

# TI IPP STRONGG IN MONGOLIA

## Good Governance and Social Accountability in Mongolia

Established in 2003, Transparency International Mongolia (TI Mongolia) is part of the Transparency International global coalition against corruption that brings together chapters operating in more than 100 countries worldwide with an international Secretariat based in Berlin, working towards a shared vision: a world free of corruption.

### BACKGROUND

Despite occasional progress in some areas, Mongolia's score in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) has continued to deteriorate, dropping from 39 points in 2015 to 33 in 2023. Corruption in both the public and private sectors remains endemic. According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer – Asia 2020 (GCB), Mongolians perceive the health sector as the second most corrupt public service after public schools, with 17% of people surveyed admitting that they had paid a bribe to access services from a public clinic or health centre in the 12 months prior to the survey.

According to the survey, 7 in 10 people thought that corruption levels had increased or stayed the same over the same period.

### PROJECT APPROACH

With support from the *TI Indo-Pacific Partnership for Strong, Transparent, Responsive & Open Networks for Good Governance (TI IPP STRONGG) 2020 - 2023*, TI Mongolia has worked towards reducing corruption levels in public services, improving the quality of processes in the healthcare sector, and holding the government accountable regarding its anti-corruption commitments. Through the *Good Governance and Social Accountability in Mongolia (GGASAM)* project, the chapter increased social demand for accountability among diverse groups across the country and improved the national anti-corruption legal framework. The project was implemented over a period of 3 years and 7 months, from June 2020 to December 2023.



*National Forum on Pharmaceutical Procurement  
Transparency / Picture @ TI Mongolia*



*Meeting with the Prime Minister of Mongolia, during which TI-Mongolia discussed how to improve the fight against corruption. / Picture @ TI Mongolia*

## TI MONGOLIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS

### Advocating for Legislative Reform

Under the STRONGG program, TI-Mongolia has advocated for the Law on Political Parties. The Parliament of Mongolia approved the law on July 7th, 2023. TI Mongolia participated in the process and worked as a member of the working group tasked with developing the revised draft law. TI Mongolia's contribution ranged from drafting the law, meeting with minor political parties for their views and opinions and including the financial transparency and disclosure of parties. Meetings were held with the President of Mongolia, the Prime Minister of Mongolia, and numerous Members of Parliaments on the support and enhanced adoption of the law.

The law includes five key regulations: enhancing the responsibility of political parties, developing political parties as policy institutions, ensuring transparency in party financing, improving control ensuring equal participation of party members, and developing the internal democracy of political parties.

TI Mongolia has advocated for the adoption of Whistleblower Protection, including becoming a member of the working group established to develop the first draft law, providing recommendations to the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, meeting with the head of the Legal

Standing Committee of the Parliament to push for the adoption, and meeting with opposition Member of Parliament to support the adoption process. TI Mongolia submitted an official request to the Speaker of Parliament to enhance the adoption process, citing the importance of the law in the fight against corruption and implementation of the UNCAC. Subsequently, the chapter received confirmation in writing from the head of the Legal Standing Committee of the Parliament that the draft will be discussed by Parliament during its spring session. Furthermore, TI Mongolia has advocated for the adoption of Extractive Sector Transparency law. The chapter has been invited as member of the working group established to develop the draft law. However, the development process has stagnated.

### Increasing local demand for Transparency in Pharmaceutical Procurement

TI Mongolia successfully implemented the "Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency" project, with the aim to (1) achieve broad and active citizen engagement in their local health sector procurement to limit corruption risk; (2) raise awareness and provide guidance for the public to systematically advocate for their rights and demand accountability; (3) increase the quality of service and the public's satisfaction in their local health service.



During the first phase of the project, TI Mongolia collaborated with 12 local NGOs from 12 provinces. These NGOs actively participated in procurement planning, monitored the procurement or tendering process, and observed the implementation of procurement contracts. The NGOs successfully completed their work. TI Mongolia concluded that there was room for improvement to better engage the public. Therefore, in the second phase, the chapter opted to transition the project's focus from the provincial level to the national level. Moreover, instead of involving the public solely through monitoring, the approach was refined to engage the public through the creation of visualizations and articles derived from the project's findings. The local NGOs successfully published articles and infographics on local media platforms. TI Mongolia is currently working with sector experts to combine the local NGOs' findings to develop a publication for the public and the professionals.

The findings, together with the publication, will be used to leverage and justify the revised draft of the Medicine and Medical Equipment law. This will be instrumental in improving import, export, supply, procurement, production, and quality. In addition, through the project, local NGOs have improved their capacity in analysing and monitoring public procurement processes. The improved capacity of the local NGOs and the law (if passed as expected) will be sustainable in the foreseeable future.

## Strengthening Partnerships

Under the framework of the Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency project, TI Mongolia has partnered with 16 local NGOs throughout the duration of the project. These NGOs, some focusing on gender and youth issues, were tasked with gathering, researching, and analysing information to contribute to articles based on their findings. This collaboration not only strengthened ties but also opened avenues for future partnerships in various projects. Another partnership to highlight is the one with the Medicine Association. The association expressed significant interest in the National Forum, an event organised within the project, which served as a platform for stakeholders to engage in discussions regarding the challenges they encounter. TI Mongolia anticipates potential collaboration arising from this engagement.



*TI-Mongolia's medical sector consultant presentation during the National Forum / Picture @ TI Mongolia*

## Strengthening Accountability in the Healthcare Sector

The goal of the Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency project was to enhance transparency of procurement processes in the healthcare sector. Joining forces with local CSOs, TI Mongolia analysed and visualised data to monitor budgeting and procurement practices at all Regional Diagnosis and Treatment Centres (RDTCs) in the provinces of Dornod, Uvurkhangai, Orkhon and Khovd. Their findings revealed opportunities for improvement in resource allocation, training and documentation.

An analysis of the centre in the Khovd province, located in the far west of the country, found gaps in health procurement data documentation and challenges to access this information. Transparent procurement is crucial for an accountable healthcare system, yet legal open tender publication was inadequate, hindering fair competition. To address this, the chapter and the local NGO recommended announcing tenders through media outlets as mandated by law and maintaining clear record-keeping. A significant finding of the budget analysis showed that, despite 90 percent of Mongolia's population suffering from tooth decay, the centre allocated only 1 percent of its 2022 budget for dental treatment and equipment. Recommendations highlight the need for a budget increase.

A key reason for the mismatch between patient needs and budget decisions is the lack of qualified personnel. The analysis revealed that medical staff had limited knowledge of budgeting and procurement processes. To tackle this, TI Mongolia recommended introducing training programs for healthcare staff. By equipping healthcare professionals with the right set of skills, public resources can be used efficiently, resulting in improved healthcare outcomes.