

Theory of Change

A guide through systemic mazes.

October 2026 · iti.mk

Our premise

Lasting reduction of corruption requires three elements working together:

Evidence

Precise knowledge of where and how corruption operates.

Capability

Skilled professionals inside and outside institutions who act on that evidence.

Credibility

Messengers whom the public, donors and institutions trust enough to listen to.

Our work connects all three. We build credibility through consistent conduct in our daily work.

1. The problem

40/100

score on the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index

84/182

rank among countries on the same index

89%

of citizens consider corruption widespread

Corruption in North Macedonia and the region persists despite an extensive body of anti-corruption legislation. In Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index, the country scores 40 out of 100 and ranks 84th of 182, unchanged from the previous year.^[1] In its 2025 report, the European Commission found no progress in preventing and fighting corruption, for the second year running.^[2] According to the 2025 Special Eurobarometer, 89% of citizens consider corruption widespread, compared with an EU average of 69%.^[3]

The obstacles lie in implementation. Knowledge is fragmented across sectors, practitioners work in isolation, citizens are disengaged, and informal practice undermines the formal integrity framework. Legislative reforms stall in application, and individual prosecutions leave the habits of the system intact. Citizens experience corruption as inevitable.

2. What we do

1

We produce evidence that gets used.

We conduct multidisciplinary research in sectors where the damage from corruption is direct: justice, health, education, the environment and the media. We define research questions together with those who will use the findings, so that research leads to concrete policy.

2 We turn evidence into practice through three channels.

Policy recommendations go directly to legislators and regulators. Training and mentoring build the capacity of prosecutors, public officials, young professionals and civil society to apply integrity standards in their daily work. Campaigns and digital transparency tools change the civic environment in which institutions operate.

3 We build a regional community of practice.

Corruption crosses borders, and the response must too. We connect Macedonian researchers and practitioners with counterparts in the region and beyond, in a network that outlasts any single project.

4 We meet the standards we advocate.

This is the basis of our credibility, described in About us.

5 Technology is part of our solutions and our communication.

We develop digital tools that strengthen anti-corruption practice: platforms for secure reporting, dashboards that make institutional data understandable to citizens, and analytical tools that help practitioners detect patterns across cases and sectors. We also share our findings through short videos, interactive formats and digital storytelling, to reach young people and audiences that traditional advocacy seldom engages.

3. What changes

Short term

Policymakers have access to recommendations for drafting relevant laws and regulations, tailored to the Macedonian and regional context. Professionals and institutions have stronger technical and ethical capacity. Citizens, especially young people, have accessible tools through which they build their resilience within the system, understand corruption and report it.

Medium term

Legal and institutional frameworks are revised on the basis of evidence and good practice. A generation of practitioners for whom integrity is a professional norm moves into decision-making roles. Public discourse shifts from resignation towards an expectation of accountability.

Long term

Integrity is the standard in public institutions. Corruption loses its social legitimacy. North Macedonia and the region build governance systems in which transparency is part of the structure itself.

4. Assumptions

Change depends on the following conditions:

- evidence, when credibly presented, influences policy;
- training leads to changes in behaviour when reinforced by peer networks and institutional incentives;
- sustained civic pressure changes institutional conduct;
- integrity at the organisational level is achievable and recognisable to those we seek to reach;
- well-designed technology extends both the practical reach of anti-corruption work and the reach of its message;
- diversified funding and disciplined governance sustain the work beyond individual project cycles.

5. How we will know

We measure ourselves at three levels: outputs (published research, trained professionals, policy recommendations), outcomes (policies adopted, institutional practice changed, reporting mechanisms used) and institutional credibility, which we assess through independent review, partner feedback and the composition and conduct of our team.

- we publish annual transparency and activity reports;
- we disclose our sources of funding;
- we submit our governance and financial management to periodic independent review.

6. The chain of change

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Multidisciplinary researchers; legal and policy expertise; a network of vetted partners; governance built on personal integrity; digital and communications expertise.	Research and analysis; policy drafting and advocacy; training and mentoring; public campaigns, digital tools and contemporary formats for young people; regional networking.	Published research, policy briefs, trained professionals, public awareness campaigns, an operational regional network, digital solutions, communication products for young people.	Evidence-based policy; changed institutional practice; informed and engaged citizens; greater youth participation in civic life; integrity as a professional standard.	Less corruption and greater public trust in institutions in North Macedonia and the region.

The principle connecting all levels: ITI's own institutional integrity.

Sources

1. Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2025: North Macedonia. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025/index/mkd>
2. European Commission, North Macedonia 2025 Report. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/267b368e-6b55-4a42-bb72-6395593de4da_en?filename=north-macedonia-report-2025.pdf
3. Special Eurobarometer on Corruption 2025 / European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report, Country Chapter North Macedonia. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ede31053-efc6-4dd0-89ed-c9224f7eeb70_en?filename=2025+Rule+of+Law+Report+-+Country+Chapter+North-Macedonia.pdf



Contact: contact@iti.mk · iti.mk