



ANNUAL REPORT

THE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (IDFI)



Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information

2020

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INTRODUCTION

As in previous years, the 2020 activities of the Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) were aimed at addressing the challenges to democracy and good governance through evidence-based research, monitoring, and advocacy efforts. Specifically, IDFI provided vital assistance in order to improve the transparency of public institutions, increase citizen participation in the decision-making process, achieve high standards of the rule of law, develop inclusive economic policies, promote the process of democratic decentralization, and protect human rights.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, 2020 was a year of significant challenges. The Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information studied human rights violations and monitored Covid-19-related regulations and government spending.

IDFI also explored the key challenges posed by the pandemic to the country in terms of open governance, economic and social policy, the rule of law, disinformation, media, and innovation. Accordingly, in response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) carried out a variety of activities. Throughout the year, IDFI produced research/analytical materials and recommendations, videos, visualizations, webinars/online discussions, and training courses.

In 2020, IDFI was actively involved in charitable activity. Specifically, it provided the Children's Hostel "Firefly Country" with the necessary medical equipment, and the socially vulnerable – with 2,000 units of masks for protection from the virus.

IN 2020, IDFI CARRIED OUT THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:



Prepared 6 policy documents
Prepared 49 research documents
Prepared 14 blog posts
Prepared 14 visualizations



Held 1 international conference
Held 2 local conferences
Held 11 trainings and lectures
Held 15 discussions/presentations



In 2020, IDFI launched 17 new projects.



The number of IDFI employees increased to 29.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

In 2020, IDFI continued actively monitoring access to public information, conducting workshops, providing recommendations to the relevant agencies, as well as stakeholders. To encourage the use of open data, IDFI also organized competitions and attempted to raise awareness of various target groups about the issue. It also continued to monitor and accelerate the implementation of sustainable development goals.

GOOD GOVERNANCE FORUM 2020 - #GGFORUM2020

In 2020, IDFI held the second edition of an international high-level conference on Good Governance and fighting corruption, titled the “Good Governance Forum” (GGForum). Political Integrity and Elections were the principal topics of the forum for this year. The event took place on October 2 and was conducted virtually due to Covid-19-related restrictions. GG Forum aimed [to explore innovative mechanisms and the most cost-effective approaches to ensuring political integrity](#), especially at a time of Georgia’s upcoming parliamentary elections planned for October 2020. The conference gathered local and international experts and stakeholders around several key related issues:



- Electoral legislation and practice
- Political donations and political party financing
- Use of administrative resources during the election campaign
- Lobbyism and international transparency standards.

The representatives of prominent international organizations working on these topics as well as public institutions of different countries delivered speeches during the conference, including Transparency International, International IDEA, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), European Parliament, High Authority for Transparency in Public Life (HATVP) of France, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Open Government Partnership (OGP), the State Audit Office of Georgia, Transparency International – Georgia (TI-G), Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA), International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), etc. For more information regarding the conference panels and speakers, see the [Forum Agenda](#).

GG FORUM 2020 RESULTS BY NUMBERS



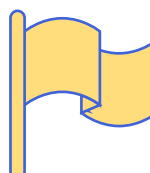
+80

PARTICIPANTS



19

SPEAKERS



10

COUNTRIES



5

SESSIONS

The Forum was organized by IDFI, in cooperation with the Open Government Partnership (OGP), with the support of the global philanthropic organization, Luminate.

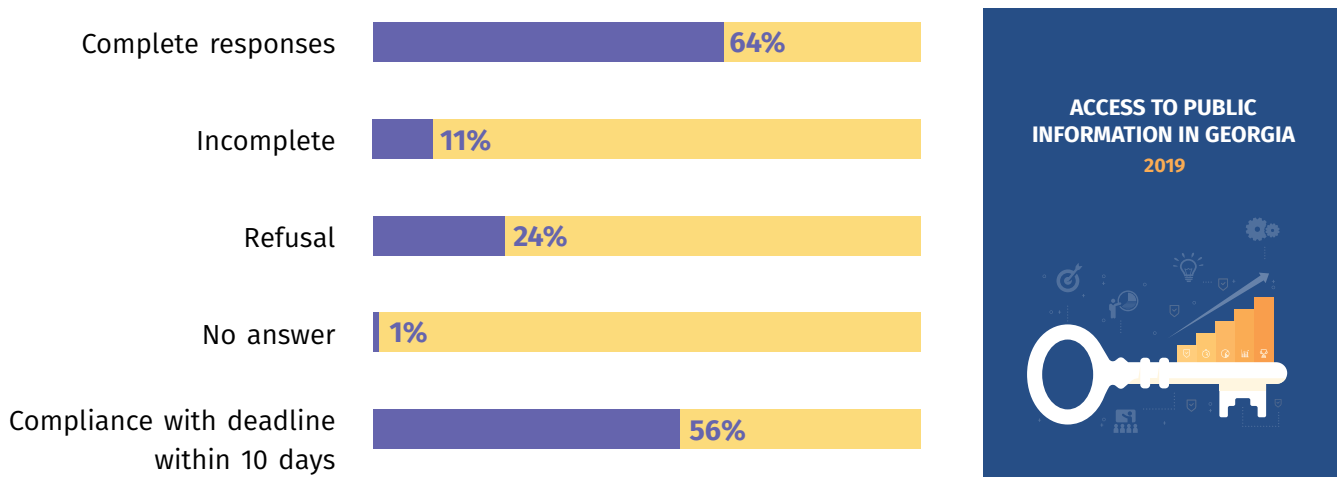
Full recordings of the online conference sessions are available on IDFI's YouTube channel:

- ▶▶ [Good Governance Forum: Opening Remarks](#)
- ▶▶ [Political Party Funding and Political Donations: Legislation and Practice](#)
- ▶▶ [Lobbyism: International Transparency Standards and Current Trends](#)
- ▶▶ [Use of Administrative Resources and Pre-election Amendments to the State Budget](#)
- ▶▶ [Good Governance Forum: Final Remarks](#)

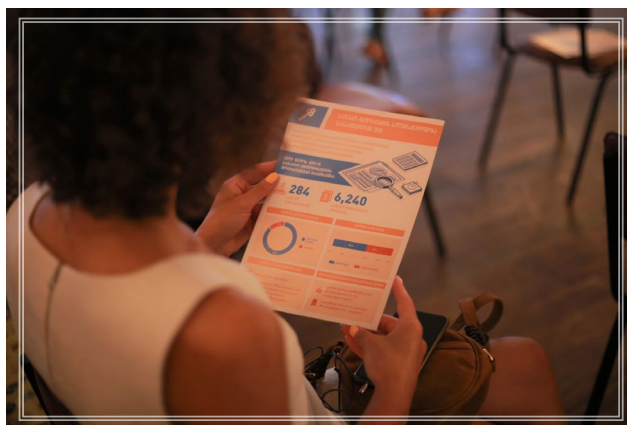
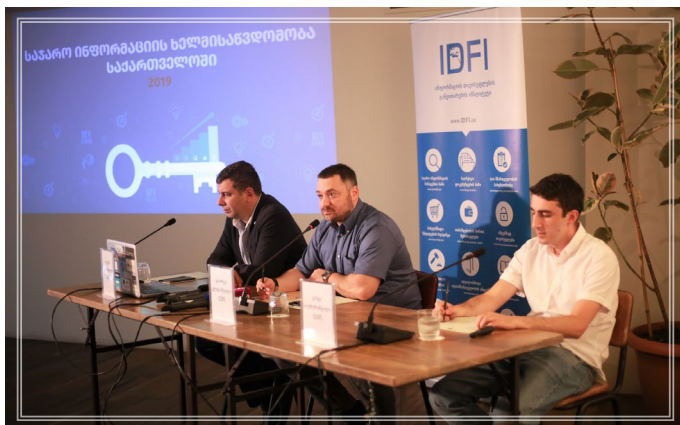
ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION IN GEORGIA

In 2020, IDFI presented the results of the 2019 monitoring on access to public information, based on 6,240 freedom of information (FOI) requests sent to 284 public institutions.

A total of **6,240 FOI requests were sent.**



According to the monitoring results, during the last 5 years the ratio of the responses received on FOI requests was the lowest in 2019. Also, the number of public institutions awarded for 100% compliance to FOI requests are approximately twice as low as compared to the previous year.



IDFI awarded a total of 25 public institutions, including:

- **National Statistics Office**
- **Office of the Public Defender**
- **State Inspector Service**
- **National Intellectual Property Center - Sakpatenti**
- **City Hall of Mtskheta Municipality.**

IDFI once again named the whole system of the **Ministry of Justice** and subordinate agency of the Ministry of Finance – **State Treasury** as the most closed public institutions.

The relevance of proactive disclosure of information became even more apparent this year due to the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the risks of unreasonable and vague management of public funds increased significantly. These risks were further increased by the restrictions imposed on the provision of public information during the state of emergency in the country.

In 2020, IDFI also monitored the compliance of public institutions with the standards of proactive disclosure of information – one of the crucial commitments undertaken by Georgia within the framework of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative.

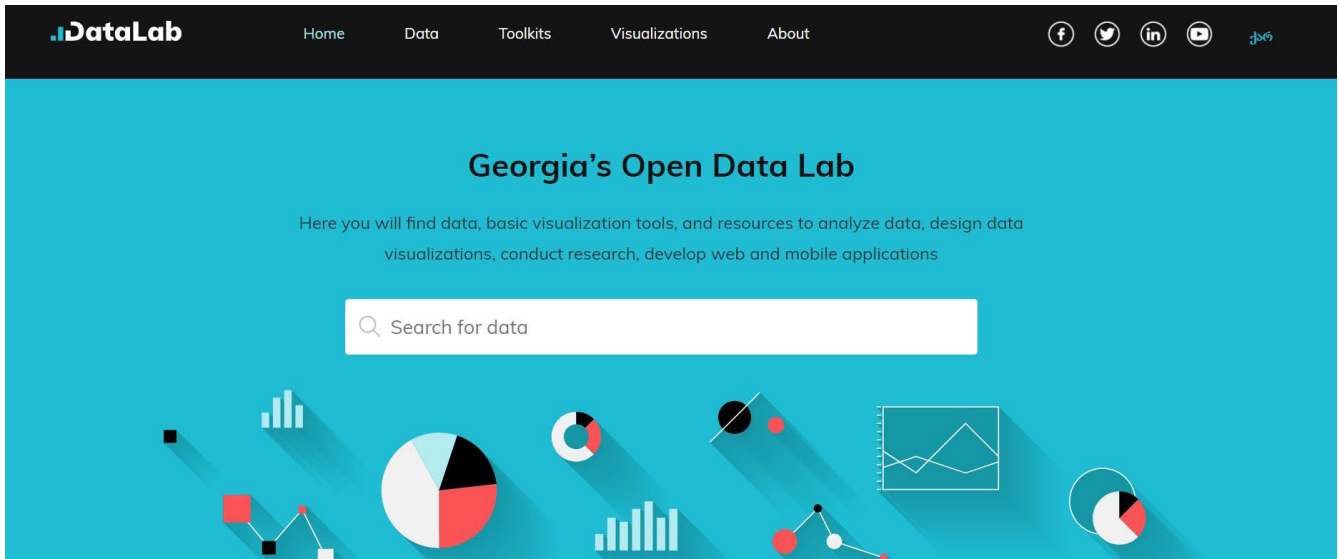
- **IDFI monitored a total of 121 public institutions;**
- **The average level of compliance with the standards of proactive disclosure of information equaled 55%.**

In 2020, IDFI developed a set of recommendations for the Government of Georgia, including a structured list of information that should be released proactively during the COVID-19 crisis. The practical recommendations aimed to guide public institutions about what types of information is important to be published in order for the general public to have relevant information about the measures taken in the fight against the pandemic.

ADVOCACY FOR ACCESS TO OPEN DATA

Georgia's Open Data Lab - DataLab.Ge

In order to encourage access to data on various public policy issues, IDFI continued to work on open data issues. Additional datasets have been released through the **open data portal** created by the Institute - **DataLab.Ge**. By the end of 2020, up to 1,300 datasets were available on the portal.



Datasets are available in open, machine-readable formats (Excel and CSV). Besides exploring data, users are able to:

- Analyze and process data of interest;
- Make simple visualizations;
- Download datasets in open formats;
- Share data through social media and websites;
- Create new apps.

OPEN DATA TOOLKIT

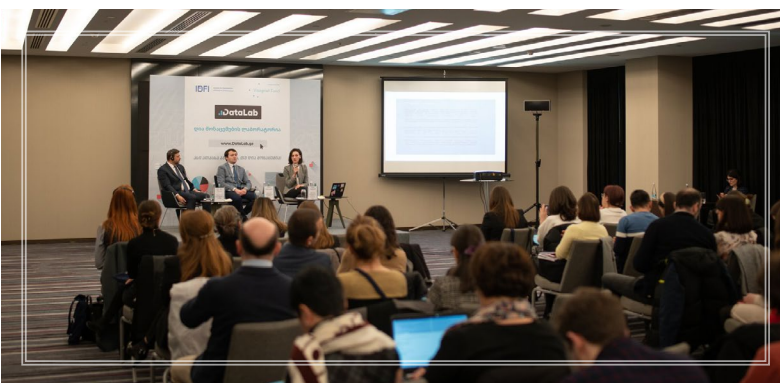
In addition to the publication of new data, the portal includes educational materials related to open data. In 2020, a new module – [Open Data Toolkit](#) – was integrated into the platform, dealing with theoretical and practical issues of obtaining, processing, cleansing, analyzing and visualizing data for people interested in the field, including researchers, journalists and activists.



CONTEST OF ANALYTICAL ARTICLES - DATA FOR CHANGE (#DATA4CHANGE)

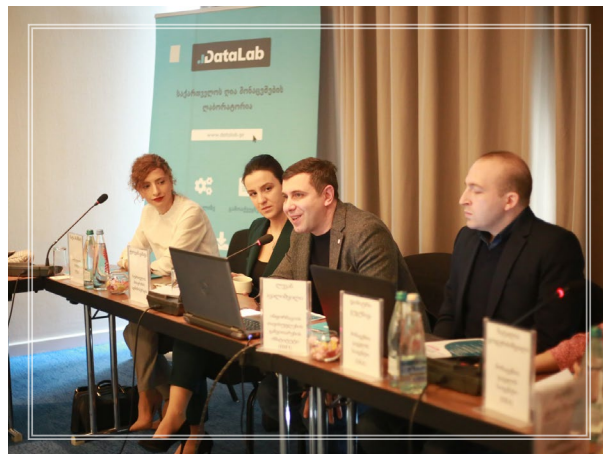


With the goal of encouraging the use of public data, as well as preparing analytical, data-driven articles, IDFI launched the second series of [contest](#) “Data for Change”, through which any individual interested in data analysis was able to prepare analytical articles on public policy and public finance. The contest attracted huge interest, with up to 50 article submissions. Most were on topics such as: ecology and environmental pollution, the challenges faced by children and youth in Georgia, public finance management, gender inequality, etc. [At the end of the presentation](#), the top three winners were awarded with certificates and gifts by Peter Mikiska, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to Georgia, and the representatives of IDFI.



ADVOCACY FOR ENHANCING ACCESS TO OPEN DATA

On January 21, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), in cooperation with the **Data Exchange Agency (DEA)**, organized a [meeting](#) on the **development plans and future perspectives of the Open Data Platform** - WWW.DATA.GOV.GE. The event gathered representatives of civil society, media, business, and academia to discuss the needs, challenges, and development plans of the open data government platform. The representatives of IDFI introduced best international practices and standards that may be applicable when updating the Government's open data portal.



IDFI - A REGIONAL HUB FOR GLOBAL DATA BAROMETER (GDB)

At the end of the 2020, IDFI [became](#) a [Regional Hub](#) for Central Asia and Eastern Europe for the [Global Data Barometer](#) (GDB), which is a global index study of data for the public good that builds on the foundation of the [Open Data Barometer](#).

In the course of the initiative, a benchmark study based on a common methodology will be produced. Over 120 countries are going to be part of the Global Data Barometer first edition for 2020-2021.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN DATA PORTALS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE PANDEMIC

Raising public awareness and increasing data accessibility remain crucial in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. IDFI [overviewed](#) the best international practices, as well as successful initiatives or applications from individual countries fostering the use of open data in the fight against pandemic, with the focus on preventing the pandemic, informing citizens, and introducing new technologies to alleviate common problems.

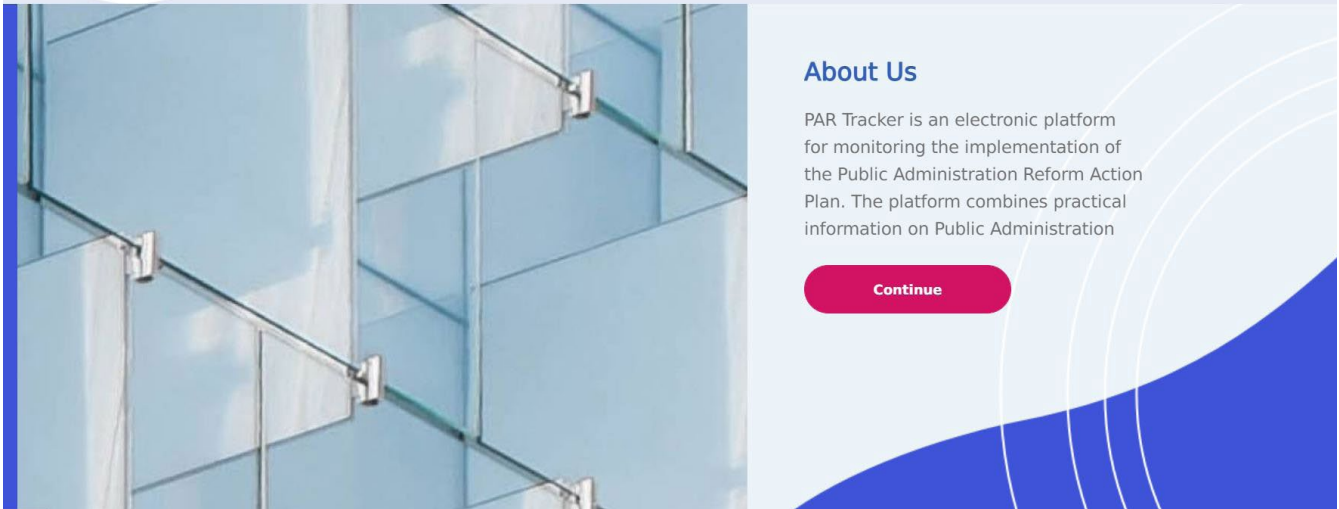
PROMOTING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

With the support of the European Union, IDFI prepared the 2019 Alternative Monitoring Reports on the Implementation of four directions of the Public Administration Reform Action Plan, the findings of which were [presented](#) to the public in July 2020. On December 23, 2020, the organization [pre-sented](#) the monitoring results for the first six months of 2020. As part of the monitoring reports, IDFI developed recommendations to address the challenges identified during the monitoring that the Public Administration Reform Action Plan fails to address.



In order to increase the involvement of the local population in Public Administration Reform, IDFI and GYLA, in cooperation with the Government Administration of Georgia, conducted online training sessions on Public Administration Reform issues for regional NGOs.

To promote stakeholder engagement in the Public Administration Reform, IDFI, with the support of the European Union and Sida, has created an interactive electronic monitoring platform for Public Administration Reform (www.partracker.ge), which ensures the involvement of external users in the monitoring process. To ensure the effectiveness of the platform, the organization has prepared an orientation [video](#) regarding the context and use of the online monitoring platform. To promote public awareness of Public Administration Reform, IDFI also published informational videos on Public Administration [Reform](#), as well as on the gaps and [challenges](#) identified during the monitoring process.



In February 2020, IDFI [submitted](#) recommendations to LEPL Public Service Development Agency regarding the draft Policy Document and Action Plan on public service development, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation.

On March 10, 2020, IDFI with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented the findings of the first systemic [survey](#) that assessed the gender influence on the working environment, career development, and professional growth of women and men in the Georgian public sector.



In July 2020, within the framework of the project “Assessing Georgia’s progress in 20 EaP Deliverables for 2020”, IDFI [summed](#) up the implementation and challenges of the Public Administration Reform.



COMMENTS OF IDFI ON 2020 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) OF SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN GEORGIA PREPARED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In June 2020, IDFI published its [comments on the VNR report](#) prepared by the Government of Georgia. The VNR report includes information on the steps taken towards the implementation of SDGs since 2016. In order to highlight relevant shortcomings and suggest necessary measures needed for effective implementation of SDGs, IDFI prepared its comments on the report and provided the SDGs Council of Georgia with the document.

ANALYZING THE REGULATORY BASE OF THE SDGS COUNCIL IN GEORGIA

The January 23, 2020 decree of the Prime Minister of Georgia approved the new Rules of Operation of the Interagency Council (the Council) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IDFI studied the decree and [prepared its opinions and recommendations](#). The decree introduced a number of new regulations pertaining to the operation and composition of the Council and reflected some of the recommendations that have been regularly highlighted by IDFI previously. Namely, some of the positive changes included establishing an independent SDGs Council and separating it from the



Civil Service Reform Council, as well as involving local authorities and the representatives of the Ombudsman in the work of the SDGs Council. However, IDFI stressed that challenges remained in such directions as working group composition procedures, transparency of the Council and working group's activities, the participation of the private/business sector in the process of SDGs nationalization and awareness-raising on SDGs.

BLACK SEA NGO FORUM: ADVANCING CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

On November 27th, 2020 IDFI participated in the Black Sea NGO Forum titled - Advancing Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region in Times of Uncertainty. During its plenary session - Advancing Sustainable Development in the Black Sea Region in 2020, IDFI informed the audience on the experience of Georgia in the direction of SDGs nationalization. IDFI also discussed the path of Georgia towards the institutionalization of SDGs, the role of CSOs in the process, and the need for future development



OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP)

In 2020, IDFI was actively represented in the Open Government Partnership at local, regional, national, and international levels.

At the national level, two of the three star commitments submitted by the civil sector to the Secretariat of the OGP Georgia Inter-Agency Coordination Council were initiated by IDFI, namely the introduction of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) standards and the establishment of the beneficial ownership registry of foreign entities. At the same time, IDFI was actively involved in coordinating the process of developing the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan 2021-2022. With the direct involvement of IDFI, the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara approved its Open Governance Action Plan for 2020-2021.

NATIONAL LEVEL



As a result of the advocacy of IDFI and other NGO members of the Open Government Georgia Forum, on February 13, 2020, the Inter-agency Coordination Council of Georgia was established by [the decree of the Government of Georgia](#).

While the involvement of relevant ministries in Open Government Georgia Forum was based on the voluntary principle and the majority of the NGOs did not have the authority to block the proposed decisions, the Coordination Council considers mandatory representation of the senior officials, which should have a positive impact on the implementation progress of OGP commitments.

The coordination council covers all three branches of the government and consists of the representatives of the ministries, Deputy Chairperson of the Supreme Court of Georgia, and the Chairperson of the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council. Additionally, the members of the non-governmental organizations are represented in the council with the voting right. Therefore, the decision-making process in the council is based on a cumulative majority of the representatives of the state agencies and the NGOs, creating a unique platform among the members of the Open Government Partnership that allows decision-making based on the involvement of government and non-governmental organizations.

IDFI, as the member of the Open Governance Inter-Agency Coordination Council, and together with the other civil society representatives, [presented the commitments](#) to the Secretariat of the Open Governance Inter-Agency Coordination Council, which were then distributed to the relevant state agencies.

The commitments presented by IDFI are based on best international practice, including on the commitments of other OGP member countries, and are aimed at strengthening citizen engagement and the rule of law, increasing access to data and freedom of information, supporting the fight against corruption, and promoting transparency in state agencies. It is noteworthy that among three starred commitments presented by the civil sector, 2 of them were elaborated by IDFI, particularly the endorsement of the principles of EITI and the establishment of beneficial ownership registry of overseas entities.

OPEN PARLIAMENT

IDFI, with the financial support of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, worked closely with the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council and its Secretariat, organizing Council meetings and coordinating the activities of the Council and its Consultative Group.

On March 2, 2020, a meeting of the Permanent Parliamentary Council of the Parliament of Georgia and the Consultative Group took place, which was also attended by representatives of civil society and international organizations. During the meeting, a discussion of the fulfillment of the obligations of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan took place.



Despite the pandemic, the Parliamentary Council continued its work and held its [first remote meeting](#) on June 30, 2020, chaired by the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Council - Kakha Kuchava. Representatives of the Consultative Group also took part in the meeting. The participants of the meeting discussed the implementation of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan 2018-2019 and,

at the same time, began preparations for the development of the 2021-2022 Action Plan. The Parliamentary Council set a specific deadline for the submission of the Action Plan commitments, and members of the Consultative Group, including IDFI, submitted draft commitments to the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Council. The commitments elaborated by IDFI are aimed at increasing the transparency of parliamentary activities, raising citizen awareness, and promoting their involvement in the legislative process.



[The Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open Governance and its Consultative Group held a workshop on July 20-22.](#) In the framework of the meeting, the members of the council and the consultative group discussed initiatives and recommendations submitted for the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan for 2020-2021. As a result of the meeting, the draft version of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan was prepared, which will be submitted for further approval to the renewed composition of the Council formed after the parliamentary elections of October 2020.

The role of IDFI in strengthening awareness on the Parliament is noteworthy. With the financial support from the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, IDFI created a video to help popularize the Parliament's mobile application. At the same time, IDFI, with the involvement of UNDP and the Parliament of Georgia, elaborated 23 brochures describing parliamentary activities (13 brochures reflecting the activities of the departments of the Parliament of Georgia and 10 brochures pertaining to the electronic and legislative mechanisms for citizen involvement in parliamentary activities). The purpose of these brochures is to raise citizens' awareness on petitions, legislative initiatives, parliamentary openness, the mobile application of the Parliament of Georgia (Geo Parliament), and the activities of parliamentary committees.

IDFI, with the involvement of the UNDP, developed a guide on citizen engagement in parliamentary activities. The guide explains in simple and understandable language the legislative process and the importance of citizen participation.

IDFI also purchased an interactive dashboard for the citizen reception of the Parliament of Georgia and developed the concept of a dashboard. Using the dashboard, citizens will be able to receive information concerning parliamentary activities and engagement mechanisms.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, four infographics have been created to raise public awareness on healthcare standards, [government-imposed restrictions, measures to suppress transmission of the coronavirus, mechanisms provided for engaging in the legislative process during a state of emergency](#), and [the role of the Georgian Parliament in declaring a state of emergency](#). It should be noted that the infographics have been translated and distributed through social networks in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages.

OPEN SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF AJARA (SCA)

In 2020, the activities of IDFI were particularly effective in promoting Open Governance Principles at the Supreme Council of Ajara (SCA). IDFI supported the institutionalization of the process of involvement of the Supreme Council of Ajara in the Open Government Partnership and the development of the Open Government Action Plan for 2020-2021.

During 2020, IDFI held several meetings with the SCA as well as with the representatives of the civil society organizations operating in Ajara. IDFI also promoted amending the SCA Rules of Procedure and subsequently participated in the elaboration of the charter of the Open Government Council of the SCA. At the same time, an active advocacy campaign was conducted with civil society organizations working in Ajara to ensure the involvement of the non-governmental and international organizations in the composition of the Consultative group.

On April 30, 2020, the Supreme Council of Ajara amended the Rules of Procedure of the SCA, thus creating a legal basis for [the establishment of the Open Governance Council of the Supreme Council of Ajara](#), which was later followed by the [formation of a Consultative Group](#) of the Open Government Council composed of non-governmental and international organizations.

IDFI, with the active involvement of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conducted several meetings dedicated to raising the awareness on Open Government Partnership with both the Open Governance Council and the Consultative Group. Part of the meetings were held remotely. Especially noteworthy is the [online meeting of July 14 held between the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open Governance and the Open Governance Council of the SCA](#). The purpose of the meeting was to share the experience regarding the involvement of legislatures in Open Government Partnership. Representatives of the Parliamentary Council shared the experience of introducing an open government partnership principle in the legislative body with their colleagues from the SCA. The exchange of experience between the representatives of the Secretariat was also important, as it is the Secretariat that actively coordinates the activities of the Council.



On August 6-7, [the Open Governance Council of the SCA and its Consultative Group organized a workshop](#) and discussed suggested initiatives for the Open Governance Council Action Plan for 2020-2021. In the framework of the workshop, recommendations and proposals for the Action Plan were presented by the members of the Open Governance Council and the Consultative Group, and the [final version of the Action Plan was approved on August 14 by the Bureau of the SCA](#).

The Action Plan consists of 15 commitments and, in line with other important obligations, aims to promote citizen involvement in the legislative process, strengthen public oversight by means of enhanced civil society participation, and to develop a system for petitions (including electronic petitions). The action plan also envisages the preparation of the concept for adapting the website and the building of the SCA to the needs of persons with disabilities.

IDFI translated the action plan to English and coordinated its printing. At the same time, IDFI elaborated and printed the [timeline](#) for the implementation of this plan.



In addition, to manage the challenges posed by the pandemic, IDFI provided [training for the staff of the SCA to strengthen their remote working and communication skills](#). It should also be noted that IDFI provided training for the SCA staff regarding open data and proactive disclosure of public information. The trainings were conducted remotely.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

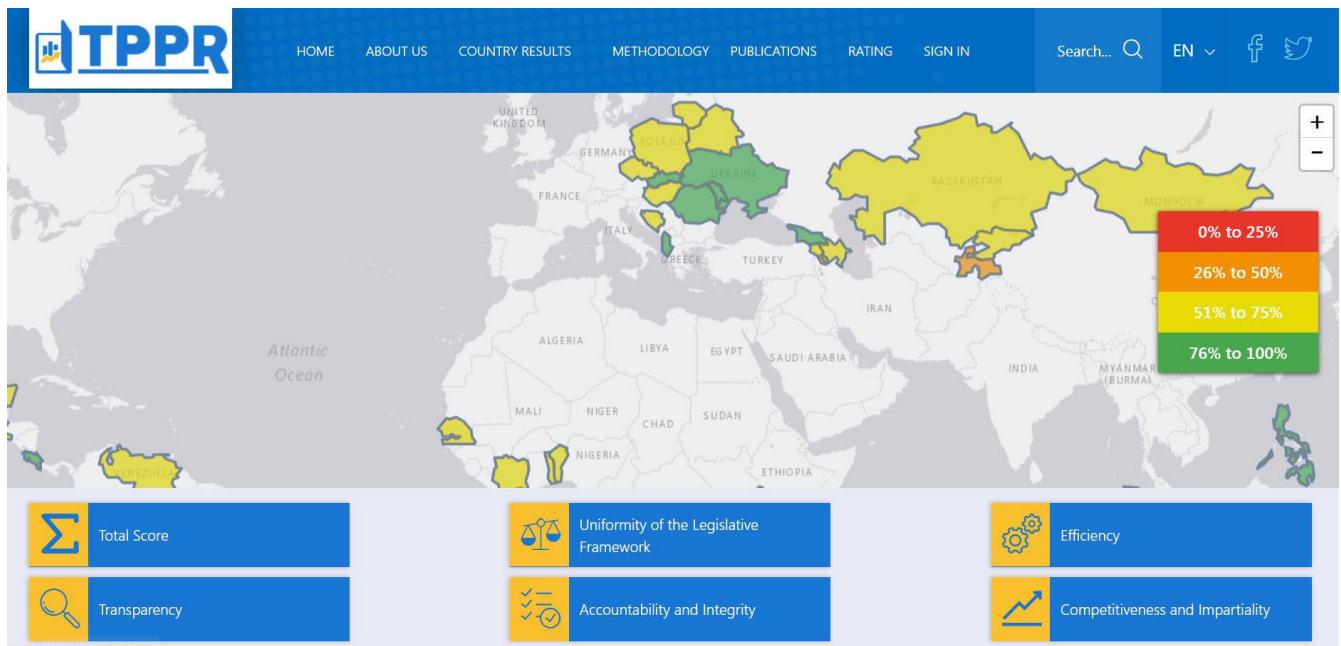
[The membership term of IDFI Executive Director Giorgi Kldiashvili in OGP Steering Committee expired in October 2020](#). As a member of the Steering Committee, Giorgi Kldiashvili actively participated in the development of OGP policies and standards in cooperation with his colleagues, advocated for various initiatives globally and regionally, and participated in summits and conferences organized by OGP. Giorgi's regional targets covered Asia and the Pacific.

IDFI has launched an [active advocacy campaign](#) that will move into an in-depth phase next year. In particular, the campaign aims to transform OGP by 2030 by further pushing it to better meet the needs of its citizens while strengthening [synergies between OGP and other international platforms](#) by bringing them closer together and addressing citizen-centered tasks, as well as strengthening the accountability of government structures.



PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

GLOBAL INITIATIVE OF IDFI - TRANSPARENT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RATING (TPPR)



[Transparent Public Procurement Rating \(TPPR\)](#) is a global initiative of IDFI that aims to support the establishment of transparent and accountable procurement systems all over the world through conducting legislative evaluation of the countries, comparing strengths and weaknesses of national systems, drawing a rating, and conducting common advocacy with the members of the TPPR network.

During 2020, IDFI continued to actively work towards expanding the scope of TPPR. As a result, representatives from the following countries were added to the [TPPR network](#): Benin, Brundu, Ecuador, Mexico, Mozambique, Senegal, Venezuela, and Côte d'Ivoire. Currently, the [rating](#) covers 40 countries from Europe, Asia and Oceania, Africa, and South America. IDFI actively cooperates with the TPPR partner organizations in order to support common advocacy and facilitate positive change in the area of public procurement.

In 2020, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) acknowledged TPPR as one of the main sources for monitoring good governance in public procurement and added IDFI with its platform of TPPR as a [partner organization of OGP in the area of public procurement](#).

TRANSPARENT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RATING REPORT 2020



By the end of 2020, IDFI prepared a comprehensive Transparent Public Procurement Rating [Report](#) covering the period of 2016-2020. The report includes public procurement legislation (PPL) evaluation of 40 countries, analyses weak and strong points of individual procurement systems, and includes country-tailored recommendations. The report also includes detailed statistical analysis based on the rating of the countries. Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia hold the leading positions in the rating. PPL of all three countries was evaluated with more than 90%. The statistical analysis also distinguishes countries performing relatively poorly. The lowest performance in the rating was attributed to Tajikistan and Papua New Guinea. Both countries received less than 40%. The analysis also revealed that countries for the most part struggled to perform well in the benchmark indicator of Transparency at the post-tendering

stage. This was mainly due to the fact that countries rarely published information on contract amendments, sub-contractors, contract performance, and audit reports.

GUIDELINES ON COVID-19 RELATED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Due to the global crises caused by Covid-19, most countries faced the challenge of conducting fast and effective procurement in order to acquire goods and services necessary for fighting the pandemic. As a rule, due to the state of emergency announced in most of the countries affected by the pandemic, national legislations foresaw the necessity of conducting public procurement within a limited period of time and allowed avoiding the competitive process of procurement (such as electronic procurement, tenders, etc.). IDFI stressed that these provisions should not have been interpreted as posing risk to transparent and accountable public procurement. On the contrary - ensuring the openness and transparency of the procurement process was particularly important in the situations when considerable financial sources (state budgets, special funds, international aid, and private donations) were spent on conducting urgent procurements aimed at fighting against the pandemic.

Taking into consideration the challenges posed by the global health crisis, IDFI developed [Guidelines on Covid-19 Related Public Procurement](#) containing practical information on the necessary steps aimed at avoiding corrupt practices in the process of conducting Covid-19-related procurements.

STUDY ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT REVIEW BODY

In May 2020, IDFI published a [study](#) examining whether Georgia succeeded in complying with the obligations arising from Article 143 of the Association Agreement. Specifically, establishing/maintaining an impartial and independent procurement review body, which is essential for the effective functioning of the public procurement system.

IDFI analyzed EU standards pertaining to procurement review bodies and studied relevant legal documents of OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), as well as the recommendations of SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) and EBRD (the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). IDFI also studied the legal frameworks of Slovenia and Croatia, since these countries had to harmonize their legislation with the same standards applicable to Georgia nowadays.

IDFI noted that it was questionable whether Georgia had succeeded in complying with the obligations arising from Article 143 of the Association Agreement and developed recommendations necessary for complying with the obligations and ensuring public trust in the independence and impartiality of the Dispute Resolution Council.

REGIONAL WORKSHOP - OPEN DATA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

During the period of November 10-19, 2020, IDFI participated in the Local Open Contracting Initiative (LOCI) Regional Workshop organized by Hivos in collaboration with the Open Contracting Partnership (OCP) and Open Government Partnership (OGP). Representatives of CSOs and governmental entities from central and eastern Europe participated in the event.

IDFI was actively involved in the event, starting from its planning stage. During the workshops, IDFI facilitated the discussions held within the sub-group of Georgia and led and organized the discussion session of Monitoring as an Incentive. During the session, IDFI presented the platform of TPPR and discussed recent trends and findings. During the discussion, attendees also became acquainted with the latest public procurement reforms in Moldova, as presented by Iurie Morcoțîlo from Expert Grup, and learned how COVID-19 can serve as a chance for transparency reforms in public procurement – presented by Isabelle Adam from Government Transparency Institute.

The workshop established a shared understanding of open contracting and identified action steps for the future development of public procurement systems in the represented countries.

INFORMATION SESSION ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT LEGISLATION OF KYRGYZSTAN

In December 2020, IDFI delivered an [information session](#) for the civic activists, advocates, and public servants of Kyrgyzstan. During the session, IDFI introduced to the audience the methodology of TPPR, the evaluation of Kyrgyzstan, the best and the worst-performing benchmark indicators and the position of Kyrgyzstan in the Transparent Public Procurement Rating. IDFI also discussed the commitments of Kyrgyzstan in the direction of Public Procurement based on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan 2018-2020 and their possible effect on the system of public procurement in the country.

ANALYTICAL MATERIALS ON THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS IN TPPR COUNTRIES

During 2020, IDFI in cooperation with its international partners prepared and published articles on the public procurement systems and challenges in Venezuela, Ukraine, and Albania.

The article by Daniel Rosas Rivero - "[Venezuelan Public Procurement: A great challenge lies ahead](#)" gives an overview of public procurement-related changes introduced in Venezuela during last 10 years and stresses that the biggest challenge in Venezuela is its perception by the society as the area particularly vulnerable to corruption.

As a result of the cooperation with the Albanian Institute of Science (AIS), IDFI published an article titled "[Albanian Government Applies Secrete Contracts Regulations to COVID-19 Related Public Procurement](#)". The article describes the practice implemented by the Albanian government in regard to COVID-19-related public procurements, noting that the process is conducted in breach of the principles of transparency and accountability and creates risks of corrupt practices.

IDFI also prepared an [article](#) on the draft amendments to the Law of Ukraine on Public Procurement, noting that the draft amendments threatened the leading position of Ukraine in TPPR, and analyzed its probable impact on the TPPR evaluation of Ukraine.





ANTI-CORRUPTION DIRECTION

IDFI continues to be actively involved in the fight against corruption. The organization implements significant measures to promote awareness-raising in the Anti-Corruption direction, which, among other activities, is reflected in the implementation of the educational certification program.

IDFI observes the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan and actively participates in the monitoring process. IDFI also observes the assessments by international organizations of the situation in Georgia regarding corruption, analyzes and periodically publishes the results.

During 2020, IDFI developed and published an [analysis](#) of Georgia's Anti-Corruption indexes according to the rankings of several international organizations: World Bank evaluation [results](#); the Council of Europe's anti-money laundering body MONEYVAL [assessment](#) of Georgia on money laundering and terrorism financing; Business Bribery Risk [index](#) 2020.

In 2019-2020, Georgia was mentioned in the rankings of several international organizations. All of them indicate that the corruption situation in the country is worsening, with high-level corruption being mentioned as one of the causes for the trend. The independence of state agencies tasked with combating corruption is another challenge. Taking into consideration the shortcomings of the existing Anti-Corruption System, during 2020, IDFI continued to [advocate](#) for the importance of creating an Independent Anti-Corruption Agency equipped with a high degree of independence, relevant authority, and public trust to investigate high-profile corruption cases and answer all lingering questions.

Considering the situation created by the novel coronavirus, IDFI has been actively discussing from the beginning the dangers of rising [corruption risks](#) within the context of the pandemic.

ANALYTICAL AND GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF IDFI

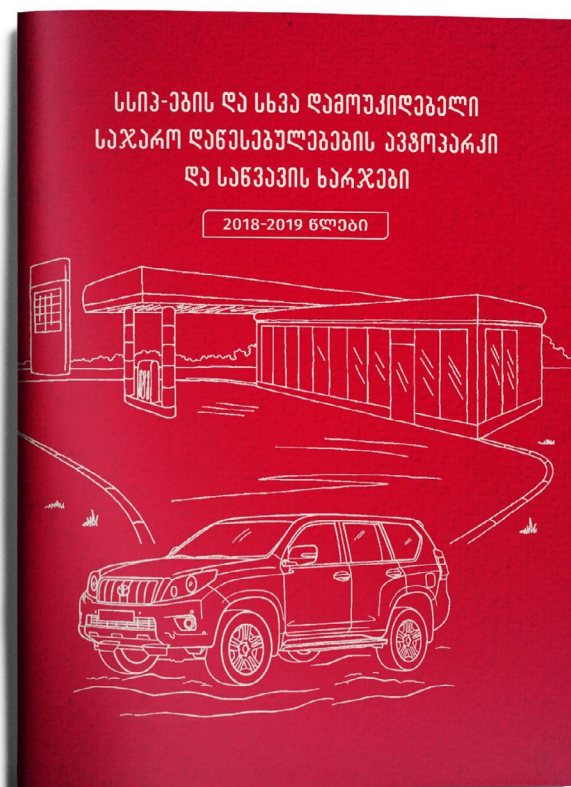
As in previous years, IDFI continued government oversight activities in 2020, within the framework of which the Institute published a number of important studies and analyses:

- ▶▶ Public procurement during COVID-19: the government agencies no longer utilized electronic tenders during the state of emergency declared due to the prevention of Coronavirus. The analy-

sis of Covid-19-related public procurement, covering the period between March 21 and November 15¹, revealed that in most cases the supplier companies had donated to or were affiliated with the ruling party, or had been established a few days before the signature of the contract, and in some cases they had been operating in a radically different field before the state of emergency.

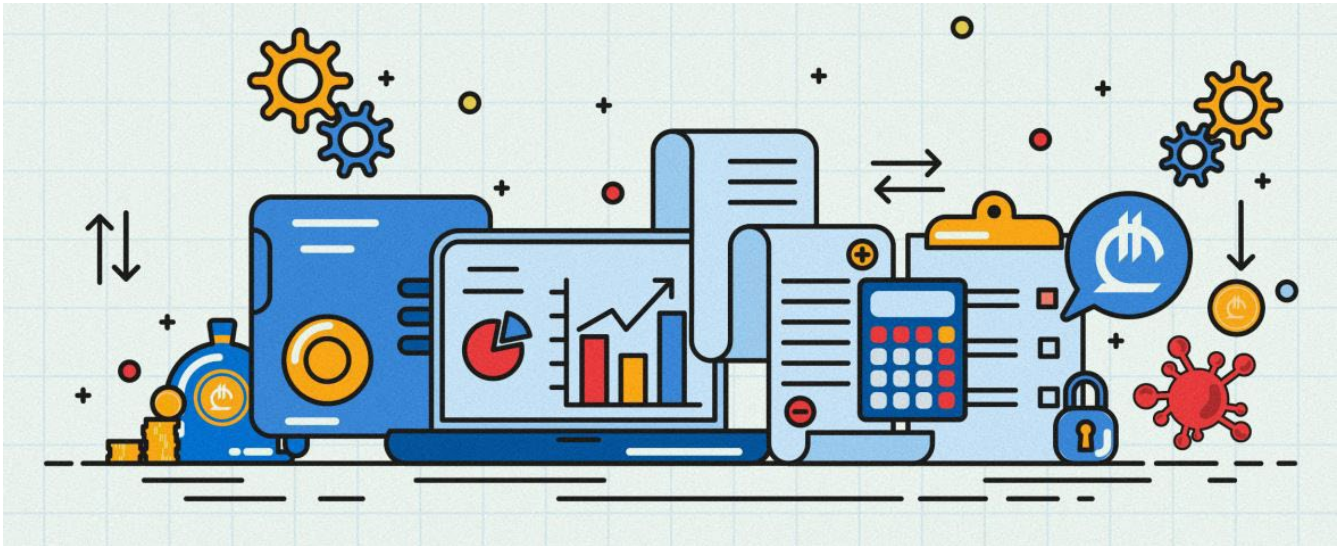
▶▶ [Political Donations: Free will or Business Investment?](#) – Analysis of donations of political parties was of great importance due to the October 2020 Parliamentary election. Some political donations throughout 2019 and before June 3, 2020, raised suspicions in regard to the integrity of the donors, as well as the legality of their contributions in favor of the ruling party. As the analysis showed, the co-owners and directors of one company often donated money within the same timeframes. The analysis also revealed cases where companies or their founders have won lucrative government tenders after having donated to the ruling party.

▶▶ [Vehicles and Fuel Expenses of LEPLs and other Independent Authorities](#) - the analysis clearly demonstrated the challenges associated with rational administration of the vehicles. Based on IDFI's [recommendation](#), there is a necessity of establishing a centralized service for state-owned vehicles that will supervise the management of all vehicles owned by public institutions.



▶▶ [Remuneration of Persons Employed in Public Institutions on the Basis of Administrative and Labor Contracts](#) – According to key findings, despite the reforms carried out in the public sector in recent years, the existing practice of contract employment at public institutions remains a significant bureaucratic challenge. In particular, the ambiguity of the functions and duties of contract employees selected through a simplified screening process and the practice of providing significantly different pay for similar positions increases the risks of nepotism and mismanagement of public funds. These risks are also significantly increased by the non-transparent recruitment process.

¹ [Covid-19 Related Simplified Tenders](#)
[Covid-19 Related Simplified Tenders – Part 2](#)
[The COVID-19 related State Procurements](#)



▶▶ [Fuel Expenses of Members of Parliament: 2018-2020](#) – the analysis showed that despite the restrictions imposed during the state of emergency, vehicles assigned to various MPs consumed more fuel during the state of emergency than in the same months of the previous year. Additionally, the fuel consumption levels of parliamentarians often remain unchanged, even throughout the months when they are on business trips abroad for a week or longer.



▶▶ [Georgian Lobbying in the United States 2015-2020](#) – which included an analysis of the contracts as well as information regarding actual transfers from Georgia. The study revealed that in 2015-2020, more than \$5 million was spent from the state funds on lobbying in the US, while political parties spent more than half a million USD during the same period. The terms of the contracts signed on behalf of the companies operating in the United States, along with the amounts received, are publicly available on the electronic database of the US Department of Justice. Unfortunately, this type of information is not accessible in Georgia.

EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

In 2020, IDFI continued implementation of the Educational Certification Program in Fighting Corruption. In response to the challenges posed by the Pandemic, the [Program was implemented online using electronic platforms](#). In total, during the first part of the Program, eight modules were offered to the course participants: [major ideas, concepts, theories & social science perspectives on corruption](#); [Good Governance](#); [compliance in government, business and civil society](#); [private corruption](#); [legal side of corruption](#); [e-governance in fighting corruption](#); [corruption and politics](#); [best international practice in fighting corruption](#); [modern whistleblowing and investigative journalism](#).



It should be highlighted that during the whole year IDFI frequently organized additional lectures for course participants by inviting guest lecturers. Particularly noteworthy was the lecture on the [Fight Against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism](#), which was read by Mamuka Jgenti, who is the former representative of Georgia in the Council of Europe and is the Key Expert on Judiciary/CSOs and on Anti-money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism.

Out of the almost 500 applications, 32 participants were selected, 19 of whom finished the Program.

In the fall semester of 2020, the renewed [Memorandum of Cooperation](#) was signed between IDFI and Ilia State University. Under the new memorandum, the Modules of the Certification Program in Fighting Corruption have been transformed into academic courses of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the Ilia State University. These Modules will be open to the students of the above-mentioned faculty, as well as to the Program participants selected through a competition. Students at Ilia State University will have the opportunity to receive ECTS and certificates in case of high academic achievement, while students of other universities selected as a result of the competition, representatives of the state, non-governmental and private sectors, will receive certificates upon successful completion of the program.

A total of 4 academic courses will be developed within the framework of the memorandum. In particular, the Bachelor's Degree program will offer "Good Governance and Corruption" and "Pol-

itics and Corruption”, while in the Master's degree program the courses in “Anti-Corruption Policy Management in Public and Private Institutions”, and “Fight against Corruption - International Actors, Anti-Corruption Platforms” will be offered. In contrast to the first year of the Certification Program in Fighting Corruption, up to 100 participants in total will have access to the academic courses.

In the renewed format of the Program, almost 300 applications were submitted. Finally, based on the selection of documents and interviews, 20 participants were selected for the Bachelor’s Degree courses and 24 participants were selected for the Master’s Degree courses. The participants of the Program are representatives of the state, non-governmental and private organizations, and students of various universities.

ONLINE FELLOWSHIP AT IDFI



In order to encourage government oversight, as well as to enhance monitoring skills, IDFI laid the foundation for the [Fellowship Program](#) in 2020. For three months, selected candidates are able to work together with the Institute's researchers on analytical articles regarding topics such as: public finance management, implementation and expenditures of state programs / projects, public procurement, etc. Fellows selected through the program are also able to process and analyze data obtained from public institutions and thereby become engaged in various projects of the organization. In 2020, three candidates were selected for the program.



RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2020, IDFI put a significant effort in supporting judicial reform and improving human rights standards in the country. To this purpose, IDFI prepared studies, reports, and policy documents on a variety of key issues; conducted strategic litigation, awareness-raising activities, as well as evidence-based advocacy at both international and national levels; collaborated with relevant public agencies and participated in various discussions and workshops. IDFI will continue to actively work to strengthen the rule of law and human rights in the country.

SUPPORTING THE REFORM OF THE SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

On January 23, 2020, IDFI [presented the study](#) - **“The Supreme Court of Georgia – Analysis of Institutional and Legal Framework”**.

The study addressed the following key issues:

- The Role and the Place of the Supreme Court in the Judicial System;
- Selection and Appointment of the Supreme Court Justices;
- Chambers of the Supreme Court;
- Chairperson of the Supreme Court and Chairpersons of Chambers;
- Liability of the Chairperson and Judges of the Supreme Court;
- Plenum of the Supreme Court;
- Electronic System of Case Distribution in the Supreme Court.



In addition, the study provided an assessment of the appointment of the Supreme Court justices in 2019 and discussed problematic issues identified in this process. The study included specific recommendations based on international standards to support further reforms of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

The presentation was attended by the Supreme Court judges and the judges of the Constitutional Court of Georgia, as well as lawyers, representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, the diplomatic corps, the Parliament, and academia. At the presentation of the study, the Acting Chairperson of the Supreme Court agreed with most of the recommendations and expressed her readiness for further cooperation

In February 2020, IDFI [filed](#) an Amicus Curiae Brief regarding the Constitutional [Appeal](#) of the Public Defender. IDFI fully shared the ombudsman's reasoning, arguing that the impugned provisions of the Organic Law on Common Courts, which regulated the selection of Supreme Court judges, contradicted the requirements of the Constitution.

Although the Constitutional Court did not grant the appeal, the dissenting [opinion](#) of the four judges was in full agreement with the views of IDFI.

In September 2020, the Parliament of Georgia took into account the recommendation to amend the rules for the selection of the judges of the Supreme Court: The High Council of Justice's obligation to substantiate its decision and the possibility of judicial appeal was established at the legislative level.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

On June 2, 2020 IDFI submitted a [report](#) to the UN Human Rights Council for the 3rd Cycle of **Universal Periodic Review** on the following issues:

- Administration of Justice and Fair Trial;
- Freedom of Expression/Access to Information;
- Right to Privacy.

On December 8, 2020, Ketevan Kukava, IDFI's Head of Rule of Law and Human Rights Direction, [delivered](#) a statement at the Pre-Session hearing of the Universal Periodic Review and briefed the Permanent Representatives of other countries to the UN on the state of justice/fair trial and freedom of expression/access to information in the country. Ketevan Kukava also suggested specific recommendations that are necessary to be taken into account to eradicate existing shortcomings.

Universal Periodic Review established by the UN Human Rights Council is an important mechanism aimed at improving the human rights situation in all member states. Many of the issues raised in IDFI's Alternative [Report](#) are reflected in the report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that summarizes the information provided by stakeholders.

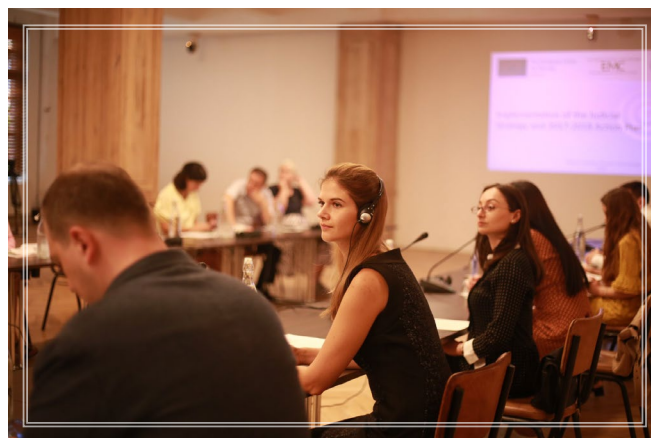
MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JUDICIAL STRATEGY AND THE ACTION PLAN

In 2020, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) in collaboration with the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) published the second shadow [report](#) – **“Implementation of the Judicial Strategy and the Action Plan”**. The report evaluates the activities under the umbrella of the following key five directions:

1. Activities and Institutional Organization of the High School of Justice;
2. Judicial Selection-Appointment and Promotion System;
3. Judicial Liability System;
4. Institutional Arrangement of the High Council of Justice and the Regulation of its Activities;
5. Transparency of the Judicial System.



The monitoring revealed that, from 2017 to February 2020, in both reporting periods, out of 92 activities reviewed in total, 35 were fulfilled, 31 were partially fulfilled, and 26 were unfulfilled.



The report was presented on 22 July 2020 at the concluding [event](#) of the EU-supported [project](#) “Facilitating Implementation of Reforms in Judiciary (FAIR)”.

ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In March 2020, the Government of Georgia initiated the process of developing a new Strategy for the Protection of Human rights. Within the scope of this initiative, IDFI submitted to the government [opinions](#) and recommendations regarding the main directions and objectives that should be part of the strategy.

IDFI’s opinions and recommendations addressed the following key issues:

- Right to a fair trial;
- Freedom of expression/access to information;
- Right to privacy;
- Independence of the prosecution service;
- Right to equality;
- Combating violence against women and domestic violence.

IDFI's many recommendations were reflected in the goals and objectives in the draft Strategy that will be adopted in the near future.

SUPPORTING THE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIVE MECHANISM

Since July 2020, IDFI, in collaboration with the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), has been [supporting](#) the State Inspector's Service to improve its investigative work.

To this end, the organizations started working on a study that aims to identify the gaps and challenges related to the investigative work of the State Inspector Service as well as to deliver relevant recommendations. The study will be available to the public in 2021.

IDFI and EMC also facilitate the availability of foreign critical articles on law enforcement accountability in the Georgian language. In November 2020, a [Georgian version](#) of Stephen P. Savage's article - "Thinking Independence - Calling the Police to Account through the Independent Investigation of Police Complaints" was published.

ADVOCATING FOR JUDICIAL TRANSPARENCY

In 2020, IDFI continued to [advocate](#) for access to court decisions. For this purpose, IDFI submitted its [opinions](#) to the Parliament about the legislative amendments that should be implemented.

IDFI also participated in a workshop organized within the framework of the EU4Justice Project on Legislative Regulation of the Publication of Judicial Acts and Personal Data Protection.

In 2020, IDFI assessed the level of judicial transparency in the following three areas: **Access to Court Decisions, Proactively Published Public Information, Court Statistics**, and prepared a study that analyzes existing gaps and challenges. The study will be available to the public in 2021.

STRATEGIC LITIGATION

On June 15, 2020 the Independent Inspector partially [granted](#) the administrative complaint of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information and provided the requested documents related to the disciplinary proceedings in a generally formulated manner.

In recent years, IDFI has paid significant attention to the importance of publishing the conclusions of an Independent Inspector. The accessibility of conclusions is crucial in order to assess the degree of the inspector's independence, the impartiality of the disciplinary proceedings, and the consistency of the practice.

Taking into consideration the fact that it was impossible to obtain conclusions from the Independent Inspector's office on the ground of confidentiality, partial satisfaction of the complaint and releasing the documents in a generally formulated manner, without identifiable data, was an important step forward.

The importance of issuing conclusions in a generalized form as public information was also reflected in the Independent Inspector's 2020-2021 strategy.

On January 16, 2020, the [Tbilisi Court of Appeals rendered a decision against](#) LEPL National Archive of Georgia and ordered the respondent to disclose information about the number of applicants who were refused access to archival documents and the relevant legal basis for the refusals. It is noteworthy that the Court of Appeals announced the final decision right after the main hearing, which was due to the weakness of the respondent's arguments. The court fully shared in IDFI's legal reasoning and found that the requested information undoubtedly constitutes open, public information.

STUDY ON SECRET SURVEILLANCE IN GEORGIA

In September 2020, IDFI published the [study](#) related to secret surveillance in Georgia, which reviews the legal framework of covert investigative and intelligence activities, discusses existing gaps, international standards, and assessments, and presents the trends identified based on the statistical analysis.

The study revealed the serious risks and challenges in Georgia in terms of privacy.

PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COALITION FOR AN INDEPENDENT AND TRANSPARENT JUDICIARY

In 2020, IDFI continued its active participation in the activities of the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary. IDFI's Head of Rule of Law and Human Rights Direction – Ketevan Kukava participated in the public discussions "Concept - Fair Trial" organized by the Coalition:

- **Reform of the Supreme Court** - IDFI focused on the selection of the Supreme Court justices as well as the powers of the Chairperson of the Supreme Court and the Plenum.
- **Judiciary and Publicity** - IDFI spoke about the challenges related to access to court decisions.

- **The Constitutional Court of Georgia** – Existing Challenges - IDFI discussed the decision of the Constitutional Court regarding the selection of the Supreme Court justices and the dissenting opinion of four judges.

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

In 2020, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and with the participation of the competent agencies of the executive branch, as well as the judiciary and the legislative authorities, a state report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was prepared. The purpose of the report was to provide information to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination about the measures taken by Georgia to comply with its obligations under the Convention. IDFI submitted written [opinions](#) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on two issues covered by the draft report:

- Anti-discrimination legislation and the fight against hate speech;
- Judicial reform.

MONITORING THE SYSTEM OF THE DISCIPLINARY LIABILITY OF JUDGES

In June 2020, IDFI in collaboration with the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) published an [analysis](#) about significant gaps and challenges in legislation and practice in terms of judicial disciplinary liability.

The analysis also included specific recommendations for further improvement of disciplinary proceedings.



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In 2020, to raise awareness about freedom of expression, IDFI continued to analyze the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. IDFI published an overview of two important ECHR court decisions:

- [Brzeziński v. Poland](#) - The case concerned Polish election law that allows the court to verify the accuracy of information within 24 hours and restrict its dissemination. The Court unanimously found that the measures taken against the applicant under this law violated freedom of expression enshrined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- [Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt v. Hungary](#) – This decision of the European Court of Human Rights is particularly important because it addresses the interrelationship between **freedom of expression and technology**. The Grand Chamber reiterated the importance of freedom of expression for the development of a democratic state.

ACCESS TO COURTS - SURVEY

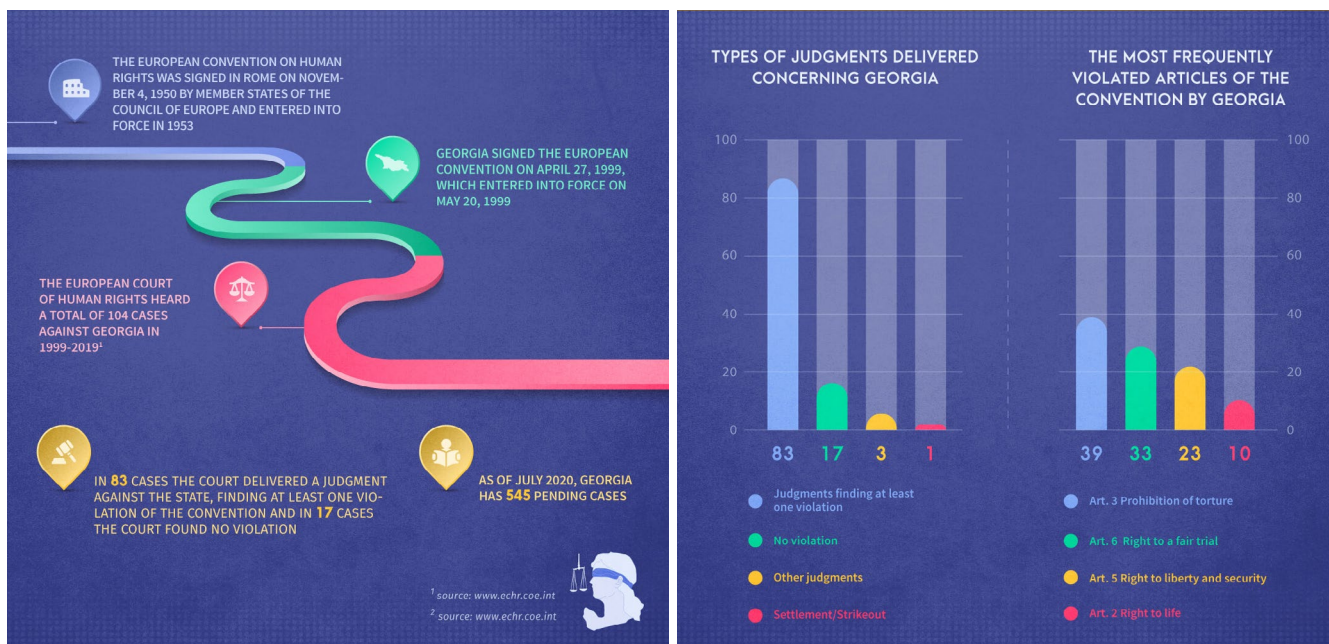
In May 2020, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), and Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) published the [report](#): “Access to courts, public opinion survey results”.

The report summarizes the findings of a survey of Georgian-speaking adults living in Georgia regarding attitudes towards access to courts. The survey briefly reviews the following issues: attitudes of the population of Georgia towards courts, timeframes and fees of court trials, their awareness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and legal aid service centers, and experience of addressing courts.

CASE STATISTICS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNING GEORGIA

On November 4, 2020, on the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights, IDFI published a [visualization](#) of the European Court of Human Rights case statistics against Georgia.

The analysis of statistical data revealed the most frequently violated articles of the European Convention in Georgia.



PUBLIC SURVEY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SUPREME COURT JUDGES

To understand people's knowledge of and attitudes towards the Supreme Court appointment process, Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) conducted a phone survey during the period of January 30 - February 10 at the request of IDFI and Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC).

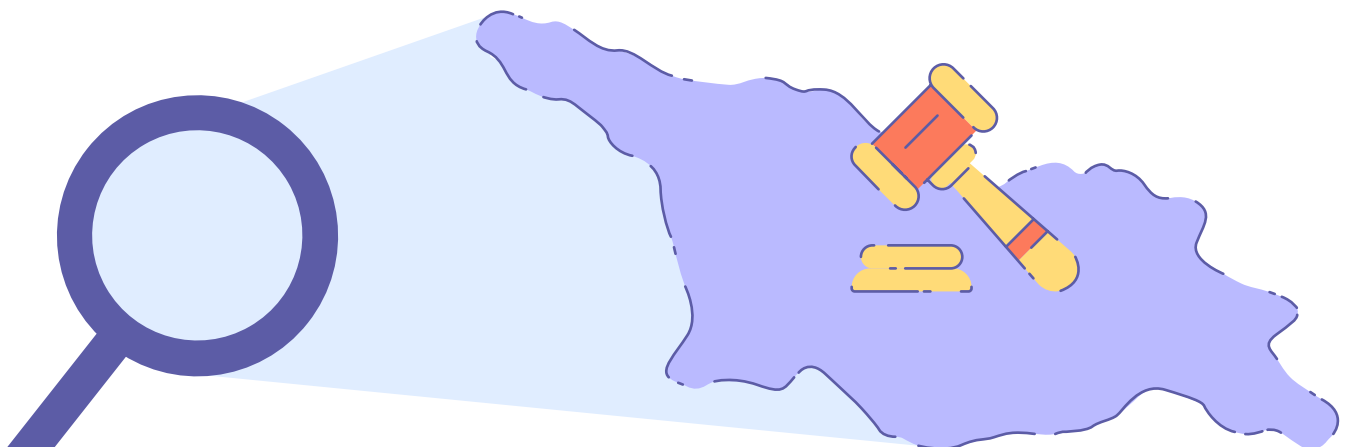
According to the survey [results](#), people in Georgia are divided between trusting and distrusting judicial institutions. While more than half of the public has heard about the Supreme Court appointment process, they have little trust in it, and have for the most part not heard of the new judges.

ASSESSMENT OF GEORGIA'S POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

IDFI annually analyzes Georgia's ranking in the “Rule of Law Index” of the World Justice Project. [According](#) to the global Rule of Law Index of 2020, the overall score of the state of the rule of law in Georgia is 0.60 (maximum score 1). With this score Georgia is on the 42nd place among 128 countries assessed. The rating of Georgia has decreased by one position and 0.01 point compared to the previous year.

The logo for the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) is displayed on a dark teal background. It features the letters 'BTI' in a large, white, sans-serif font. To the right of 'BTI' is a vertical bar with a color gradient from yellow at the top to blue at the bottom. To the right of the bar, the words 'TRANSFORMATION INDEX' are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, stacked on two lines.

In 2020, IDFI also [analyzed](#) the degree of democracy in Georgia according to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). The review showed that in 2020 the democracy status of Georgia decreased in several directions compared to 2018. As for the Rule of Law, the report particularly stresses the serious challenges related to judicial independence, the questions concerning the investigation of high-level corruption, and the need to depoliticize the Prosecutor’s Office. The report also talks about the polarized political environment and weak democratic traditions due to a lack of relevant political culture in Georgia.



PROMOTING RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION DURING THE PANDEMIC

In May 2020, IDFI published a [document](#) and a [visualization](#) providing an overview of the international standards related to the rule of law and human rights protection in time of emergency, as well as analysis of key challenges regarding the following fundamental rights: the right to a fair trial, freedom of expression/access to information, and the right to privacy.



Additionally, in order to adhere to the principles of legality and proportionality, IDFI [called](#) on the government of Georgia to provide a clear explanation regarding the legal basis for possible restrictions after the end of the state of emergency. Giving excessive power to the executive branch remains a [challenge](#) to this day.

Beginning in August 2020, IDFI, with the support of the European Union, [launched a project](#) related to the issues of fundamental human rights and the rule of law during the pandemic. Within the framework of this project, IDFI prepared two in-depth studies and analytical evaluations.

The first in-depth study focused on the [constitutionality of the liability measures used for breaches of the restrictions](#) established during the pandemic. The study revealed that the Parliament of Georgia indirectly delegated to the executive branch the power to determine the actions subject to administrative and criminal prosecution, which created significant risks of violating the requirements of the Constitution of Georgia. In terms of legal liability, not only the problem of constitutionality but also the problem of legality was revealed. Namely, the executive branch has artificially expanded the content of the administrative offenses clearly defined by the Parliament of Georgia. Specifically, the Parliament of Georgia had recognized the violation of the rule of wearing a mask in closed spaces as an administrative offense, but the executive branch expanded the content of this article and included as a violation of the rule not wearing a mask in an open space as well. **[According to IDFI, such an action of the government contained signs of violation of the Constitution and the Organic Law of Georgia “On Normative Acts”.](#)**

Only the Constitutional Court of Georgia has the formal authority to address the questions of the violations of the Constitution by the normative acts adopted in order to combat the pandemic. [Therefore, IDFI paid special attention to the activities of the abovementioned institution.](#) The study revealed that up to 15 constitutional claims were filed in court over the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, although they had not been considered by the Constitutional Court. At the same time, the changes in the relevant constitutional levers, the dynamics of their consideration, and

the personnel changes made in the Constitutional Court left the impression that the consideration of cases was being delayed artificially. IDFI called on the Court to consider the relevant constitutional complaints in a timely manner. **Shortly after the publication of the study, the Constitutional Court of Georgia [developed the rules for holding a remote hearing](#) and held the first substantive hearing on the restrictions instituted during the pandemic.** However, the Constitutional Court has not yet made a decision on any of the constitutional complaints related to the pandemic.



PROMOTING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PROSECUTION SERVICE

With the support of the European Union IDFI prepared and, at the closing event on May 13, 2020, presented a [policy paper](#) on the challenges facing the Prosecution Service in criminal proceedings of crimes committed with discriminatory motive. The document identified the challenges faced by prosecutors in terms of prosecution of cases of hate crime, domestic offences, domestic violence, and violence against women and offered recommendations in response to the challenges.

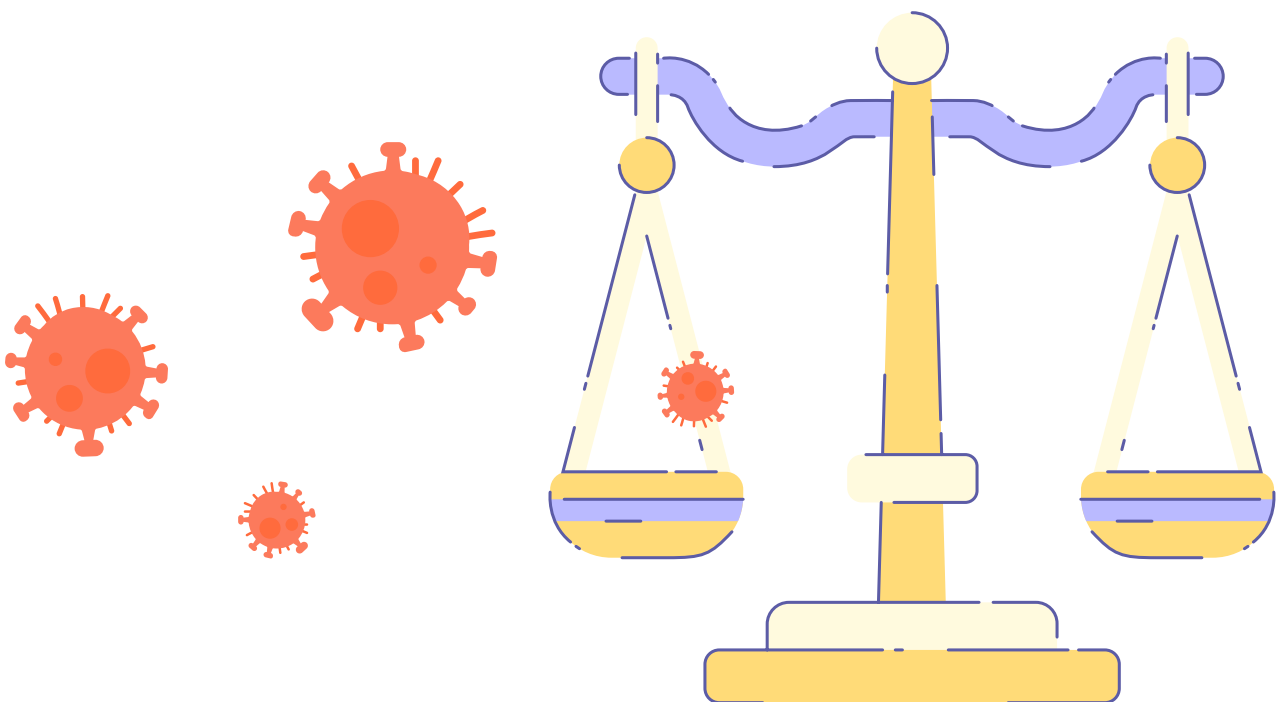
During 2020, IDFI published an [article](#) analyzing the General Prosecutor's Selection Process. Within the analysis, IDFI evaluated the legislative regulation and practice of the selection process for the Prosecutor General.

In order to gauge the public attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office, during 2020 IDFI published results of the surveys that assessed the activities of the Prosecutor's Office on high-profile cases and determined the public attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office:

- Survey [Result](#) 1: Perceptions of the Prosecutor's Office
- Survey [Result](#) 2: The Survey of the population of Georgia on the knowledge and attitudes towards Prosecutor's Office

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Considering the situation created by the novel coronavirus, IDFI prepared a [visualization](#) on how the Prosecution Service worked during the state of emergency. Additionally, the organization published an [article](#) regarding the impact of new coronavirus pandemic on domestic violence and violence against women. Within the article, the role of relevant agencies, including the Prosecution Service, in combating domestic violence during COVID-19 pandemic were reviewed and recommendations were elaborated to address existing challenges.





LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION

In 2020, IDFI further expanded the scope of its activities related to local government. The Institute has been actively engaged in six municipalities to promote good governance principles and open data standards at the local level.

ONLINE CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



On December 18, IDFI [held an online conference](#) – **Strengthening Good Governance Principles at the Local Level** with the support of the global philanthropic organization, Luminate. The conference was aimed at exploring challenges, planned reforms, needed interventions, and innovative approaches at the local level in terms of transparency, quality of governance, delivery of municipal services, and citizen participation. To this end, the event brought together organizations, experts, donor community working on local self-government, as well as representatives of both local and central governments, to foster discussion on the following issues:

- ▶▶ Local self-government reform: challenges, ongoing reforms, and the role of civil society engagement
- ▶▶ Development of transparency and accountability principles at the local level
- ▶▶ Promoting citizen participation in local decision-making process
- ▶▶ Increase access to and quality of municipal services

Conference speakers included local and international experts working on this issue, along with the representatives of public institutions.

For more information regarding conference panels and speakers, see the [Forum Agenda](#).

ONLINE CONFERENCE BY NUMBERS



+120

PARTICIPANTS



23

SPEAKERS



4

SESSIONS

Full recordings of the online conference sessions are available on IDFI's YouTube channel:

- ▶▶ [Opening Remarks](#)
- ▶▶ Session I: [Local Self-Government Reform: Challenges, Ongoing reforms and the Role of Civil Society Engagement](#)
- ▶▶ Session II: [Development of Transparency and Accountability Principles at the Local Level](#)
- ▶▶ Session III: [Promoting Citizen Participation in Local Decision-making Process](#)
- ▶▶ Session IV: [Increase Access to and Quality of Municipal Services](#)

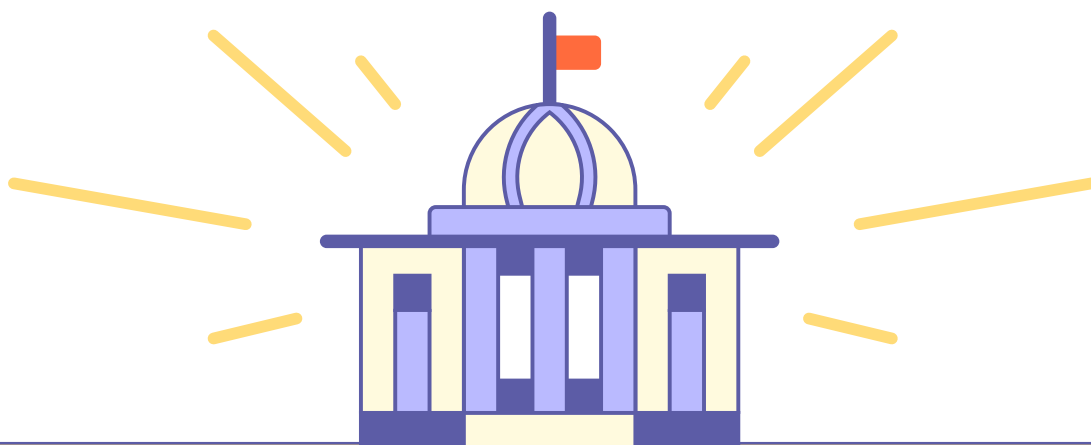
IMPLEMENTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY PRINCIPLES IN GEORGIA'S MUNICIPALITIES

IDFI, within the scope of USAID/GGI funded project, supported the City Halls of [Telavi](#), [Lagodekhi](#), [Zugdidi](#), and [Senaki](#) Municipalities in developing Building Integrity and Transparency Strategy and Action Plans. The purpose of the strategic documents is to strengthen the resilience of City Halls against the threat of corruption at the local level, improve capacity building of the municipalities, implement mechanisms for transparency and citizen engagement at the local level, as well as to improve public ethics and integrity standards.

In order to develop evidence-based strategic documents, IDFI conducted an in-depth situation analysis in terms of transparency, accountability and integrity of the selected municipalities. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were held with City Hall representatives as well as other local stakeholders (civil society representatives, media, academia) during the preparation process of the situational analysis.

Based on the recommendations elaborated for the elimination of the gaps and challenges identified by the situation analysis, priority directions, goals and objectives of the strategy were determined. On the basis of the transparency and integrity strategy, an action plan for the implementation of the strategy was developed in each municipality. Public engagement was a priority during the process of drafting the strategic documents.

The full implementation of the adopted strategic documents will enable the representatives of the City Halls of all four municipalities to better respond to local challenges and the needs of citizens, improve the governance system, increase public trust, reduce corruption risks, and improve the quality of municipal services.



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LOCAL CIVIL SERVANTS ON THE ISSUES OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

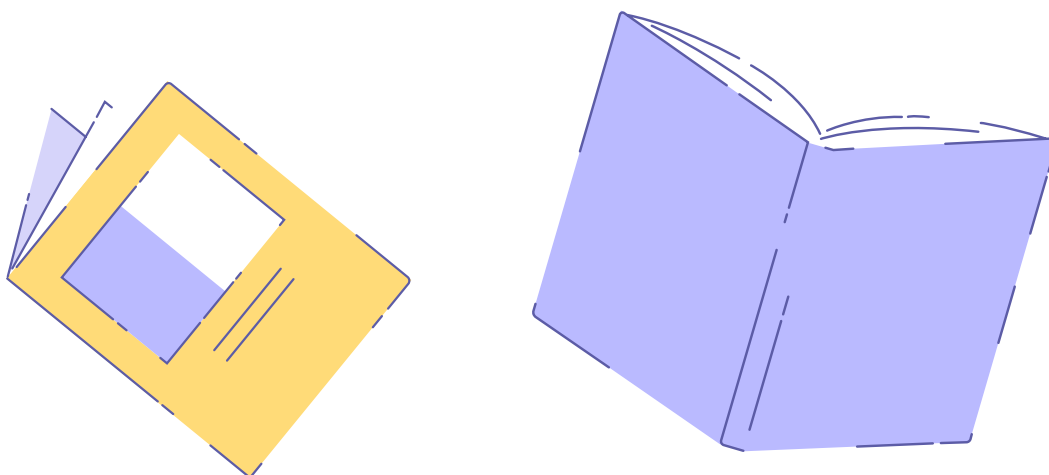
In November-December of 2020, IDFI conducted online trainings on transparency, accountability and integrity for the employees of the City Halls of [Telavi](#), [Lagodekhi](#), [Senaki](#), and [Zugdidi](#) municipalities and Legal Entities under the City Halls. The aim of the trainings was to raise awareness, as well as build capacity of the employees regarding anti-corruption mechanisms. The trainings were conducted based on the Transparency and Integrity Guidebook developed specifically for civil servants.

IMPROVING OPEN DATA MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION PRACTICES IN MUNICIPALITIES

In 2020, IDFI, with the financial support from the USAID Georgia Democratic Governance Initiative (GGI) and Tetra Tech ARD, supported the City Halls of Gori, Zugdidi, Telavi, Lagodekhi, Ozurgeti, and Senaki in improving data management practices by preparing needs assessment and capacity building for civil servants. Within the framework of the initiative, data accessibility, open data collection, processing and publication practices, as well as legal framework were studied in the mentioned municipalities, as a result of which the needs of the City Halls were identified and practical recommendations were prepared.

In addition, an [Open Data Guidebook](#) was prepared for civil servants. It outlines the importance of open data and key standards and discusses the guidelines that public servants should follow in the process of collecting, processing, and publishing open data.

[Online trainings](#) on open data management and publication issues were carried out based on the developed guidebook for the employees of City Halls and Municipal Councils of all six municipalities.



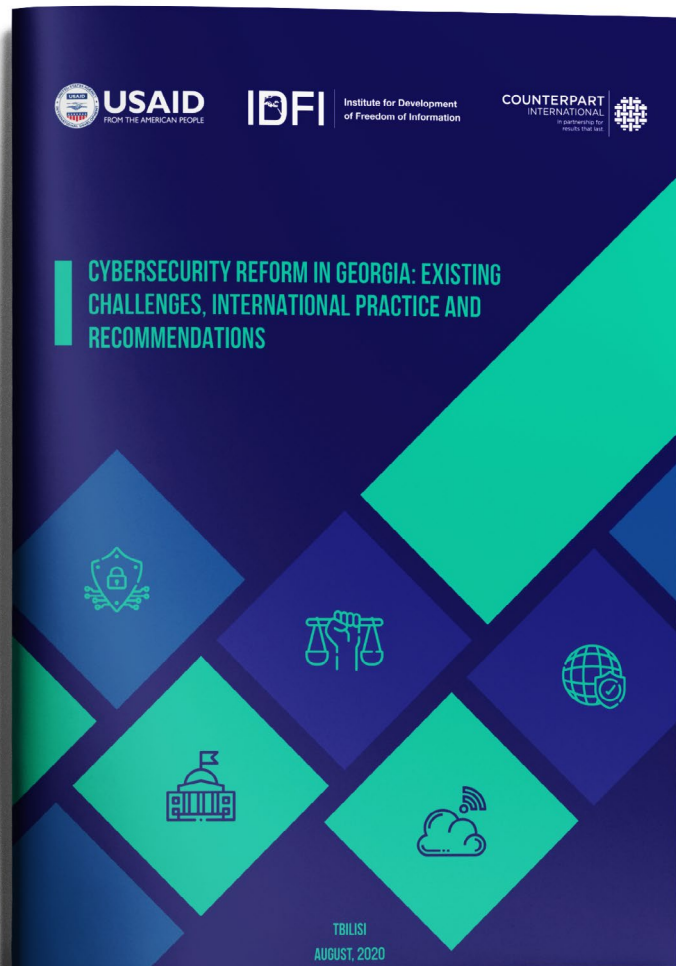


MEDIA, INTERNET AND INNOVATIONS

In 2020, IDFI monitored the media environment, Internet access, and the use of innovation in the public sector in order to strengthen democratic processes in response to new circumstances created by the Covid Pandemic. The Institute especially focused on the government's (legislative) initiatives, which in the future could potentially have a negative impact on freedom of expression and cyber security.

Therefore, IDFI studied international practices and provided its own recommendations to the Government. This year was also significant for the organization, as this was the year it initiated research and awareness-raising activities on the subject of artificial intelligence.

SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY AGAINST CONTROVERSIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON INFORMATION SECURITY



As a result of IDFI's successful advocacy efforts, the Parliament of the IX Convocation did not adopt the problematic draft Law on Information Security. The amendments initiated in October 2019 became the subject of criticism of the representatives of civil society, the private sector, as well as the experts in the field. Due to disagreements with stakeholders on principal issues, the adoption of legislative amendments was first delayed in June 2020. The draft law was returned to the mode of the second hearing from the stage of the final hearing.

IDFI was actively involved in the process of reviewing the bill and examining the risks associated with the amendments. With the support of Counterpart International and the United States Agency for International Devel-

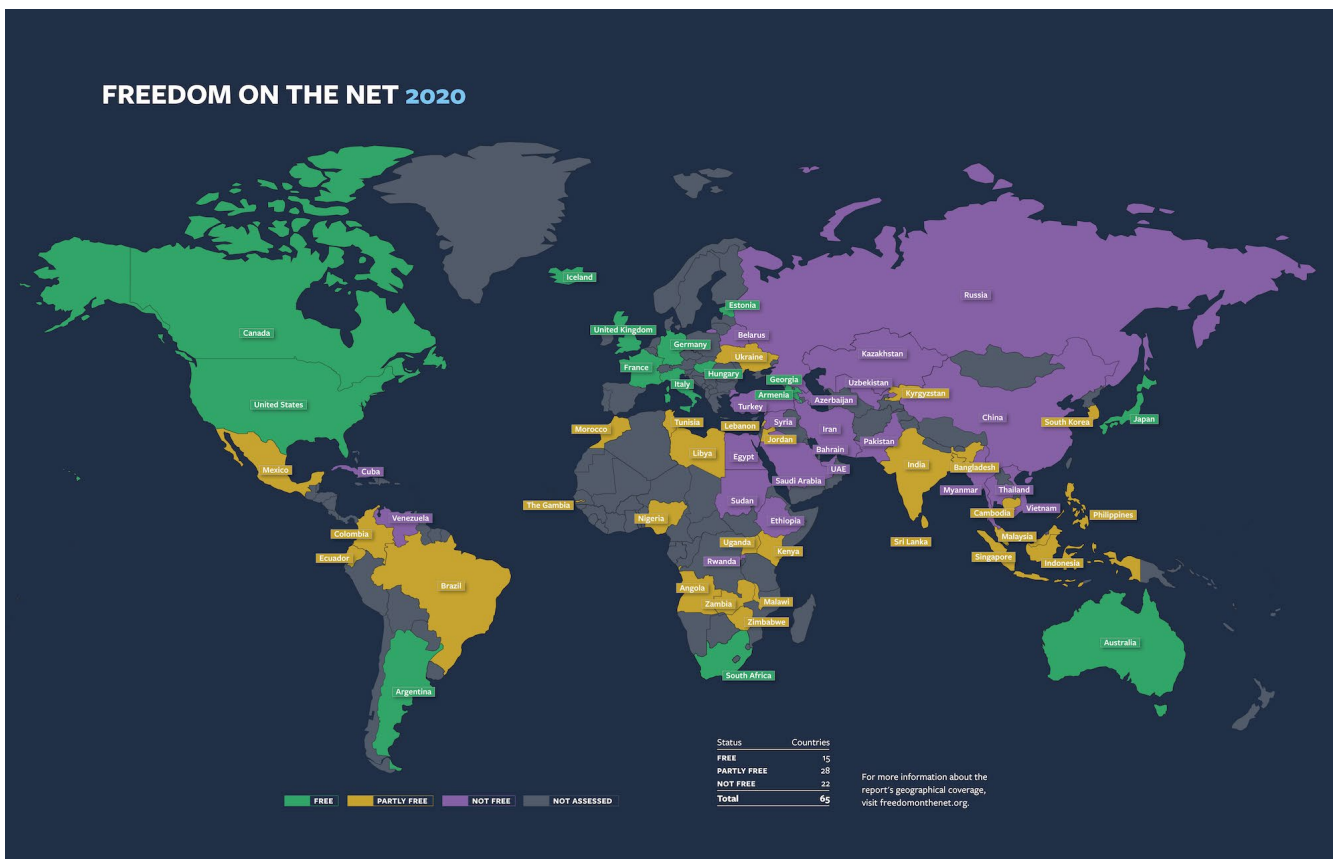
opment (USAID), the Institute studied the amendments to the bill, the challenges facing the country, and international best practices comprehensively. When preparing the study, workshops were held to take into account the views of cyber security experts, public institutions, academia, the private sector and civil society representatives.

Finally, [a comprehensive study and relevant recommendations were prepared](#). IDFI presented the study and recommendations during the [online conference](#) on September 22nd. Irakli Sesiashvili, the author of the bill in question and the chairman of the Defense and Security Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, also spoke at the conference. Additionally, with the special invitation from IDFI, policy and advocacy consultant, Javier Ruiz Diaz introduced the main tendencies of international cyber security standards.

The event audience included local, as well as international experts of cyber security, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations, public institutions, private sector, media, academia, the international community, and various embassies.

FREEDOM OF INTERNET IN GEORGIA

For the seventh year in a row, IDFI’s Media, Internet and Innovations Direction Head is a contributor of Freedom House and participates in the preparation of the Annual Report on Internet Freedom in Georgia.



According to the [report published](#) in October 2020, Georgia obtained a score of 76 out of 100 and was assessed as “Free” in terms of Internet freedom. The country’s score [improved by 1 point](#) compared to 2019.

According to the report, even though digital freedoms are generally protected in Georgia, an increasing number of cyberattacks and domestic content manipulation was observed during the coverage period. Also, although the rate of Internet access continues to grow, government initiatives aimed at developing Internet infrastructure are implemented with slow progress.

INTERNET USAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY TENDENCIES IN GEORGIA

Given the spread of coronavirus and the restrictions imposed, the importance of Internet access has become more apparent. In response, IDFI, based on various sources and data, analyzed trends in Internet access and use, the status of the government-initiated “Universal Internetization Project”, and tendencies regarding Internet availability among students. [The analysis](#), along other discoveries, showed that one-fifth of students are unable to engage effectively in the learning process due to a lack of internet or computer access.

Additional [visualization](#) was prepared based on the research findings.



DIGITAL SAFETY OF CHILDREN - TIPS FOR PARENTS

Due to the pandemic, the Internet has acquired special significance, including among children. These circumstances have clearly emphasized the need to increase the digital literacy of parents. In order to raise parents' awareness in this regard, in cooperation with the non-governmental organization, Parents for Education, practical and informative video instructions were prepared for parents on the following topics:

- ▶▶ [Children and online gaming](#)
- ▶▶ [Children on social Media](#)
- ▶▶ [6 rules of cyber-hygiene](#)
- ▶▶ [How to reduce cyber threats](#)

Furthermore, the Head of IDFI's Media, Internet and Innovations Direction led an [online webinar](#) that provided parents with information and practical tips on how they can protect their children from digital threats.

GEORGIA IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

In order to get acquainted with the international tendencies in the field of e-government and innovation, IDFI studied Georgia's results in various ratings and indexes and developed recommendations based on the identified trends.

Georgia's scores in terms of e-government and e-participation have slightly improved in the [UN E-Government Survey 2020](#). Although the country has dropped by 5 positions in the e-government



Georgia in the UN E-Government Survey

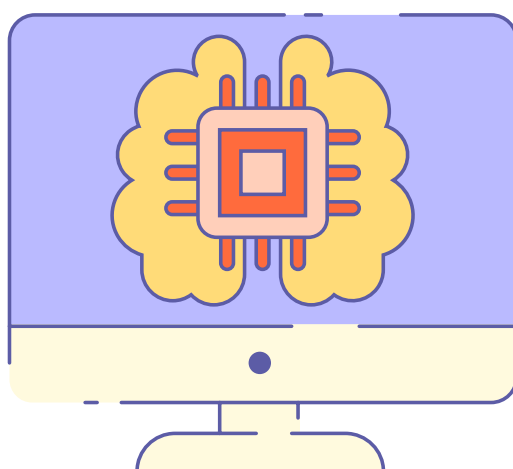
Review of 2020 Results

ranking, it advanced by 7 positions in the e-participation ranking. [Compared to other countries in the region](#), it becomes apparent that Georgia is losing momentum in this field, and is slowly losing the opportunity to become a leading nation in the region in terms of e-government reforms.

Additionally, according to the results of the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020, Georgia's position in the ranking deteriorated by 15 places and [dropped from 48th to 63rd place](#). Through specific indicators, the index showed the strengths and weaknesses of Georgia in terms of innovative development. Georgia is ahead of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the ranking, but lags significantly behind Ukraine, Russia, and the Baltic states.

THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN THE GEORGIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

In 2020, with the financial support of the International Center for Nonprofit Law (ICNL), IDFI began studying the use of artificial intelligence systems by public institutions. The aim of [the initiative](#) is to introduce transparency and ethical standards in the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector. To this purpose, the main characteristics and international standards, principles, and ethical norms of the use of artificial intelligence systems were studied, international examples of their use in the public sector were analyzed, and recommendations were developed based on Georgian practice. The Institute continues to work on raising the awareness of public officials and the general public on this issue and advocating for the implementation of the recommendations.



IDFI'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE GEORGIAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2020

On December 3rd, 2020, within the framework of the Georgian Internet Governance Forum 2020, IDFI coordinated the organization of one of the panels on Georgia's information security ecosystem and current challenges.

The panel speakers included:

- ▶▶ Levan Avalishvili – Programs Director, IDFI
- ▶▶ Mari Malvenishvili - Director, Cyber Security Education-Research Center
- ▶▶ Liisa Past - Head of Cyber Security Business Development, Cybernetica
- ▶▶ Nata Goderdzishvili - Head of Strategic, Legal and International Cybersecurity, Digital Governance Agency

See the panel recordings: <https://youtu.be/evqQWjbiy8?t=836>

THE FUNDING AND THE RATINGS OF GEORGIAN PUBLIC BROADCASTER AFTER THREE YEARS OF ANNOUNCED REFORM

The Public Broadcaster has been undergoing reform since 2017, which should have led to a technical upgrade, efficient use of financial resources, and improved ratings of the broadcaster. IDFI inquired about how the reform process was going in 2017-2019 and whether it had the desired result, subsequently preparing a relevant [analysis](#).

CHALLENGES OF TRANSPARENCY OF THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (GNCC)

In 2020, IDFI continued to monitor the activities of the GNCC and [NNLE “Media Academy”](#) established by the Commission. The Media Academy refused to disclose public information, indicating that it was not a legal entity under public law, neither in an organizational nor in a functional definition, and thus refused to disclose various types of public information such as: the staff list of Media Academy, copies of the legal acts defining the mandates of Media Lab, Media Critic and Media School, the activities carried out by them and relevant costs, their budgets, etc. The GNCC did not consider IDFI's administrative claim on the grounds that it was not a superior administrative body

of the Media Academy as defined by the General Administrative Code of Georgia. At this point, the dispute is pending in court. These circumstances demonstrate the lack of transparency in the activities of the “Media Academy” founded by the GNCC.



Considering the above-mentioned non-transparent activities, IDFI studied the publicly disclosed information on the website of the Media Critic platform and [analyzed](#) its contents as well as the information about the authors.

Further analysis of the Media Critic content showed that most of its criticism is directed at the media labeled as “oppositional” by the platform’s experts. Most of the sponsored materials on the platform’s Facebook page refer to the same target.

In addition, IDFI reviewed several non-transparent and unfounded decisions made by the GNCC in the article - ["Transparency challenges in the activities of the Georgian National Communications Commission."](#)

IDFI’S ENGAGEMENT IN THE MEDIA ADVOCACY COALITION

Throughout the year, IDFI has been actively engaged in the Media Advocacy Coalition meetings and activities. Coalition member organizations constantly monitored the media environment in the country and published their own assessments and statements about the identified problems. For example, the Coalition disseminated its views on issues such as:

- [Instances of violations of journalists' rights on the day of the 2020 parliamentary elections;](#)
- [Developments around Adjara’s Public Broadcaster;](#)
- [Developments in regard to “TV Pirveli”](#)



ECONOMY AND SOCIAL POLICY

Against the background of the challenges facing the country, when approximately 20% of the population is below the poverty line and the low standard of living in the country remains a significant problem, it is essential for the country to develop effective socio-economic policy that should ensure long-term economic growth.

In 2020, IDFI resumed its activities aimed at analyzing the socio-economic challenges facing the country. The main goal of IDFI in this direction is to periodically review and prepare reports on the economic situation in the country, to raise financial and economic literacy, and to promote the development of important sectors of the economy. As part of the updated social and economic policy, IDFI plans to:

- Analyze the macroeconomic situation of the country and develop recommendations for improving economic policy;
- Issue sectoral studies and facilitate the transparency and availability of information;
- Monitor the implementation of current economic policy;
- Facilitate the raising of the financial and economic literacy levels.

In 2020, economic and social policy research conducted by IDFI was largely in response to the situation created by the coronavirus pandemic in the country. Analytical papers reviewed the risks in terms of both the spread of the virus and the impending economic crisis. In particular, the statistics of infectious diseases in Georgia, emergency budget allocations, and other topics were analyzed.

As a show of social solidarity, at the initial stage of the spread of coronavirus in Georgia, IDFI, taking into account international good practice, created a prototype analytical portal for cases of coronavirus infection, which was then submitted to the Center for Disease Control of Georgia. IDFI also provided 2,000 masks used for protection from the virus to vulnerable individuals.

In 2020, IDFI monitored state social and health programs, developing recommendations for improving access to programs for beneficiary vulnerable groups. Among them, the effectiveness of the following state programs was evaluated within the framework of the research project "Access to Cancer Treatment in Georgia":

- **State Universal Healthcare program**
- **Referral Service State program;**

- **Early detection and screening of diseases;**
- **Pediatric oncohematological service;**
- **Palliative care for terminal patients;**
- **Health programs funded from the local self-government budgets**

REVIEW OF THE GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-CRISIS ACTIVITIES AND MONITORING OF ITS EXPENDITURES

In July, with the support of the European Union (EU), IDFI [launched](#) the monitoring of Covid-19-related public finances, public procurements, government anti-crisis plan implementation, StopCov fund spending, and donor assistance distribution. By the end of the year, a total of 480 requests for public information had been sent to about 200 public institutions in the scope of the project, of which 326 requests have received a response. Based on the information received and the analysis of publicly available data, several analytical papers were prepared on the following issues:

- ▶▶ **[Budgetary Measures Taken in Response to the Pandemic](#)** - Overviews the impact of the pandemic measures on Georgia's macroeconomic performance and the structure of first-phase anti-crisis assistance.
- ▶▶ **[Results of the Monitoring of the Agro-Diesel Supply Program](#)** - The circumstances discussed in the study raised important questions about the effectiveness of the program. In order to eliminate the identified shortcomings and increase the effectiveness of the program, IDFI offered specific recommendations to the government.





MEMORY AND DISINFORMATION STUDIES

Memory and Disinformation Studies Direction mainly works on the study of Soviet past and legacy, the enhancement of the openness of archives, and the analysis of contemporary disinformation campaigns. In this direction, IDFI has created “Stalin’s lists”, International Rating of the Openness of State Archives, held conferences on archival work and memory studies, published research materials based on archival documents and articles on the tendencies of disinformation. The Direction studies the stories of the victims of the totalitarian regime, works on their commemoration, and holds advocacy campaigns for effective state memory politics in this direction. Currently, IDFI holds an active campaign for in-depth study of the mass grave of the victims of Soviet terror discovered in Batumi and the increase of social support for the repressed individuals. In addition, the organization actively published research articles about the Soviet past, related collective memory, and analyzed Russian disinformation. Additionally, IDFI organizes various events, exhibitions, lectures, educational tours, and competitions aimed at raising public awareness about the Soviet past and legacy.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OPENNESS OF ARCHIVES

In May 2020, IDFI finished the project “Enhancing the Openness of State Archives in Former Soviet and Eastern Bloc Countries” funded by the Open Society Institute – Budapest Foundation and published the renewed [International Rating, results, and key findings](#). The organization started this project in 2017. In 2017-2018, the methodology for evaluating the openness of archives was created and 20 archives of 10 former Soviet republics were assessed. In 2019-2020, 8 countries of Eastern and Central Europe were added to the rating. As a result of the project, 2 archives in each country have been evaluated. After the publication of the results, IDFI sent certificates to each archive.

ADVOCACY OF THE OPENNESS OF ARCHIVES

In 2020, IDFI continued its advocacy for the openness of archives in Georgia and beyond. In February, the head of the Archives, Soviet and Memory Studies direction at the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Anton Vacaharadze, and an analyst, Megi Kartsivadze, attended the conference „Nationalist Historiography in Post-Communist South Caucasus“ organized by the Cen-

tral European University in Budapest. Within the framework of the conference, on IDFI's initiative, a roundtable discussion was held on the topic "Openness of State Archives and Memory Politics in the Former Soviet and Eastern Bloc Countries". The participants discussed existing problems in the archives of the South Caucasian states and the advocacy campaigns carried out within the framework of IDFI's project. The organization was planning to participate in many more international conferences, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the visits were cancelled. Nevertheless, IDFI's partners held advocacy campaigns beyond Georgia. Anton Vatcharadze's article "Openness of State Archives in the Former Soviet Republics and Eastern Bloc Countries" was published in a Croatian journal. Additionally, the article "[Allowing Photocopying in the Archives of Georgia – Essential Step toward Enhancing the Openness of Archives](#)" was published on IDFI's website.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, IDFI, together with its international partners, carried out the research project "[Openness of State Archives in Post-Soviet Republics and Eastern Bloc States During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)". The goal of the research was to evaluate the level of openness of particular archives during the lockdown, how the archives have adapted to the new reality, and if they have elaborated strategic plans for future emergency situations. For the research, IDFI created a questionnaire, which was filled by the archival experts. Partners from the following countries participated in the evaluation: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Hungary, and Kazakhstan. The results were published in November 2020.

CAMPAIGN FOR INCREASED LIVING SUBSIDY FOR THE VICTIMS OF REPRESSIONS

In 2020, IDFI, in collaboration with "Memorial", launched a new campaign. The first activity was to demand the increase of living subsidy for the repressed individuals, since among the living subsidies established for the different social categories, the amount for the victims of political repressions (together with the persons who were at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant) – 7 GEL – is the lowest. The organization also published research papers about the topics: [Victims of Soviet Repressions in Georgia – Legal Remedies and Their Assessment](#) and [The Statistics of Social Assistance for the Victims of Political Repressions](#).

IDFI sent an [open letter](#) to the Prime Minister. The letter was redirected to the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. According to the [response](#) received from the Ministry, the increase of the amount of allocation was not considered by the law on "the 2020 State Budget of Georgia". Moreover, the official position of the Ministry was that the increase of living subsidy only for the victims of repressions would cause a fair dissatisfaction among the individuals belonging to other social categories receiving living subsidies.



In July 2020, IDFI published a [petition](#) on ichange.gov.ge, through which the organization demanded the increase of living subsidy for the repressed individuals. The petition needed to get 10,000 signatures in 30 days, which would oblige the Government of Georgia to discuss it. Unfortunately, mostly because of the nonflexible website, the online petition did not get 10,000 signatures in 30 days, and the Government has not considered it, although IDFI has continued the social campaign.

For raising public awareness about the social support for the repressed, IDFI held [meetings](#) in Tbilisi and the regions and published interviews with the repressed and their descendants. In total, IDFI addressed the Prime Minister with three letters, but all of them were left without response.

MEMORY STUDIES

IDFI published various [articles](#) based on archival documents. The organization also assessed the legal, institutional, and memorial dimension of the memory politics of Georgia since 1991 and published the [results of the research](#).

In 2020, for raising public awareness about the Soviet occupation and repressions, IDFI organized the [Week of the Soviet Occupation](#).



Additionally, for popularizing memory and Soviet studies among students, IDFI held the essay competition “[Soviet Terror in the Memory of Modern Georgia](#)”. Two winners were selected as a result of the competitions, and their articles were published on IDFI’s website – “[Sovietization – First Step of the Soviet Collective Memory](#)” and “[The Memory of the 1930s Repression – What and Why Do We Remember?](#)”.

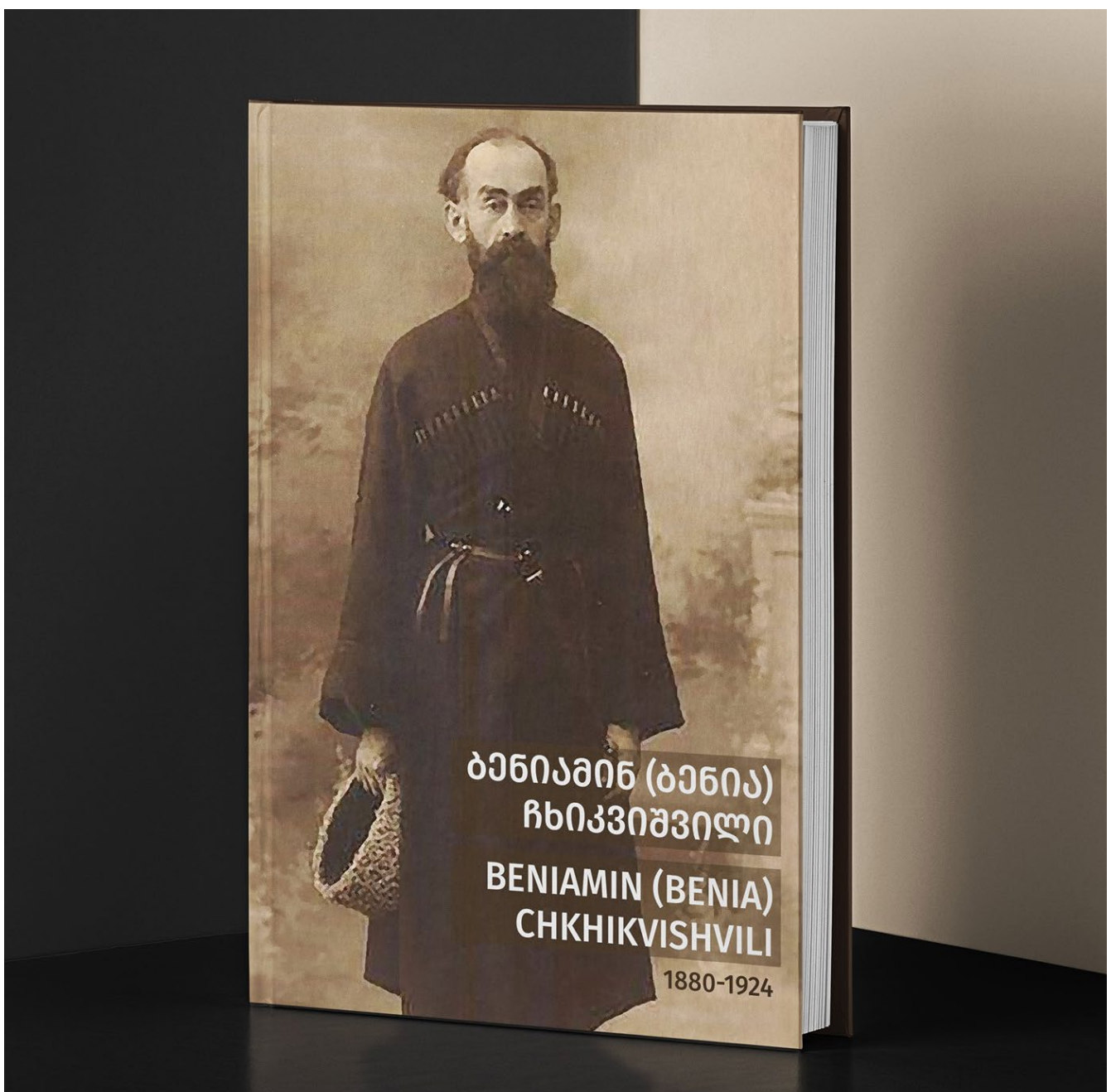
IDFI also manages the Facebook page “[Biographies: The Mass Repressions of 1937-1938 in Georgia](#)”, on which the biographies and stories of the repressed are regularly published. The page has more than 5,000 subscribers.



In 2020, IDFI [published](#) the theses of the Conference “Openness of State Archives and Memory Studies”, held in 2019 by IDFI, in English and Russian. It includes 25 articles in total.

Anton Vatcharadze discussed the perception of Stalin’s figure in Georgia, Stalin’s birth-house museum in Gori, and various problematic statues at the [online conference](#) organized by the Ukrainian Catholic University.

In collaboration with the National Library, IDFI published the second memorial album about the distinguished political figure of the First Democratic Republic of Georgia, Benjamin (Benia) Chkhikvishvili. The album includes documents and photos preserved at the National and MIA Archives as well as the materials from family collections.



MASS GRAVES OF THE REPRESSED

A year after the discovery of mass graves in Khelvachauri by the Batumi and Lazeti Diocese, IDFI is still actively engaged in the study of the place and the commemoration of the victims. In 2020, IDFI issued recommendations for the government to continue working on the identification of the bodies and erect the memorial complex at the place of the discovery. IDFI also received funding from the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and started the project “Commemoration of the First Mass Graves of the Victims of the Soviet Regime Discovered in Georgia”. An [online discussion](#) was

Online Discussion on the First Mass Graves of the Victims of the Soviet Regime discovered across Adjara Region

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held within the framework of the project. The speakers’ list included: Executive Director of IDFI, Giorgi Kldiashvili; Chief specialist at the Legal Department of the Ministry of Health of Adjara, Davit Katamadze; Representative of Batumi and Lazeti Diocese of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia, Metropolitan Dimitri (Sarjveladze); Imam of the Cheli Mosque, Chairperson of the Georgian Muslims Union, Jambul Abuladze. The representatives of the government, civil society and media, descendants of the repressed, the Director-General and the Deputy Director of the National Museum, and researchers also participated in the discussion. They discussed the issues related to the study of the stories of the repressed and their proper commemoration.

DISINFORMATION STUDIES

In 2020, IDFI actively worked on research on disinformation and propaganda. The articles, blogs, infographics, and videos about disinformation were published on IDFI's website as well as the website created by the organization specifically for this purpose – www.damoukidebloba.ge.

IDFI also actively worked on debunking the disinformation related to COVID-19. Articles about the disinformation campaigns related to the [virus](#), [Lugar Laboratory](#), and the [Ministry of Health of Georgia](#) were published.



Additionally, IDFI is focused on raising public awareness about the threat of disinformation. With the organization of the American Corners Batumi, Anton Vatcharadze and Megi Kartsivadze held [lectures](#) on the topic “Russian Propaganda: from the Empire until Today”. Anton Vatcharadze talked about the formation and development of Russian propaganda from the Empire until the Second World War, while Megi Kartsivadze’s lecture concerned Russian propaganda during the Cold War and the post-Soviet period as well as today’s trends in this direction.



TRAININGS AND LECTURES

TRAININGS ON MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

In 2020, IDFI representatives conducted [practical trainings](#) for journalists working in the regions, local civil society representatives, students, and activists on mechanisms and methods for monitoring government activities, including working with public data. During the trainings, IDFI representatives provided information to the participants on the following issues:

- ▶▶ How to detect and verify suspicious circumstances in public procurement;
- ▶▶ How to control the targeted management of the state budget;
- ▶▶ How to obtain public data on government activities;
- ▶▶ How to request public information.



ONLINE WEBINARS / TRAINING ON MONITORING CORONAVIRUS-RELATED SPENDING

After the Covid-19 outbreak, the analysis of government spending in response to the pandemic, especially simplified procurements, and healthcare data, has become very topical. In this regard, an [online webinar](#) was conducted for journalists, researchers, and civic activists led by the Institute's researchers in order to share IDFI's experience.

FATF RECOMMENDATION 8 FOR NPOS

Within the scopes of the project “Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (GF-AML/CFT)” launched by European Commission, [the training on “FATF Recommendation 8 for NPOs” was held for the representatives of non-governmental organizations.](#) The organization of the training course in Georgia was supported by the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). The training participants were awarded with certificates.

The following non-governmental organizations are taking part in the training course: Civil Society Institute; Media Development Foundation; Europe Foundation; Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation); Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC); Transparency International – Georgia; Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC); Civil Development Agency (CiDA); International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED); Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA).



INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING TRAININGS FOR IDFI STAFF

In 2020, IDFI staff received several institutional development trainings on monitoring and evaluation, as well as diversity and inclusion. Along with gaining theoretical and practical knowledge in this area, the staff of the organization got acquainted with the new internal policies of the Institute on these issues. This will enable IDFI to better plan and evaluate the results of its activities in the future and to facilitate the involvement of various vulnerable groups in the activities of the organization.



CONSULTATIONS

CIVIL AUDIT HOTLINE

In 2020, IDFI continued to receive and analyze notifications received through the [Civil Audit Hotline](#). The Institute created the hotline in 2019 for citizen engagement in the monitoring of the government activities. Through the hotline, any citizen (including activist, journalist, business representative, etc.) can provide us (including anonymously) information on possible misconduct in the public sector, mismanagement of public finances, alleged corruption cases, as well as cases of abuse of power by public officials' incompatible activities, restriction of public information, nepotism, and conflict of interest. In 2020, IDFI received and reviewed up to 30 notifications.

IDFI provided consulting services to more than 70 citizens in signing the petition to increase the subsidies for the oppressed household, as well as through the Facebook page: Biographies, the 1937-1938 mass terror in Georgia. 10 international students and researchers consulted with IDFI on access to Georgian archives and documents kept in archival funds.





IDFI'S DONOR ORGANIZATIONS

- THE EUROPEAN UNION
- LUMINATE
- SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY (SIDA)
- UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)
- INTERNATIONAL VISEGRAD FUND
- OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION
- USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD
- EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS IN GEORGIA
- EAST WEST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
- OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FOUNDATION
- COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL
- INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE
- INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW (ICNL)
- EAST WEST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE / PROMOTING RULE OF LAW IN GEORGIA (PROLOG)
- COUNCIL OF EUROPE
- EAST EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)



PROJECTS INITIATED IN 2020

1. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INDEX - 2021

DONOR ORGANIZATION: [OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FUND](#) (OSGF)

The ultimate goal of the project is to develop transparent and accountable local self-governments, enhance public participation in local municipalities and improve principles of transparency and accountability at the local levels in Georgia

2. PROMOTING PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS IN GEORGIA*

The main goal of the project is to strengthen the protection of personal data in the most problematic areas.

3. PROMOTING GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICAL STANDARDS OF USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW INC.* (ICNL)

The project aims to promote the development and implementation of greater transparency and ethical standards in the use of artificial intelligence by public agencies.

4. MONITORING COVID-19-RELATED PUBLIC SPENDING AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND AFTER

DONOR: [EUROPEAN UNION](#) (EU)

The aim of the project is to increase the effectiveness and proportionality of the actions aimed at combating the pandemic in Georgia.

5. EMPOWERED CIVIL SOCIETY AND ENHANCED BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY STANDARDS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

DONOR ORGANIZATION: [INTERNATIONAL VISEGRAD FUND](#)

The project aims to strengthen the monitoring groups operating in Georgia and the society in general, so that they can more effectively monitor and control the government

6. COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST MASS GRAVES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SOVIET REGIME DISCOVERED IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE*

The main goal of the project is to raise awareness about the first mass grave of the victims of the Soviet regime found in Georgia

7. SUPPORTING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE INSPECTOR SERVICE

DONOR ORGANIZATION: [OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FUND](#) (OSGF)

The project aims to help improve the performance of the Office of the State Inspector, especially in the area of investigation, through monitoring, research and advocacy activities

8. ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY OF THE JUDICIARY IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *EAST WEST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE* / [PROMOTING RULE OF LAW IN GEORGIA](#) (PROLOG)

The project aims to improve the transparency of the judiciary, as well as advocate for changes in the legislation and practice

9. CORE SUPPORT

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY* (SIDA)

The project aims to support democracy and good governance in Georgia through evidence-based research, monitoring, and advocacy activities.

10. PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICE ON UPDATING HANDBOOK ON TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *COUNCIL OF EUROPE*

The project is aimed at providing consulting services on the updating of the Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Georgia.

11. DEVELOP INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY-HALLS OF TELAVI AND LAGODEKHI MUNICIPALITIES

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD*

The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Telavi and Lagodekhi City Halls in the fight against corruption at the local level.

12. DEVELOPING OPEN DATA PRACTICES IN THE CITY HALLS OF GORI, LAGODEKHI, OZURGETI, SENAKI, TELAVI, AND ZUGDIDI MUNICIPALITIES

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD*

The aim of the project is to improve good governance and raise awareness of open data policy in the Gori, Lagodekhi, Ozurgeti, Senaki, Telavi, and Zugdidi municipalities.

13. ENSURING LEGAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DIGITAL RIGHTS IN GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL*

The aim of the project is to provide and strengthen legal guarantees for digital rights in Georgia at the legislative level.

14. DEVELOP BUILDING INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY HALL OF SENAKI MUNICIPALITY

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD*

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of the Senaki City Hall system against the threat of corruption.

15. DEVELOP BUILDING INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY HALL OF ZUGDIDI MUNICIPALITY

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD*

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of the Zugdidi City Hall system against the threat of corruption.

16. DEVELOPMENT OF TBILISI CITY HALL'S OPEN DATA PORTAL CONCEPT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *USAID GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE IN GEORGIA, TETRA TECH ARD*

The aim of the project is to increase the transparency and accountability of the Tbilisi City Hall through the development of an open data portal and the implementation of effective open data management practices.

17. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *EAST EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)*

The aim of the grant is to build IDFI's capacities in order to facilitate its role as a regional hub as part of the first global edition of the Global Data Barometer.

18. INCREASING THE COVERAGE AND QUALITY OF STATE SERVICES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

DONOR ORGANIZATION: *OPEN SOCIETY GEORGIA FUND (OSGF)*

The aim of the project is to review the education system of Georgia during the COVID-19 pandemic against the background of the existing regulations and to identify the challenges in the learning process facing different social groups.



2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

IDFI REVENUES AND EXPENSES



705 114 \$

REVENUE FROM
GRANTS



83 252 \$

OTHER OPERATING
INCOME



14 448 \$

DONATIONS

802 815 \$

TOTAL REVENUE

Salaries excluding income tax	297 632 \$
Income tax on salaries	68 375 \$
Service Fee	65 996 \$
Consultancy and Other Professional Services (Translation, Consultancy, Expert Honorarium)	59 098 \$
Subgrants, Grants and Mutual Partnership Projects	46 159 \$
Outreach and PR Activities (Design, Audio-Video Visualization, Publishing, Awards and Marketing)	38 745 \$
Events (Conferences, Presentations, Workshops, Trainings)	21 932 \$
Web-Page Development	20 022 \$

Depreciation and Amortization	20 427 \$
Penson Contribution	11 225 \$
Other Costs	7 428 \$
Other Office Costs and Inventory	5 890 \$
Financial, Accounting and Audit Services	5 496 \$
Fringe Benefits and Health Insurance	5 101 \$
Interest expense	3 591 \$
Transportation (Local Trips, Fuel Costs, Accomodation)	3 122 \$
Communication Expenses	2 230 \$
Utilities	2 197 \$
Travel (International Trips, Per Diems, Accomodation)	1 828 \$
Office Vehicle Maintenance and Insurance Costs	1 562 \$
Bank Fees	1 451 \$
Postage	659 \$
Office Stationary	574 \$
Office Rent	322 \$
Total Operating Expenses	691 064 \$

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