Monitoring Assistant - Instructions

The Monitoring Assistant is a list of common red flags of corruption in public procurement that allows users to identify irregularities in the different phases of the procurement process. The Monitoring Assistant helps users understand and detect red flags of corruption in procurement processes, suggests actions when irregularities are found and makes reporting on monitoring findings easier.

To use the Monitoring Assistant:

1) Go to the Monitoring Assistant Home Page and
   a. Log in with your Username and Password, or
   b. Click on "register", if you are a first-time user.

2) After log in, you will be re-directed to the Monitoring Assistant Home.
   a. To start monitoring a new procurement process, click on "New Procurement Process" in the menu on the left side of the page. Fill in the relevant information for the procurement process at hand and then click "Add Procurement Process"; you will be directed to the "Start the Process" page; select the phase of the procurement process from which you want to start monitoring. You can, at any point save your answers, exit the system and later resume monitoring from where you stopped.
   b. If you want to resume monitoring of an old procurement process, click on "My Projects" in the menu on the left side of the page and then select the process you wish to continue monitoring by clicking on "Continue Assessment". Monitoring resumes automatically from the last phase you have completed.

3) As you go through the questions, you can receive additional information and guidance by clicking on the "Tips" or scrolling over the "Possible Corruption Schemes". The tips help users better answer the question. The "Possible Corruption Schemes" column provides suggestions on the schemes that could explain the appearance of a red flag. The "List of Questions" document contains a comprehensive list of all questions and schemes included in the tool.

4) Users have 4 options for answers: "Yes", "No", "Not Applicable" and "Information not Available". All questions have been worded so that a "Yes" answer always triggers a red flag. A "No" answer means that you have not detected a certain red flag. A "Not Applicable" answer indicates that the question does not apply to the process at hand. An "Information not Available" answer indicates that you do not have access to the relevant information,.

5) At any point during the monitoring process you can save your answers, by clicking on the "Save Responses" button at the bottom of the page, exit the system and later resume monitoring from where you stopped. Once you have answered all the questions for a phase, click on "Save Responses and Evaluate" at the bottom of the page. This will take you to the evaluation section.

6) The Evaluation section of each phase gives users:
    a. an overview of all the questions with "Yes" or "Information not Available" answers;
    b. recommended actions for the red flags that have been detected;
    c. a box to add comments or list supporting evidence. To add a note or comment, write it in the comment box provided below each question and then click on "save comments".
    d. Some questions are marked with a small red flag. This indicates questions that require special attention as they are stronger indicators of possible corruption.

7) After reviewing the evaluation page, go to the bottom of the page and do one of the following
    a. Continue monitoring by clicking on "Continue to Next Phase".
    b. Save your comments, log out and resume monitoring at a different time.
    c. Print the Evaluation Report by clicking on "Print Report". This will generate a Word Document that summarizes all the relevant information on the phases already monitored. You can also print Evaluation Reports directly from the "My Projects" page.

End the monitoring by clicking on "Mark Project Complete" (only from the "Implementation" phase). You can mark a project as complete even if you have not monitored all phases of the project. If you have marked a project as "complete" by mistake, you can reopen it by going to the "My Projects" page.

Monitoring Assistant - Limitations

The Monitoring Assistant (MA) is based on a forensic and red flags approach and was designed to support civil society organizations in procurement monitoring. The Monitoring Assistant helps users understand and detect possible red flags of corruption in procurement processes, suggests actions when irregularities are found and makes reporting on monitoring findings easier. However, because of the way it was designed, the MA has significant limitations, and users should consider the following:

Context - The MA was designed to be adaptable to different country and sector contexts, as well as to procurements of different types (goods, works or services) and sizes. This flexibility implies that not all procurement-specific occurrences can be captured by the tool. To compensate for this limitation, the Civil Society Procurement Monitoring (CSPM) tool offers a number of resources:

1) The Country-Specific Procurement Monitoring Guides (currently available for Indonesia and the Philippines) contain detailed country-level information on the procurement framework, common corruption schemes, procurement monitoring experiences and access to information environment.

2) The Procurement Monitoring Guide contains specific information on the Education, Health and Infrastructure sectors.

3) The Links pages, which contains information on additional sources that users can consult as a support for effective procurement monitoring through the MA.

4) The MA allows users to make their monitoring and reporting more detailed by adding comments and notes, when a red flag is detected.

Additionally, users should apply their knowledge of the country or sector, expertise, judgment and any other resources to which they may have access, to make their monitoring more effective.

Errors in good faith, incompetence, and extraordinary circumstances – Red flags do not necessarily indicate corruption, but merely the possibility that corruption may be occurring. The Monitoring Assistant and its interactive lists of red flags should be used as supporting tools and not replace your good judgment and experience. In some instances, a red flag may be the result of an error in good faith, incompetence or extraordinary circumstances. Users should carefully consider this possibility when monitoring a procurement process. When in doubt, inquiring about the findings of the procurement monitoring with procurement officials may help clarify the specific circumstances that led to what appears to be corruption. The Monitoring Assistant allows users to comment on each red flag detected, to ensure that any mitigating factors are captured. The Procurement Monitoring Guide provides additional suggestions and techniques on how to adequately assess a Red Flag.

Recommendations – The MA recommends different courses of action every time a user detects a red flag. Just as the rest of the MA, recommendations had to be kept general enough to adapt to different country contexts. When deciding whether to follow a recommendation or not, users should carefully consider the country-specific factors such as openness of government agencies, independence of the media, personal safety, and security etc. As suggested in the GRG and MA, when red flags are detected, the preferred approach should be to first exhaust legal channels to request clarifications and present complaints, before approaching the media. Users should never follow a recommendation if they feel it would put the safety of their organization and staff at risk.

How will we use the information we collect?

We do not collect or request that you provide any names when filling the Monitoring Assistant. Aggregate information on projects monitored may be made public to highlight the most common issues in the various phases of the procurement process, in order to help policy makers address them.

We do not sell, trade, to outside parties your personally identifiable information or any information on procurement monitoring activities you may have conducted through the Monitoring Assistant. This does not include trusted third parties who assist us in operating our website, as long as those parties agree to keep this information confidential.

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