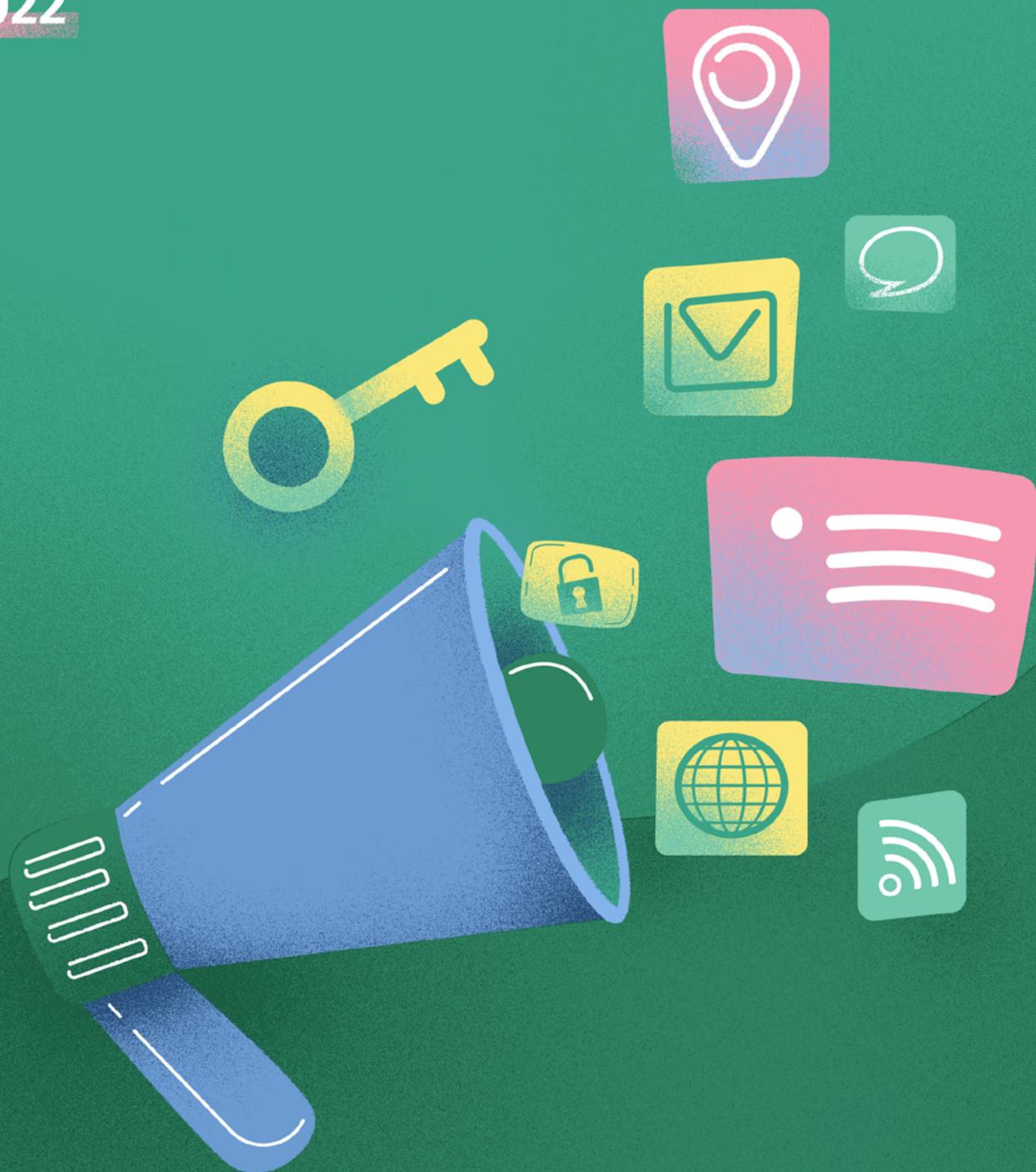


ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN GEORGIA

2022



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**ACCESS TO PUBLIC
INFORMATION
IN GEORGIA**

2022

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MAIN FINDINGS

MAIN FINDINGS

- ▶ Out of 7,582 requests sent to 374 public institutions in 2022, IDFI received answers to only 4,385 (58%);
- ▶ Out of 7,582 requests sent to public institutions in 2022, IDFI received information within the prescribed 10-day period in 2,640 cases (35%);
- ▶ In 2022, the non-response rate for each point in IDFI's standard requests amounts to at least 41%. Among them, most agencies (59%) ignored or refused to answer the points related to the disclosure of internal audit reports;
- ▶ In 2022, the unanswered information requests related to the Russia-Ukraine war and its impact on Georgia were particularly problematic. For example, the Administration of the Government of Georgia did not answer the request for information about the humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine, the Maritime Transport Agency did not disclose the information related to the attempts of ships under international sanctions to enter the ports of Georgia;
- ▶ In 2022, according to the categories of institutions, in percentage terms, the largest number of requests were refused or left unanswered by state LLCs and NNLEs (90% unanswered, refusal); Others were LEPLs subordinate to ministries (83% did not answer, refused) and central public institutions (66% did not answer, refused);
- ▶ The highest rate of complete responses (69% complete) was observed in the group of public institutions that includes: the government and ministries of Adjara A/R, as well as the government of Abkhazia A/R and the administration of South Ossetia.
- ▶ In 2022, only 9 public institutions fully provided public information within the 10-day timeframe (including the Bureau of Public Security, the Office of the Public Defender, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Adjara);
- ▶ In 2022, 69 institutions (including 49 agencies subordinate to ministries) were found to have left all requests from IDFI unanswered;
- ▶ In 2022, the rate of access to information of 130 public institutions is less than 50%;
- ▶ Among the central public institutions, the highest rates of access to public information were observed for the Administration of the President of Georgia (95.36%) and the apparatus of the Parliament of Georgia - (85.39%); The indicator of the Administration of the Government of Georgia was only 18.31%;

- ▶ In 2022, IDFI standard requests were left unanswered by all ministries, resulting in a response rate ranging from only 0% to 40%. Among them, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth was the lowest (0%);
- ▶ In 2022, results for all ministries significantly worsened in the access to information rating compared to the previous year. Among them, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (-88%), the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (- 84%), the Ministry of Health (-66%);
- ▶ In 2022, the response rates of public institutions decreased by 24 percent compared to the previous year and amounted to 58%. This indicator is the lowest result since 2010;
- ▶ In 2022, IDFI prepared 56 administrative complaints and 16 administrative lawsuits. Despite the legal complexity of the dispute, the court has extended the term of consideration of the case to 5 months for all the cases received in the proceedings;
- ▶ The rate of complete answers in 2022 is 33%, the lowest recorded result since 2010;
- ▶ In 2022, compared to the previous year, the percentage of responses received decreased the most in the case of ministries (-62%), LEPLs subordinate to ministries (-65%), and administrations of state Governors (-26%);
- ▶ In 2022, compared to the previous year, the response rate was slightly improved in the agencies included in the category of independent agencies (+1%) as well as Municipal Councils (+4%).
- ▶ In 2022, the rate of providing public information on time decreased by 19% and amounted to 35%. This figure is the lowest since 2010.
- ▶ In 2022, the rate of timely disclosure of public information decreased by 19%, amounting to 35%. This figure is the lowest since 2010.



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

On June 23, 2022, the European Council recognized the European perspective of Georgia. However, it determined the implementation of various democratic reforms as a prerequisite for granting the candidate status.

Transparency and accountability of public bodies is a constituent part of democratic governance, and freedom of information is one of its most important elements. The conditions established by the European Union for granting the candidate status are related to a significant degree to the increase of accountability and transparency of public institutions, and access to public information is named as one of the most important challenges. Accordingly, ensuring the availability of public information has a significant impact on the Euro-Atlantic integration process of Georgia.

The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) has been monitoring the availability of public information in Georgia since 2010. IDFI's systematic monitoring significantly contributed to the identification of key trends and problems in access to public information.

This report presents an assessment of the availability of public information in Georgia based on data from 2022. The report also includes an analysis of the trends in the release of public information in 2010-2022 and the rating of access to public information in public institutions.

IDFI used the methodology and criteria developed in 2011 for compiling the ratings and evaluating the availability of information¹.

In 2022, IDFI also implemented the project "Improving Access to Public Information by the Media", the goal of which was to provide legal support to the media in matters related to public information. The mentioned project significantly contributed to the identification of issues of wider public interest and the drafting of relevant information requests, the activation of the litigation process and the detection of systemic problems related to the availability of public information. The statistical data presented in this report also includes the results of the requests sent by the beneficiaries of the mentioned project.

¹ See IDFI- report – [Access to Public Information in 2017](#) – p. 3; p. 17.



**ACCESS TO
PUBLIC INFORMATION
IN GEORGIA IN 2022**

ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN GEORGIA IN 2022

In 2022, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information assessed the quality of access to public information in Georgia based on the responses received from **374 public institutions**. In 2022, the increase in the number of public institutions included in the report (for example, in 2021 and 2022 public information requests were sent to 285 public institutions) is largely due to the beneficiaries of the project “Improving Access to Public Information by the Media”, on behalf of whom IDFI requested public information from state museums and publicly funded theaters in Georgia. These institutions are legal entities of public law operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia. There is also an increased number of state-owned NNLEs and LLCs that IDFI addressed with requests for public information in 2022.

Institutions which IDFI addressed with public information requests in 2022 can be grouped as follows:

- 15** central public institutions (Parliament of Georgia, Administration of the President and Government, Ministries/Office of the Minister of State)
- 9** Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Government and Ministries, Office of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and Supreme Council, Administration of South Ossetia;
- 80** NNLEs and other institutions subordinated to the ministries;
- 75** Public museums and theaters;
- 31** independent public bodies (independent NNLEs, regulatory commissions and others);
- 128** representative and executive bodies of local self-government (city hall, council);
 - 9** Administrations of the Governors;
 - 5** Administrative bodies within the judiciary;
 - 22** State LLCs, JSCs, NNLEs

REQUESTED PUBLIC INFORMATION

In 2022, IDFI addressed 374 public institutions with a total of 7,582 requests. The majority of requests sent to public institutions were requests of standard content, related to issues pertaining to public administration, such as management of administrative resources and state property, staffing, and others. In 2022, the standard questions related to individual administrative expenses additionally covered the financial documentation attached to the expenses. For example, a standard letter requested from public institutions copies of financial documents confirming the payment of restaurant services with the highest costs (check and/or invoice), copies of documents confirming the expenses of business trips, contracts signed for the purchase of advertising services, etc.

In the context of specific projects and studies conducted by IDFI, in 2022, standard content requests were also sent to local governments on issues related to infrastructure projects, privatized municipal property, the activities of the members of councils, etc.

The standard content of the requests sent by IDFI to public institutions in 2022 covered the following issues:

- ▶ **Social assistance provided for employees from the institution's budget;**
- ▶ **Inventory records;**
- ▶ **Internal audit reports;**
- ▶ **Information about the state car fleet;**
- ▶ **Expenses incurred on vehicle maintenance;**
- ▶ **Video fines issued to government cars;**
- ▶ **Agreements signed on the purchase of advertising services;**
- ▶ **Copies of documents confirming business trips, on the basis of which the incurred expenses were reimbursed;**
- ▶ **Copies of financial documents confirming payment of restaurant services (checks and/or invoices);**
- ▶ **Current staff lists and vacant positions;**
- ▶ **Open, closed, internal, and simplified selection processes for open vacancies and the number of participants in them;**
- ▶ **Number of failed and terminated selection processes;**
- ▶ **Number of selection processes completed by appointment of internal staff;**

- ▶ **Statistics of appeals of selection results in the Claims Commission and in court;**
- ▶ **Statistics of dismissed employees;**
- ▶ **Copies of court decisions on labor disputes;**
- ▶ **Register of positions and remuneration amounts of persons employed under administrative and labor contracts;**
- ▶ **Copies of contracts and biographical data (CV) of employees employed in the positions of advisor to the head;**
- ▶ **Information on monetary bonuses and salary supplements given to officials;**
- ▶ **Copies of e-mails sent and received for the purpose of market research within the framework of simplified purchases.**

In addition, the following standard requests were sent to local governments:

- ▶ **Copies of project proposals submitted to the Fund for Regional Projects;**
- ▶ **Limits set for the municipality from the Fund for Regional Projects and indicators of its utilization;**
- ▶ **Information requested by the Ministry and the governor about the progress of the project from the municipality, and information about the work site;**
- ▶ **Expenses incurred on the purchase of supervisory services for infrastructure projects;**
- ▶ **Reports submitted by supervisory companies and violations identified;**
- ▶ **Penal sanctions imposed on companies in cases of violation of deadlines on infrastructure projects;**
- ▶ **Database of changes implemented in infrastructure project contracts;**
- ▶ **List of privatized municipal properties;**
- ▶ **Expenditures incurred from the municipality budget under the article of subsidies;**
- ▶ **The list of LLCs and NNLEs established by the municipality, the number of employees and the labor compensation totals;**
- ▶ **Statistics of absences from the sessions of the City Council;**
- ▶ **Reports submitted by the Gender Equality Council to the City Council;**
- ▶ **Accounts of members of the council.**

The standard requests discussed above were not sent to agencies in the judiciary system, government LLCs, government NNLEs, state-funded theaters and museums. Based on the specifics of the activity, financial management, and legal status of such agencies, as well as taking into account the interest of IDFI, the requested information was mostly of a different nature. For example, from state museums and theaters, IDFI requested only the information that presented the subject of interest of the beneficiary of the project “Improving Access to Public Information by the Media” and related to the donations and budget contributions received by them.

Since 2011, IDFI annually sends standard requests to public institutions regarding the management of administrative expenses; these agencies have established a practice of processing information on standard content requests from IDFI over the years.

On the other hand, non-standard requests entail inquiries about issues of high public interest that directly fall within the scope of activities of the addressed institutions, as well as requests that IDFI sends to relevant public institutions based on the appeal of interested third parties. In 2022, public interest was mostly focused on threats arising from the Russia-Ukraine war and the political processes surrounding these events. Accordingly, a large number of non-standard requests were sent to the agencies responsible for relevant information. Examples of such non-standard requests are: statistics of crossing the Georgian border by Russian citizens, the number of bank accounts opened by Russian citizens and the amount of deposits placed in commercial banks, indicators of turnover of Russian rubles at currency exchange points, information related to the enforcement of international sanctions, humanitarian aid sent to Ukraine, real estate purchased by Russian citizens, indicators of Georgian citizenship granted to Russian citizens, issued residence permits, and others.

In addition, a number of non-standard requests were also sent inquiring about: expenses for providing housing for displaced families; mortality rate statistics from the Coronavirus; financing of sports federations; various statistics related to the educational process in public schools, motions about covert investigative actions; minutes of the meetings of the Governmental Commission for Integration in the European Union; management of funding received from the Government’s reserve fund; information related to money laundering issues; court statistics, etc.

Furthermore, in 2022, IDFI implemented the project “Improving Access to Public Information by the Media”, within the framework of which, taking into account the interests of the beneficiaries, 172 public information requests were prepared, covering various issues. Among them were information about privatized property for 1 lari, information about the exclusion of land from forest funds, domestic violence statistics, information related to the employment program, information about social advertisements, etc.

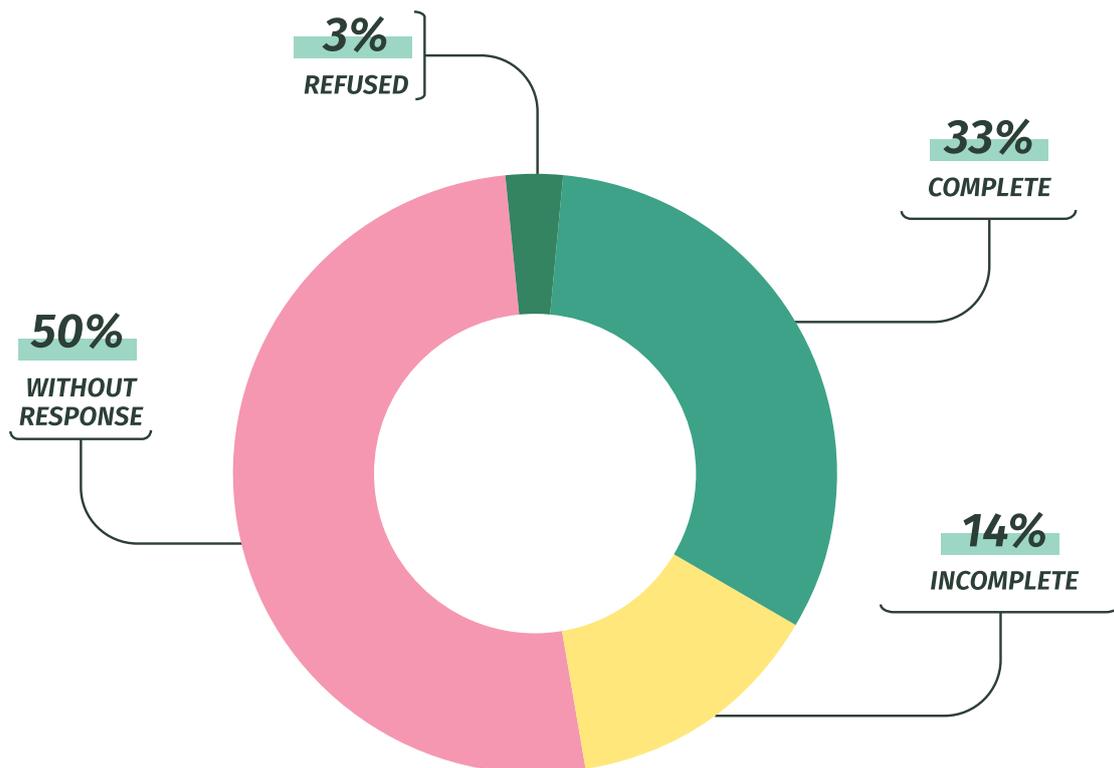
2022 ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION STATISTICS

Out of 7,582 requests sent to 374 public institutions, IDFI received complete responses for 2,115, partial response for 894, and a refusal for 183 requests. 3,197 requests were left unanswered, while in 1,193 instances the institutions informed us that they had not taken the specified action or did not have the requested information.

The percentages in the charts below do not reflect the responses received from public institutions according to which the institutions did not have the requested information and/or had not taken a specific action. Accordingly, the data presented depicts the responses received to 6,389 requests sent to 374 agencies.



RESPONSES TO THE REQUESTS



In 2022, according to the categories of institutions, the highest percentage of requests left unanswered were by state-owned LLCs and NNLEs, similar to the previous year; In 2022, a total of 194 requests were sent to the mentioned organizations, of which 127 questions were left unanswered, and in 50 cases they refused to provide information.

In 2022, agencies included in the category of central public institutions and LEPLs subordinate to ministries stood out in terms of the low degree of accountability. For example, in 2022, 1,499 of 1,831

requests sent to agencies subordinate to ministries were left unanswered, and 390 of 619 requests sent to central agencies remained unanswered.

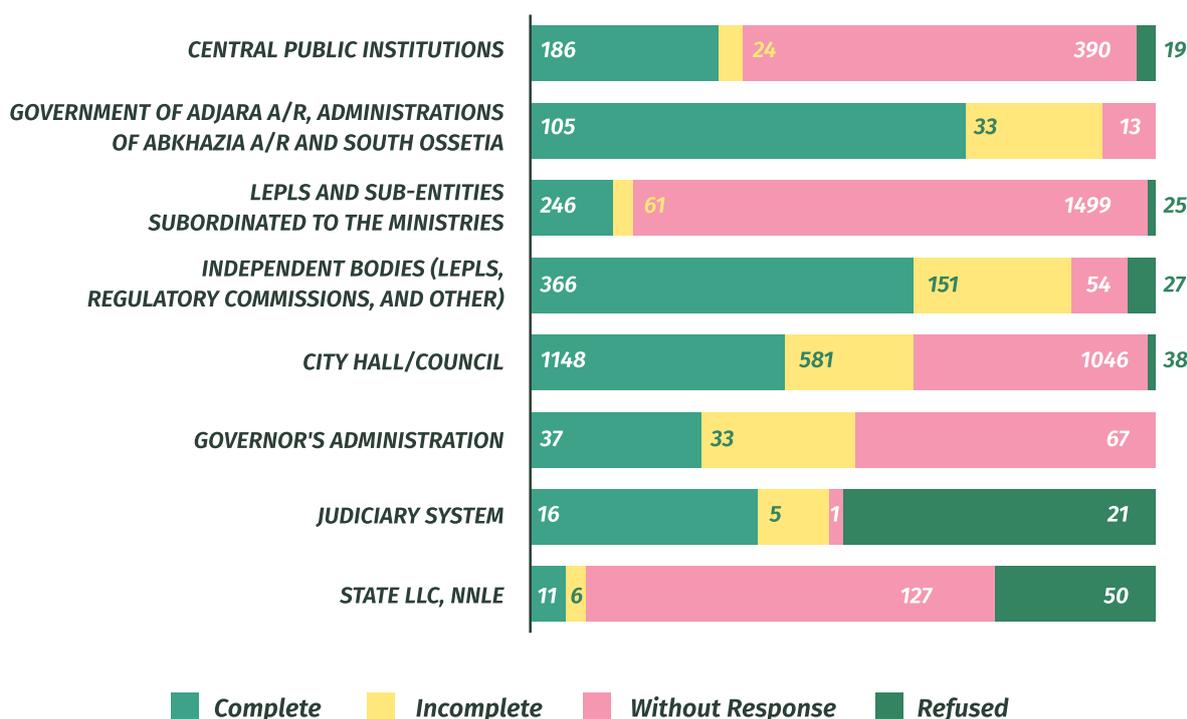
From the central public institutions, the Administration of the Government of Georgia and all ministries, as well as the majority of LEPLs subordinate to the ministries, left the majority of standard information requests sent in 2022 unanswered. As a result, the index of access to information of these groups of institutions has radically deteriorated compared to previous years. The detailed, year-by-year trends are summarized below.

In 2022, the agencies included in the judicial system were notable for the percentage of refusals received on the requests sent. According to the Organic Law of Georgia “On General Courts”, the Department of General Courts manages the finances necessary to ensure the activity of the courts. Accordingly, the addressee of the requests for information regarding the finances of the courts was the mentioned agency. In regards to several points of the request, the Department of General Courts declared that it did not process and record the requested financial information (including bonuses and allowances given to judges, travel expenses, fuel expenses, etc.). IDFI, taking into account the specifics regarding the management of funds, does not send requests of standard content to individual courts; therefore, the number of requests sent to them during the year is relatively small.

In 2022, the highest rate of complete responses was observed in the group of public institutions that includes the government and ministries of Adjara A/R, the government of Abkhazia A/R, and the administration of South Ossetia. In particular, out of 152 requests sent to them, we received complete answers in 105 cases.



RESPONSES TO REQUESTS ACCORDING TO THE TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS



THE MOST CONCEALED INFORMATION - 2022

In 2022, out of 270 public institutions to which standard requests were sent, 43% (115 public institutions) did not reply to all points included in the letter. Accordingly, the share of unanswered standard requests is at least 43%.

The largest share of public agencies (59%) refused to release internal audit reports. In many cases, public agencies have explained the reason for the refusal of internal audit reports by stating that the results of the audit inspection represented internal documentation and therefore did not fall into the category of public information.

Moreover, several referred to the Law of Georgia on Internal Financial Control, according to which the internal auditor is obliged not to make the results of the internal audit public without the consent of the head of the institution, except in cases covered by the legislation of Georgia. According to IDFI, public agencies disregarded the requirements of Article 42 of the General Administrative Code of Georgia, per which the results of the audit belong to the category of information that cannot be classified as confidential.

IDFI's court practice is also of note in this regard. Specifically, in 2017, the Tbilisi Court of Appeals stated in the decision of IDFI versus the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia that reporting is an integral part of the budget process and that everyone has the right to know the results of the audit and revision of public institutions. The following decision was also sustained by the Supreme Court of Georgia.

The second most concealed category of information was related to the contracts of persons employed as advisers to the head of the public agency and their biographical data (CV). Public agencies in many cases were often appealing to the fact that this kind of information contained personal data. IDFI estimates that in accordance with the existing legislation, a public agency should have at least disclosed copies of the contracts of advisers with personal data redacted. Meanwhile, the only legitimate reason for refusing to disclose the CVs of the persons employed in these positions could be the lack of their consent. The position of the Public Defender of Georgia is also known on this issue. According to it, the biographical data of the adviser contains personal data, but is of public interest and therefore the agency has a positive obligation to disclose it.

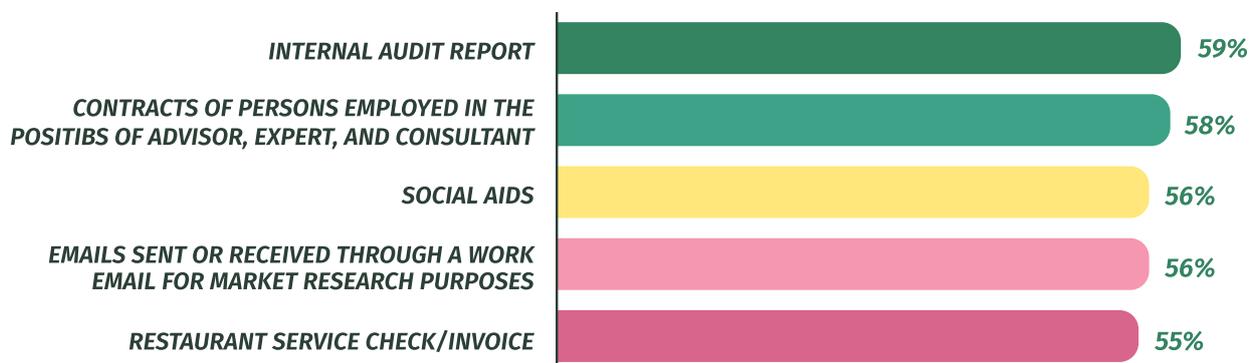
Information on both internal audits and advisers has been the most problematic category of requests for public agencies sent by IDFI over the years. However, it is important to mention that the percentage of unanswered requests may not fully reflect the degree of the lack of transparency of such information. The agencies that respond to these requests are often the ones that have not conducted such audits during the requested period and/or do not have an advisor employed in the agency. Consequently, it cannot be determined if these institutions would be willing to disclose this information if the requests were applicable to them.

The third most concealed category of information was related to the social assistance issued by public agencies to employees (including the names and surnames of officials). This type of data contains less controversial elements in terms of its content. Only a few institutions refused to answer on the grounds of safeguarding personal data. Consequently, the high rate of unanswered requests was probably due to the intent to cover up existing practices. The shortcomings of granting social assistance by public agencies are often uncovered in the reports of the State Audit Office. For example, the 2019-2020 audit report of Kutaisi Municipality states that during this period, employees, including high-paid officials, were issued significant funds as social assistance without proper reasoning. Kutaisi Municipality has not answered IDFI's request for records of issuance of social assistance in 2021, while disclosing the other information included in the same request letter.

In 2022, public agencies found it problematic to release information of simplified procurements, more specifically, email correspondence regarding market research and the financial documentation (bill and/or invoices) of the largest procurements of restaurant services.



REQUESTS LEFT UNANSWERED MOST OFTEN BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



Within the framework of the monitoring carried out in 2022, a number of agencies left unanswered or refused to provide information without legal justification on issues directly related to the specifics of their activities. Especially problematic are the cases where agencies refused to answer requests related to issues of significant public interest.

For example:

- ▶ **The Administration of the Government, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** left unanswered the request for information about the humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine;

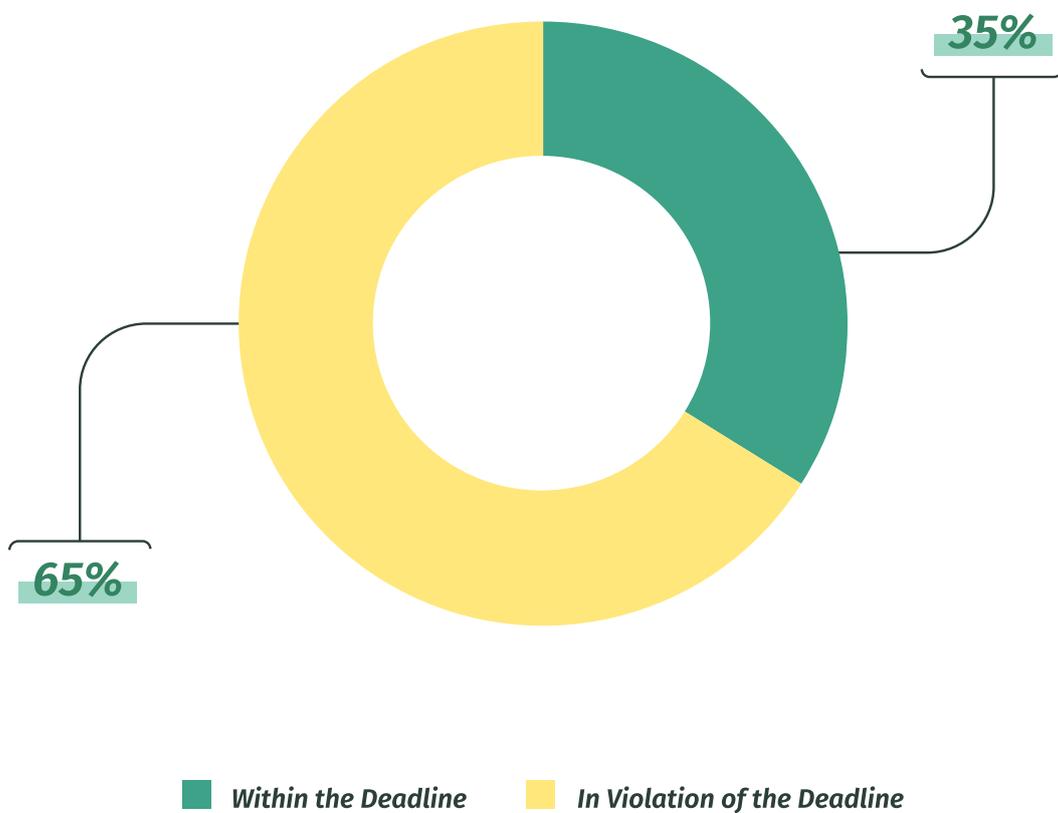
- ▶ **The Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia** did not disclose the information related to the attempt of ships under international sanctions to enter the ports of Georgia;
- ▶ **The National Agency of Public Registry** refused to provide information on real estate registered with citizens of Russia;
- ▶ **Georgian Civil Aviation Agency** left unanswered the request for information about the legal grounds for the refusal of the charter flight sent to land at the Tbilisi International Airport for volunteers;
- ▶ **The Administration of the Government of Georgia** left unanswered the information request regarding the activities of the state vehicle fleet study commission;
- ▶ **The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia** left unanswered the request for information about the memorandum signed between the Government of Georgia and the joint-stock company “Inter RAO”;
- ▶ **The Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia** left the request for information related to money laundering cases unanswered;
- ▶ **The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia** did not make public information about the financial reports submitted by the Georgian Rugby Union to the Ministry.
- ▶ **The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia** left unanswered the request for information about the investigations started due to the injury of people during the construction/repair of various municipal infrastructure.

TIMEFRAMES OF DISCLOSING PUBLIC INFORMATION

Out of 7,582 requests sent to public institutions in 2022, IDFI received information within the 10-day timeframe in only 2,640 cases. In addition, including requests left unanswered, the mentioned deadline was violated in 4,942 cases.



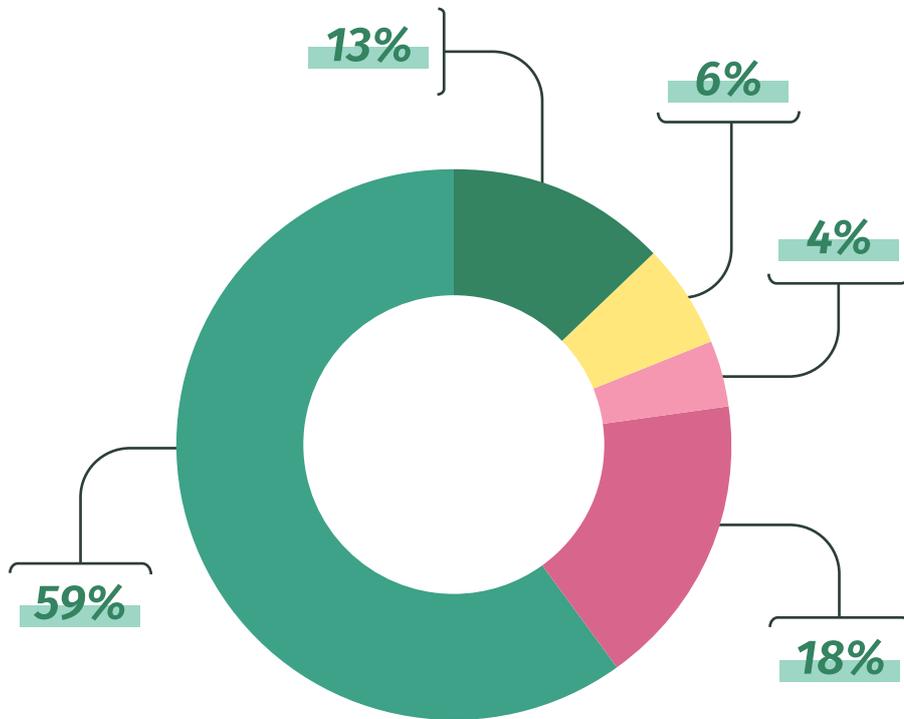
STATISTICS OF VIOLATIONS OF THE 10-DAY DEADLINE (INCLUDING UNANSWERED REQUESTS)



With the assumption that the immediate response to a request for public information means the provision of information within 3 days, the number of requests immediately issued by public institutions amounted to only 331. In 969 cases, public institutions requested a 10-day period for the provision of information and provided information within said period, in 433 cases public Institutions requested a 10-day period for providing information, but subsequently left the request unanswered or provided information in violation of the deadline. In 1,340 cases, the 10-day period was not requested, although the information was provided in the period from 4 to 10 days, and in 4,509 cases, the statutory time limits were violated without requesting the 10-day period.



THE 10-DAY DEADLINE REQUESTED



■ Requested 10 days and complied

■ Issued the information immediately

■ Requested 10 days and violated the deadline

■ Did not request 10 days and complied

■ Did not request 10 days and violated the deadline



RATING OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION - 2022

THE MOST ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS - 2022

The monitoring of access to public information conducted by IDFI during 2022 demonstrated that 9 public institutions provided complete information in response to our FOI requests within a period of 10 days. During the same period, the number of public institutions with a 100% rating has decreased by four compared to the previous year (13 public institutions).

In 2022, 2 public institutions provided complete information on our FOI requests while simultaneously violating the deadline of 10 days. Therefore, taking into consideration the methodology of the monitoring project, they received a rating of 99%.

HIGHEST RATES OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION					
	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	COMPLIANCE WITH THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	<i>Civil Service Bureau</i>	21	21	21	100%
2	<i>Office of the Public Defender</i>	19	19	19	100%
3	<i>Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Adjara A/R</i>	18	18	18	100%
4	<i>Supreme Council of the Adjara A/R</i>	16	16	16	100%
5	<i>Georgian National Agency For Standards And Metrology</i>	15	15	15	100%
6	<i>Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Centre</i>	14	14	14	100%
7	<i>City Council of Poti Municipality</i>	13	13	13	100%
8	<i>City Council of Chiatura Municipality</i>	13	13	13	100%
9	<i>City Council of Kareli Municipality</i>	11	11	11	100%
10	<i>National Center for Disease Control and Public Health</i>	21	21	4	99,2%
11	<i>Ministry of Agriculture of the Adjara A/R</i>	19	19	0	99%

THE LEAST TRANSPARENT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Since 2011, IDFI has been naming the least transparent public institutions based on the results of the monitoring. IDFI, in identifying the most closed public institution, takes into account a number of complex factors in combination with statistics on responses to public information requests. Among these are the importance of the activities of the public institution and the information covered by it, the practice of litigation, the degree of proactive access to information, and more.

In 2022, the rate of access to public information significantly deteriorated, due to numerous requests left without a response by public institutions. For example, all requests sent by IDFI in 2022 were left unanswered by 69 public institutions, and therefore their information availability rate is 0%. In addition, the rate of access to information of 130 public institutions is less than 50%, among which the ministries and their subordinate agencies predominate significantly.

In 2022, the abundance of public institutions showing low accountability and the unscrupulous attitude towards freedom of information indicates a systemic closed approach established in the public sector of Georgia. As a result, IDFI refrained from naming one specific public Institutions as least transparent. Indicators of access to public information of individual agencies according to categories of institutions are presented in more detail below.



**ACCESS TO INFORMATION
RATINGS BY CATEGORIES
OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

According to the results of the monitoring conducted in 2022, among the central public institutions of Georgia (Office of the Parliament, Presidential Administration, Administration of the Government, and Ministries), the highest rate of access to public information was observed at the Administration of the President of Georgia (95.93%) and the Office of the Parliament of Georgia - 87.36%. In 2022, IDFI sent the highest number of public information requests to the Parliament of Georgia, 90, of which 74 were fully answered.

The rate of access to information ranges from 0% to 40% for the Administration and ministries of the Government of Georgia. Among them, the **Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (0%)** and the **Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality (0%)** left all of IDFI's requests unanswered.

RATING OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN CENTRAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS								
PUBLIC INSTITUTION		NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	COMPLIANCE WITH THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	Administration of the President of Georgia	22	20	2	0	0	20	95.36%
2	Parliament of Georgia	90	74	6	0	10	65	85.39%
3	Ministry of Internal Affairs	61	23	6	1	31	14	40.44%
4	Ministry of Education and Science	64	16	6	6	36	28	29.69%
5	Ministry of Finance*	34	10	0	1	23	8	27.06%
6	Ministry of Defense	39	10	0	6	23	9	25.56%
7	Administration of the Government of Georgia*	74	14	2	0	58	7	18.31%
8	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development	41	7	0	2	32	4	16.05%
9	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure	26	3	0	0	23	3	11.54%
10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	31	3	1	2	25	6	11.29%
11	Ministry of Justice*	27	2	1	1	23	0	9.15%

RATING OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN CENTRAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

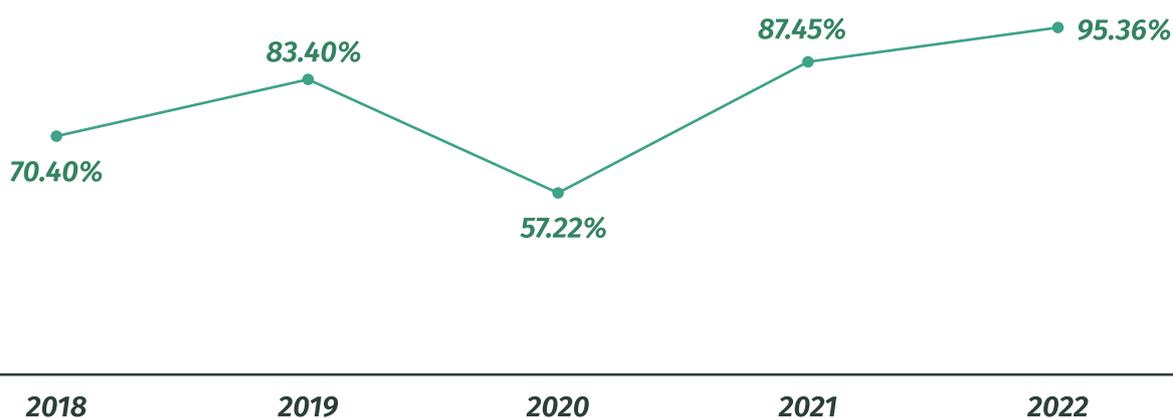
PUBLIC INSTITUTION		NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	COMPLIANCE WITH THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
12	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	25	2	0	0	23	2	8%
13	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs	28	2	0	0	26	0	7.07%
14	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality	23	0	0	0	23	0	0%
15	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth	33	0	0	0	33	0	0%

* Certain requests were answered as a result of an administrative complaint or one month late without notice

In 2022, among central public institutions, the Administration of the President of Georgia is the only agency that has improved the rate of access to information compared to the previous year. Specifically, the Administration's 2021 rate of 87.45% increased by about 8% and amounted to 95.36%. This improvement of the indicator of access to information was significantly facilitated by the improvement of the quality of the provided information, as well as the improvement of the timeframes of providing the information.



ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF GEORGIA

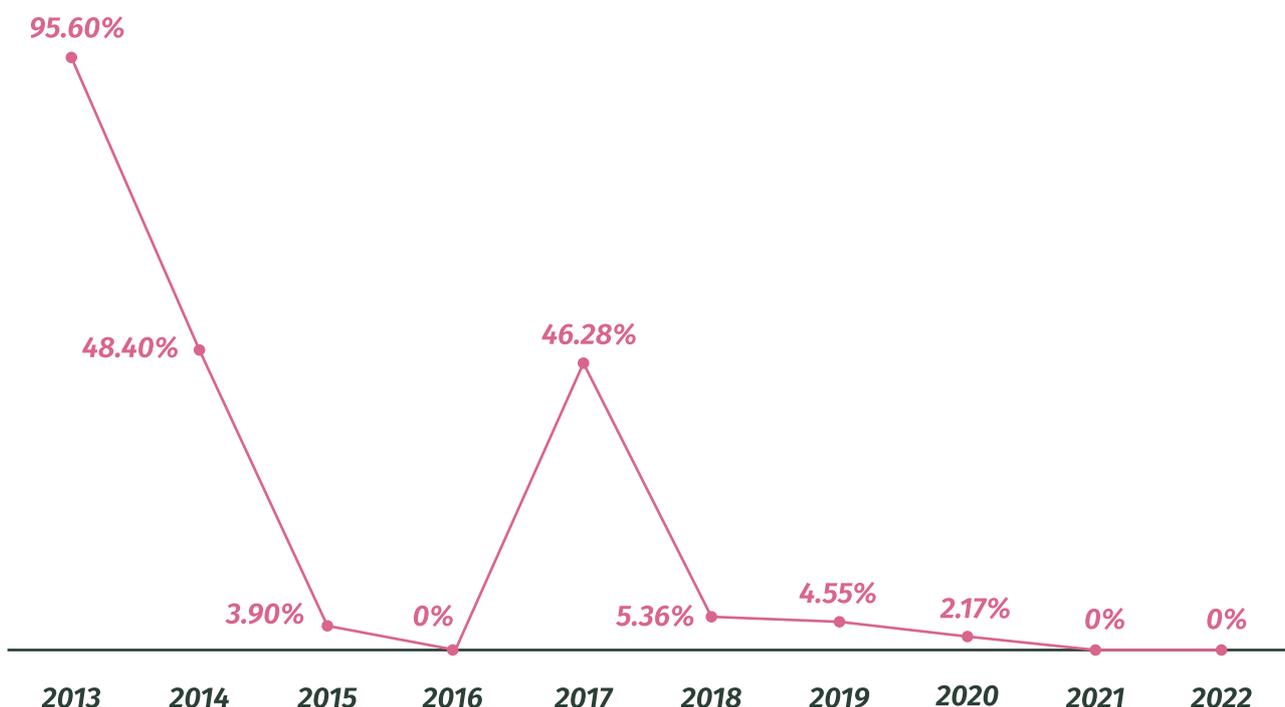


In 2022, like the previous year, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia maintained the 0% rate of information accessibility. On March 16, 2021, after the separation of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the appointment of Tea Tsulukiani as minister, IDFI did not receive a response from the Ministry to any requests. Throughout Tea Tsulukiani's tenure, the same approach existed in the system of the Ministry of Justice, which for years was named as the most closed agency in IDFI's access to public information reports. The period of Tea Tsulukiani's tenure as the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth also had a negative impact on the quality of information availability of other legal entities of public law under the Ministry's jurisdiction. For example, after March 16, 2021, the National Agency for the Protection of Cultural Heritage did not respond to any requests. In 2022, one of IDFI's project beneficiaries was able to receive information from both the Ministry and the Agency only after filing an administrative complaint.

In 2022, the rate of access to information worsened even further in the Administration of the Government of Georgia. Out of 74 requests sent in the reporting period, 58 were left unanswered. In addition, individual requests are answered only after the submission of an administrative complaint. After 2015, the Administration of the Government of Georgia significantly limits the availability of information related to the management of finances and its activities. In addition, it is worth noting that after 2014, the Administration of the Government no longer publishes financial information on their website, which must be proactively published as per the resolution of the Government of Georgia.

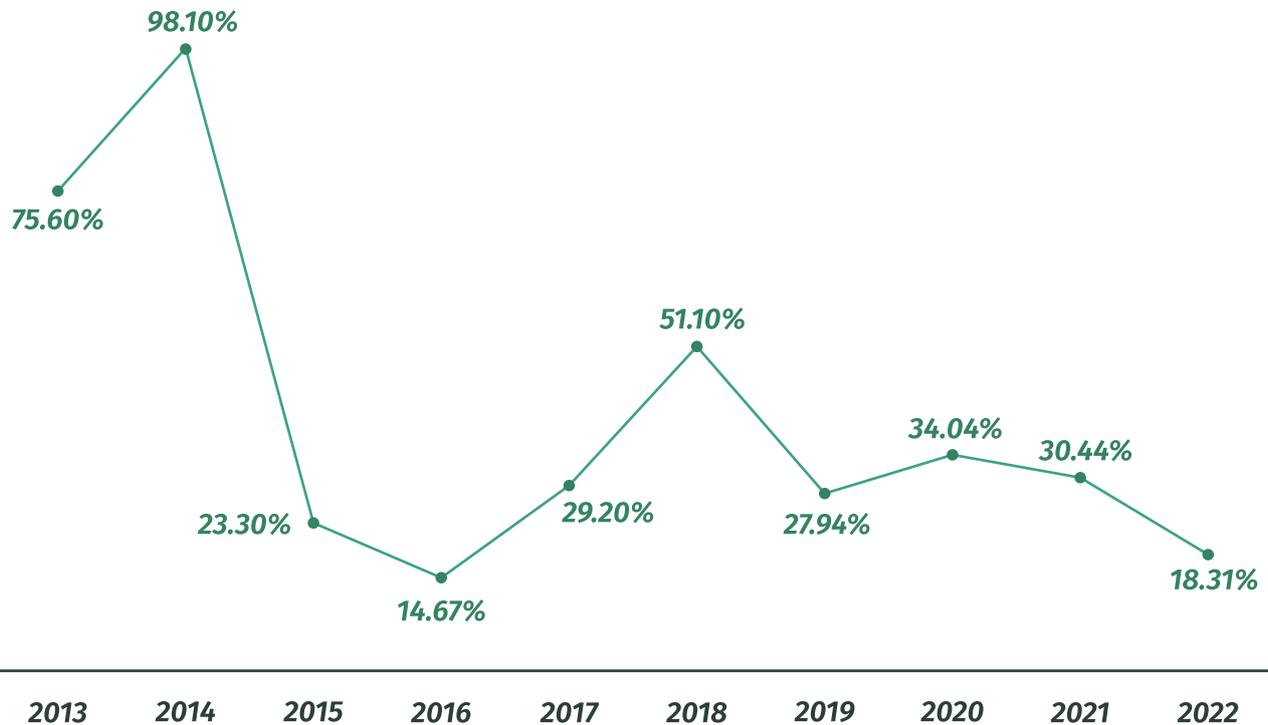


ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION DURING THE MINISTRY OF TEA TSULUKIANI



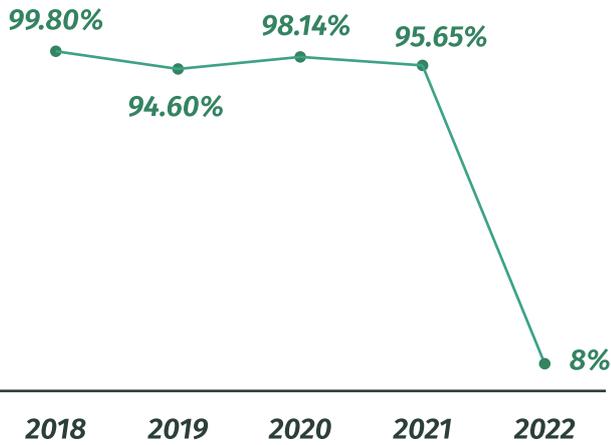


ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

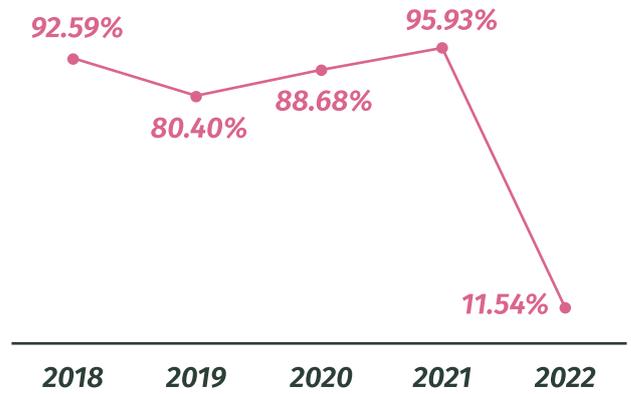


As the analysis presented above demonstrates, the Administration of the Government of Georgia, as well as the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, have been deliberately violating the requirements of Georgian legislation for years. This creates a dangerous precedent and reinforces the arbitrariness of compliance with the law in public institutions. The attitude of no accountability of such agencies or officials can be considered as one of the important factors limiting the disclosure of information by other central agencies or their subordinate agencies. In 2022, compared to the previous year, the results of all ministries significantly worsened in the index of access to information. IDFI's standard requests were left unanswered even by those ministries that were distinguished by high accountability over the years and played an important role in determining the positive overall indicator of access to information in the country. For example, in 2022, compared to the previous year, the indicator of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture worsened by 88%, the indicator of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure decreased by 84%, the indicator of the Ministry of Health decreased by 66%, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worsened by 55%, and results of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Science fell by 49%.

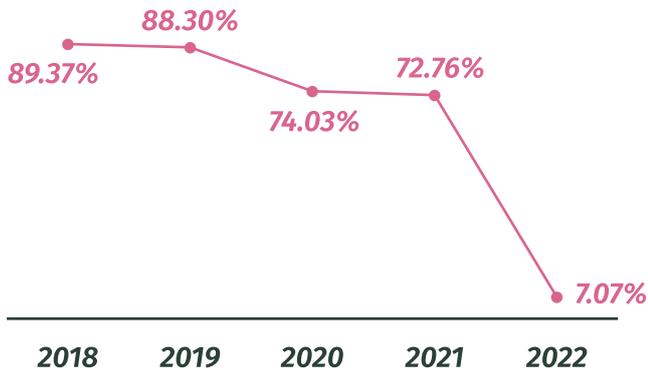
**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA**



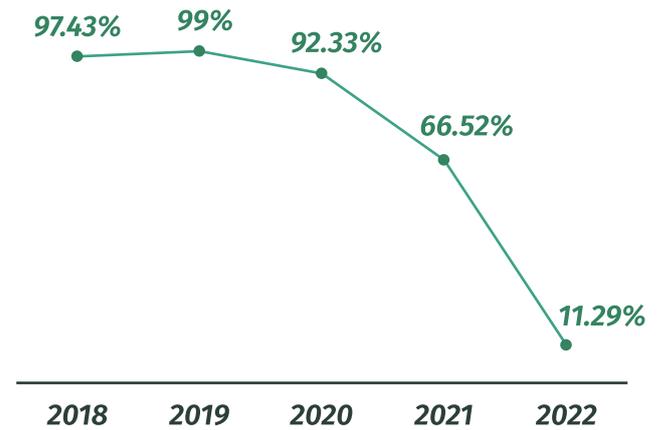
**MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**



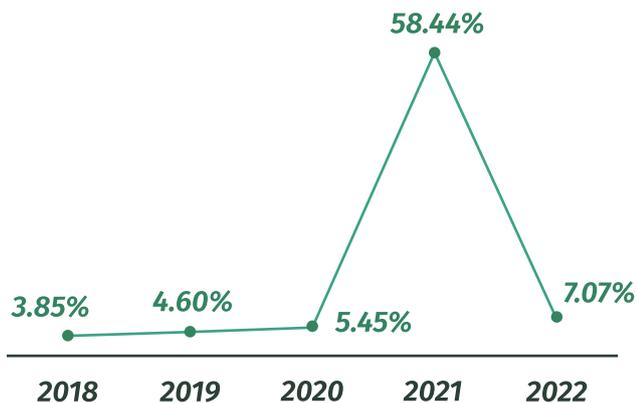
**MINISTRY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED
PERSONS FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES,
LABOR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**



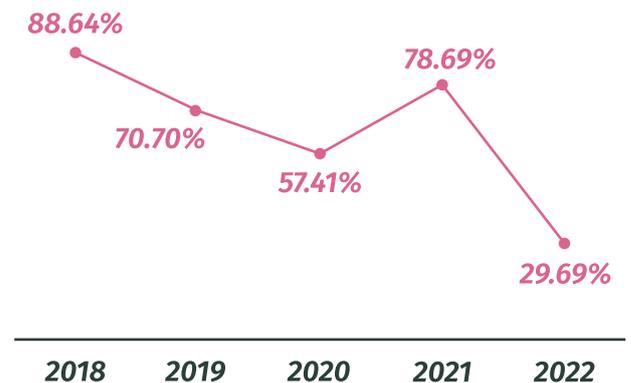
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

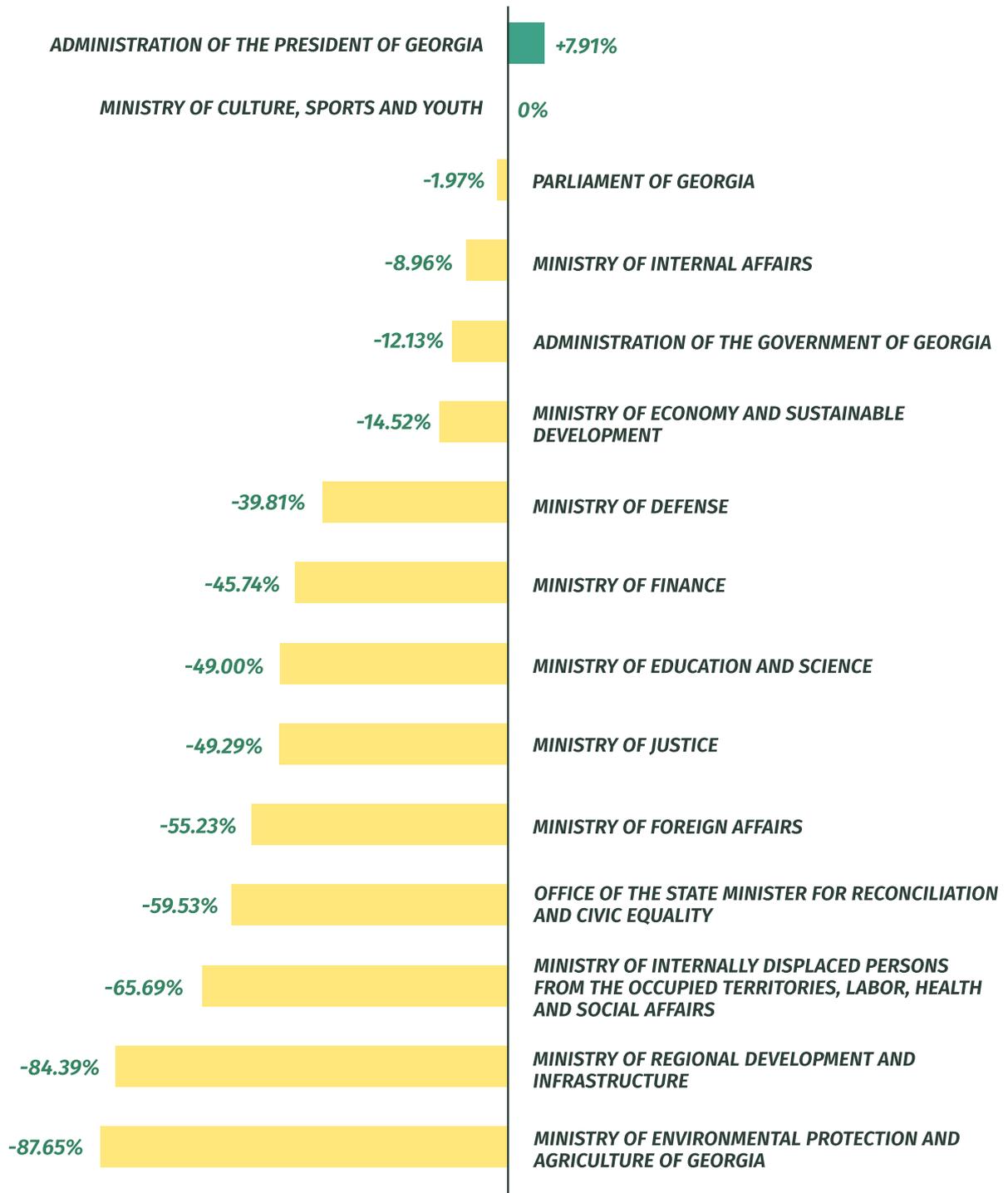


MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE





ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN CENTRAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS COMPARED TO 2021



TRENDS IN ACCESS TO INFORMATION OF CENTRAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

PUBLIC INSTITUTION		2022	CHANGE	2021	CHANGE	2020	CHANGE	2019	CHANGE	2018
1	Administration of the President of Georgia	95.36%	791%	87.45%	30,23%	57.22%	-26,18%	83.40%	12,90%	70.40%
2	Parliament of Georgia	85.39%	-1.97%	87.36%	-4,75%	92.11%	-6,19%	98.30%	15,60%	82.69%
3	Ministry of Internal Affairs	40.44%	-8.96%	49.40%	4,16%	45.24%	-30,26%	75.50%	3,21%	72.24%
4	Ministry of Education and Science	29.69%	-49,00%	78.69%	21,28%	57.41%	-13,29%	70.70%	-18%	88.64%
5	Ministry of Finance	27.06%	-45.74%	72.80%	59,89%	12.91%	-45,69%	58.60%	30,60%	28,00%
6	Ministry of Defense	25.56%	-39.81%	65.37%	11,87%	53.50%	-26,20%	79.70%	10%	69.63%
7	Administration of the Government of Georgia	18.31%	-12.13%	30.44%	-3,60%	34.04%	6,14%	27.90%	-23,20%	51.10%
8	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development	16.05%	-14.52%	30.57%	-18,79%	49.36%	-35,84%	85.20%	29,90%	55.24%
9	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure	11.54%	-84.39%	95.93%	7,25%	88.68%	8,28%	80.40%	-12,20%	92.59%
10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	11.29%	-55.23%	66.52%	-25,81%	92.33%	-6,67%	99%	1,57%	97.43%
11	Ministry of Justice	9.15%	-49.29%	58.44%	52,99%	5.45%	0,85%	4.60%	0,70%	3.85%
12	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	8%	-87.65%	95.65%	-2,49%	98.14%	3,54%	94.60%	-5,20%	99.80%
13	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs	7.07%	-65.69%	72.76%	-1,27%	74.03%	-14,27%	88.30%	-1,07%	89.37%
14	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality	0%	-59.53%	59.53%	-19,04%	78.57%	-13,13%	91.70%	-5,39%	97.06%
15	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-

LEGAL ENTITIES OF PUBLIC LAW, SUB-ENTITIES, AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

According to the analysis carried out in 2022, 4 agencies showed a 100% rate of access to information among public institutions of the mentioned category. It should be noted that this category includes both legal entities subordinate to ministries and independent entities of public law, regulatory commissions, and others (a total of 106 public institutions). The rating indicator of information availability was not calculated in the case of agencies that were addressed with less than 10 information requests during the reporting period, such as, for example, state museums and theaters. In addition, LEPL Public-Private Cooperation Agency explained to IDFI that the action specified in the request was not taken in 17 of the 22 standard requests, therefore the agency was no longer evaluated according to the remaining 5 requests. Additionally, in 2022, IDFI refrained from rating the Special Investigation Service and Personal Data Protection Service. The aforementioned agencies, after the dissolution of the State Inspector's Service, came into operation on March 1, 2022. Accordingly, the requested information could not fully cover the scope of information requested for other agencies.

Out of 106 public institutions, 50 left all of IDFI's requests unanswered. Among them, 49 are LEPLs subordinate to ministries and or sub-departmental institutions. It is worth noting that among the public institutions of this category, there was only one agency (National Agency for Wildlife) that did not respond to any of IDFI's requests last year. In 2022, IDFI's standard requests were left unanswered by LEPLs that in previous years had high accountability and were often named among agencies with highest rates of access to information. For example, LEPL Department of Environmental Supervision, LEPL Innovation and Technology Agency, LEPL State Laboratory of Agriculture in 2020-2021 were awarded by IDFI for openly providing access to information, but in 2022 left all requests unanswered.

Among the mentioned agencies where information accessibility rate was 0% in 2022, most are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice (10 agencies) and the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (10 agencies). There are 7 agencies under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, 6 agencies under the Ministry of Education and Science, 6 agencies under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 5 agencies under the Ministry of Health, 4 agencies under the Ministry of Finance, and 1 agency under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

THE BEST RATINGS IN LEPLS, SUB-ENTITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

PUBLIC INSTITUTION		NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	COMPLIANCE WITH THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	<i>Civil Service Bureau</i>	21	21	0	0	0	21	100%
2	<i>Office of the Public Defender</i>	19	19	0	0	0	19	100%
3	<i>Georgian National Agency For Standards And Metrology</i>	15	15	0	0	0	15	100%
4	<i>Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Centre</i>	14	14	0	0	0	14	100%
5	<i>National Center for Disease Control and Public Health</i>	21	21	0	0	0	4	99.2%
6	<i>National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement</i>	18	16	2	0	0	18	94.44%
7	<i>National Statistics Office of Georgia</i>	24	22	1	1	0	24	93.58%
8	<i>Roads Department of Georgia</i>	18	15	3	0	0	18	91.67%
9	<i>Financial Monitoring Service Of Georgia</i>	16	13	3	0	0	16	90.63%
10	<i>National Intellectual Property Center SAKPATENTI</i>	17	14	3	0	0	0	90.18%

THE LEAST ACCOUNTABLE LEPLS, SUB-ENTITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS 2022

	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	UNANSWERED	REFUSED	RESULT
1	National Archive of Georgia	25	22	3	0%
2	Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia	24	24	0	0%
3	Georgian National Tourism Administration	23	22	1	0%
4	Georgian Civil Aviation Agency	23	23	0	0%
5	Public Service Hall	22	22	0	0%
6	National Assessment and Examinations Center	22	22	0	0%
7	International Education Center	22	22	0	0%
8	Education And Science Infrastructure Development Agency	22	22	0	0%
9	Office Of Resource Officers Of Educational Institutions	22	22	0	0%
10	Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia	22	22	0	0%
11	Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	22	22	0	0%
12	Center for professional training and retraining of convicts	22	22	0	0%
13	Unified National Accreditation Body - Accreditation Center	22	22	0	0%
14	Land Transport Agency	22	22	0	0%
15	Technical and Construction Supervision Agency	22	22	0	0%
16	Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency	22	22	0	0%
17	State Sub-Agency Department of Environmental Supervision	22	22	0	0%
18	National Environmental Agency	22	22	0	0%
19	Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia	22	22	0	0%

THE LEAST ACCOUNTABLE LEPLS, SUB-ENTITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS 2022

	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	UNANSWERED	REFUSED	RESULT
20	Agency of Wildlife	22	22	0	0%
21	Environmental Information and Education Center	22	22	0	0%
22	State Laboratory of agriculture of Georgia	22	22	0	0%
23	National Wine Agency	22	22	0	0%
24	National Agency for sustainable Land management and Land	22	22	0	0%
25	Scientific-Research Center of Agriculture	22	22	0	0%
26	Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking	22	22	0	0%
27	Emergency Response Coordination Centre	22	22	0	0%
28	State Treasury	22	22	0	0%
29	Financial Analytical Service	22	22	0	0%
30	Academy of the Ministry of Finance	22	22	0	0%
31	Legislative Herald of Georgia	22	22	0	0%
32	National Bureau of Enforcement	22	22	0	0%
33	Notary Chamber of Georgia	22	22	0	0%
34	Training Center of Justice of Georgia	22	22	0	0%
35	Non-custodial Penalties and Probation National Agency	22	22	0	0%
36	MIA Academy	22	22	0	0%
37	Border Police	22	22	0	0%
38	Security Police	22	22	0	0%
39	Healthcare Service of the MIA	22	22	0	0%

THE LEAST ACCOUNTABLE LEPLS, SUB-ENTITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS 2022

	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	UNANSWERED	REFUSED	RESULT
40	<i>Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia</i>	22	22	0	0%
41	<i>112 - Emergency Response Center</i>	22	22	0	0%
42	<i>Creative Georgia</i>	22	22	0	0%
43	<i>State Employment Promotion Agency</i>	22	22	0	0%
44	<i>Digital Governance Agency</i>	22	22	0	0%
45	<i>Agency of Nuclear and Radiation Safety</i>	22	22	0	0%
46	<i>Penitentiary and Probation Training Centre</i>	22	22	0	0%
47	<i>National Health Agency</i>	22	22	0	0%
48	<i>Labour Inspection Service</i>	22	22	0	0%
49	<i>National Agency of Mineral Resources</i>	22	22	0	0%

GOVERNMENT, MINISTRIES, AND SUPREME COUNCIL OF ADJARA A/R, GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPREME COUNCIL OF ABKHAZIA A/R, ADMINISTRATION OF SOUTH OSSETIA

The Government and ministries of Adjara A/R have always been distinguished by a high level of access to public information and have been providing complete information requested by IDFI with no interruptions. According to the 2022 evaluation, the government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara was only assessed with 39.29%, which is 50% lower than the previous rate in 2021. In the case of the A/R Ministries of Adjara, the indicators of information availability range from 66% to 100%. Among them, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara has a 100% rate.

This group of public institutions also includes the Administration of South Ossetia (84.38%), the Government Office of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (55%), and the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (72.08%).

RATING OF ADJARA A/R GOVERNMENT AND MINISTRIES

PUBLIC INSTITUTION		NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	COMPLIANCE WITH THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	<i>Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Adjara A/R</i>	19	19	0	0	0	19	100%
2	<i>Supreme Council of the Adjara A/R</i>	16	16	0	0	0	16	100%
3	<i>Ministry of Agriculture of the Adjara A/R</i>	19	19	0	0	0	0	99%
4	<i>Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Adjara A/R</i>	18	17	1	0	0	0	96.22%
5	<i>Administration of South Ossetia</i>	16	11	5	0	0	16	84.38%
6	<i>Supreme Council of Abkhazia A/R</i>	13	6	7	0	0	0	72.08%
7	<i>Ministry of Finance and Economy of Adjara A/R</i>	17	8	7	0	2	15	66.76%
8	<i>Government Office of the Abkhazia A/R</i>	20	7	8	0	5	15	55%
9	<i>Government of Adjara A/R</i>	14	3	5	0	6	8	39.29%

CITY HALLS AND COUNCILS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

According to the results of the monitoring conducted in local self-governments in 2022, out of 128 public institutions (City Halls and Councils), only municipal councils of Poti, Chiatura, and Kareli had a 100% rating in access to public information. It is noteworthy that only the city halls of Zugdidi and Tkibuli were in the top ten of city halls and councils in the rating.

In 2022, 7 City Halls and 7 Municipal Councils left all of IDFI's requests unanswered. Among them, the municipalities of Bolnisi, Tetrtskaro, and Marneuli are of note, as their executive and representative bodies do not fulfill the requirements of the legislation and do not issue public information.

In 2022, Tbilisi City Council slightly improved the index of access to information (+4%). The situation is different in the case of the City Hall of Tbilisi, the access to information rating of which has worsened significantly every year since 2018. As a result, the figure for 2022 is only 35.14%, which is the lowest point in the last 10 years.

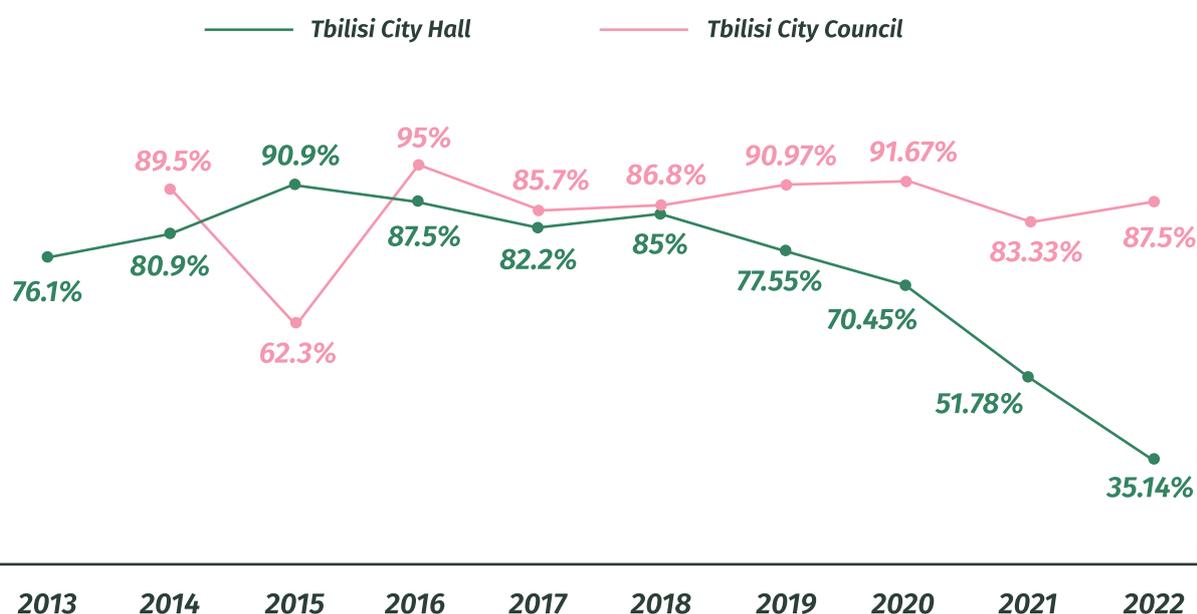
TOP TEN OF THE RATING OF CITY HALLS AND COUNCILS								
	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	THE 10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	Poti Municipality Council	13	13	0	0	0	13	100%
2	Chiatura Municipality Council	13	13	0	0	0	13	100%
3	Kareli Municipality Council	11	11	0	0	0	11	100%
4	Zugdidi City Hall	27	26	1	0	0	27	99.09%
5	Terjola Municipality Council	15	14	1	0	0	15	98%
6	Tskhaltubo Municipality Council	15	14	1	0	0	15	98%
7	Zugdidi Municipality Council	12	11	1	0	0	12	97.22%
8	Lentekhi Municipality Council	11	10	1	0	0	11	97.06%
9	Chokhatauri Municipality Council	14	13	1	0	0	0	96.88%
10	Tkibuli City Hall	31	28	3	0	0	31	96.43%

THE LEAST ACCOUNTABLE CITY HALLS AND COUNCILS

	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	REQUESTS	UNANSWERED	RESULTS
1	Khashuri City Hall	34	34	0%
2	Abasha City Hall	34	34	0%
3	Bolnisi City Hall	34	34	0%
4	Tetritskharo City Hall	34	34	0%
5	Kaspi City Hall	34	34	0%
6	Marneuli City Hall	34	34	0%
7	Mestia City Hall	34	34	0%
8	Bolnisi Municipality Council	20	20	0%
9	Tetritskharo Municipality Council	20	20	0%
10	Marneuli Municipality Council	20	20	0%
11	Samtredia Municipality Council	20	20	0%
12	Sachkhere Municipality Council	20	20	0%
13	Shuakhevi Municipality Council	20	20	0%
14	Khoni Municipality Council	20	20	0%



INDICATORS OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION OF TBILISI CITY HALL AND COUNCIL



ADMINISTRATIONS OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES

In 2022, none of the administrations of State Governors fully responded to IDFI's requests within the 10-day timeframe. Among them, the Administration of the Governor of Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti had the highest rate of only 76.67%.

In 2022, 3 out of 9 administrations of State Governors left all of IDFI's requests unanswered. The access to information rating of the other 6 administrations varies from 59% to 77%.

RATING OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE STATE REPRESENTATIVES								
PUBLIC INSTITUTION		NUMBER OF REQUESTS	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	REFUSED	UNANSWERED	10-DAY DEADLINE	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
1	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti Region	15	9	5	0	1	14	76.67%
2	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region	12	7	4	1	0	12	75%
3	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Kvemo Kartli Region	12	6	5	1	0	12	70.83%
4	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Guria Region	16	7	8	0	1	15	68.75%
5	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Kakheti Region	11	5	4		2	0	62.82%
6	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Samegrelo -Zemo Svaneti Region	11	3	7	1	0	11	59.09%
7	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Imereti Region	21	0	0	0	21	0	0%
8	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region	21	0	0	0	21	0	0%
9	Administration of the State Representative-Governor in Shida Kartli Region	21	0	0	0	21	0	0%



**ACCESS OF
PUBLIC INFORMATION
IN 2010-2022**

ACCESS OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN 2010-2022

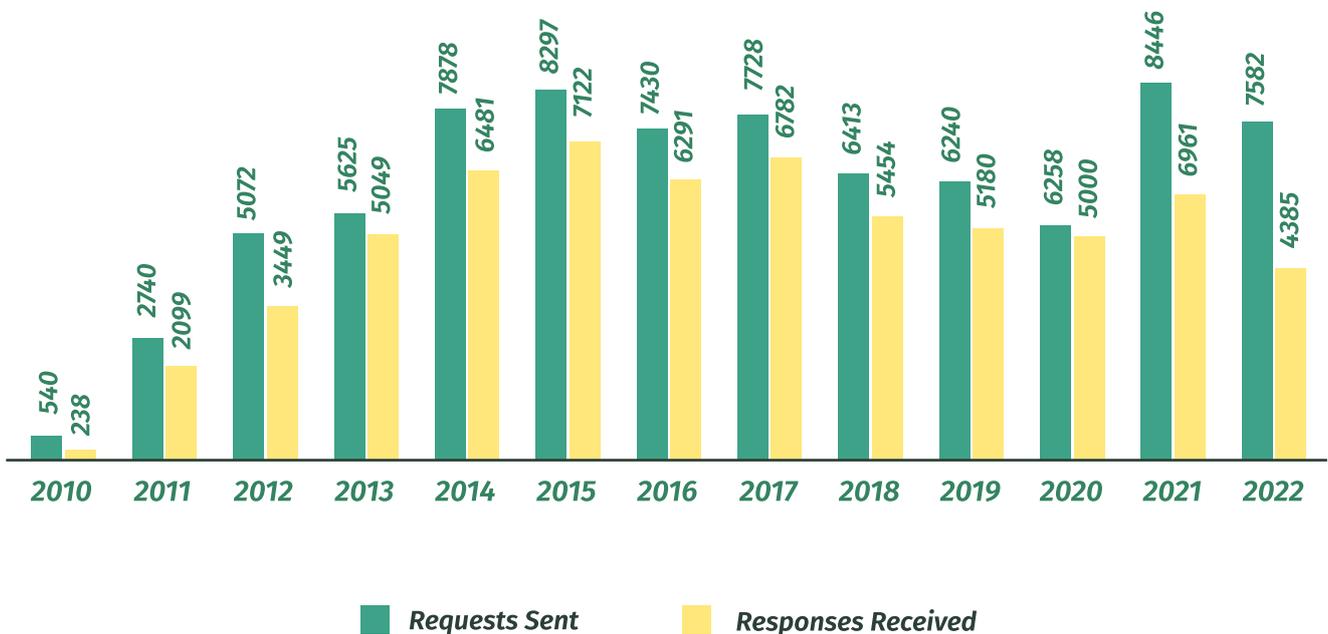
IDFI's monitoring between 2010 and 2022 provides a 13-year dynamics of access to public information across different public institutions.

During this time, IDFI sent **80,250** requests for public information, of which **64,391** were answered.

The percentage of responses varied greatly based on statistics maintained by IDFI over a period of 13 years, with **the highest percentage (90%) occurring in 2013** and another high percentage (88%) in 2017. However, the response rate decreased somewhat from 2018 to 2021, though it remained above the critical limit of 80% established in 2014. In 2022, the accessibility of public information worsened, and the response rate plummeted to 58%, the lowest since 2010, with a 24% decrease compared to 2021.

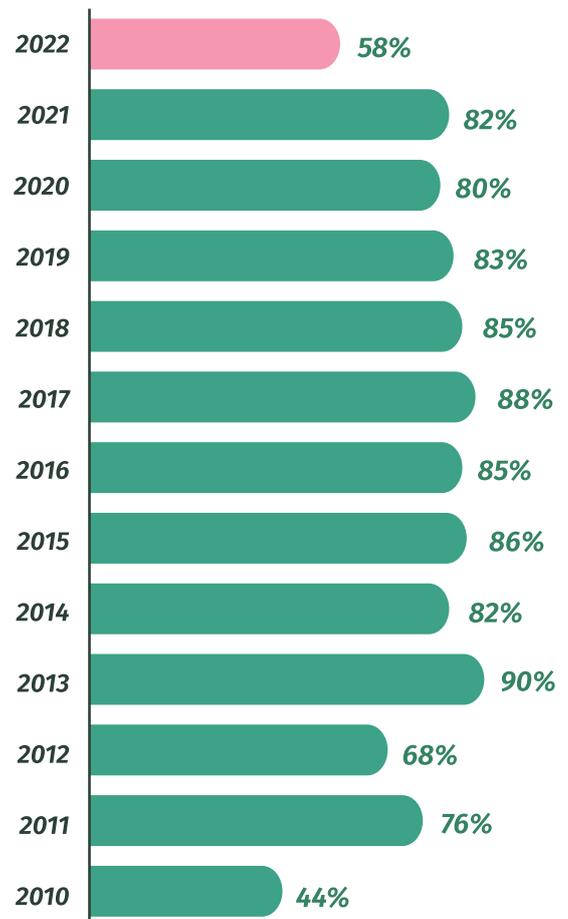


RESPONSES TO REQUESTS SENT IN 2010-2020



YEAR	PUBLIC INSTITUTION	REQUESTS SENT	RESPONSES RECEIVED
2022	374	7582	4385
2021	285	8447	6932
2020	285	6258	5 000
2019	284	6 240	5 180
2018	282	6 413	5 454
2017	289	7 728	6 782
2016	294	7 430	6 291
2015	307	8 297	7 122
2014	308	7 878	6 481
2013	224	5 625	5 049
2012	229	5 072	3 449
2011	154	2 740	2 099
2010	21	540	238

PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF RESPONSES RECEIVED BY YEARS

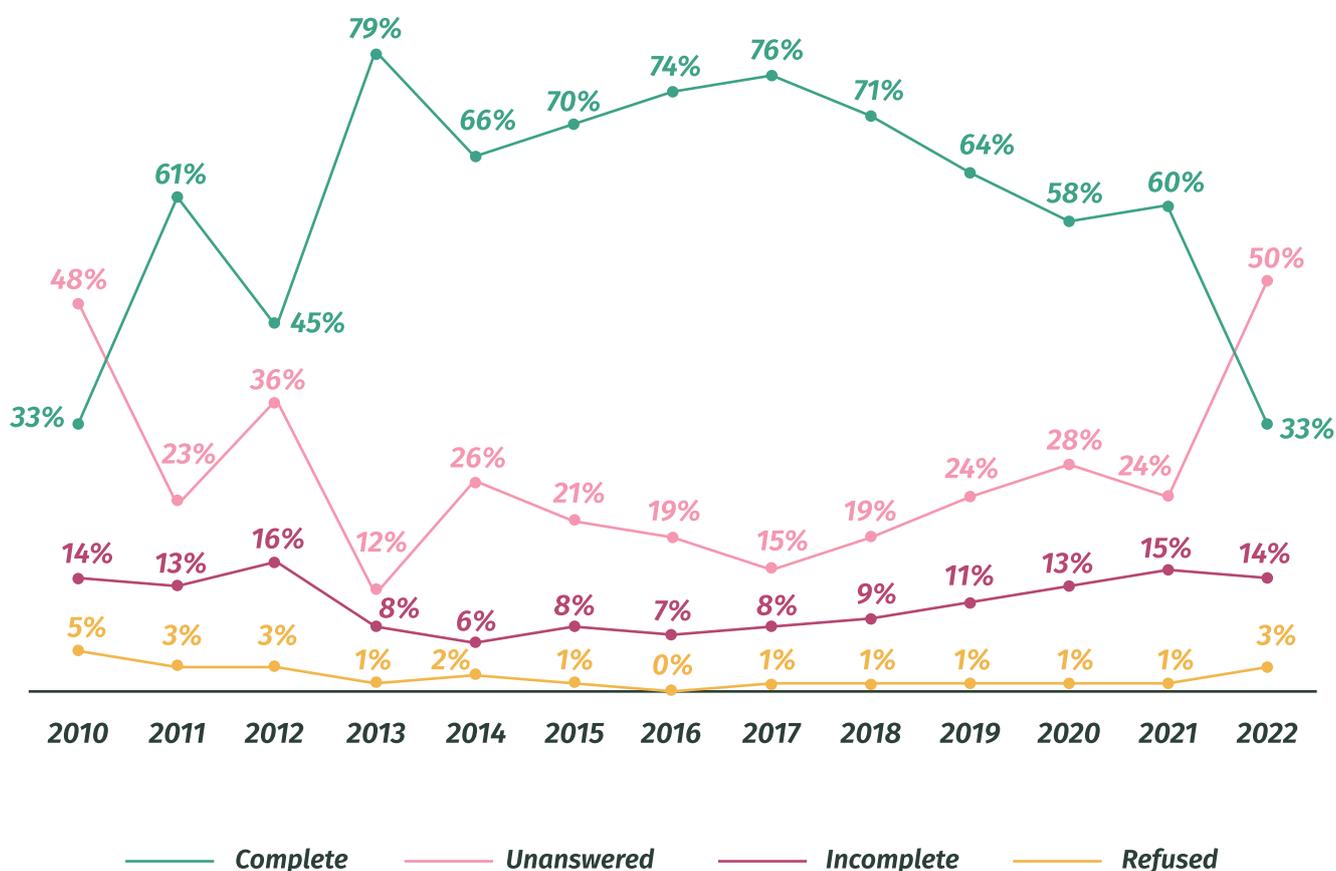


Excluding responses where **public institutions stated that they did not have the requested information or did not take specific actions**, the percentage of requests that received a full response in 2022 decreased by 27% compared to the previous year, while the rate of unanswered requests increased by 26%. At the same time, the share of refusals to provide information increased by 2%.

This 33% rate of complete answers is the lowest recorded since 2010.



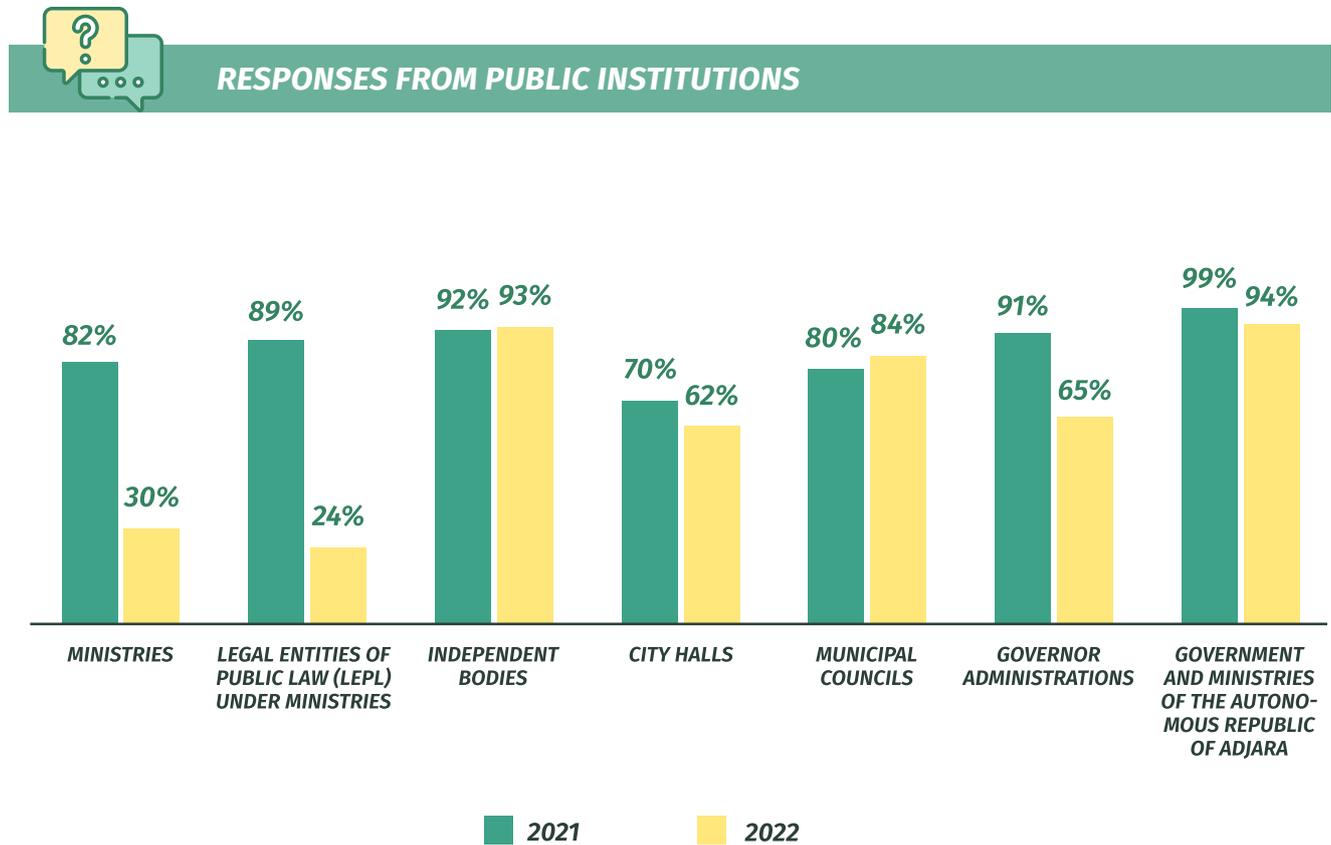
RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



Note: the percentage does not reflect the responses received from public institutions, according to which the institutions did not have the requested information, or did not take a specific action.

The deterioration of the overall score of 2022 was not uniformly reflected in all groups of public institutions. Compared to 2021, the percentage of responses to requests sent in 2022 mostly decreased in the case of ministries (-62%), LEPLs subordinate to ministries (-65%), and administrations of state representatives (governors) (-26%). Furthermore, a certain decrease was observed in the case of city halls of municipalities (-8%) and agencies of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (-5%). In 2022, compared to the previous year, the number of responses received slightly improved in the entities included in the groups of independent agencies (+1%) and municipal assemblies (+4%).

According to the groups of public institutions, data analysis reveals that the decrease in the country's overall score for access to public information in 2022 is primarily linked to the limitation of information disclosure by the agencies included in the structure of the Government of Georgia (ministries, LEPLs of ministries, administrations of state representatives).



On the one hand, the drastically decreased rate of responses received from public institutions in 2022 should be seen as a negative development with respect to the accessibility of information in the Government of Georgia's agencies. On the other hand, in the short term, the extent of the decline in information availability raises doubts about whether the Georgian authorities have made a political decision to restrict freedom of information in the country.

TIMEFRAMES FOR DISCLOSING PUBLIC INFORMATION IN 2010-2022

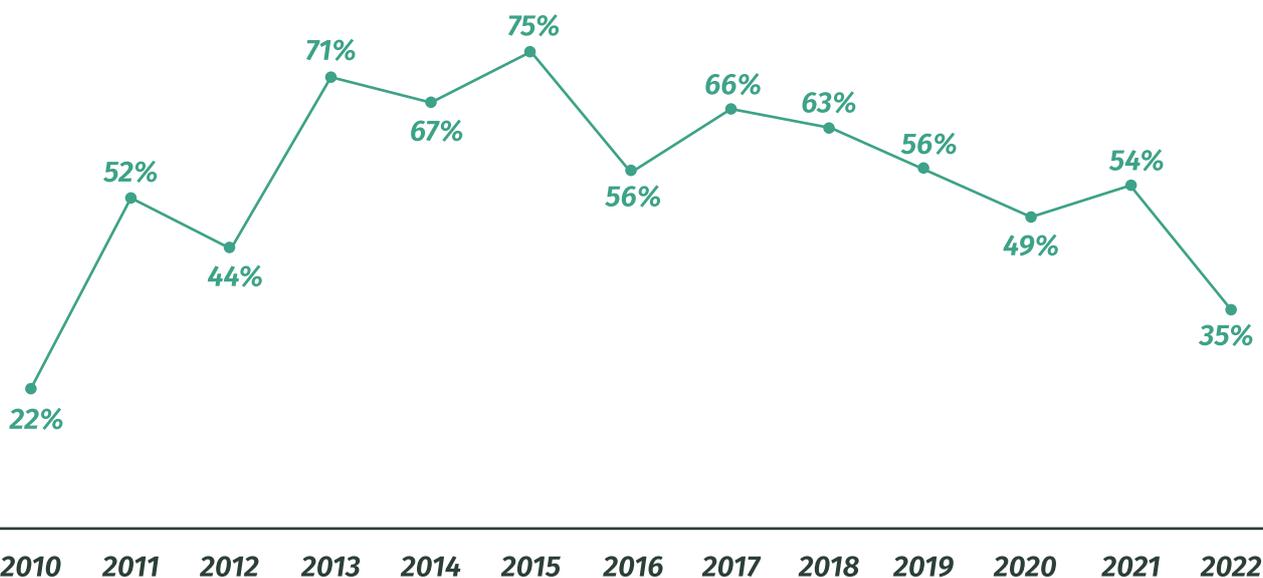
According to existing legislation of Georgia, public institutions are obligated to provide responses without delay to requests for public information. However, they may request a period of 10 days in cases when the information requested is of high volume, if a public institution has to collect and process information, or if it has to consult another administrative body. At the same time, public entities are obligated to inform applicants about the need of using the 10-day period immediately.

Because in 2010-2022 IDFI usually requested a high volume of public information, the provision of information within the period of 10 days was evaluated as a timely response, regardless of whether a public entity informed us about the need of using the 10-day period.

In 2022, the rate of timely disclosure of public information worsened by 20% compared to the previous year, with a 35% rate - the lowest since 2010. This is due to a significant increase in unanswered requests. Notably, a similar drastic decrease in the responses received by observing the 10-day deadline was not observed even in the conditions of the Coronavirus pandemic, when public agencies encountered a number of challenges (transition to a remote work process, involvement in the fight against the pandemic, etc.).



RESPONSES RECEIVED IN COMPLIANCE OF THE 10 DAY DEADLINE





CASES OF STRATEGIC LITIGATION

CASES OF STRATEGIC LITIGATION

In 2022, in response to the significant deterioration of access to public information, IDFI actively began to file administrative appeals in response to the refusal to provide public information, partial disclosure of information, and leaving the application unanswered. In 2022, IDFI prepared a total of 56 administrative complaints and submitted them to relevant public institutions in order to increase access to public information. IDFI started to implement the project of providing legal support for journalists on issues of access to public information at full capacity from January 2022. The majority of complaints submitted in 2022 were drafted within the framework of the mentioned project. In addition, complaints were submitted to public institutions either on behalf of IDFI, or directly on behalf of the beneficiary journalist/media organization.

It is worth noting that the problems of non-disclosure and/or incomplete release of information were resolved in some cases after a relevant administrative appeal was filed. The submission of the complaint turned out to be successful and public institutions provided information fully in 14 cases, and partially - in 8 cases.

In most cases, the reason for the administrative appeal was that the request was left without response by the public institution, a fact that occurred 39 times. Apart from that, the public institution released the information provided by certain points of the application in 9 cases, but left other remaining point(s) without responding and did not explain the reasons for not providing the specified information. The answers received to the request for public information were also the reason for submitting a number of complaints - in such letters, public institutions explicitly stated or implied that there were conditions hindering the release of information (see the table below) and in this way tried to justify the restriction of access to public information. All such refusals, which IDFI deems inconsistent with legislation regulating Freedom of Information, were appealed.

GROUNDS	AMOUNT
<i>Personal Data</i>	4
<i>Information is not being processed</i>	4
<i>Information is not being processed in the requested form</i>	3
<i>Confidential information</i>	2
<i>State secret</i>	1
<i>Norms of the General Administrative Code do not apply to a specific public institution</i>	1
<i>A fee is required for the release of public information</i>	1
<i>Information is not processed due to a lack of human resources</i>	1

As a consequence of the processing of statistical data regarding complaints, public institutions that, as a rule, do not respond either to public information requests or to subsequent complaints were identified. For instance, IDFI appealed the failure of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia to respond to requests for public information 3 times - in 2 cases, the Ministry did not consider the complaint and indicated that it fell under the purview of the court, while 1 complaint was left unanswered like the FOI request itself. In addition, it should be noted that 6 administrative complaints were submitted to the Administration of the Government of Georgia for non-fulfillment of the obligation to provide public information, and only 1 of them was provided with information (without consideration of the complaint), while the rest of the complaints were left without a response.

It should also be noted that 6 administrative complaints were submitted to the Administration of Government of Georgia on the basis of the failure to fulfill the obligation to provide public information, and information was provided in only 1 case (without consideration of the complaint), while the rest of the complaints were left without a response or reaction.

One of the means for increasing access to public information is filing an administrative complaint, and IDFI actively uses all the legal instruments provided by the law, which contributes to ensuring freedom of information.

IDFI'S LAWSUITS

In 2022, IDFI initiated 16 lawsuits against public institutions regarding public information.

Including:



AGAINST GEORGIAN NATIONAL TOURISM ADMINISTRATION

Content of the request: On June 6, 2022, IDFI addressed the Georgian National Tourism Administration and requested information about marketing campaign contracts concluded in order to present Georgia at the “FITUR 2021” International Tourism Exhibition.

Field: Public procurement contracts

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Agency refused to provide information, indicating that the **contract is confidential**. On July 7, 2022, an administrative complaint was filed. The Agency **did not consider** the complaint, indicating that the authorized official responsible for public information does not have a functionally and/or institutionally higher administrative body/official and the response could be appealed only in court.



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: On June 6, 2022, IDFI addressed the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and requested information regarding expenditures from the government reserve fund. Namely, awards issued to public servants and officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Field: On expenditures of budget funds

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Ministry provided only partial information without naming officials (who fall under the scope of the law of Georgia on “Fighting Against Corruption”), and also without indicating structural subdivisions of the Ministry. IDFI appealed this partial response with an administrative complaint. The ministry **did not consider** the complaint, only referred to its first response and the right of appealing in court.



AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: On June 6, 2022, IDFI addressed the Administration of the Government of Georgia and requested information regarding expenditures from the government reserve fund and their purpose.

Field: On expenditures of budget funds

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Administration of the Government left the application unanswered, which was appealed as determined by the administrative legislation. The Administration of the Government left the administrative complaint **unanswered** as well. No decision was made on the complaint (neither dismissal, denial nor approval of the complaint). After the expiration of the one-month time limit for consideration of the complaint, IDFI referred to the court and filed an administrative claim in order to obligate the Government of Georgia to provide the requested information.



AGAINST THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: On June 6, 2022, IDFI requested information regarding purchasing of legal services and contracts with foreign specialists with funds allocated from the government reserve fund.

Field: Public procurement contracts

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Prosecutor's office left IDFI's application **unanswered**, which was appealed with a complaint of July 8, 2022. The Prosecutor's Office reviewed the complaint without an oral hearing and **did not grant** it. As the reason for denial, the Prosecutor's Office mentioned that the contracts with foreign experts contain their **personal data**.



AGAINST NATIONAL AGENCY OF PUBLIC REGISTRY, ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA, AND THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

Content of the requests: On June 8, 2022, IDFI addressed three public institutions (National Agency of Public Registry, Administration of the Government of Georgia, and the Ministry of Economy) and requested information about lands excluded from the Forest Fund of Georgia and their cadastral codes.

Field: Activities carried out within the scope of the authority of a public institution

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: Both the Administration of the Government and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development left our requests **unanswered**. In both cases, IDFI filed administrative complaints. The Ministry of Economy **did not consider** the complaint, indicating that the authorized official responsible for public information does not have a functionally and/or institutionally higher administrative body/official and that the response could be appealed only in court. The Administration of the Government left the complaint **unanswered**. No decision was made on the complaint (neither dismissal, denial nor approval of the complaint). IDFI initiated a lawsuit against both these public institutions.

Regarding the National Agency of Public Registry, at first, the agency left IDFI's request **unanswered**. After IDFI filed an administrative complaint, the agency provided information, but **did not consider** the complaint further. The information provided by the agency only partially covered IDFI's request. The agency explained the refusal to provide the cadastral codes by the fact that to provide this type of information, it is necessary to pay a fee for each cadastral code (as it turns out from the response from the agency, there are up to 25,000 cases in total). IDFI initiated a lawsuit against the Agency.



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Content of the requests: On June 24, 2022, IDFI addressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and requested information regarding the Commission for Georgia's Integration in the EU. Namely, audio-visual recordings and minutes of the 61th session of the Commission.

Field: Regarding activities of consultative bodies of the Government of Georgia

Responses to the application and the administrative complaints: The ministry refused to provide the requested information and as a grounds for refusal pointed out that **regulations of the General Code of Georgia do not apply** to the state's foreign policy and, therefore, activities of the Commission. This response was appealed as determined by the administrative legislation. The Ministry reviewed the complaint with an oral hearing and **refused to grant** it. The grounds for refusal were the same – the Administrative Code of Georgia and its III chapter (Freedom of Information) do not apply to the situation.



AGAINST THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE OF GEORGIA

Content of the requests: On June 30, 2022, IDFI addressed the State Security Service of Georgia and requested information about statistics of dismissals of public servants in the Service.

Field: Personnel policy of a public institution

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: On July 15, 2022, the Service provided only partial information, without indicating legal grounds for dismissal and the subdivisions, as was requested. As a result, IDFI appealed the Service's incomplete response. The service **did not consider** the administrative complaint and referred only to its letter of July 15, 2022. In response to the complaint, there was no reference even to the right to appeal in court.



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT OF GEORGIA

Content of the requests: On September 12, 2022, IDFI addressed the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and requested information about activities of the competition commission for the selection of teachers in public schools

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution

Response to the application: The ministry **did not grant** the request and indicated that it would be relevant to request information from public schools directly. Since the relevant normative act of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports determines the mandatory participation of a representative of the ministry in competition commissions, the requested information must have been available to the Ministry. Therefore, on August 12, 2022, IDFI filed an administrative claim against the Ministry.

Result of the lawsuit: After initiating the lawsuit, on August 31, 2022, the Legal Entity under Public Law within the governance of the Ministry - Teachers Professional Development Center - provided the requested information fully (the request to the Center was sent on August 12, 2022, simultaneously with filing of the claim against the Ministry). Therefore, IDFI withdrew the claim and concluded the litigation.



AGAINST THE GEORGIAN CIVIL AVIATION AGENCY

Content of the requests: On July 15, 2022, IDFI addressed the Georgian Civil Aviation Agency and requested information about legal grounds for the refusal to allow a charter plane aiming to transfer volunteers to Ukraine to land in Tbilisi International Airport.

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Agency left the request **unanswered**, which was appealed with an administrative complaint. The Agency left the administrative complaint **unanswered** as well. After the expiration of the one-month time limit for consideration of the complaint, IDFI referred to the court and filed an administrative claim against the Agency.



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORT AND YOUTH

Content of the requests: On July 15, 2022, IDFI addressed the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia and requested information about dismissals of public servants and their legal grounds, as well as the statistics of disciplinary actions against public servants in the Ministry

Field: Personnel policy of a public institution

Response to the application and the administrative complaint: The Ministry left the request **unanswered**, which was appealed with an administrative complaint. The Ministry **did not consider** the complaint and indicated that disputes related to public information can only be resolved through litigation in court. IDFI filed the lawsuit against the Ministry on October 24, 2022.



AGAINST THE MARITIME TRANSPORT AGENCY OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: On September 15, 2022, IDFI requested public information from the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia about the entry or denial of entry to Georgia of ships under international sanctions.

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The Agency left the request unanswered, and did not consider the complaint, indicating that the authorized official responsible for public information does not have a functionally and/or institutionally higher administrative body/official and that the response could be appealed only in court as determined by the administrative legislation. On November 16, 2022, IDFI filed the lawsuit against the Agency.



AGAINST THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF GEORGIA

Previous period of application: on May 13, 2022, the Supreme Court obligated the National Archives of Georgia to release public information that IDFI has been requesting since June 29, 2018. Information requested by IDFI includes the numbers of applicants who had been denied access to National Archives documents and the relevant legal basis of the refusals.

Content of the request: The ruling of the Supreme Court set bounds on information to include the year 2018. On August 5, 2022, IDFI lodged a new request to the National Archives of Georgia and requested the very same information on which the Supreme Court of Georgia ruled in favor of IDFI.

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution

Response to the application and administrative complaint: Despite the fact that the Supreme Court's judgment about this case entered into legal force, the National Archives of Georgia rejected the identical request, stating that it did not process the information in the requested form. After this, IDFI appealed the National Archives's response, referring to the decision of the Supreme Court of Georgia, but the complaint was dismissed with the same argument, that the requested information is not processed in the National Archives. On November 17, 2022 IDFI referred to the court and filed an administrative claim against the National Archives of Georgia.



AGAINST OPERATIONAL-TECHNICAL AGENCY

Content of the request: On November 17, 2022, IDFI requested statistical data from the Operational-Technical Agency about covert investigative actions.

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution.

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The request was dismissed, referring to the fact that requested information will be reflected in the annual report, which has not been elaborated yet. IDFI appealed the Agency's response. The head of the Agency did not consider the administrative complaint, his letter only referring to the initial response. Furthermore, the response letter of the complaint did not clarify the appeal procedure. Finally, on January 31, 2023, IDFI filed a lawsuit against the Agency.



AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: On October 24, 2022, IDFI requested public information from the Administration of the Government of Georgia about the activities of the State Commission on the purchase and renewal of official vehicles.

Field: Regarding activities of consultative bodies of the Government of Georgia

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The Administration of the Government left the request unanswered, which was appealed as determined by the administrative legislation. The Administration of the Government left the administrative complaint unanswered as well. No decision was made on the complaint (neither granting fully or partially the complaint, nor leaving the complaint unconsidered). Due to the expiration of the one-month deadline for consideration of the complaint, IDFI filed a lawsuit against the Administration of the Government of Georgia.

The statistical data about the mentioned cases:

IDFI COURT STATISTICS			
The results of requesting public information		Decisions made on the complaint:	
Was not granted	5	Was not considered	8
Left unanswered	9	Was not granted	3
Partially granted	2	Left unanswered	4
Legal problem		Field:	
Unanswered	9	Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution	8
Information is not processed in a specific form	2	Expenditure of budgetary funds	2
The information is not processed	1	State procurement contracts	2
The information is confidential	1	Activities of consultative bodies of the Government of Georgia	2
Personal data	1	Personnel policy of a public institution	2
The General Administrative Code does not apply	1		
Information processing is a service (payment is required))	1		

In addition to the cases discussed above, where IDFI was a party to the dispute, the organization also actively assisted journalists and other beneficiaries in drafting up legal documents, as well as representing them in administrative and court proceedings. Within the scope of the mentioned legal support, IDFI prepared 8 administrative lawsuits and one cassation appeal.

Including:



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: Within the scope of the mentioned dispute, the journalist requested information from the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia about state theaters and museums, their budgets, and expenses.

Field: General information about the structure and activities of the public agency

Response to the application and administrative complaint: IDFI was involved in all stages of the mentioned dispute. In particular, IDFI prepared a public information application, as well as the administrative complaint and lawsuit. The application was left unanswered by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia, so IDFI filed an administrative complaint, which was left unanswered as well. Finally, with the help and representation of IDFI, the journalist filed a lawsuit against the Ministry.

Outcome of the claim: After initiating the lawsuit, the journalist was provided with the requested information.



AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: Within the scope of the mentioned case, the journalist requested information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia about the statistics of refusal of entry of foreigners to Georgia (with an indication of the grounds for refusal).

Field: Activities carried within the scope of authority of a public institution

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The public information request was not granted, indicating that the Ministry does not process the information in the requested form. With the help of IDFI, an administrative complaint was filed against the Ministry. In response to the complaint, the Ministry only indicated that the applicant can appeal in the court. Finally, with the help and representation of IDFI, the journalist filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.



AGAINST THE NATIONAL FOOD AGENCY (I)

Content of the request: The subject matter of the dispute in the mentioned case was the National Food Agency's non-fulfillment of the obligation stipulated by the law - the obligation to timely inform the society about harmful food.

Topic: Obligation to spread information.

Response to the application and administrative complaint: Initially, on April 4, 2022, the application requesting the Agency to fulfill its obligation established by the law - to disseminate information about harmful food on the market - was submitted to the Agency.

The Agency does not fulfill the mentioned obligation, and in particular, even in the case of obvious non-compliance with the requirements of the technical procedures established by a decree of the Government of Georgia, the Agency does not issue information in the form of a warning. The Agency did not grant the request, a decision that was appealed with an administrative complaint.

On June 2, 2022, as a result of the oral hearing, the appeal was not granted by the order of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. The order shared the agency's position that the non-compliance of food with technical regulations is not sufficient for the dissemination of warning information. Consequently, with the help of IDFI, the plaintiff filed a lawsuit against the National Food Agency on June 30, 2022.



AGAINST THE NATIONAL FOOD AGENCY (II)

Content of the request: Within the scope of this dispute, the applicant requested information from the National Food Agency about the results of the state control carried out by the Agency with regards to the identification of data of business operators, including the personal data of individual entrepreneurs and natural persons.

Topic: Information related to the activities included in the sphere of authority of the public institution.

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The Agency granted the public information application partially, and in particular, it provided the applicant with the results of state control only with regards to the identification data of companies, and redacted the personal data of individual entrepreneurs and natural persons. The mentioned response was appealed.

On May 20, 2022, the complaint was not granted by the order of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. As a result, the beneficiary, with the support of IDFI, filed a lawsuit against the National Food Agency and requested it to fully grant the original request and provide identification data of business operator natural persons and individual entrepreneurs.



NATIONAL AGENCY OF STATE PROPERTY

Content of the request: Within the scope of the mentioned dispute, the journalist requested a copy of the privatization agreement of a specific state property and information on the fulfillment of privatization obligations from the National Agency of State Property.

Topic: Administration of state property

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The journalist initially submitted a public information application to the Agency, which was left unanswered. After that, the journalist filed an administrative complaint against the Agency. The Agency did not consider the complaint and indicated that the person responsible for public information does not have a functionally superior body/person, and the action should be appealed only in court. The journalist filed a lawsuit against the Agency with the support and representation of IDFI.



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND YOUTH OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: Within the framework of the mentioned dispute, the journalist requested information from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia regarding the restoration of the Gelati Monastery.

Topic: Cultural heritage related information

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The journalist at first submitted a public information request to the Ministry, which the Ministry left unanswered. Afterwards, the action of the Ministry was appealed with an administrative complaint. The Ministry did not consider the complaint and indicated that disputes related to public information should be resolved only through the courts.

Claim: The journalist filed a lawsuit against the Ministry with the legal support and representation of IDFI. Along with the filing of the lawsuit, IDFI submitted a motion seeking immediate release of the most critical information as provisional measures for the lawsuit. The court did not grant the application for provisional measures, and the refusal was appealed. The Court of Appeals has not yet reviewed the appeal on the provisional measures of the claim.



AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: The answers given by the Government of Georgia to the self-assessment questionnaire of the European Union on the status of a candidate were requested by the journalist from the Administration of the Government.

Topic: The candidate status of the European Union.

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The Administration of the Government left the journalist's request unanswered. Afterwards, with the support of IDFI, the journalist filed an administrative complaint against the Administration of the Government of Georgia. The complaint was left unanswered as well. Due to the expiration of the one-month time limit for consideration of the complaint, the journalist filed a lawsuit with the legal support of IDFI against the Administration of the Government of Georgia.



NATIONAL AGENCY FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION OF GEORGIA

Content of the request: Within the scope of the dispute, the journalist requested information about the condition of one of the cathedrals with the status of cultural heritage.

Topic: Information related to cultural heritage

Response to the application and administrative complaint: The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia left the application without response. With the support of IDFI, the journalist appealed the non-fulfillment of the obligation to the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia. The Ministry did not consider the administrative complaint and indicated that disputes related to public information should be resolved through the courts.

Outcome of the claim: Consequently, the journalist, with the help and representation of IDFI, filed a lawsuit against the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. After filing the lawsuit, the journalist was provided with the requested information. For this reason, IDFI withdrew the claim and the proceedings ended.

► THE CASSATION APPEAL

In 2022, IDFI provided legal assistance to another beneficiary. This time, IDFI was involved in the case at the stage of the third instance of the dispute and prepared a cassation appeal.

Specifically, the subject matter of the dispute is the allegedly incorrect public information issued by the public institution. Neither the decisions of the first nor the second instance court properly assessed the nature of the information inaccurately created and issued by the public institution.

Due to the vagueness of the provisions of the General Administrative Code of Georgia regulating incorrect public information, as well as the absence of the practice of the Supreme Court of Georgia regarding this issue, IDFI considered it important to be involved in the mentioned case.

The statistical data on the mentioned cases are as follows:

STATISTICAL DATE OF LITIGATIONS CONDUCTED WITH IDFI'S LEGAL SUPPORT WHERE IDFI WAS NOT A PARTY			
The results of the public information application		Responses to the complaint	
<i>Was not granted</i>	3	<i>Was not considered</i>	4
<i>Without response</i>	5	<i>Was not granted</i>	2
		<i>Without response</i>	2
Legal problem		Topic	
<i>Unanswered</i>	5	<i>Information related to the activities included in the sphere of authority of the public institution</i>	2
<i>Personal Data</i>	1	<i>Cultural heritage</i>	2
<i>Information is not processed in a specific way</i>	1	<i>General information about the structure and activities of the public institution</i>	1
<i>Incorrect public information</i>	1	<i>Obligation to disseminate the information</i>	1
		<i>Administration of state property</i>	1
		<i>The candidate status of the European Union</i>	1
		<i>Incorrectly issued public information</i>	1



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

According to the monitoring conducted by IDFI in 2022, the quality of access to public information in the country has decreased significantly compared to the previous year. The rate of responses (58%) from public institutions in 2022 is the lowest observed since 2010. There was an established practice of a critical threshold of 80% on the rate of responses after 2013, which was successfully maintained until 2022.

The rate of access to public information in most categories of public institutions has declined in 2022, and the ministries and their subordinate bodies that have actively left the letters of FOI requests unanswered should especially be highlighted.

The radical decline in the rate of responses received from public institutions in 2022 can be interpreted as negative changes in terms of accessibility of public information in a number of agencies, which was facilitated by the desire to cover up the requested information. Furthermore, the precedents created over the years by the lack of integrity of influential agencies and officials regarding freedom of information can be considered as one of the important factors encouraging the lack of integrity of other public institutions as well. For example, the Administration of the Government of Georgia, which is the main coordinating agency of the executive public institutions, has been violating the requirements of the Georgian legislation for years and has significantly hindered the accessibility of public information. In addition, the former Minister of Justice, who is the current Minister of Culture of Georgia, deliberately limits the accessibility of public information in the subordinate administrative bodies, which could have a negative effect on other public institutions as well.

The extent of the deterioration of the accessibility of public information in the short time period raises significant concerns regarding the political decision of the Georgian authorities to limit freedom of information in the country.

The deterioration of access to public information in 2022 should be considered a critical problem, as the conditions established by the European Union for granting candidate status are closely related to the increase in accountability and transparency of public institutions, with access to public information named as one of the significant problems in this regard. Consequently, the deterioration of access to public information will have a negative impact on the process of Georgia's integration into the European Union.

A sharp decline in the accessibility of public information in the short time period raises significant questions regarding the institutional sustainability of accountability mechanisms in a number of government agencies. The impact of the factors on the quality of publicity discussed above clearly indicates the need to create more effective mechanisms to ensure accessibility of public information.

