

Index of Active Transparency 2023

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Abbreviations

Moi	Ministry of Interior
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MoH	Ministry of Health
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
MISA	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MLSG	Ministry of Local Self-Government
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MPSICR	Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations
MTC	Ministry of Transport and Communications
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
RNM	Republic of North Macedonia



Summary

- In 2023, the average **active transparency score** of the government, ministries and municipalities stands at **76%** (from maximum possible 100%) and **has improved by only 3 percentile points** compared to last year (from 73% to 76%).
- This year, **54%** of analysed institutions have improved their performance in respect to active transparency, unlike last year when the share of institutions with improved active transparency track record accounted for 81%.
- Active transparency among ministries and the government stands at **86%**, while the municipalities' average score is **74%**. Contrary to observations made under the last year's index, in 2023, ministries demonstrate an improvement by barely 1 percentile point, while active transparency improvement among municipalities is calculated at 4 percentile points.
- As was the case last year, only two institutions, i.e. **the Ministry of Defence and the Government**, have earned a perfect score of **100%**, which means they publish all information required under active transparency obligations.
- Two municipalities, i.e. **Veles and Gevgelija**, share the third position in the overall ranking list, with a high compliance score of **99%** with obligations for publication of information according to the principle of active transparency.
- Among **planning regions**, the **East Region** climbed to the top position (with a compliance score of 83%), while the **Skopje Region** still remains at the bottom of the ranking list (with a compliance score of 66%).
- Both, ministries and municipalities, publish **the least information in the area of finances** (only 57% from maximum 100% among municipalities and 62% from maximum 100% among ministries).
- The overall situation in respect to **freedom of information requests** addressed to all institutions and containing identical inquires is deteriorating. In particular, the average response rate accounts for **16 days** (last year it was 12 days) among **municipalities** and **19 days** (last year it was 16 days) among **ministries**. Only **65%** of institutions disclosed the information requested within the **law-stipulated maximum deadline** of 20 days (last year this share was 93%).

The term 'active transparency' means publication of information by the institutions at their own initiative, without being addressed with freedom of information requests. Proactive publication of information, i.e. active transparency is a legal obligation, primarily under the Law on Free Access to Public Information, but also in other legislation, such as the Law on Self-Government, Law on Budgets, Law on Public Debt, Law on Financing Local Self-Governments, etc. In addition to national legislation, active transparency is a matter of good practice, i.e. the institutions have committed to proactive publication of information under the Open Government Partnership's National Action Plans.

Overall ranking under the 2023 Index of Active Transparency

Rank	Institution	Score
VERY GOOD		
1	Ministry of Defence	100.0%
1	Government of RNM	100.0%
3	Veles	98.6%
3	Gevgelija	98.6%
5	Ministry of Finance	98.1%
6	Berovo	97.1%
6	Delchevo	97.1%
6	Kichevo	97.1%
6	Kochani	97.1%
10	Gradsko	97.1%
11	Kumanovo	95.8%
12	Bitola	95.7%
12	Valandovo	95.7%
12	Kavadarci	95.7%
15	Karposh	95.7%
15	MLSP	95.7%
15	MAFWE	95.7%
18	Centar	94.2%
19	Demir Hisar	92.9%
20	Ilinden	92.8%
20	Brvenica	92.8%
20	Centar Zhupa	92.8%
23	Strumica	91.4%
24	Ministry of Health	91.3%
25	MLSG	90.9%
26	Shtip	90.0%
27	Debrca	89.9%
28	Zrnovci	89.9%
29	MESP	89.1%
29	MISA	89.1%
31	Kisela Voda	88.4%
31	Konche	88.4%
33	Ministry of Interior	87.5%
34	Negotino	87.1%
35	Gazi Baba	87.0%
35	Vasilevo	87.0%
35	Ministry of Economy	87.0%
38	Ohrid	85.7%
38	Prilep	85.7%
40	Novo Selo	82.6%
40	MES	82.6%
42	Probishtip	81.9%
43	Kriva Palanka	81.4%
43	Krushevo	81.4%
45	Butel	81.2%
45	Lipkovo	81.2%
47	MTC	80.4%
48	Debar	80.0%
48	Tetovo	80.0%
GOOD		

Rank	Institution	Score
50	Tearce	79.7%
50	Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	79.7%
52	Ministry of Justice	79.2%
53	Radovish	78.7%
53	Sveti Nikole	78.7%
55	Vevchani	78.4%
55	Mogila	78.4%
57	Mavrovo and Rostushe	76.8%
58	Makedonska Kamenica	75.7%
59	Vinica	74.3%
59	Pehchevo	74.3%
61	Gostivar	72.9%
62	Bosilovo	72.5%
63	Ministry of Culture	71.7%
64	Bogdanci	71.4%
65	Chashka	71.0%
65	Gjorche Petrov	71.0%
67	Chair	69.6%
67	City of Skopje	69.6%
69	Aerodrom	69.0%
70	Novaci	68.1%
71	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	67.4%
72	Makedonski Brod	67.1%
73	Petrovec	66.8%
73	Jegunovce	66.8%
75	Struga	65.7%
76	Krivogastani	65.2%
77	Kratovo	64.3%
77	Resen	64.3%
79	Demir Kapija	61.4%
AVERAGE		
80	Bogovinje	59.4%
81	Zhelino	58.0%
82	Studenichani	56.3%
83	Rankovce	52.2%
83	Rosoman	52.2%
83	MPSICR	52.2%
86	Karbinci	50.7%
86	Staro Nagorichane	50.7%
88	Dojran	50.0%
89	Chucher Sandevo	49.3%
90	Shuto Orizari	47.8%
91	Plasnica	46.4%
92	Sopishte	44.9%
92	Dolneni	44.9%
94	Saraj	43.5%
95	Vrapchishte	40.6%
POOR		
96	Zelenikovo	36.23%
97	Lozovo	30.43%
98	Arachinovo	28.99%

Introduction: Why active transparency?

The term 'active transparency' means publication of information by the institutions at their own initiative, without being addressed with freedom of information requests. On the other hand, 'reactive transparency' accounts for cases in which the institutions are addressed with requests to disclose particular information.

The need for proactive publication of information originates in the need for public disclosure and availability of:

- » information about the authorities' regulations and decisions, ensuring the right of citizens to be informed about their rights and responsibilities in the society;
- » information needed by citizens to hold the authorities accountable;
- » information needed by citizens to participate in decision-making processes; and
- » information needed by citizens to obtain access to services provided by the public institutions.

The institutions that proactively publish information also enjoy multiple benefits from such practice, as follows:

- » active transparency helps the institutions to be more responsible in terms of public spending;
- » by practicing active transparency, the institutions promote the principles of good governance and integrity; and
- » the institutions are more efficient on the account of better management of information at their disposal.

It seems that technology development and advancement go hand-in-hand and support active transparency of the institutions because the methods for distribution of information disposed by institutions and useful for citizens are growing in number and become easily accessible.

The legal basis for active transparency is found in the Law on Free Access to Public Information. In addition to the obligation for the institutions to respond to freedom of information requests, this law features provisions relating to proactive publication of information, i.e. publication of information at the institution's own initiative.

Furthermore, a series of other laws stipulate obligations for the institutions to proactive publish information. These include provisions from the Law on Local Self-Government, Law on Budgets, Law on Public Debt, Law on Financing Local Self-Governments, etc.

In addition to being regulated as legal obligation, active transparency is also a matter of good practice. Across the world, it is believed a good practice for the institutions to make publicly available to all citizens their responses to frequently asked questions submitted under the freedom of information instrument.

Voluntary publication of information helps civil society organizations and investigative journalists to develop and publish research studies/stories which – in turn – allow citizens to better understand performance and operation of relevant institutions, their rights and responsibilities, the manner in which

they can influence decisions that affect their day-to-day life and work, and facilitates the citizens' access to services provided by the state.

In principle, any institution can proactively publish all information at its disposal, except for those regulated as exemption by the law.

Active transparency is a relatively new notion in the world. Hence, there are no predefined standards about which information should be published by the institutions, except for those regulated as exemption by law. However, the analysis of relevant practices in different countries has led to definition of the list of information which the institutions should, as minimum, make publicly available as part of their active transparency.

When engaging in proactive publication of information, the institutions should be guided by the principle on cost-effective and efficient publication of information, which means that information made available is easily accessible to the broadest group of citizens possible. Moreover, honest practice of active transparency means that the institutions inform citizens and interested parties about information disclosed and they encourage access to and use of such information.

Proactively published information should be easily accessible and understandable, useful, relevant (relevancy of information could be confirmed in cooperation with civil society organizations and journalists) and regularly updated.

Based on all above, the Center for Civil Communications developed a detailed and comprehensive research methodology that measures the level of active transparency demonstrated by state institutions. The idea behind this research and ranking under the so-called Index of Active Transparency is to help the institutions by indicating which information they need to publish and to encourage them to make said information available to the public.

Methodology

This research is conducted on the basis of previously designed methodology and uses structured questionnaires that measure the compliance of analysed institutions with obligations for proactive publication of information on their official websites.

The baseline for questionnaire design is identified in legal obligations for institutions to publish information pertaining to various areas of their performance which are relevant for citizens and affect their daily life and work. In that regard, due consideration was made of active transparency obligations stipulated under the Law on Free Access to Public Information and those stipulated in other laws that govern public spending.

This research is conducted for the eighth consecutive year and targets institutions that are direct holders of executive powers at both central and local level, i.e. the government and its ministries and local authorities, i.e. municipalities and the City of Skopje.

Having in mind the multitude of obligations for proactive publication of information by national and local authorities (municipalities have far greater obligations in this regard), the research is conducted on the basis of two questionnaires. One questionnaire targets the government and its ministries, while the other is intended for local self-government units, i.e. municipalities and the City of Skopje. In that, the questionnaire addressed to the Ministry of Finance includes additional inquiries to reflect its multiple obligations on information dissemination compared to other line ministries.

Depending on its importance, volume and scope of information published on official websites of ranking institutions, each question is assigned a particular number of points (weight). In addition to measures their compliance with obligations for publishing information covered by the questionnaire, the research also includes a test probe, i.e. submission of freedom of information requests to all institutions targeted by the research in order to assess their performance in respect to timely and complete disclosure of information requested. The maximum number of points that could be assigned to the government and line ministries is 48, with the exception of the Ministry of Finance which could be assigned a maximum of 54 points, while in the case of local authorities, i.e. municipalities and the City of Skopje, the maximum number of points is 74.

The initial research was conducted in the period from 20th March to 15th May 2023. The final ranking of institutions was made on the basis of their active transparency compliance scores (expressed as percentage), i.e. the index of active transparency, which are calculated as the ratio between the number of points awarded and the maximum number of points. In that, a score of 0 accounts for the lowest rank, while a score of 100 signified the highest rank.

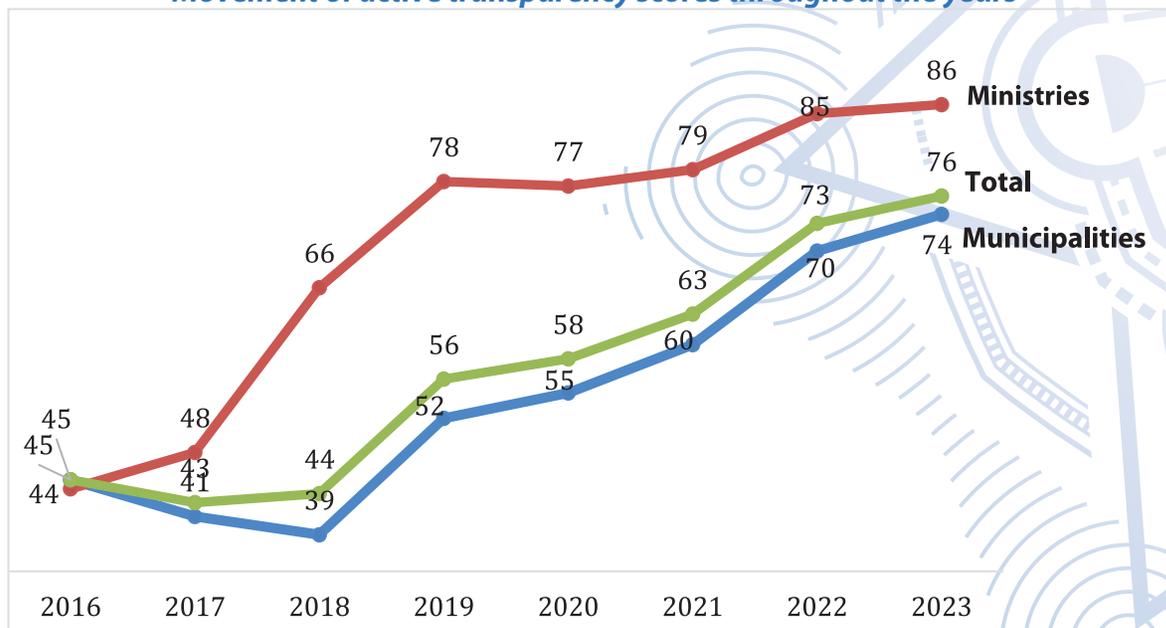
The scale of active transparency is divided into five categories, depending on the relevant compliance score. More specifically, the institutions assigned a compliance score in the range from 80% to 100% are ranked as "very good", those with compliance score in the range from 60% to 80% belong to the category of "good" active transparency, the institutions with compliance scores in the range from 40% to 60% are ranked as "poor" and those with compliance score in the range from 0% to 20 % are ranked as "very poor" in terms of active transparency.

Detailed analysis of active transparency in 2023

A total of 54% of ministries and municipalities improved their active transparency score compared to last year.

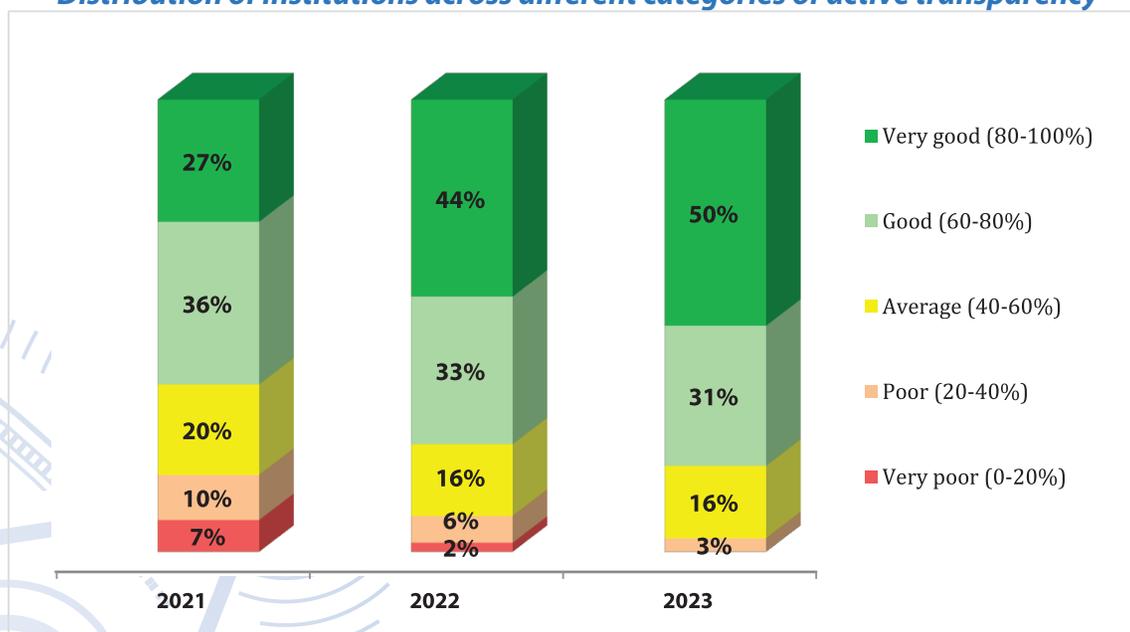
- In 2023, the average active transparency score of all 98 analysed institutions stands at 76% (from maximum 100%) and falls under the category of **“good”** active transparency.
- In 2023, the overall active transparency accounts for 76% and represents an improvement by only 3 percentile points compared to last year, when it was calculated at 73%.
- In continuation, ministries publish more information than municipalities. While in 2016, when this index was developed for the first time, both groups of institutions had the same starting point (compliance score of 45%), the gap in terms of active transparency between ministries and municipalities still remains high. Namely, active transparency of ministries stands at 86%, while municipalities have an average active transparency score of 74%.

Movement of active transparency scores throughout the years



- For the first time, this year’s index does not include any institutions ranked in the category of “very poor” active transparency, marked by compliance with obligations for proactive publication of information in the range of 0% to 20%.
- Also for the first time, almost half of institutions (50%) are ranked in the best category of “very good” active transparency, with compliance scores in the range above 80%.

Distribution of institutions across different categories of active transparency



ACTIVE TRANSPARENCY OF MUNICIPALITIES: 19 municipalities have active transparency scores higher than 90%

- The two best-ranked municipalities, Veles and Gevgelija, have active transparency scores of 99% and share the third position in the overall ranking list that covers all institutions.
- As many as 36 municipalities (last year their number was 30) fall in the best category of active transparency qualified as “very good”, each having earned a compliance score in the range from 80% to 100%.
- There are no municipalities ranked in the category of “very poor” active transparency (last year there were two municipalities with such scores).
- This year, 47 municipalities have improved their active transparency (last year improvement was observed with 68 municipalities).
- The so-called leader municipalities, i.e. those that have improved their compliance scores by more than 30 percentile points, include: Butel (improved score by 54%), Kichevo (improved score by 37%) and Negotino (improved score by 31%), while the biggest regression is noted with Bogdanci (decreased score by 17%).
- At the same time, all four worst-ranked institutions are municipalities.

ACTIVE TRANSPARENCY OF MINISTRIES AND THE GOVERNMENT: Proactive publication of information is marked by stagnation

- After 2020, known as the crisis year, when this research observed an insignificant drop in active transparency by 1 percentile point, this year marks the lowest annual increase in active transparency demonstrated by ministries and the government, accounting for only 1 percentile point.
- Among 16 ministries and the government, only 6 institutions have improved their active transparency scores (last year their number was 11), while 9 of them are marked by decreased active transparency and 2 maintained their last year’s score.

- As was the case last year, the Ministry of Defence and the Government hold the top rank, with compliance score of 100%. For third year in a row, the Ministry of Defence is the best-ranked institution and was the first one at that time, together with the Municipality of Karposh, to have earned the maximum score of 100% since the start of this ranking effort, i.e. from 2016 onwards.
- The biggest annual increase by 12 percentile points is noted with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, while the biggest annual decrease by 9 percentile points is noted with the Ministry of Education and Science.
- In addition to the Ministry of Defence, five other ministries also demonstrate very high level of active transparency, those being: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and Ministry of Local Self-Government. Last ranked in this group is the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations, despite its continuous improvement from one to another year.
- As many as 12 ministries are ranked in the category of “very good” active transparency (compliance score in the range from 80% to 100%), while 3 ministries belong to the category of “good” active transparency (compliance score in the range from 60% to 80%). Only 1 ministry belongs to the category of “average” active transparency (compliance score in the range from 40% to 60%).

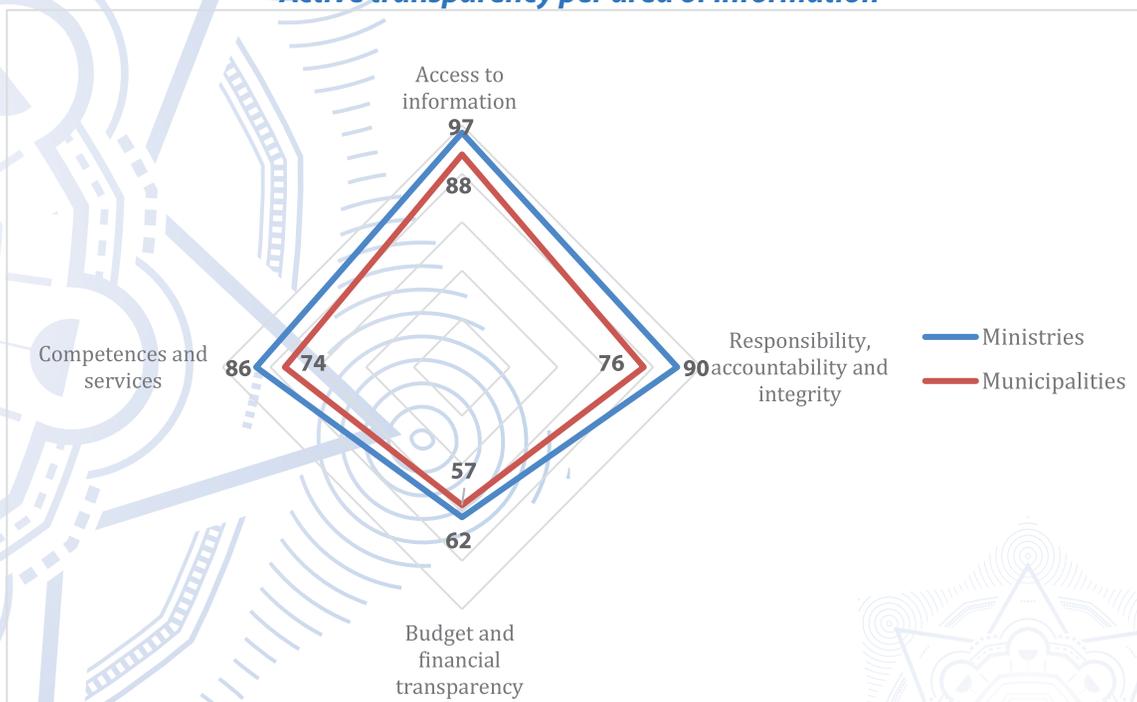
Ranking of ministries and the government according to their active transparency score

Rank	Overall rank	Institution	2023 score	2022 score	Change (%)
1	1	Ministry of Defence	100.0%	100.0%	0
1	1	Government of RNM	100.0%	100.0%	0
3	5	Ministry of Finance	98.1%	94.4%	3.7
4	15	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	95.7%	83.3%	12.4
4	15	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy	95.7%	91.3%	4.4
6	24	Ministry of Health	91.3%	91.7%	-0.4
7	25	Ministry of Local Self-Government	90.9%	95.5%	-4.6
8	29	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	89.1%	91.7%	-2.6
8	29	Ministry of Information Society and Administration	89.1%	89.6%	-0.5
10	33	Ministry of Interior	87.5%	91.7%	-4.2
11	35	Ministry of Economy	87.0%	81.3%	5.7
12	40	Ministry of Education and Science	82.6%	91.7%	-9.1
13	47	Ministry of Transport and Communications	80.4%	75.0%	5.4
14	52	Ministry of Justice	79.2%	83.3%	-4.1
15	63	Ministry of Culture	71.7%	77.1%	-5.4
16	71	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	67.4%	60.9%	6.5
17	83	Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations	52.2%	54.3%	-2.1
		AVERAGE	85.8%	85.3%	

The least information is published in the area of finances

- Both, ministries and municipalities, publish the most information in the area of access to information and **the least information** in the area of **finances**.
- As regards **access to information**, the compliance score with active transparency obligations for this type of information, most of which originate in the Law on Free Access to Public Information, accounts for 88% among municipalities and is significantly higher, i.e. 97%, among ministries and the government.
- In terms of proactive publication of information in the area of **budget and fiscal transparency**, the average compliance score among municipalities is calculated at 57%, while ministries have an average score of 62%.
- As regards **information on competences and services**, the average compliance score for publication of such information stands at 74% among municipalities and 86% among ministries.
- In the area of **responsibility, accountability and integrity**, on average, ministries publish 90% and municipalities publish only 76% of all information required under active transparency obligations.

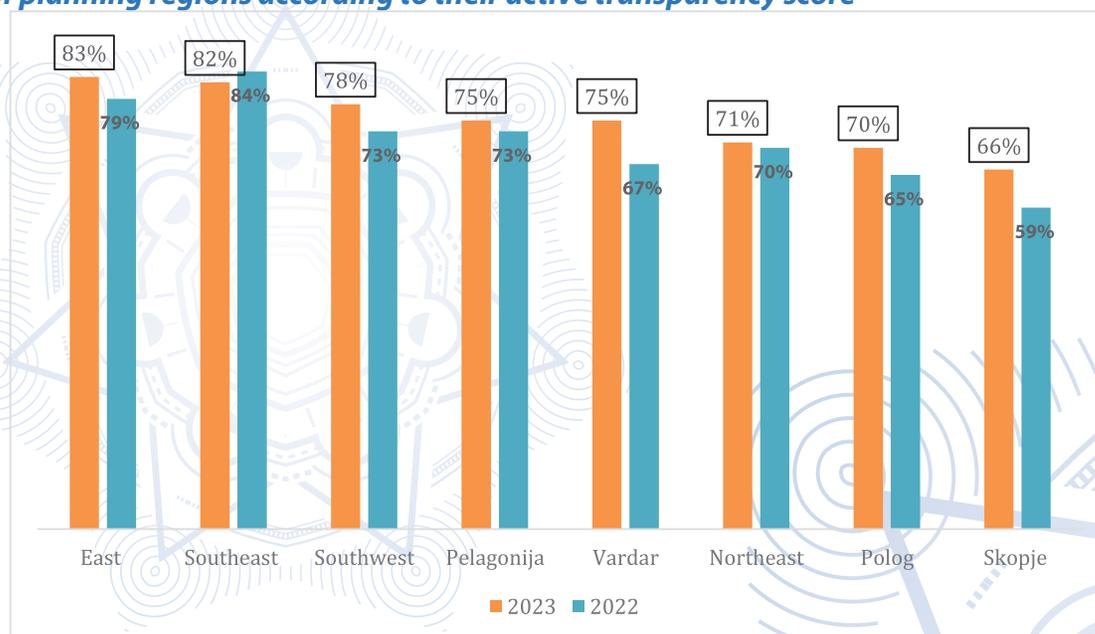
Active transparency per area of information



REGIONAL COMPARISONS: East Region is again the best-ranked, while the Skopje Region remains at the bottom of this list for several consecutive years

- In 2023, all planning regions in the country, except for the Southeast Region, have demonstrated an improvement in terms of their active transparency.
- After last year's fall to the second rank, the East Region restored its long-standing primacy in terms of active transparency and climbed to the top of this ranking list, overtaking the Southeast Region.
- The Southeast Region continuously improves its active transparency and, from being second-to-last at one point in time, this year it holds the third rank among planning regions.
- Polog and Skopje Regions are traditionally ranked at the bottom of this list, although this year both regions demonstrated an improvement compared to their last year's scores.

Ranking of planning regions according to their active transparency score



East Region - 83% (last year - 79%)

- After last year's fall from the top rank, the East Region regained its leadership position which it held for the previous three years. This region's average compliance score accounts for 83%, representing an improvement by 4 percentile points compared to last year.
- Kochani, last year's leader in this planning region, is now joined by two other municipalities, Berovo and Delchevo, and all three have a compliance score of 97% in terms of obligations for proactive publication of information. This year as well, they are closely followed by Shtip, with a compliance score of 90%.
- Probishtip and Cheshinovo-Obleshevo made an upward jump on the ranking list, with Probishtip climbing from the eighth to the sixth position and Cheshinovo-Obleshevo climbing from the tenth to the seventh position.

Active transparency of municipalities in the East Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Kochani	97.1%
1	Berovo	97.1%
1	Delchevo	97.1%
4	Shtip	90.0%
5	Zrnovci	89.9%
6	Probishtip	81.9%
7	Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	79.7%
8	Makedonska Kamenica	75.7%
8	Vinica	74.3%
9	Pehchevo	74.3%
10	Karbinci	50.7%

Southeast Region - 82% (last year - 84%)

- After last year's climb to the top, the Southeast Region again fell to the second position with a compliance score of 82%, which is by 2 percentile points lower compared to last year. This planning region is the only one marked by deteriorated active transparency under this year's index. Moreover, half of municipalities in this region have demonstrated lower active transparency.

- After three years at the top of the ranking list, this year Valandovo is replaced by Gevgelija. At the same time, Gevgelija – together with Veles – are the best-ranking municipalities and third-ranked institutions in the overall ranking list, with an active transparency score of 99%.
- Valandovo is now second-ranked, with high compliance score of 96%, with Strumica climbing to the third position with a score of 91%. As was the case last year, Konche still holds the fourth position, closely followed by Vasilevo.
- Dojran is at the bottom of this ranking list, with an annual decrease of its active transparency score by 14 percentile points.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Southeast Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Gevgelija	98.6%
2	Valandovo	95.7%
3	Strumica	91.4%
4	Konche	88.4%
5	Vasilevo	87.0%
6	Novo Selo	82.6%
7	Radovish	78.6%
8	Bosilovo	72.5%
9	Bogdanci	71.4%
10	Dojran	50.0%

Southwest Region - 78% (last year - 73%)

- Having climbed the ranking list by one position over the last several years, the Southwest Region now holds the third position among planning regions in terms of their active transparency.
- Kichevo took the primacy from Centar Zhupa with an improvement by high 37.1 percentile points compared to its last year's score and is now the best-ranking municipality in this planning region from last year's second-to-last position.
- Ohrid, once an unquestionable top-ranking municipality in this planning region according to its active transparency, now holds the fourth position and was tumbled down from the last year's third position by Debrca.
- Struga and Plasnica remain at the bottom positions in this ranking list.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Southwest Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Kichevo	97.1%
2	Centar Zhupa	92.8%
3	Debrca	89.9%
4	Ohrid	85.7%
5	Debar	80.0%
6	Vevchani	78.3%
7	Makedonski Brod	67.1%
8	Struga	65.7%
9	Plasnica	46.4%

Pelagonija Region - 75% (last year - 73%)

- A former leader and later the second-best planning region in terms of active transparency, this year, the Pelagonija Region is ranked fourth, with an average compliance score of 75%.
- Bitola maintains its top position from last year, closely followed by Demir Hisar, but has fallen from third to ninth position in the overall ranking list. Although being the two best-ranked municipalities in the region, both Bitola and Demir Hisar demonstrated lower active transparency compared to last year.
- There are no changes among the top 6 ranking positions within the Pelagonija Region.
- Krivogashtani climbed to the seventh position from being the last-ranked municipality last year.
- Marked by continuous decrease in terms of proactive publication of information year after year, Dolneni is ranked at the bottom of this list with a compliance score of only 45%.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Pelagonija Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Bitola	95.7%
2	Demir Hisar	92.9%
3	Prilep	85.7%
4	Krushevo	81.4%
5	Mogila	78.3%
6	Novaci	68.1%
7	Krivogashtani	65.2%
8	Resen	64.3%
9	Dolneni	44.9%

Vardar Region - 75% (last year - 67%)

- Following last year's drop by two ranks, the Vardar Region managed to climb one position and is ranked fifth among all planning regions.
- There are no changes in terms of the leader position within this region occupied by Veles, which is also the best ranked municipality in the overall ranking list, holding the high third position among all institutions and having earned an impressive compliance score of 99%.
- Gradsko took the second position from Kavadarci, although both municipalities have improved their active transparency this year.
- Negotino is definitely the biggest winner in this region, having climbed from the sixth to the fourth position and demonstrating an enormous improvement by 31.3 percentile points in terms of its active transparency.
- The bottom three municipalities exchanged ranking positions, with Lozovo being the last-ranked municipality, Rosoman ranking as second-to-last and Demir Kapija ranked one position higher.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Vardar Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Veles	98.6%
2	Gradsko	97.1%
3	Kavadarci	95.7%
4	Negotino	87.1%
5	Sveti Nikole	78.6%
6	Chashka	71.0%
7	Demir Kapija	61.4%
8	Rosoman	52.2%
9	Lozovo	30.4%

Northeast Region - 71% (last year - 70%)

- In spite of last year's improvement, the Northeast Region has again fallen by one rank, from the fifth to the sixth position.
- Kumanovo strengthened its top position, while Kriva Palanka dropped to second place, after having shared the first position with Kumanovo last year. Kumanovo holds the 11th position in the overall ranking list, while Kriva Palanka has dropped to the 43rd position, but had once held the third position in the overall ranking list.
- As was the case last year, Lipkovo is the biggest winner in this planning region. From last year's bottom position in the region and in the overall ranking list, this municipality improved its standing by climbing more than 50 positions. Two years ago, Lipkovo's active transparency score accounted for 12%, last year – 64% and this year it has a compliance score of 81% with obligations for proactive publication of information.
- Staro Nagorichane and Rankovce remain at the bottom of this list, one with a decreased and the other with an unchanged performance in terms of active transparency compared to last year.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Northeast Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Kumanovo	95.8%
2	Kriva Palanka	81.4%
3	Lipkovo	81.2%
4	Kratovo	64.3%
5	Rankovce	52.2%
6	Staro Nagorichane	50.7%

Polog Region - 70% (last year - 65%)

- Despite last year's improvement, the Polog Region remains on the second-to-last position among planning regions, which it has held for several years. However, year after year, this region manages to reduce the active transparency gap compared to higher-ranking regions to an insignificant level.
- Last year's improvement by 24 percentile points and this year's improvement by new 10 percentile points allowed Brvenica to take a stronghold on the first position in this region with continuous improvement of its active transparency.
- Tetovo regained the second position after last year's drop to the fourth rank, while Tearce dropped from the second to the third position.
- Gostivar remains fifth-ranked municipality in this region, followed by Jegunovce, which climbed from the second-to last to the sixth position.
- For several years now, there are no changes in terms of the bottom-ranked municipality, which is held by Vrapchishte, despite its significantly improved compliance score over the last two years.

Active transparency of municipalities in the Polog Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Brvenica	92.8%
2	Tetovo	80.0%
3	Tearce	79.7%
4	Mavrovo and Rostushe	76.8%
5	Gostivar	72.9%
6	Jegunovce	66.7%
7	Bogovinje	59.4%
8	Zhelino	58.0%
9	Vrapchishte	40.6%

Skopje Region - 66% (last year - 59%)

- For the fifth consecutive year, the biggest planning region in the country, i.e. the Skopje Region, occupies the bottom of the ranking list for active transparency. However, for the first time this year, this region entered the category of institutions with “good” active transparency, after having surpassed the lower threshold of 60% in respect to compliance with obligations for proactive publication of information.
- For many years now, Karposh is the leader in this planning region with an active transparency score of 97%.
- From last year’s second position, Ilinden fell by one ranking position, thereby leaving the second-best ranking to Centar, which climbed to this rank from last year’s eighth position.
- As was the case last year, next on the list of municipalities in this region are Kisela Voda and Gazi Baba. Having made an upward jump by 10 ranks, Butel arrived to the sixth from last year’s 16th position.
- The City of Skopje fell from the seventh to the eighth position and shares it with Chair, which improved its standing by 6 ranks.
- This year, the bottom two ranks belong to Zelenikovo and Arachinovo, although both municipalities have significantly improved their active transparency compared to last year.

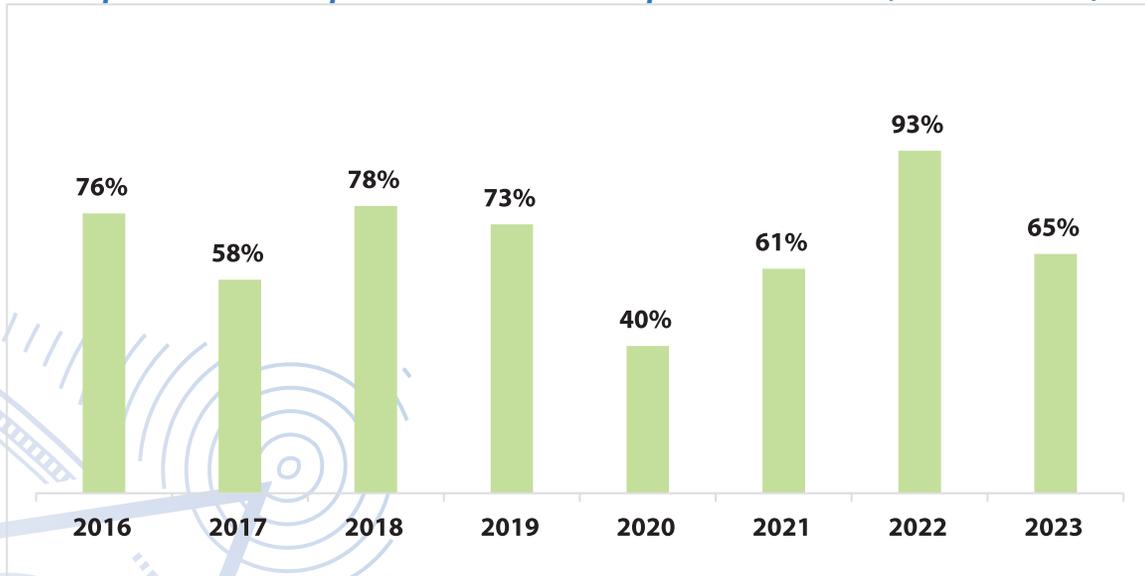
Active transparency of municipalities in the Skopje Region

Rank	Municipality	Score
1	Karposh	95.7%
2	Centar	94.2%
3	Ilinden	92.8%
4	Kisela Voda	88.4%
5	Gazi Baba	87.0%
6	Butel	81.2%
7	Gjorche Petrov	71.0%
8	City of Skopje	69.6%
8	Chair	69.6%
10	Aerodrom	69.0%
11	Petrovec	66.7%
12	Studenichani	56.3%
13	Chucher Sandevo	49.3%
14	Shuto Orizari	47.8%
15	Sopishte	44.9%
16	Saraj	43.5%
17	Zelenikovo	36.2%
18	Arachinovo	29.0%

On average, the institutions responded to FOI requests within a period of 17 days (last year this period was 13 days) and only 65% of them disclosed the information requested within the law-stipulated deadline (last year this share was 93%)

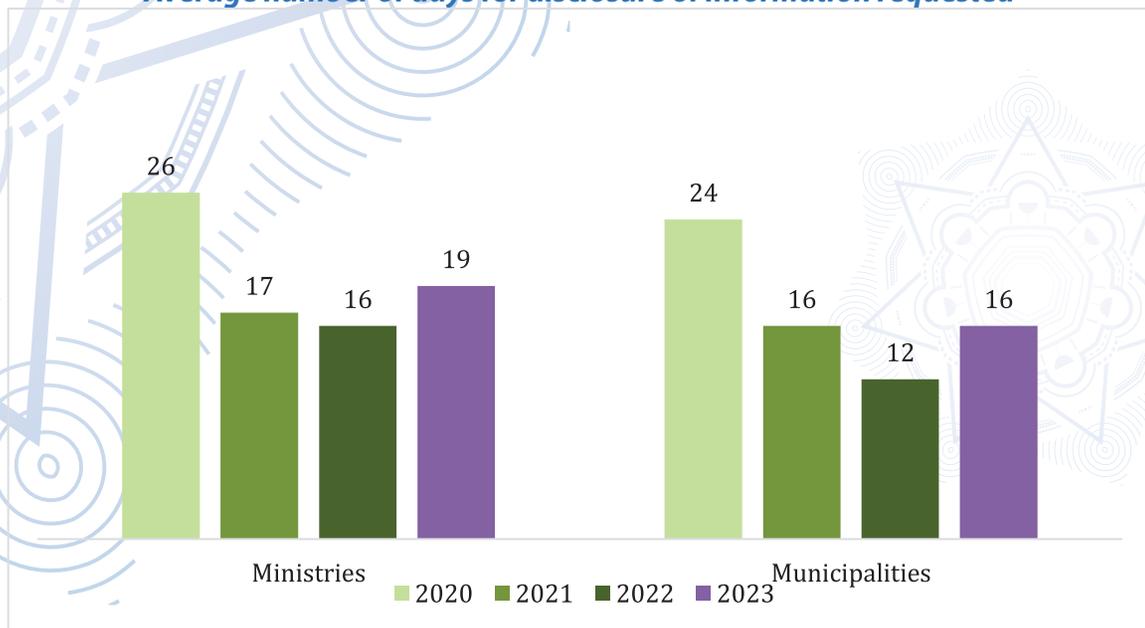
- On average, the institutions responded to FOI requests they were addressed with on the same day and with identical inquiries within a period of 17 days, i.e. only 3 days before expiration of the law-stipulated maximum deadline, which represents a deterioration from previous practices.
- Only 65% of institutions responded to FOI requests within the law-stipulated maximum deadline of 20 days, while the other 34% disclosed the information requested after this deadline, with one institution not responding at all. Last year, 93% of institutions have responded within the law-stipulated deadline, whereby the current situation implies a significant deterioration in respect to compliance with the instrument on free access to public information.

Responses to FOI requests within the law stipulated deadline (all institutions)



- Traditionally, ministries demonstrate much better performance under the active transparency index, including their response rate to FOI requests both in terms of the average number of days for information disclosure and the share of information disclosed within the law-stipulated maximum deadline. This year, the average response rate is 16 days among municipalities and 19 days among ministries. However, the share of information disclosed accounts for 64% among municipalities and 71% among ministries.
- This year, the fastest response rate of only one day was noted with five institutions (municipalities Demir Hisar, Konche, Mavrovo and Rostushe and Plasnica, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy). On the other hand, the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations did not respond to the FOI request submitted.

Average number of days for disclosure of information requested



Winner and losers

- In 2023, only half (54%) from the total of 98 institutions covered by this index have improved their active transparency compared to last year.
- On the other hand, as many as 39% of institutions have published less information compared to last year and 7% of them have neither improved nor deteriorated their performance in terms of active transparency.
- The biggest individual improvement is noted with Butel (by 54 percentile points), Kichevo (by 37 percentile points) and Negotino (by 31 percentile points). The biggest individual decrease of active transparency is noted with Bogdanci (by 17 percentile points).
- In the case of ministries, the biggest improvement was made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. On the contrary, the Ministry of Education and Science is marked by the biggest decline in terms of active transparency.

Annual change under active transparency scores (2023/2022)

Institution	Change (%)	Institution	Change (%)
Butel	53.7	Mavrovo and Rostushe	1.4
Kichevo	37.1	Tearce	1.4
Negotino	31.4	Shtip	1.4
Demir Kapija	29.5	Kochani	1.3
Chair	27.6	Sopishte	0.0
Centar	24.6	Staro Nagorichane	0.0
Arachinovo	20.3	Novaci	0.0
Zelenikovo	18.8	Ohrid	0.0
Krivogashtani	18.8	Ministry of Defence	0.0
Chucher Sandevo	16.0	Government of RNM	0.0
Lipkovo	14.5	Bosilovo	0.0
Jegunovce	13.1	Ministry of Health	-0.4
MLSP	12.4	MISA	-0.5
Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	11.6	Chashka	-0.8
Vrapchishte	11.6	Bitola	-1.4
Rosoman	10.2	Valandovo	-1.4
Brvenica	10.2	Debar	-1.4
Gradsko	8.7	Resen	-1.4
Delchevo	8.5	Petrovec	-1.4
Plasnica	7.3	Karposh	-1.4
Debrca	7.3	Konche	-1.5
Kumanovo	7.2	MPSICR	-2.1
Tetovo	7.1	MESP	-2.6
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6.5	Pehchevo	-2.8
Probishtip	6.2	Demir Hisar	-2.8
Zrnovci	5.8	Dolneni	-2.9
Kavadarci	5.7	Shuto Orizari	-2.9
Gevgelija	5.7	City of Skopje	-2.9
Ministry of Economy	5.7	Ilinden	-2.9
MTC	5.4	Studenichani	-3.1

Gazi Baba	5.3
Radovish	5.0
Centar Zhupa	4.4
MAFWE	4.4
Strumica	4.3
Krushevo	4.3
Karbinci	4.3
Bogovinje	4.3
Novo Selo	4.3
Gostivar	4.3
Ministry of Finance	3.7
Kisela Voda	2.9
Vinica	2.9
Vevchani	2.9
Struga	2.8
Prilep	2.8
Veles	2.8
Mogila	1.5
Berovo	1.4

Ministry of Justice	-4.1
Ministry of Interior	-4.2
Saraj	-4.3
Sveti Nikole	-4.3
Vasilevo	-4.3
MLSG	-4.6
Gjorche Petrov	-5.1
Ministry of Culture	-5.4
Aerodrom	-5.6
Makedonska Kamenica	-5.7
Kratovo	-5.7
Rankovce	-5.8
Kriva Palanka	-7.2
Zhelino	-7.2
MES	-9.1
Makedonski Brod	-11.5
Lozovo	-13.1
Dojran	-13.8
Bogdanci	-17.2



Appendices: Research Questionnaires

1. Questionnaire on active transparency for ministries and the government

First group of questions: access to information

1. Does the institution's website have separate section on access to information?
2. Has the institution published general contact information for the officer responsible for mediating access to information (name and surname, telephone and e-mail)?
3. Has the institution published the method for submission of freedom of information requests?
4. Has the institution published the list of information it disposes with?
5. Has the institution published general contact information for the information holder (address, telephone and e-mail)?

Second group of questions: responsibility, accountability and integrity

6. Has the institution published data about the minister (biography, contact info, etc.)?
7. Has the institution published the list of employees/heads of departments and sectors with contact information?
8. Has the institution published its organizational structure (scheme, organogram)?
9. Has the institution published contact information for the officer responsible for protected internal reporting (name and surname, telephone and e-mail)?
10. Does the institution publish press releases and/or newsletters or other format for information dissemination?

Third group of questions: information on competences and services

11. Has the institution published information on its competences?
12. Has the institution published the laws that regulate its competences?
13. Has the institution published regulations it adopts as secondary legislation?
14. Has the institution published its strategy plans and/or work strategy?
15. Has the institution published its annual plan and/or work program for the current year?

Fourth group of questions: budget and fiscal transparency

16. Has the institution published its budget for the current year?
17. Has the institution published its final budget account for the previous year?
18. Does the institution publish its audit reports?
19. Has the institution published its annual plan for public procurements in the current year?
20. Does the institution publish procurement notices in the current year?
21. Does the institution publish notifications on contracts signed for public procurements?

Additional questions for the Ministry of Finance

(pertaining to the fourth group of questions: budget and fiscal transparency)

22. Does the institution publish monthly reports on budget execution in the current year?
23. Does the institution publish semi-annual report on budget execution for the first six months of the previous year?
24. Does the institution publish data on public debt of RNM for the previous or the current year?

Period in which the institution responded to FOI requests.

2. Questionnaire on active transparency for municipalities and the City of Skopje

First group of questions: access to information

1. Does the municipality's website have separate section on access to information?
2. Has the municipality published general contact information for the officer responsible for mediating access to information (name and surname, telephone and e-mail)?
3. Has the municipality published the method for submission of freedom of information requests?
4. Has the municipality published the list of information it disposes with?
5. Has the municipality published general contact information for the information holder (address, telephone and e-mail)?

Second group of questions: responsibility, accountability and integrity

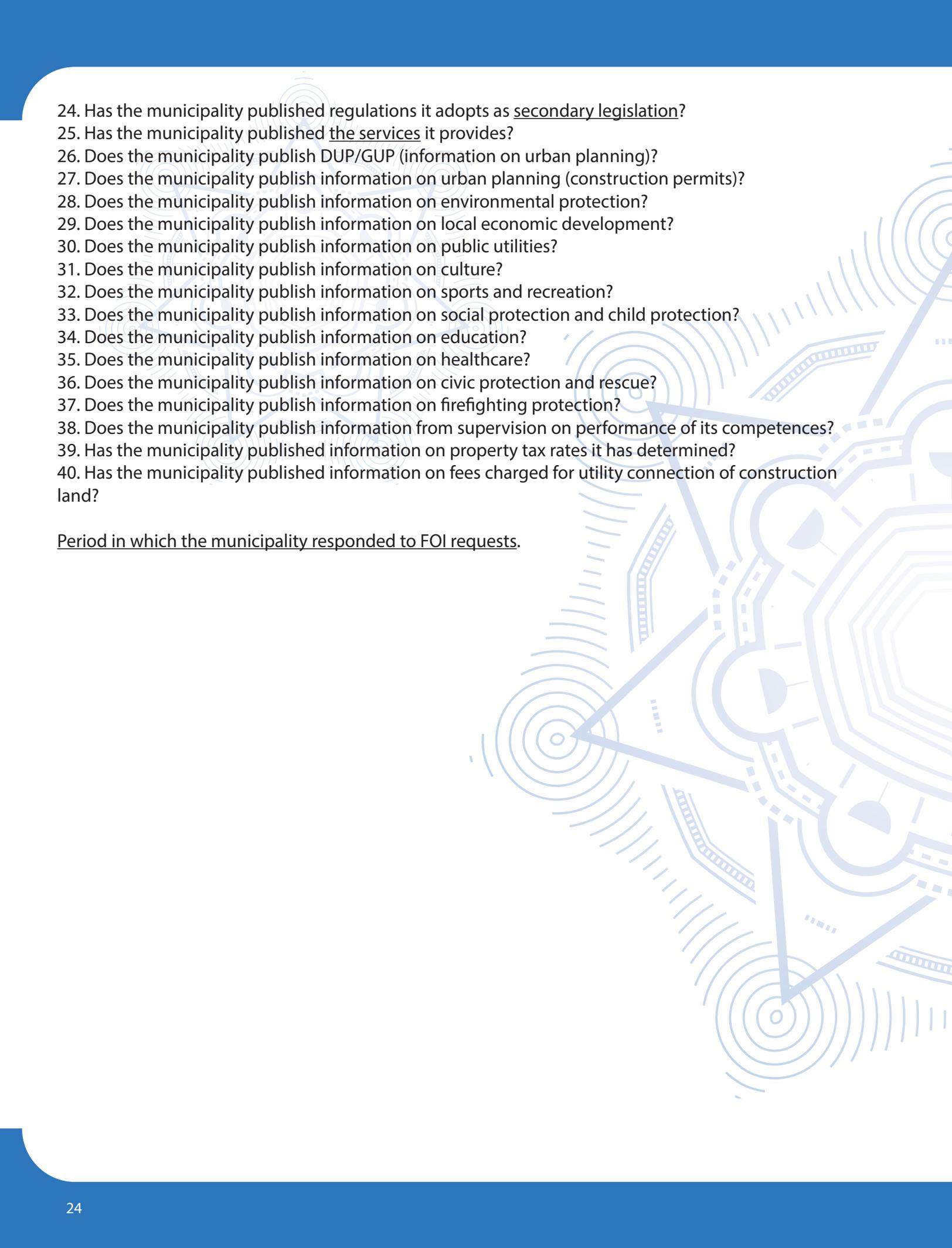
6. Has the municipality published data about the mayor (biography, contact info, etc.)?
7. Has the municipality published the list of employees/heads of departments and sectors with contact information?
8. Has the municipality published its organizational structure (scheme, organogram)?
9. Has the municipality published contact information for the officer responsible for protected internal reporting (name and surname, telephone and e-mail)?
10. Does the municipality publish press releases and/or newsletters or other format for information dissemination?
11. Has the municipality published its statute?
12. Does the municipality publish its bulletins?
13. Does the municipality publish meeting agendas of its municipal council?

Third group of questions: budget and fiscal transparency

14. Has the municipality published its budget for the current year?
15. Has the municipality published its final budget account for the previous year?
16. Does the municipality publish the so-called civil budget?
17. Does the municipality publish quarterly reports on budget execution for the previous year?
18. Does the municipality publish its audit reports?
19. Has the municipality published its annual plan for public procurements in the current year?
20. Does the municipality publish procurement notices in the current year?
21. Does the municipality publish notifications on contracts signed for public procurements?

Fourth group of questions: information on competences and services

22. Has the municipality published information on its competences?
23. Has the municipality published the laws that govern its competences?

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24. Has the municipality published regulations it adopts as secondary legislation?
 25. Has the municipality published the services it provides?
 26. Does the municipality publish DUP/GUP (information on urban planning)?
 27. Does the municipality publish information on urban planning (construction permits)?
 28. Does the municipality publish information on environmental protection?
 29. Does the municipality publish information on local economic development?
 30. Does the municipality publish information on public utilities?
 31. Does the municipality publish information on culture?
 32. Does the municipality publish information on sports and recreation?
 33. Does the municipality publish information on social protection and child protection?
 34. Does the municipality publish information on education?
 35. Does the municipality publish information on healthcare?
 36. Does the municipality publish information on civic protection and rescue?
 37. Does the municipality publish information on firefighting protection?
 38. Does the municipality publish information from supervision on performance of its competences?
 39. Has the municipality published information on property tax rates it has determined?
 40. Has the municipality published information on fees charged for utility connection of construction land?

Period in which the municipality responded to FOI requests.