



## Panel Discussions:

### Enhancing Legislative Framework and practices for access to public information in Georgia

#### Press-release

**June 15, 2022** - The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information held panel discussions on "**Enhancing Legislative Framework and practices for access to public information in Georgia.**"

The event addressed the main obstacles and needs regarding Georgia's access to public information legislation and practice.

**Giorgi Kldiashvili**, an Executive Director of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, welcomed participants with an opening speech.

*"Based on our research and experience performed, access to information law is outdated. In this respect, a draft law on freedom of information was drafted in 2014. Several action plans included commitments to adopt the Law on Freedom of Information. However, the lack of political will to improve access to information remains a challenge. We need to remind the government again that this is a priority issue and the legislation needs to be updated,"* said **Giorgi Kldiashvili**.

In the course of the event, two-panel discussions gathered the international and Georgian experts and representatives of the civil, public, and private sectors.

The practical challenges of access to public information were addressed by **Toby Mendel**, Executive Director of the Centre for Law and Democracy (Canada); **Vako Natsvlishvili**, Representative of the Open Society Georgia Foundation; **Giorgi Davituri**, Head of Media and Freedom of Expression at the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information; **Tamar Gugutishvili**, Representative of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia and **Maia Kopaleishvili**, Professor of Administrative Law at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The panel was moderated by **Levan Avalishvili**, Programs Director at IDFI.

The legislation on access to open data and challenges in this regard were discussed by **Ketevan Tsanova**, Head of the Public Administration Unit at Administration of the Government of Georgia;

**Veronica Cretu**, Envoy of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and member of the Council of Europe Committees (Moldova); **Nadiya Babinska-Virna**, Open Data Expert (Ukraine) and **Nikoloz Gagnidze**, Chairman of the National Cyber Security Association.

The panel discussion was moderated by **Teona Turashvili**, Local Government, Internet, and Innovations Directions Head at IDFI. The Moderator reviewed the results of Georgia in the Global Data Barometer (GDB) Survey and summarized the country's main obstacles and needs. In particular, the need for establishing a unified open data policy, legislative framework, and open data standard was emphasized.

Based on the identified needs, the panel speakers stressed the measures to be taken, the government's plans and international standards, as well as the experience and good practices of different countries in this process. The speakers also highlighted the need for cooperation between stakeholders in implementing open data initiatives, which further contributes to public good arising in such circumstances.

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