



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

**NEWS RELEASE: MEC Finds Significant Recruitment Issues in its VCA on the
E-Tazkira Authority**

KABUL, Afghanistan, October 21, 2015 – Today, MEC announces the launch of a Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment (VCA) on the national Electronic ID, or E-Tazkira, project. Corruption concerns related to employee recruitment in this department led parliamentarians, civil-society leaders, and others, to express their reservations about this endeavor. Consequently, President Ashraf Ghani asked MEC to investigate the recruitment process and major contracts in this project. This is the first VCA considered, and carried out, at the request of the President. The MEC delegation met with several stakeholders, including the IOM, MOI and MOCIT, to define the scope of the project and collect information on recruitment and contracting processes.

MEC examined the legal framework, administration, employee-recruitment process, major contracts, procedures, and practical mechanisms of the E-Tazkira Authority. Among the problems MEC identified were a lack of written procedures for recruitment; a tendency to ignore the Civil Service Law in the recruitment process; and interference in the process by powerful individuals from the government, parliament, and elsewhere. Additionally, the E-Tazkira Authority's lack of attention to the implementation of procurement laws, rules, and regulations exposed the project to corruption. MEC's three main findings concerned the improper recruitment of approximately 70% of the authority's staff; problems with the contracts signed with Grand Technology Resources (GTR) and the Orange Group; and deficiencies with the eligibility process. The Authority does appear, however, to have established a workable procedure, though unverified, for distributing the new identification cards to Afghan citizens.

Furthermore, political and ethnic challenges have had negative effects on the implementation process, resulting in significant delays. The Afghan leadership has been promising to commence the distribution process for three years, and multiple Presidential Decrees and decisions of the Council of Ministers have been issued in furtherance of this goal, but ultimately, distribution was stopped by the President's verbal orders.

To address the deficiencies identified in this report, MEC's recommendations are that the administrative structure and HR procedures of the E-Tazkira Authority be reformed by introducing a transparent, competitive, and merit-based hiring process, and that the \$101 million IT contract with GTR be audited by an independent third party. Establishing a proper recruitment process for staff of this department and ensuring proper contracting processes are followed are necessary steps in ensuring the support and acceptance of this project by the citizens of Afghanistan.

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