Conducting of NIS survey in Serbia will provide our country such cornerstone for revision of strategic acts and focusing on priorities in fight against corruption.

The National Integrity System (NIS) comprises the principle governance institutions in a country that are responsible for the fight against corruption. When these governance institutions function properly, they constitute a healthy and robust National Integrity System, one that is effective in combating corruption as part of the larger struggle against abuse of power, malfeasance and misappropriation in all its forms. However, when these institutions are characterised by a lack of appropriate regulations and by unaccountable behaviour, corruption is likely to thrive, with negative ripple effects for the societal goals of equitable growth, sustainable development and social cohesion. Therefore, strengthening the NIS promotes better governance in a country, and, ultimately, contributes to a more just society overall.

The concept of the NIS has been developed and promoted by Transparency International (TI) as part of TI’s holistic approach to combating corruption.[[1]](#footnote-1) While there is no absolute blueprint for an effective anti-corruption system, there is a growing international consensus as to the salient aspects that work best to prevent corruption and promote integrity. The NIS assessment offers an evaluation of the legal basis and the actual performance of institutions relevant to the overall anti-corruption system. These institutions – or ‘pillars’ –comprise the executive, legislature, judiciary, the public sector, the main public watchdog institutions (e.g. supreme audit institution, law enforcement agencies), as well as political parties, the media, civil society and business as the primary social forces which are active in the governance arena.

Thus, the NIS is generally considered to comprise the “pillars”, which are based on a number of foundations in terms of people’s rights, resources, values and voice. These pillars are following:

* Legislature
* Executive
* Judiciary
* Public Sector
* Law Enforcement
* Ombudsman
* Audit Institution
* Political Parties
* Media
* Civil Society
* Anti-Corruption Agencies
* Electoral Management Body
* Business

The NIS is based on a holistic approach to preventing corruption, since it looks at the entire range of relevant institutions and also focuses on the relationships among them. Thus, the NIS presupposes that a lack of integrity in a single institution would lead to serious flaws in the entire integrity system. As a consequence, the NIS assessment does not seek to offer an in-depth evaluation of each pillar, but rather puts an emphasis on covering all relevant pillars and at assessing their inter-linkages.

TI believes that such a holistic “system analysis” is necessary to be able to appropriately diagnose corruption risks and develop effective strategies to counter those risks. This analysis is embedded in a consultative approach, involving the key anti-corruption agents in government, civil society, the business community and other relevant sectors with a view to building momentum, political will and civic pressure for relevant reform initiatives.

On a cross-country level, the NIS assessment creates a sound empirical basis that adds to our understanding of strong or weak performers. In addition, from a regional perspective, the results can create a sense of peer pressure for reform as well as an opportunity for learning from those countries that are in similar stages of development. Since its inception in the late 1990s, more than 70 NIS assessments have been conducted by TI, many of which have contributed to civic advocacy campaigns, policy reform initiatives.

Conducting of NIS survey will also provide opportunity to enhance cooperation of civil society and relevant stakeholders and to involve of all targeted institutions and sectors (listed above as ‘NIS pillars”) in further anti-corruption reforms.

1. Further details of the NIS can be found in The TI Source Book 1997 and 2000 and the partly completed TI Anti-Corruption Handbook, both available at www.transparency.org/nis. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)