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MONITORING MOLDOVA'S PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

NEWSLETTER

No. 18 (August 2026)



»»» CONTENTS »»»

4 | PNAP

Regulations Governing the Activities of Procurement Service Providers Discussed by Members of the National Public Procurement Platform

7 | APPEALS

The state fee for lodging an appeal has raked out economic obstructionist practices from the system

8 | EXPLANATION

Public procurement of works in 2026 – the new rules explained simply

10 | PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

The amendments concerning the adjustment of public procurement contracts reduce certain risks, but leave key issues unresolved

12 | RIGGED PROCUREMENT

Rigged public procurement in Taraclia. District president among those under suspicion

14 | INFOGRAPHICS

Myths in public procurement

16 | PUBLIC FUNDS

'Unallocated services' is the grey area through which millions disappear from local authorities' expenditure

EDITORIAL

VADIM ȚURCAN, ASSOCIATE EXPERT IN
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AT IDIS "VIITORUL":

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MEANS MOVING AWAY FROM THE LOWEST-PRICE CRITERION TOWARDS CHOOSING THE BEST INVESTMENT



Public procurement is one of the most important economic levers available to the state. In 2025, contracting authorities in the Republic of Moldova carried out 10,013 public procurement procedures and concluded 36,253 contracts and supplementary agreements, with a total value of 17.3 billion lei. Added to these are low-value procurements, estimated at a further 2.8 billion lei, of which approximately

2.3 billion were carried out through direct award.

As a proportion of the Republic of Moldova's gross domestic product in 2025, the value of the procurement procedures reported by the Public Procurement Agency represents approximately 4.9 per cent of GDP. We are therefore not talking about a marginal administrative sector, but about a market of considerable size, capable of influencing corporate behaviour, the quality of public infrastructure, energy consumption, working conditions and the direction in which the economy is developing.

The key question is no longer simply how much the state spends, but how it spends it.

CONTINUED ON PAG. 17 »»»

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT DISCUSSED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MONITORING COALITION AND THE NATIONAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PLATFORM



» The implementation of sustainable public procurement, the professionalisation of the sector, and the alignment of the national procurement system with European Union (EU) standards were the main topics discussed at the meetings of the [Public Procurement Monitoring Coalition](#) and the [National Public Procurement Platform \(NPPP\)](#), organised by IDIS "Viitorul" as part of the project "Supporting Moldova's public procurement reform in the EU accession context" implemented with EU support.

At the Coalition meeting, Wojciech Paczynski, program manager at the EU Delegation in Chisinau, said that what is important in the field of procurement is clarity regarding the criteria applied in procurement contract award procedures, with an emphasis on the longevity of the product, service, or work being procured—and not just on the immediate cost. It is also important for the authorities to conduct a market assessment, to understand what is available and what can

be purchased on the market, and to be able to engage with economic operators to secure an appropriate offer; furthermore, it is important to implement contracts to ensure that what is purchased under a procurement contract is actually delivered and not something else.

During the PNAP meeting, Olga Morari, a senior consultant in the Public Procurement Policy Directorate of the Ministry of Finance,

spoke about the implementation of sustainable public procurement in the Republic of Moldova, verifiable criteria, sustainability indicators, and the adaptation of standard documentation. "Public procurement is no longer simply a process through which contracting authorities procure works, goods, and services; rather, it has become a strategic tool for economic development, environmental protection, and the promotion of social objectives," said Olga Morari.

Vadim Țurcan, an associate expert at IDIS "Viitorul" and co-author of the analytical note "Sustainable Public Procurement: Between Public Policy and Practical Implementation," noted that the document highlights the need to accelerate the adoption of the secondary legislation on sustainable public procurement and to update the related legal framework. At the same time, the document recommends that the Public Procurement Agency develop standard guidelines and documentation in Romanian, expand dedicated training programs, and transform pilot projects into practical tools for contracting authorities. The expert also advocates for the integration of sustainability criteria into tender documents and the use of the "best value for money" criterion, the establishment of priority categories for sustainable procurement, and the monitoring of contract outcomes.

Diana Enachi, co-author of the analytical note, stated that Italy is believed to be the first country to have mandated the inclusion of environmental requirements for certain goods, services, and works, including furniture, paper, IT equipment, cleaning services, catering, construction work, and street lighting. Another country is the Netherlands, which has a strategy with a clear vision for sustainable procurement – including green, social, and economic aspects – with clear objectives and targets to be achieved. In addition, Diana Enachi notes that the Dutch electronic procurement system – TenderNed – includes standardized sustainability criteria developed at the national level and made available to contracting authorities.

Details on pulsachizitii.md



REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF PROCUREMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS DISCUSSED BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PLATFORM

» At their meeting on Monday, June 29, 2026, members of the National Public Procurement Platform (PNAP) discussed [the draft regulations governing the activities of procurement service providers](#). The event took place as part of the project "Supporting Public Procurement Reform in Moldova in the Context of EU Accession," implemented by IDIS "Viitorul" with EU support.



Elena Grumeza, State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance (MF), stated during the meeting that the regulation will contribute to the professionalization of the field by involving certified specialists in procurement procedures, which will improve the quality of processes and reduce errors and the administrative burden.

Lucia Mătășaru, senior consultant in the Ministry of Finance's Public Procurement Policy Directorate, [presented the draft regulation on the activities of procurement service providers](#), which was developed in response to the need to

clarify the institutional and operational framework for this type of service. "This draft Regulation sets out, for the first time in our legislation, the rules governing the category of operators active in the public procurement market, a process which, until now, has not been governed by any clear regulatory framework," said Lucia Mătășaru.

For her part, Diana Enachi, an expert at IDIS "Viitorul", set out a series of recommendations for the draft Government Decision approving the Regulation on the activities of procurement service providers, which involves delegating

the process of organising a procurement procedure to procurement service providers. In her view, the draft is necessary, both in terms of implementing the Public Procurement Law and transposing Directive 2014/24/EU. Although the current Public Procurement Act No. 131/2015, which has been in force since May 2016, regulates the activities of procurement service providers, the provisions of the Act have not yet been implemented due to the lack of secondary legislation.



According to Diana Enachi, the work of procurement service providers is an essential mechanism for recognising ancillary procurement activities, enabling the outsourcing of expertise and, consequently, improving the quality of the procurement process, thereby creating a mechanism for professionalisation and institutional accountability. However, there are several aspects of the draft that require review and improvement in order to effectively meet the local needs of contracting authorities, as well as to transpose the EU Directive and European practices that have proven their effectiveness. One of the most significant shortcomings is the inability of individuals, consultants and independent experts to provide procurement services, a provision which is, in fact, set out in both EU Directives and the legislation of EU countries, such as Romania.



The Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) argues in [a detailed analysis](#) that the draft Regulation is based on a sound premise – the professionalisation of public procurement – but treats procurement service providers as mere consultancy service providers, ignoring the fact that they will carry out duties with a direct impact on public funds and on competition. The virtually non-existent entry barrier, the lack of any integrity checks and the absence of transparency mechanisms risk turning a tool designed to improve efficiency into a new grey area within the procurement system.

More information on pulsachizitii.md





REGULATIONS ON LOW-VALUE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT, ADAPTED TO THE NEW LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

» **The Regulation on low-value public procurement** has been adapted to the new legislative framework, through amendments approved by the Government, with a view to bringing it into line with the provisions of Law No. 325/2025 on public procurement and to establishing a more transparent and efficient framework for the use of public funds.

The new provisions raise the thresholds for direct procurement, giving contracting authorities greater flexibility when carrying out low-value procurements. At the same time, to enhance transparency and competition, a requirement is introduced to publish calls for tenders in the Automated Information System 'State Register of Public Procurement' (SIA 'RSAP') for low-value procurements exceeding 400,000 lei for goods and services and 600,000 lei for works, social services and other specific services.

The draft also provides for the standardisation of tender documentation, through the use of standard

forms for technical and financial proposals, as well as the application of rules proportionate to the value of the procurement. At the same time, the Regulation clarifies the simplified regime applicable to certain standardised digital products and services, such as software licences, cybersecurity solutions, digital advertising and airline tickets, thereby reducing the time and administrative costs associated with these purchases.

The regulation addresses the specific characteristics of digital markets, where certain products and services are provided via global platforms or through standardised subscription models, for which the application of traditional competition procedures is often difficult or ineffective. As a result, public authorities will be able to respond more quickly to operational needs, ensure the continuity of digital services and make more efficient use of public resources.

The new rules will help to increase transparency, stimulate competition and facilitate economic operators' access to the public procurement market.

Source: [Ministry of Finance](#)

THE STATE FEE FOR LODGING AN APPEAL HAS RAKED OUT ECONOMIC OBSTRUCTIONIST PRACTICES FROM THE SYSTEM

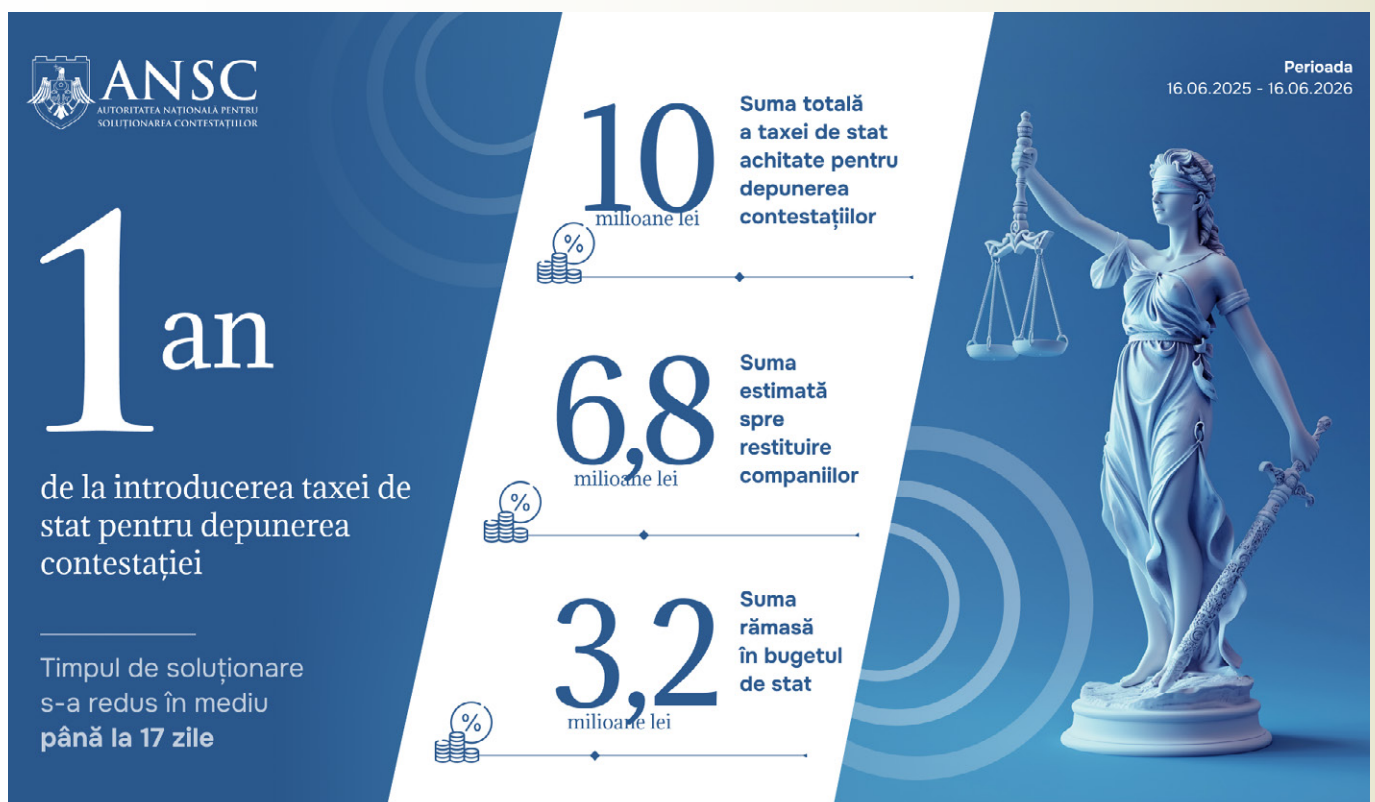
» One year on from the introduction of the state fee for appeals lodged in public procurement, sectoral and concession procedures, the National Agency for Complaint Resolution (NACR) notes that the reform has achieved its main objectives: reducing unfounded appeals, making economic operators more accountable, and streamlining the dispute resolution process.

The measure, which will come into force on 16 June 2025, was designed to deter appeals lodged in bad faith, which were blocking or unduly delaying public procurement procedures. At the same time, the legal framework has been structured to guarantee fair access to the right to challenge, through the refund of the state fee in the case of successful challenges.

During its first year of implementation, the mechanism was refined through several legislative amendments. From 23 January 2026, the state fee is calculated based on the value of the contested lot, rather than the total value of

the procurement procedure, thereby reducing the financial burden on economic operators who contest only part of the procurement. At the same time, the circumstances in which the fee is refunded have been expanded to include cases where the appeal is not examined on its merits for procedural reasons. From 1 April 2026, with the entry into force of Law No. 20/2026, the procedural instrument of the 'Conclusion' was also introduced, which allows for the swift resolution of certain procedural matters and ensures the refund of the fee in the cases provided for by law.

Continued on ansc.md



PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF WORKS IN 2026 – THE NEW RULES EXPLAINED SIMPLY



În vigoare din:
02 mai 2026

Modificări la Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 638/2020 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului privind achizițiile publice de lucrări



NOȚIUNI NOI: CLARITATE & TRANSPARENȚĂ

- Introducerea „documentației de deviz”;
- Redefinirea „lucrărilor similare”;
- Clarificări privind documentația de proiect.



EFICIENȚĂ & CERINȚE DE CALITATE PENTRU LUCRĂRILE FINANȚATE DIN BANI PUBLICI

- Caietul de sarcini va include **cerințe minime de calitate pentru materiale și echipamente**, aprobate de beneficiar;
- Obligația de **justificare tehnico-economică** pentru cerințe de calitate superioare normativelor în construcții.



TRATAMENT EGAL ȘI NEDISCRIMINARE

- Reguli mai clare pentru stabilirea **garanțiilor pentru ofertă & garanția de bună execuție a contractului**.



DREPTURI PENTRU COMPANII & RESPONSABILIZARE PENTRU AUTORITĂȚI

- Dreptul operatorilor economici de a solicita **dobândă de întârziere** pentru plăți tardive efectuate de autoritățile publice.



REGIMUL ABATERILOR NEÎNSEMNATE, ÎMBUNĂTĂȚIT



Eliminarea limitei valorice fixă de **10.000 lei** din **prețul total al ofertei**, pentru **cuantificarea teoretică a abaterilor/omisiunilor din ofertă**;



Introducerea mecanismului mai flexibil de apreciere a caracterului neînsemnat al abaterilor dacă:

- Corectarea este **minoră**;
- NU schimbă **clasamentul ofertelor**;
- NU depășește **1%** din **prețul total al ofertei**.

FRAGMENTED TENDERS AT MOLDATSA. A 2 MILLION LEI PROCUREMENT SPLIT INTO 14 LOW-VALUE CONTRACTS

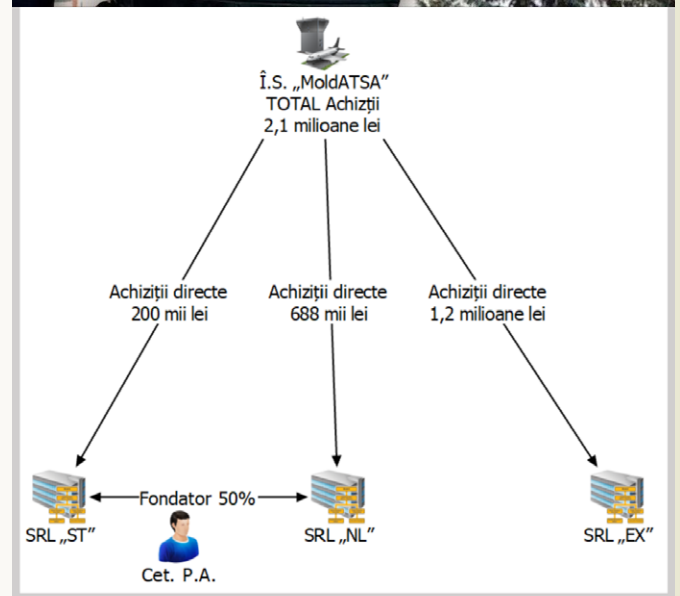
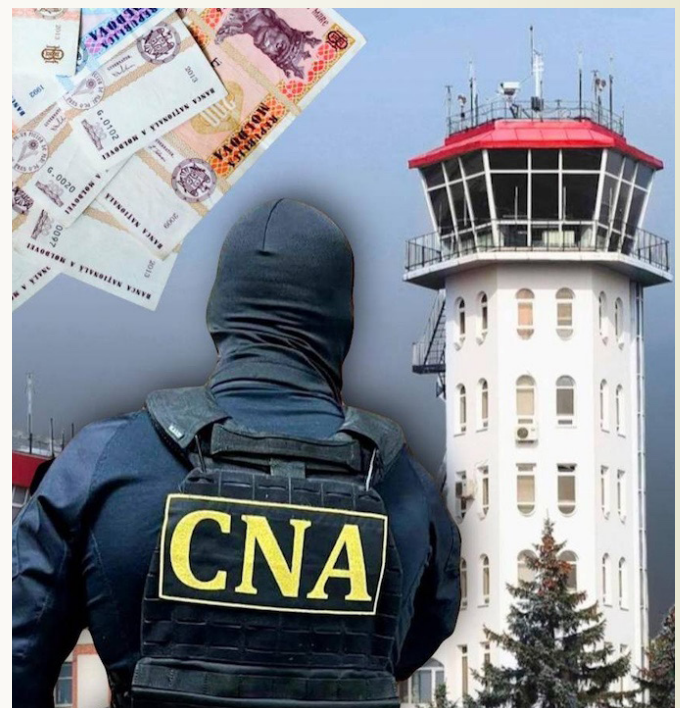
» At Moldatsa, practices involving the deliberate splitting of procurement contracts were employed to ensure that the threshold of 400,000 lei was not exceeded – an amount above which the approval of the founder, the Public Property Agency (PPA), was mandatory – [according to an investigation by Ziarul de Gardă](#). Using this method, a security system with a total value of 2 million lei was procured, according to the National Anti-Corruption Centre's report on the assessment of institutional integrity at the State Enterprise Moldatsa.

Moldatsa is alleged to have split a large procurement of security equipment into 14 separate low-value contracts, thereby circumventing the public tender process and favouring certain economic operators, according to the document, published on 30 June 2026, when criminal investigations were carried out at Moldatsa's headquarters.

According to the NAC, in the first nine months of 2025, Moldatsa procured security systems worth a total of nearly 2 million lei, through the conclusion of 14 low-value procurement contracts with three economic operators. According to the NAC, in this case "there are indications of a possible fragmentation of procurement requirements and the repeated use of low-value procurement procedures".

"In support of the arguments regarding the possible splitting of procurements identified in the procedures carried out by the State Enterprise 'MoldATSA', it should also be noted that a significant proportion of the contracts were concluded on the same day or within very close timeframes". "This circumstance may indicate the existence of known and planned procurement requirements that were to be assessed and contracted for as a single lot, using the procurement procedure corresponding to their combined value," the NAC report further states.

Source: zdg.md





THE AMENDMENTS CONCERNING THE ADJUSTMENT OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS REDUCE CERTAIN RISKS, BUT LEAVE KEY ISSUES UNRESOLVED

» Parliament has adopted, at second reading, amendments to Law No. 131/2015 on public procurement, which allow for the adjustment of contract prices for contracts with a duration of less than 12 months in the event of significant cost fluctuations.

[An analysis by the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance \(AGER\)](#) reveals that, compared with the original version, the new wording introduces several restrictions, including the application of the adjustment only to the unfulfilled part of the contract, exclusively to construction materials and/or fuel, and only provided that sufficient funds are available.

According to AGER's analysis, these amendments partially address the criticisms regarding the clarity of the provision, but do not eliminate the mechanism's main vulnerabilities. The organisation points out that the law was adopted without an impact assessment of the similar

mechanism introduced in 2022, without an estimate of the effects on the public budget, and without an analysis of the impact on competition.

AGER also points out that there is a lack of key safeguards regarding the transparency of the application of adjustments, the reporting of budgetary impact, uniform rules for examining applications, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, making the adjustment conditional on the availability of funds may lead to unequal treatment of economic operators in similar situations.

In conclusion, although the new regulation provides a clearer framework for adjusting contracts during periods of price volatility, it leaves key questions unanswered regarding the impact on public finances, competition and the uniform application of the law. AGER recommends supplementing the legal framework with additional transparency and monitoring measures to ensure a fair and predictable mechanism.

Source: ager.md

REGIONAL SEWERAGE NETWORKS: NUMEROUS TENDERS, PROBLEMS AND RISKS

» In the spring of this year (2026), eight tenders for sewerage networks were launched, with a combined estimated value of 319 million lei excluding VAT, through four regional development agencies. The authorities are thus highlighting the need for investment in local infrastructure. Taking all these factors together, Olga Diaconu, project coordinator at the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) and a monitor for the Public Procurement Monitoring Coalition, identified a range of risks, namely inconsistent deadlines, award criteria based almost exclusively on price, technical requirements that differ significantly from one project to another, and risks of restricted competition.



"An analysis of the eight procedures does not call into question the need for investment in the sewerage system. On the contrary, precisely because these projects are necessary, the way in which they are prepared and awarded must be carefully scrutinised." Public procurement involves genuine competition and clear rules to ensure the best possible value for money. "However, having compared the tender procedures carried out by four Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), we have identified a number of inconsistencies and/or uneven approaches, despite the source of funding and the responsible ministry being the same," says Olga Diaconu.

Olga Diaconu also states that [the response provided by North RDA](#) confirms part of this

systemic problem. The regulatory framework does not provide for a standardised methodology for drawing up tender documents for all sewerage works. According to North RDA, the tender documents are based on the technical documentation and the cost estimate, which are drawn up, verified and assessed by experts prior to the launch of the procedures, and the procurement working group operates within the limits set by these documents. The response confirms that many of the risks that arise during the tender process have their origins prior to the tender, during the design phase.

The risk patterns identified are discussed in more detail in the following [MONITORING REPORT](#).

RIGGED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN TARACLIA. DISTRICT PRESIDENT AMONG THOSE UNDER SUSPICION



» The president of Taraclia district, together with the chair of the Construction Committee and a public procurement specialist, are under investigation by law enforcement for alleged acts of abuse committed in the organisation of public procurement. The National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) and prosecutors from the Cahul Municipal Prosecutor's Office are carrying out searches on Monday at the suspects' workplaces, homes and cars.

The loss to the public budget for 2025 alone, resulting from the actions of the suspects, is estimated at approximately 3 million lei. According to the NAC, the suspects are alleged to have rigged public procurement procedures

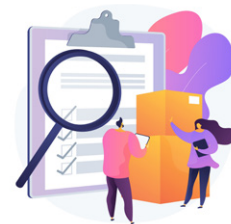
and to have favoured the award of contracts to a company managed by the chair of the Construction Committee, through intermediaries.

Law enforcement officers have documented several instances in which the suspects allegedly negotiated prices for certain projects, with cost estimates drawn up to include fictitiously inflated quantities, in the interests of the firms concerned. "The low-value contracts mainly concerned repair works at educational institutions, and the estimated loss to the public budget for 2025 alone amounts to approximately 3 million lei," notes the NAC.

The suspects are to be investigated whilst remaining at liberty. Law enforcement officers are continuing their criminal investigation with a view to establishing all the circumstances of the case, identifying all those involved and gathering the evidence required to reach a legal conclusion.

Source: anticoruptie.md

ABNORMALLY LOW TENDERS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT – NEW RULES FROM 2027



Ce înseamnă în achizițiile publice o „ofertă anormal de scăzută”?

- ✓ O companie propune un preț mult mai mic decât valoare estimată a achiziției sau celelalte oferte depuse;
- ✓ Nu orice preț mic este o problemă, dar trebuie obligatoriu justificat. Autoritatea contractantă are obligația de a solicita de la ofertant clarificări cu privire la prețul/ costurile propuse;
- ✓ Autoritatea contractantă **NU** are dreptul să respingă o ofertă anormal de scăzută fără a solicita, în prealabil, clarificări privind prețul/costurile propuse.



Pe 1 ianuarie 2027 vor intra în vigoare noi reguli de calcul a ofertelor anormal de scăzute conform Legii nr. 325/2025 privind achizițiile publice



ACHIZIȚIE DE BUNURI & SERVICII:

- 1 Un preț care este cu cel puțin 20% mai mic decât media aritmetică a prețurilor oferite de către toți ceilalți ofertanți, cu excepția ofertei cu cel mai mic preț

Exemplu:

o autoritate contractantă realizează o achiziție de mobilier de birou cu valoarea estimată de 450.000 lei, fiind depuse următoarele oferte:

Oferta A	450.000 lei
Oferta B	410.000 lei
Oferta C	340.000 lei
Oferta D	460.000 lei

Calculăm oferta anormal de scăzută după următorii pași:

Pasul 1

cea mai mică ofertă: Oferta C (340.000 lei)

Pasul 2

media aritmetică a prețurilor oferite de toți ceilalți ofertanți (Ofertant A, B și D): 440.000 lei

Pasul 3

Prețul Ofertei C (340.000 lei) este cu 22,7% mai mic decât 440.000 lei

Concluzie: Oferta C este o ofertă anormal de scăzută.

- 2 prețul ofertat, în raport cu bunurile ce urmează a fi livrate sau serviciile ce urmează a fi prestate, reprezintă mai puțin de 80% din valoarea acestor bunuri sau servicii, calculată de autoritatea contractantă.

Concluzie: Oferta C (340.000 lei), este o ofertă anormal de scăzută, deoarece reprezintă 75,6% din valoarea estimată a achiziției (450.000 lei).

MYTHS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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Contestațiile în achiziții sunt
abuzive și tergiversează
procesul de achiziție



REALITATE

Contestațiile, deși necesită timp
pentru soluționare, corectează
neregulile, responsabilizează
autoritățile publice și asigură un
proces de achiziție corect.

Contestații în cifre

ANSC 2023 - 2025

Datorită mecanismului de contestare,
peste 1.000 de proceduri de achiziție
afectate de încălcări au fost
remediate, iar contractele au fost
atribuite legal și corect.



**Iunie
2025**

**Introducerea taxei
pentru contestare**



Termenul mediu
de soluționare
(2023 -2025)

≈ **18
zile**

2025

a crescut
numărul
contestațiilor
admise

(488)



a scăzut
numărul
contestațiilor
respinse

(464)



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MYTHS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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Achizițiile publice sunt tehnice și complexe, iar cetățenii nu au un rol real în acest proces.

REALITATE

Achizițiile publice pot părea complexe, dar sunt finanțate din bani publici și influențează direct viața fiecăruia dintre noi!



Transparența este unul dintre principiile de bază ale achizițiilor **prevăzute în lege**.

3 motive pentru care societate civilă, inclusiv cetățenii pot și trebuie să se implice în procesul de achiziție publică

- 1 — sunt finanțate din bani publici (taxe și impozite) și au un buget anual care depășește 18 miliarde de lei.
- 2 — monitorizarea creșterea transparența, iar legislația prevede participarea directă a societății civile în procesele de achiziție din orice instituție publică
- 3 — au impact direct asupra vieții cetățenilor și calității infrastructurii și a serviciilor publice (drumuri, școli, grădinițe, spitale, transport, etc.)

Achizițiile sunt publice și pot fi monitorizate în timp real pe portalul guvernamental **MTender.gov.md**

M.Tender

Intră pe **MTender.gov.md** și vezi cum sunt cheltuiți banii publici. Monitorizează ce procură primăria ta, care este bugetul și cerințele de calitate, cine câștigă licitațiile și cât costă totul, de la rechizite și alimentația din grădinițe, până la drumuri, trotuare, servicii publice și proiecte mari de infrastructură.



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'UNALLOCATED SERVICES' IS THE GREY AREA THROUGH WHICH MILLIONS DISAPPEAR FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES' EXPENDITURE

» In the budgets of Chişinău's municipal authorities, there is a category that can cover almost any kind of expenditure, ranging from billboards, banners and promotional services to flowers, gifts, events, decorations, technical services or items that are difficult to identify. It is called 'Services not allocated to other categories', ECO 222999, and, in some sectors, amounts to tens of millions of lei. This category has become a grey area in budget reporting, according to Olga Diaconu, project coordinator at the Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) and a monitor for the Public Procurement Monitoring Coalition.

According to Olga Diaconu, such an approach may create conditions conducive to practices that are difficult to detect and monitor, such as the splitting of contracts, the circumvention of more competitive procedures, or the concealment of any preferential treatment of certain economic operators. The reports analysed do not automatically prove the existence of such practices, but the reporting method makes it difficult to verify them. It is also worth noting that two of the five municipal districts, Ciocana and Botanica, did not publish any information at all on their expenditure for 2026 on the transparency portal. Consequently, for these two districts, we analysed the data published in 2025.

In the analysed reports, the item 'Services not classified elsewhere' includes expenditure

on: public information; promotion; information boards; banners; flowers; gifts; event services; festive lighting; installations; technical services; equipment maintenance; printing; hire; payments to individuals; and services that are difficult to identify based on general descriptions.

"This variety shows just how widely this category is used. Some expenditure may be necessary and justified. But when everything is lumped together under the same heading, the public can no longer distinguish between routine administrative expenditure, public events, public relations, communication, refurbishments or other services," says Olga Diaconu.

Source: revizia.md



VADIM TURCAN, ASSOCIATE EXPERT
IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AT IDIS "VIITORUL":

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MEANS MOVING AWAY FROM THE LOWEST-PRICE CRITERION TOWARDS CHOOSING THE BEST INVESTMENT

««« [CONTINUED FROM PAG. 1](#)



For a long time, public procurement has been associated almost exclusively with finding the lowest price. This approach may seem prudent from a budgetary point of view, but it becomes costly when the product purchased consumes more energy, requires frequent repairs, has a short service life or needs to be replaced after only a few years. The lowest purchase price does not always mean the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

Sustainable public procurement proposes a shift in perspective: from the price paid

on the day the contract is signed to the value obtained over the entire lifetime of the good, work or service. This equation must consider operating costs, energy and water consumption, maintenance, repairs, lifespan, recycling, environmental impact and, where applicable, the social effects of the contract.

Sustainability does not, therefore, mean automatically purchasing the most expensive product, nor does it mean introducing 'green' conditions merely for the sake of image. It means selecting the

solution that offers the best value for money and the best long-term economic, social and environmental outcomes. A large proportion of the state's resources has been channelled into roads, water and sewerage networks, street lighting, schools, nurseries, hospitals and other infrastructure projects.

These investments will have an impact on communities for decades to come. A poorly designed or constructed public building can result in persistently high costs for heating, cooling and maintenance. Conversely, an investment based on an energy audit, sustainable materials, efficient technical solutions and a life-cycle cost assessment can reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and the strain on public budgets.

The Republic of Moldova already has the legal framework in place for this transformation. The National Programme for the Development of the Public Procurement System for 2023–2027 recognises sustainable procurement as a strategic priority, and Law No. 325/2025 on public procurement enshrines the possibility of using environmental, social, innovation and performance criteria. However, there is still a considerable gap between legal provision and practical implementation.

Contracting authorities require standardised criteria, methodologies for calculating life-cycle costs, evaluation factor templates, indicative weightings and tender documentation tailored to different categories of products, services and works. In the absence of these tools, it is only natural that many institutions continue to use the lowest-price criterion, as it is simpler to apply and apparently easier to defend in the event of a challenge. The experience of European countries shows that progress is made when general rules are translated into concrete measures.

Italy has introduced mandatory minimum environmental criteria for certain categories of procurement, whilst the Netherlands has developed standardised criteria, measurable objectives and monitoring mechanisms. For the Republic of Moldova, a realistic solution would be to gradually combine the two approaches: establishing priority categories for which sustainability criteria would become mandatory, and developing a digital system to measure the proportion and impact of these procurements.

The transition should be carried out in stages. It is possible to start with areas where the criteria are relatively easy to define and verify: paper, IT equipment, lighting, furniture, food, motor vehicles, energy-efficient windows and doors, cleaning services and renovation work on public buildings. Consulting the market before launching procedures is also essential, so that the new requirements encourage economic operators to modernise, rather than becoming artificial barriers to competition.

Sustainable public procurement should not be seen as an additional burden imposed on civil servants and the business community. When implemented correctly, it can lead to buildings that consume less energy, infrastructure that lasts longer, safer products, better working conditions and more efficient public spending.

The Republic of Moldova must no longer simply choose the cheapest bid. It must learn to choose the investment that generates the greatest value for its citizens. Genuine public procurement reform will begin when the success of a procedure is no longer measured solely by the savings achieved at the time the contract is signed, but by performance, sustainability and the long-term benefits generated.