

# 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. The TI Movement 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.

With support from the *TI Indo-Pacific Partnership for Strong, Transparent, Responsive & Open Networks for Good Governance (TI IPP STRONGG) 2020 – 2023*, TI Mongolia aims to reduce corruption levels in public services, improve the quality of processes in the healthcare sector, and uphold the government accountable regarding its anti-corruption commitments. Through the *Good Governance and Social Accountability in Mongolia (GGASAM)* project, the chapter works to increased social demand for accountability among diverse groups across the country and to improve the national anti-corruption legal framework.

### Project At A Glance

- Topics of focus:  
Monitoring of healthcare sector procurement through social accountability mechanisms & Anti-corruption frameworks.
- Project timeframe:  
1 June 2020 – 31 August 2023
- Locations & project outreach:  
In 21 provinces across the country.
- Budget: 149,891 EUR



*TI Mongolia engages citizens, including youths, in the fight against corruption / Picture: © Transparency International Mongolia*

# 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 35 in 2019. 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 OVERVIEW

### Objectives

1. Increase demand for accountability in local health sector procurement to limit corruption risks and improve the quality of local health services.
2. Strengthen anti-corruption legal frameworks in line with commitments made by the government in the Open Government Partnership's National Plan 2019-2021.

### Main Activities

Activities under this project include:

- Engaging citizens, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, in **monitoring local health sector procurement processes** through social accountability initiatives and tools, including the formation of 'Committees of Concerned Citizens' (CCCs) in the 21 provinces of Mongolia.
- Enhancing anti-corruption legal and regulatory frameworks and enforcement in partnership with relevant stakeholders and advocating for:
  - The full **disclosure of beneficial ownership**.



Transparency International Mongolia Транспэрэнси Интернэшнл Монгол

6 October · 🌐

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Public procurement accounts for a significant amount of govt spending and is not immune to corruption. Detecting suspicious activity in this sector is a priority as resources are diverted from projects that would boost shared prosperity. [wrlld.bg/FcZE50BH5aJ](http://wrlld.bg/FcZE50BH5aJ)  
<http://wrlld.bg/FcZE50BH5aJ>



*TI Mongolia advocates for transparency in public procurement processes and improved detection of fraud*

### TI Mongolia's response to the COVID crisis

As part of the COVID response, the CCC groups will pay close attention to COVID-related procurement in their respective province administration.

In addition, the chapter will use relevant legal frameworks to support their work around COVID-19 procurement transparency in cooperation with the Independent Authority Against Corruption of Mongolia.

- An improved legal environment **regulating political parties**, leading to a more responsible, accountable, and transparent financing and spending approach.
- The adoption of a comprehensive **Whistleblower Protection legislation** to protect and encourage citizens to report wrongdoing, rights abuses and corrupt practices. Bringing into light these wrongdoings will help to reduce the likelihood that they remain unpunished.

# SUMMARY OF PROGRESS & KEY ACHIEVEMENTS - 2022

In 2022, TI Mongolia continued to bolster social accountability initiatives to advocate for transparency in procurement in the health sector and strengthen national anti-corruption legal frameworks. This was planned through the capacity building of local NGOs, encouraging them to participate in the monitoring of public procurement. However, due to the diverse nature of local NGOs in terms of experience and size, getting them involved in the monitoring directly was a bit challenging. Therefore, the strategy shifted from participation to raising awareness of the health sector’s public procurement processes.

The chapter continues to advocate for passing the Law on Extractive Industry Transparency as a crucial mechanism to regulate beneficial ownership. The Mongolian economy is highly dependent on this sector. TI Mongolia is currently part of the working group for the draft law on this and is also in the working group for improving the CPI, which was initiated and established by the government. In addition, the chapter has played a leading role in the ‘Publish What You Pay’ coalition.

Project highlights for TI Mongolia in 2022 include:

- Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency.** Starting in 2022, TI Mongolia shifted the focus of the “Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency” subproject from participating and monitoring the procurement process to visualising budgeting and procurement of the Regional Diagnosis and Treatment Centres. The visualisation (infographics) has added benefits of being uncomplicated and easy to understand. This is especially helpful for raising awareness about transparency in public procurement among provincial citizen groups. So far, three of four local NGOs have successfully designed their infographics with guidance from data analyst and visualisation expert Ms Tselmeg, and finalised their articles in consultation with the senior editor of Ikon.mn Ms Oyuntsetseg. These materials will be used in 2023 during advocacy events.



Infographics produced by local NGOs (CCC Groups) Picture: © Transparency International Mongolia

- Whistleblower Protection Law.** TI Mongolia successfully pushed the adoption of the law through the Public Council of the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) in Mongolia. Representatives of the Public Council, including the Chapter’s ED Mr Munkhjargal, met with Mr Munkhbaatar, the head of the Legal Standing Committee of the Parliament. During the meeting, Mr Munkhbaatar agreed to accelerate the law adoption process, as the draft law, originally submitted to the Parliament in November 2021, was put on hold. The parliament voted with a 59.1% agreement to discuss the law. During the session, TI Mongolia’s former Chairman, Mr Tur-od, along with IAAC representatives, sat in parliament to answer questions.
- Extractive Sector Transparency Law.** The Ministry of Justice requested TI Mongolia and Home Affairs to join the working group tasked to develop the draft law on extractive sector transparency. The working group met once on September 7<sup>th</sup>, with a follow-up meeting yet to be scheduled. TI Mongolia is currently reviewing the draft law.

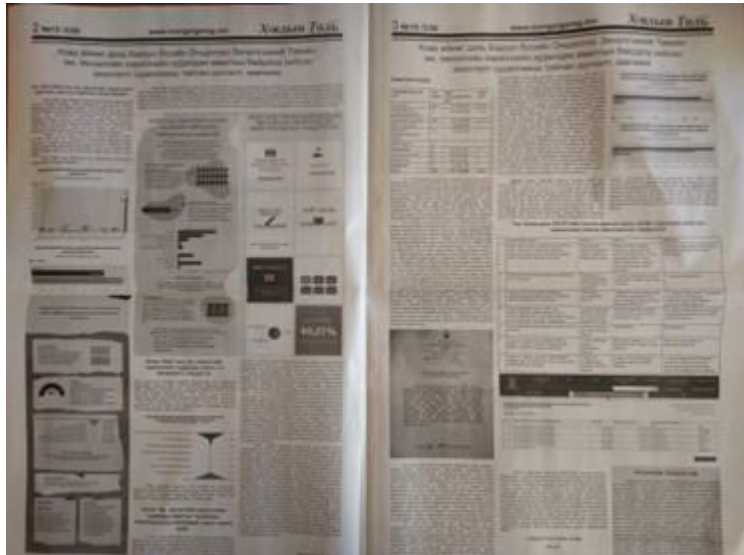
## A PUSH FOR COMPLIANCE

In April and May 2022, TI Mongolia signed a contract with four local NGOs in the Dornod, Uvurkhangai, Orkhon, and Khovd provinces to implement the Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency Initiative. During the two-day training event organised on May 5-6<sup>th</sup> at the chapter's office, the four local NGOs presented the context in which they operate. The NGO from the Khovd province flagged that the Regional Diagnosis Treatment Centres (RDTC) were reluctant to cooperate and were not complying with the Glass Account Law, which requires that government entities and state-owned enterprises disclose detailed financial and operational information on a public website.

After the event, TI Mongolia submitted an official request to the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) regarding this and met with the Head of the Prevention and Awareness Division.

As a result, the IAAC sent an official letter requiring the four RDTCs to cooperate with the NGOs working under TI Mongolia's Pharmaceutical Procurement Transparency Initiative and reminded them of the Glass Account law and its provision specifying that "any information, if not classified as a state secret, should be open to the public". The letter was forwarded to the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the provincial Governor's offices of the provinces where the RDTCs are located. As a result, the MoH took the initiative to contact the local NGOs and offered to support them going forward.

The local partner NGOs found TI Mongolia's intervention and the letter from the IAAC to be particularly helpful in pushing RDTCs to cooperate with them. At the end of 2022, three of the four local NGOs successfully completed their work and produced infographics visualising the RDTCs' pharmaceutical expenditure, procurement processes, and contract information.



*Advocacy material published in the Khovd province's daily newspaper. Picture: © TI Mongolia*

## LOOKING AHEAD

TI Mongolia's top priorities for 2023 include:

- Integrity Pacts signed with key stakeholders of the local government and RDTCs.
- Organise Regional and National Forums to share the results and impact achieved through the STRONGG project over the years. The event will target local authorities and other representatives of the local governments at the provincial level, representatives from the RDTCs and the public, including the Ministry of Health, the IAAC, and other key representatives from the government.
- Create content for public awareness and education, including articles and infographics.
- Working closely with other CSOs to continue strengthening the legal framework in Mongolia regarding transparency in the extractive industry, beneficial ownership, and protection of whistleblowers.