

*This methodological guide of party finances in election campaigns is elaborated by Promo-LEX Association within the project „Strengthening the monitoring capacity of both party and electoral candidate finances” with the financial support offered by the East Europe Foundation, with funds donated by the Sweden Government through the means of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*

## **Description of our Methodology**

### **Goal**

The main goal of the methodology is to increase transparency among the electoral candidates by providing our electorate with insight on how and where campaign funds are gathered, from whom and the manner in which they are distributed by the parties/electoral candidates for the Parliamentary Elections 2014.

### **Why do we monitor?**

- The transparency of financing electoral campaigns is a current issue for the Republic of Moldova. Vast majority of campaign spending comes from dark money sources that doesn't reveal their original funders.
- Previous campaigns revealed that in the absence of strict legal stipulations and the absence of viable mechanisms for monitoring the finances of political parties and candidates, electoral processes are often flawed.
- More often we record numerous irregularities in the raising and distribution of funds for the election campaigns.
- Lack of transparency in the campaign budgets of parties and their electoral funds lead to the distortion of candidates list for deputy, councilor, mayor, etc.
- Using opaque resources generates electoral corruption, vote buying, inequality in media coverage of all the candidates, use of administrative resources, tax evasion.
- By ensuring correct management of financial resources in the campaigns, we trust in the proper management of State financial resources.
- By monitoring the management of candidate's financial resources, we aim to increase voters' confidence in election results.
- There is the need to fill in the gaps in the law related to party finance in the election campaign and to provide the electorate with qualitative, unbiased information.

### **Promo-LEX Monitoring Mission Principles**

- **Respecting the law.** LTOs are obliged to respect the law and all the applicable legal acts of electoral processes. LTOs are obliged to follow all the legal provisions issued by state bodies. Moreover LTOs are obliged to show respect towards the persons holding responsible positions in state bodies.
- **Ensuring political impartiality and good will.** LTOs are obliged to keep political impartiality and good will during the campaigns. They should avoid expressing any kind of personal opinion, manifesting partiality or showing sympathy towards the national organs of the state power, political parties and election candidates. Observers will also refrain from any activity that may be considered established as preferential or a creation of favorable conditions to a particular participant of the election race or accepting any kind of attention from electoral candidates. Observers start work on the premise that actions are carried out within the limits monitored legislation will not start from the premise Search shortcomings.
- **Respecting the international human rights.** Internationally recognized human rights imply one of the main right – the one to vote and to be elected

in genuine democratic elections. Observers are required to respect the fundamental human rights and especially the right to vote and to be elected.

- **Avoiding to interfere with the election process.** Observers are required not to create obstacles to the electoral process in any of its stages. However observers have to notify the electoral bodies about the identified problems but so as not to create additional obstacles in the work of election administration.
- **Ensuring accuracy of observations and professionalism in drawing conclusions.** Observers are required to ensure the accuracy of the observations they make. The observations will be comprehensive factors taking into account both positive and negative, will be highlighted key features that can influence the quality of the electoral process. In drawing conclusions, observers will perform to the highest standards of accuracy and objectivity of information analysis, distinguishing between subjective and facts premises. Observers must base their conclusions on verifiable facts and not draw premature conclusions.
- **Respecting the Code of Conduct.** Observers are required to respect and protect the organizational unit of the observer mission. Observers should be aware of the role they have in the observation mission and the importance of the findings for their analysis, mission and society. Observers are required to ascertain the electoral law, the regulations developed by the electoral authorities and lead to precisely the methods applied by the observation mission.
- **Respecting the observation mission and its organizational unity.** Observers are required to respect and protect the organizational unit of the observation mission. Observers should be aware of the role they have in the observation mission and the importance of the findings for their analysis, mission and society. Observers are required to ascertain the electoral law, the regulations developed by the electoral authorities and lead to precisely the methods applied by the observation mission.

**The methodology covers three stages:** *field observations, analysis and evaluation in the office and elaboration of the election public reports and their dissemination.*

The monitoring mechanism includes field monitoring, analysis and office evaluation, reporting and public dissemination. However in developing guidelines that take into account the monitoring of election campaign financing is just one aspect of many that points to the observer's mission.

**Field observations** – Consists of collecting and verifying the field information gathered by the long term observers (it's District Election Commission) Sending the information to the core team on a weekly basis.

**Office analysis and evaluation** – Consists of receiving information from LTOs deployed in their regions (analysis, systematization and it's evaluation by the core team members)

**Elaboration of the public reports and their dissemination** – consists of elaboration of the public reports, formulation of positive and negative trends, formulation of a list full of concerns and recommendations of the observation mission and public dissemination of reports.

The mechanism and the monitoring stages:

## **Preparation period**

This first stage, which is de facto the most important for Promo-LEX electoral process or other observation mission, must provide the foundation effort and at least its general training. The successful implementation of the planning process is important to answer the following questions:

- *Who else performs monitoring exercises and which is their scope?*
- *Who are the partners interested in the results of the monitoring process?*
- *What are the minimum and maximum HR can be involved in the monitoring process? (Observers on the ground, coordinators, experts, etc.)?*
- *What information and data may be useful for actors involved in the electoral process?*

Similarly, at this stage, there should be identified those indicators that will be used in the monitoring process. It has also clarified the definition of the latter: an indicator is a factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement and reflects changes in the justice sector reform.

Simultaneously there should be developed a classification of indicators which depending on the type of information used, may include quantitative indicators (quantitative measures, numbers, percentages, transport unit, traveled distance, number of advertisements or articles) and qualitative indicators (voters' individual perceptions, opinions of others or the relevant actors).

The monitoring period itself

## **Monitoring period**

The monitoring period begins with the launch of the mission and registering observers and for each competitor with its registration in the respective electoral body. The data collection process can be applied to qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative techniques may include statistical data, surveys and structured interviews with various experts. Qualitative methods may include various aspects such as legal analysis, observations, laws, reports unpublished material available on the internet, and open interviews. The monitoring several years based on a variety of data sources as a single source can provide all necessary information and different sources in combination, can be used to verify the findings have been subjected to distortion potential which characterizes any single method of analysis.

Below are given a few suggestions for data collection to monitor the election campaign financing:

- Document analysis (financial documents/invoices/receipts/reports on campaign income and expenditure of each electoral candidate, contracts)
- Field observations (documented with photos)
- Interviews with voters
- Interviews with candidates
- Interviews with local authorities

## **Evaluation period**

During this period, which begins with the announcement of the final election results and validation of mandates we need to draw attention to the concerns or deficiencies of the observation mission, as well to the tools, to the mission strengths and to the possible solutions to overcome all the obvious weaknesses. The evaluation can be comprised of the evaluation questionnaires that need to be

filled in by observers and which will answer to questions related to the following domains:

- Training
- Internal communication
- External Communication
- Logistics Insurance
- Reporting
- Tools used
- Visibility Mission

### **The main stages of field observations:**

**1). Preparation** (needs' assessment, preliminary determination of the action plan, the accumulation of general information about the district, previous elections, candidates involved in other elections, etc.)

**2). Preventing violations** (observer's simple statement that he will monitor campaign financing which consequently will reduce the willingness of the candidates to admit violations)

**3). The Observation Process itself** (Observer hears, sees, participates, proves his findings) Fixing, documenting facts (photos, videos, interviews, request for information)

**4). Reporting** (sending information to the core team) and to the election administration

**5). Lobby** (in regards to changing those aspects that the mission considers to be negative)

### **The target subjects to be monitored**

- Candidates/ campaign/ income-expenditure/ internal (staff, representatives, observers etc.)
- Election administration CEC-DEC-PEC/ activity/ processing information/ dissemination of the information/ tabulation of results
- Public administration/ central (special services, administrative resources, incompatibilities)
- Media/ national/regional
- Other essential decision makers: local leaders (specific citizens/ charity organizations/ foundations/ service providers etc.

### **Informational resources. Features.**

During the monitoring process observers will cooperate with the same subjects that they actually monitor. But observers should keep in mind that in the process of accumulating information about another monitored respondent, this individual appears already in the role of a partner and only after as an informational resource.

- The candidates / registration / campaign / funding-spending / internal organization (personnel, representatives, observers, etc.)
- Election administration CEC-DEC-PEC
- Observers from other networks or observation missions
- Representative of local and central authorities
- Media / national / regional
- Other key stakeholders: local leaders (private citizens) / charities / foundations / service providers etc.

### **Reporting and assessment of the accumulated field data**

Data analysis should be part of a team effort. Results and criteria should be jointly decided by the team that processes the data. Therefore, more people should participate in this process. Once collected, the data must be systematized, that is organized in such a way as to permit data processing. This can happen in two cases:

a) In the situation the mission gathers the same type of information from various individuals and groups, the information will be compiled. For example, individual interviews will be organized by themes; completed questionnaires will be aggregated into a database etc.

b) If data is collected by using several different methods, we have to identify the issues that need to be analyzed. For example, from the range of event reports there should be selected only the entries related to the means of transportation which refer to the movement of a candidate to an electoral concert, given that for the reported period the candidate did not report transportation costs.

The result of the reporting process accumulated in the field can be described as follows: a) Observer from the field participates at electoral events, makes notes aimed at electoral campaign financing and reflects it in the report. Designates event report as approved by the Finance Mission Branch/ Competitor. There should be attached to the report the evidence photos, audio, video that also has naming them according to Branch. Finally, the LTO should forward the report to its regional network assistant. b)

### **The main stages of elaborating the public reports and their dissemination**

Reporting and disseminating the observation results is a key-element in the monitoring process. This doesn't apply only to elaborating the report, but mainly to the effort of communicating the findings, formulating the concerns and implicitly writing solutions for overcoming the noted obstacles as problems.

Long Term Observers (LTOs) are deployed by Promo-LEX mission to observe, access and report pre-election and election process at the regional level. In accordance with Promo-LEX observer methodology and principles, it is important for Long Term Observers to have such an approach as to enable a full and substantive analysis of the election processes.

LTOs essentially work as regional representatives of Promo-LEX, being deployed to every district of the country. Each LTO will be assigned a specific area of responsibility. Each LTO should assess the area and prioritize their work as given the time and financial constraints, a full detailed observation of the entire campaign events will not be possible, but the methodology counts on. It is important to do a good job in a reasonably wide area rather than a less good job in a larger area. Each LTO will make observations based on the following basic questions: What? Who? When? How? Where? How much? And will be compiled into a monitoring weekly report. Below there are the stages of elaborating the public reports:

- Event classification and its framing under certain general tendencies
- Legal analysis of the spotted tendencies
- Organizing the trends in the report on sections/chapters
- Attempt to define the causes and conditions that favors the trends
- Drawing conclusions and recommendations, elaborating the summary

- Integrating the financial section/chapter in the general report
- Editing the entire report
- Public presentation of the report and its dissemination to the interested

**Monitoring features:**

*Leasing contracts including:*

- Leasing contracts for permanent offices including the territorial ones
- Leasing contracts for temporary offices, including the territorial ones
- Office related utilities

*Transportation costs including:*

- Leasing contracts for transportation
- Transportation services
- Fuel
- Transportation maintenance
- Salary for the temporary drivers

*Salary, social insurance contributions and compulsory premiums for healthcare paid by the employer, including:*

- remuneration of the central electoral staff
- remuneration of the local electoral staff (territorial)
- premiums
- remuneration of the media consultants/ strategy

*Honoraria, including:*

- Observers' honorarium (including per diem)
- Volunteers' honorarium (including per diem)

*Advertising costs, including:*

- Design, layout, etc. advertising production work
- Media advertising: TV, radio, the Internet, in print
- Outdoor and mobile advertising
- Poygraphic advertising
- Promotional advertising

*Public Events, including:*

- Logistics: location, stage, lights, sound
- Stands, panels, billboards
- Security, protocol costs
- Reflecting the event in media
- Honoraria
- Associated costs

*Consulting, including:*

- Electoral and political consultancy
- Sociological services (public opinion polls, etc.)
- legal assistance and notary services

*Other costs:*

- Travel
- Protocol
- Banking

- Maintenance of permanent offices
- Communication services
- Materials (Items Small Value Short Term, office supplies, etc.)
- Other cash payments