

# Conflict of interests – open door to corruption

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## Conflict of interests – open door to corruption

### Starting point - WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

*A conflict between the public duty and the private interest of a public official, in which the public official's private-capacity interest could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.*

- Conflict of interest is a potential and often actual gateway to corruption.
- Corruption may involve conflict of interest, though not all cases of conflict of interest are cases of corruption

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### Project MOTIVE

The new Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (January 2019)

A conflict of Interests as a direct relation to the corruption phenomenon:

nepotism, clientelism – power based political relations and decision making procedures, cronyism – patronage of friends

Nepotism in public enterprises and state institutions is a huge problem in the country

The existing nepotism and cronyism is present all over the news and among political parties.

Kleptocracy and clientelism had become the norm.

Such behavioral and thinking patterns obstruct creation of democratic state.

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The competences of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) strengthened in direction of obligatory verification of Interests of the public officials.

The new members of the SCPC opened more than 70 cases of alleged nepotism in employments of the relatives and family members of the MP's, current and previous government members and other officials. Most of the employments are in the public enterprises.

There is general lack of capacity and knowledge to effectively identify and address conflict of interests as one of the corruption risks

Lack of accountability and inefficient integrity policies create an environment prone to conflict of interest

All of these activities will fall apart without a strong support of the civil society in effective implementation of the Law.

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A systemic approach is needed for informing the public about all forms of corruption and the harmfulness of corruption and conflict of interests.

Strengthening the awareness of the citizens and the public administration about corruption and conflict of interest is of great importance for dealing with these negative social phenomena, which is why it is necessary to establish a continuous mechanism for educating the public.

The key is therefore the proper management of conflict of interests, and not necessarily combating it, as in the case of corruption

Important element of the system of management of conflicts of interest is constant raising awareness through regular campaigns, discussion and education.

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The **overall objective** is effective, transparent and accountable public institutions, with integrity and ethics in the quality of service delivery to the citizens

**Specific objective** is contribution to strengthening awareness and improving knowledge of the anti-corruption related matters among the public administration employees and authorities, citizens and business entities, which will lead to better practical implementation of the laws on prevention of corruption and conflict of interests

Project duration: 9 months, 11.000 EUR

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### Expected results:

- Conducted research of the public knowledge on the conflict of interests, nepotism and cronyism,
- Prepared analyses with conclusions and recommendation, on the base of the conducted research and reviewed of the relevant legislation and documentation
- Guidance for the citizens how to recognize and act in case of potential conflict of interests prepared
- Social media campaigns conducted through distribution and promotion of the guidance, providing visibility and publicity

All of the mention results will refer to the guidelines for applicants. It will provide improved understanding of policies, raised awareness, and increased multi-sectoral dialogue and collaboration with the media.

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### **Expected outputs:**

1. Scanned knowledge and skills of the citizens on conflict of interests reporting system, practices and how to act in situations of possible conflict
2. Raised awareness of state service users for conflict of interests

**Target groups:** Employees in the state institutions, citizens which are in direct contacts with state institutions

**Final beneficiaries:** Numerous public institutions and the citizens in the country

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The first group of activities pertains to measuring the understanding of conflict of interests, nepotism and cronyism:

1.1 Survey of the public knowledge on the conflict of interests, nepotism and cronyism

1.2 Analyses with conclusions and recommendation, on the base of the conducted research and current legislation

1.3 Preparation of the Guidelines for the citizens how to recognize and act in case of potential conflict of interests

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## Guidelines

Will help citizens to understand that conflict of interest is not the same as corruption.

It is important for citizens to recognize the appearance and to realize that a poorly managed, perceived or apparent conflict of interest can be just as damaging as a poorly managed actual conflict of interest.

The critical factor is that public officials must not only behave ethically, they must also be seen to behave ethically.

Understanding and defining the differences between actual, perceived or apparent and potential conflicts of interest assists in identifying when a conflict exists and determining which type of approach may be the most appropriate is very important for the citizens in direction of knowing how to act in concrete situation.

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The second group of activities will be focused on providing Guidelines to the citizens, electronically and printed dissemination in the institutions

2.1 Printed and distributed Analysis and Guidelines

2.2 Providing publicity through event for promotion of the Analysis and Guidelines

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### Who will benefit from the project

**Citizens in general** – raising capacities to identify risks of potential conflict of interests and to provide advices in direction of elimination of the possible conflict of interests.

**Employees in the state institutions** as a most vulnerable to conflict of interests.

**Citizens who are in direct contacts with state institutions** and in position to use clientelism or nepotism, without being aware for their own acts.

**Numerous public institutions** and the citizens in the country will be tackled with actions for raising awareness, which will lead to raising institutional and personal integrity and ethics, which on the other hand will contribute in reducing conflict of interests and in that matter reduction of corruption.

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION**