



**Independent Joint Anti-Corruption
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

Press Release

During the year 2016, The Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology committed to implementing an Anti-Corruption Plan. Almost all Ministries have developed such plans. MEC is carrying out reviews of these Ministry plans, and is reporting here on its first review of the Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology (MCIT) Anti-Corruption plan.

MEC's finding is that MCIT is so far almost entirely failing to implement its Anti-Corruption Plan.

The MCIT plan contains four priority action areas, and MEC findings in each are summarized below:

TRANSPARENT COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF REVENUES IN TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR

At present, telecommunication companies collect 10 percent users' fee from mobile phone users.¹ However, MCIT still cannot verify if the amount deposited into its account represents the actual collection of 10 percent users' fee. Part of the reason is disagreements related to the installation of an IT system RTDMS. This is delayed, including tensions between the two ministries over which institution is exactly authorized to do the procurement.

At this stage, it is almost impossible for the staff of MCIT to determine if the manual reports of private telecommunication companies represent the actual amount of tax.

ENHANCEMENT OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE SERVICES

E-government Directorate of the Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology was expected to study if it is feasible to make all administrative procedures of government electronic to bring transparency, effectiveness and equitable access to public services.

To achieve the first indicator of Anti-Corruption Plan, the E-government Directorate assigned a technical team to draft an e-government services plan listing 10 public services that shall be automated during the next 3 years. The deadline for the feasibility study has been set to be May 2017 but MCIT has not yet even started choosing any company to conduct the study. The Presidential Palace has assigned the head of E-Government Directorate to only prioritize Procurement, Driving-License and Visa services saying that is not realistic to study all systems simultaneously.²

Even if MCIT had launched the study, it could not have completed it even by the end of 2017. The E-government Directorate of the Ministry failed to figure out which services should be prioritized first due to lack of consultations with experts, donors and other government officials.

HIRING COMPETENT PEOPLE AND INTRODUCING ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM

Human Resource Directorate of the Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology states that it has reviewed the Tashkeel of MCIT by November 2016. The main purpose to review the Tashkeel was planned to improve the Tashkeel and prevent overlap of positions. However, according to a letter, MEC has received from the HR and Tashkeel Department of MCIT; the Tashkeel was not substantially reviewed and no effective changes have been proposed. The staff of Planning and Policy Directorate of MCIT confirmed to MEC that there is still no Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in the ministry.³ Thus, the entire Tashkeel is outdated. In the meantime, the leadership of the Ministry did not hire any expert to review and propose

¹ Procedure for collecting of 10 percent users' fee

² Interview with E-Government Directorate of MCIT, Kabul, January 5, 2017.

³ Group discussion with the staff of Planning and Policy Directorate of MCIT, Kabul, January 26, 2017.



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RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Previously, complaints of consumers were filed only through phone conversations in the Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology. However, Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) has assessed, designed and launched a web-based system for receiving public complaints ahead of the deadline that was set for the establishment of such a system in MCIT's annual Anti-Corruption Plan. To assess the effectiveness of the system, the MEC assessment team has sent a test-complaint through the website. ATRA confirmed to the team the receipt of its complaint and promised to follow it up. This web-based complaint system was launched a month ago. So far, 55 public complaints have been received by ATRA.

This is positive progress, though the complaints system is not yet reaching large number so users.

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