

STAIR

Strengthening Transparency and Accountability through Investigative Reporting program

BACKGROUND

Persistent crime and corruption in Europe and Eurasia have significantly hampered the region's economic development and democratic transition. Linked to a rise in political disengagement, brain drain, democratic backsliding, and weakened trust in institutions, widespread corruption is development in reverse.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Building on USAID support for investigative journalism in the region since 2007, the **Strengthening Transparency and Accountability through Investigative Reporting program (STAIR)**, implemented by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), will strengthen investigative journalism networks, invest in the next generation of reporters and editors, foster innovative tools and resources, improve newsroom management and financial viability, and advance holistic approaches to safety and security.



Collaborative Journalism: Support collaborative investigative journalism networks, including the next generation of investigative reporters and editors, to expose crime, corruption, and corrosive capital across Europe & Eurasia



Capacity: Foster investigative outlets' organizational and financial viability



Security: Develop and advance proactive, holistic approaches to safety and security support for investigative journalists

GOALS

Support the role of investigative journalism in promoting greater government accountability and transparency

Improve the sustainability of the investigative journalism sector

Advance partnerships to improve journalist safety and security

COUNTRIES

Central Europe, Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), and Western Balkans

LIFE OF ACTIVITY

09/2022-09/2027

USAID FUNDING

\$20 Million

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

BUILDING ON RESULTS

Building Teams, Tools, and Standards

- The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project's (OCCRP) membership grew from a total of 6 local membership organizations (and 5 regional editors) to **21 centers and 22 regional editors** even as commercial media declined.
- OCCRP has built innovative technology and data teams that oversee its one-of-a-kind investigative data platform, OCCRP Aleph. **This platform contains 3+ billion records and lets journalists and researchers follow the money by allowing them to search, investigate, and visualize data from public databases around the world.**
- OCCRP is the most decorated investigative reporting organization in Eastern Europe--collectively, OCCRP and its partners have won **more than 200 local, national, and international awards.**

Under STAIR's predecessor program, the Regional Investigative Journalism Network (RIJN), OCCRP and its partners' reporting has contributed to:

OCCRP Achievements

- At least **\$4.5 billion in fines** levied and monies seized
- **548 policy changes** or actions by civil society, the private sector, or government
- **21 resignations and sackings**, including of a president and a prime minister
- **456 arrests, indictments, and sentences**

Suisse Secrets

Hard-hitting, impactful stories

Switzerland's banking secrecy laws have made it nearly impossible for other governments or journalists to hold the industry to account—until the **Suisse Secrets project**. OCCRP worked with the investigative team at German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung to review records of more than 18,000 Credit Suisse accounts, the largest leak ever from a major Swiss bank. Although these records represented a small subset of the bank's overall holdings, OCCRP found dozens of dubious characters in the data, including a sanctioned businessman from Ukraine who refers to smuggling as “tax optimization,” the children of a brutal Azerbaijani strongman, and a Serbian drug lord known as Misha Banana. When corrupt politicians or organized criminals turn to Switzerland to keep their money safe from prying eyes, the victims of their crimes will likely never see it again. And once dirty money makes it into a Swiss bank account, it's free to go anywhere. More than 160 journalists from 48 media partners on five continents collaborated to publish Suisse Secrets.