lunch breaks as well as training materials for the participants and invitees.

Draft Agenda

Day 1 Thursday, 24 November 2022 Tirana International Hotel/ on Zoom	
09:15 – 09:30	Registration of participants
09:30 – 10:30	<p>Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting Head of OSCE Presence in Albania, Ms. Clarisse Pasztory • Polish Ambassador to Albania, Representative of the 2022 OSCE Polish Chairpersonship, Ms. Monika Zuchniak-Pazdan • Government of Albania, Minister of State for Standards and Services, Ms. Milva Ekonomi <p>Keynotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSCE CiO Special Representative on the Fight against Corruption, Professor Anita Ramasastry • Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Country Director Albania, Ms. Kristina Voko <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Iris Pilika, Programme Officer, Economic Cooperation and Governance, OCEEA</p>
10:30 – 10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45 – 12:00	<p>Session I: Ensuring open and fair procurement processes - legal and regulatory frameworks and experiences in SEE</p> <p>The main objective of this session is to discuss and share relevant legal and compliance frameworks, tools and best practices conducive to transparent public procurement with a focus on the SEE region. The session will also touch upon the role of digital tools and their impact on the transparent use of public funds.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD representative (SIGMA) (<i>online</i>) • UNCITAL Model Law (<i>online</i>) • MAPS - Methodology for Assessing Procurement System (international standard and the universal tool to evaluate any public procurement system anywhere in the world) (<i>online</i>) <p>Q&A session (30 minutes)</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Eni Gjergji, Economic Adviser, Economic Cooperation and Governance, OCEEA</p>
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:00 – 14:30	<p>Session II: Introduction of the OECD Matrix on detection of high-level corruption cases</p> <p>The main objective of this session is to introduce to CSOs and investigative journalists a new work programme of the OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN) and its matrix of high-level corruption cases.</p> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Mr. Andrii Kukharuk, Head of ACN Law Enforcement Projects - Anti-Corruption Analyst; Mr. Noel Merillet, Anti-Corruption Analyst, Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN), Anti-Corruption Division, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, OECD</p>
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:00 – 17:30	<p>Session III: Data monitoring and analysis- Good practices from the SEE region</p> <p>This session will aim to highlight good practices and examples of data monitoring and analysis from across the SEE region. Particular attention will be paid at highlighting the way new challenges in direct contracting and procurement procedures in emergency cases (health pandemic/covid-19,) have been dealt with by CSOs and journalists in the SEE region. A roundtable discussion among participants will provide the opportunity to share an overview of good practices from among their work in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Petar Terziev, Southeast European Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI) • Representative of the Albanian Public Procurement Agency • Mr. Erduan Kafedžić, Head of Office for Anti-corruption and Quality Management of Canton Sarajevo <p>Q&A session (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtable discussion: good practices from civil society and media representatives from the SEE countries <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Kimberly Schneider, Senior Governance Adviser, OSCE Presence in Albania</p>
17:30	<i>Networking event / Reception</i>

Day 2
Friday, 25 November 2022
Tirana International Hotel/ on zoom

09:00 - 11:00	<p>Session IV: Transparent and fair procurement processes - Practical and methodological tools for watchdogs</p> <p>During this practical session tools will be presented that help in spotting corruption red flags in public contracts by introducing also sources that support CSOs and journalist in finding information related to different stages of the procurement process. Practical recommendations will be provided on the oversight of direct contracting process by CSOs and journalist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bence Toth, Senior Researcher, Government Transparency Institute • Mr. Karolis Granickas, Senior Programme Manager/ Mr. Volodymyr Tarnay Manager for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Open Contracting Partnership (OCP) (<i>online</i>) • Mr. Mykhailo Koltsov, Manager of YouControl Ukraine (<i>online</i>) <p>Q&A session (30 minutes)</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30– 12:30	<p>Session V: Group work- case study monitoring direct contracting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bence Toth, Senior Researcher, Government Transparency Institute • Mr. Karolis Granickas, Senior Programme Manager/ Mr. Volodymyr Tarnay Manager for Eastern Europe and Central Asia OCP (<i>online</i>) • Mr Mykhailo Koltsov, Manager of YouControl Ukraine (<i>online</i>) <p>Presentation of the results (30 minutes)</p>
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:30 – 15:00	<p>Session VI: Data journalism and data visualisation- Practical tools</p> <p>This session will aim to inform on different existing intelligence sources for investigative journalism and provide recommendations and practical ways to visualize data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Lazar Cova, data-journalist for BBC Serbia service
15:00 – 16:00	<p>Session VII: Group work on data journalism – case study</p> <p>Presentation of the results (30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Lazar Cova, data-journalist for BBC Serbia service <p><i>Coffee break to be served during the group work</i></p>
16:00 – 16:30	<p>Wrap up and conclusions</p> <p><i>Moderator: OCEEA, OSCE Presence in Albania</i></p>