



Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information

Proactive Publication of Information by Governments during Covid-19 Crisis

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The Goal of the Guidelines

The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) is spreading rapidly around the world. In times of a global health crisis of this kind, getting accurate information about government activities, relevant legal acts, social services, public spending on various government efforts to respond to existing challenges and new initiatives to support socially vulnerable groups becomes ever more important.

In order to effectively fight against the pandemic, states should fully internalize the past experience and take every step necessary to ensure open and proactive access to the information on Covid-19 related projects and activities. Wider society should have the opportunity to get updates and hold government accountable. Proactive provision of information about government activities will ensure higher public trust and confidence towards their governments and mobilize collective efforts for pandemic crisis management. At the same time, access to regularly updated data on websites of particular public institutions ensures that journalists and other interested parties can easily obtain data and make their own analysis. On the other hand, such a proactive and open approach will ease the administrative burden and resources of public institutions. While governments will establish effective communication and information provision practices with citizens and all groups of people in the country.

The document aims at providing decision-makers, civil society organizations and all other relevant stakeholders with practical information on the types of public information that should be published by various government agencies on their websites in order to ensure that wider society has a better understanding on the measures taken in an attempt to respond to the challenges caused by the current pandemic.

Types of information listed below should be proactively published by state institutions.

1. General Information

- 1.1. Strategy and action plan of the public institution on the process of operating during the pandemic period;
- 1.2. List of planned projects/programs of the public institution suspended due to the pandemic period.
- 1.3. Monthly reports of the activities carried out by the public institution;
- 1.4. Contact information of the public institution during the pandemic period (e-mail address, telephone number, social network address);
- 1.5. Answers to the possible questions of citizens linked with the operational specifications of public institutions during the state of the pandemic.

2. Public Information

- 2.1. Information on the restrictions imposed on the disclosure of the public information (if applicable) due to the state of emergency and the corresponding legal acts;
- 2.2. Information on the amendments (if applicable) regarding filing an administrative complaint and the time limits for reviewing them and corresponding legal acts;
- 2.3. Registry of the public information requests processing of which is suspended due to the state of emergency.

3. Staffing

- 3.1. Alterations made to the list of staff members due to the pandemic period.
- 3.2. The number of employees shifted to work remotely, indicating position and gender.
- 3.3. Legal act issued for imposing an emergency work schedule during the pandemic period.
- 3.4. Information and corresponding legal act on suspending the competitive recruitment process for a vacant position in a public institution;

4. Public Procurement and Assets (information listed below should be available to any interested person and published in a machine-readable format)

- 4.1. The annual plan of public procurement and amendments made to it due to the pandemic of Covid-19;
- 4.2. Rules governing the public procurement processes, including the information on the procedure for conducting Covid-19 related procurement;
- 4.3. Relevant guidelines for prospective tender participants and procurers on participating in and conducting public procurement by types of procurement, including Covid-19 related procurement;
- 4.4. Information on pre-tender communication with prospective suppliers (particularly important in case of urgent procurement).
- 4.5. Full text of the contracts awarded, its annexes and any amendments made to them.
- 4.6. Information on the process of contract implementation.
- 4.7. Quarterly reports on the procurements conducted, their results and implementation process.

4.8. List of conducted public procurement available in Open Contract Data (OCDS)¹ format indicating procurer, supplier, the object of procurement, mean of procurement, source of financing, relevant CPV² codes by categories and sub-categories, price and the amount of money transferred.

4.9. Supplier search engines available in open data format. Particularly useful for public entities in search of relevant medical services, goods and equipment necessary to fight against Covid-19.

4.10. List of goods, works and services that can be purchased using urgent procurement linked with Covid-19 (useful for avoiding misuse of emergency state for non-Covid-19 related urgent procurement).

4.11. List of CPV³ codes of the types of above-listed items and a wider code on Covid-19 related procurement.

4.12. Information on the steps taken in order to prevent or respond to the cases of price-gouging, including those linked with Covid-19.

4.13. Information on temporarily transferred state property for the purposes of fighting against Covid-19.

5. Funding and Statements of Expenditure

5.1. Any amendments made to the approved budget of a public institution due to the pandemic;

5.2. Information about the execution of the emergency budget approved due to the pandemic;

5.3. Total amounts of salary, salary supplements and bonuses (separately) issued to the public officials and to other employees and cost reduction on each form of remuneration due to the pandemic.

5.4. Other administrative expenses (fuel expenses, expenses of technical service for state-owned vehicles, representational expenses, work visit expenses, telecommunication expenses, office expenses) and cost reduction of each expense during the pandemic period.

5.5. Information on international aid grants received by the public institution, indicating the total amount of the grant, expenses, purpose of expenditures and suppliers.

5.6. Information about the grants awarded by the public institutions due to the pandemic, indicating total amount, purpose and recipients of the grants,

1 OCDS enables disclosure of data and documents at all stages of the contracting process by defining a common data model and supporting various document and data formats.

² CPV codes are a system of classification for public procurement which uses standardized vocabulary to help procurement personnel classify their contract notices consistently and to make it easier for suppliers and contracting authorities to find notices.

³ Ibid.

5.7. The total amount of funding received from + contingency funds due to the pandemic, indicating planned expenses, expenditures, their purposes and suppliers.

6. Legal Acts

6.1. Normative legal acts governing the activities of the public institution during the pandemic.

6.2 Individual legal acts which based on the assessment of a public institution contain information of high public interest linked with the pandemic.

7. Services

7.1. Information on public services provided during the pandemic period, indicating the provisions and conditions of using the services.

7.2. Information on the public services suspended due to the pandemic.

7.3. Information on the service fees and any amendments made to them due to the pandemic.