

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center” NGO (hereinafter referred to as “TIAC”), in support of the commitments set out by the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as “RA”) Anti-Corruption Strategy and the 2019-2022 Action Plan for its implementation, conducted a corruption risk assessment in the civil service (hereinafter referred to as “CS”) sector between September and December 2021.

The **goal** of the survey is the detection, analysis and evaluation of the corruption risks and the risk factors for such risks in the CS sector, specifically in the human resource management processes, as well as, providing recommendations which would reduce the corruption risks and the impact of the underlying factors.

The scope of the corruption risk assessment in the CS sector included the recruitment and replenishment of civil servants, job description, evaluation and ranking, vertical and horizontal mobility, training, monetary incentives, performance appraisal, disciplinary liability and dismissal, as well as the oversight and integrity systems.

Corruption risks were identified and assessed based on the study of the context, the legal framework and the law enforcement practices. The survey was conducted in a participatory manner, involving representatives from the staff of the RA President’s Office, the RA Prime Minister’s Office, the Civil Service Office of the RA Prime Minister’s Office, the Corruption Prevention Commission, as well as experts in the field.

It is expected that the recommendations developed as a result of the survey will be taken into account by the responsible bodies in the process of elaborating a CS sector anti-corruption action plan, the implementation of which would lead to the recovery of CS, strengthening the merit principle and public trust, and, as a result, improvement of the management quality and performance.

The **recommendations** developed as a result of the survey include the following:

Recruitment and replenishment of civil servants:

- Improve the competition system for vacancies by reducing the discretion of the appointing officer in the internal and external competitions, increasing the promotion of civil servants and the possibility to participate in internal competitions, eliminating the tight timeframes for submission of documents which hinder competitiveness, amending the forms for

assessment of professional knowledge and competencies by developing new assessment indicators and including integrity-related indicators;

- Depoliticize the processes of formation of Selection Boards for filling vacancies of civil servants and conducting the interviews by excluding appointment of persons holding political, administrative, autonomous and discretionary positions to Selection Boards, establishing a new procedure for evaluating the interview results and providing for criteria for evaluating the candidate's integrity competency;
- Introduce the institution of senior civil servants, excluding the possibilities for the Deputy Prime Minister for discretionary intervention in the process of organizing and appointing a competition for a group of civil service executive officers, and organizing the process of recruitment and appointment of senior civil servants through the Civil Service Office of the Office of the RA Prime Minister;

Job description, appraisal and ranking:

- Exclude the possibility of making discretionary decisions by political office holders on the civil service job descriptions and ranking of the positions, by reserving the power to make decisions in the process of describing and appraising the positions for the Secretary-General or his/her Deputy and by ensuring the participation of representatives of other structural units with shared functions or continuity, in the process of describing and appraising the positions;

Horizontal mobility of civil servants:

- Ensure the continuity and stability of the civil service under reorganization and structural changes (merger, amalgamation, division, reformation) of public administration bodies, excluding the possibility for an appointing officer to select employees without justification, and the discretion to offer a lower position to a civil servant: a lower position should be offered to a civil servant only in the absence of an equivalent vacancy;

Training of civil servants:

- Review the training procedure for civil servants, reserving the authority to assess the training needs for the Secretary General in the case of civil servants, and the CS Office of the Prime Minister's Office in the case of senior civil servants, excluding the practice of agreeing upon the training program for the relevant agency with the CS Office, and providing for a requirement for integrity needs identification and assessment in the process of training needs assessment;

Remuneration of civil servants, performance appraisal and incentives:

- Improve the performance appraisal procedure of civil servants based on the values of the key performance indicators (KPIs) established for civil servants by applying a 360-degree appraisal system in the performance appraisal, basing the award criteria on the performance rating;
- Avoid the process of unjustified awarding of civil servants on political and discretionary grounds by reserving the awarding power to the Secretary General, and, based on the new

tools for performance appraisal of civil servants, clarifying the criteria for assessing the quality of work, including the integrity indicators of civil servants;

Oversight system:

- To switch from the mechanisms of granting or denying “consents” for implementing oversight over the activities of the personnel management units of the government agencies, reserved by law to the CS Office of the RA Prime Minister’s Office, to the use of compliance check and monitoring tools for the implementation of the methodological instructions and requirements for certain civil service processes, by authorizing the CS Office to make recommendations to the RA Prime Minister for violations of the legislation, as well as to make recommendations to the head of the relevant agency;

Integrity system:

- Ensure the use of the integrity components in all civil service human resource management processes, in particular by establishing management tools for the situational conflict of interest of civil servants and the procedure for their registration, regulations of conflict of interest between the testing officer of the vacancies competition and the interviewing Board members, a requirement to use testing assignments, a questionnaire and situational problems for assessing the integrity of the candidates; by assessing the integrity competencies of a civil servant; and by providing, among the justified decisions of the official, for the conditions for eliminating the incompatibility requirements, other restrictions, situations related to conflicts of interest and potential corruption risks.