



LOCAL  
SELF-GOVERNMENT  
INDEX



## LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INDEX

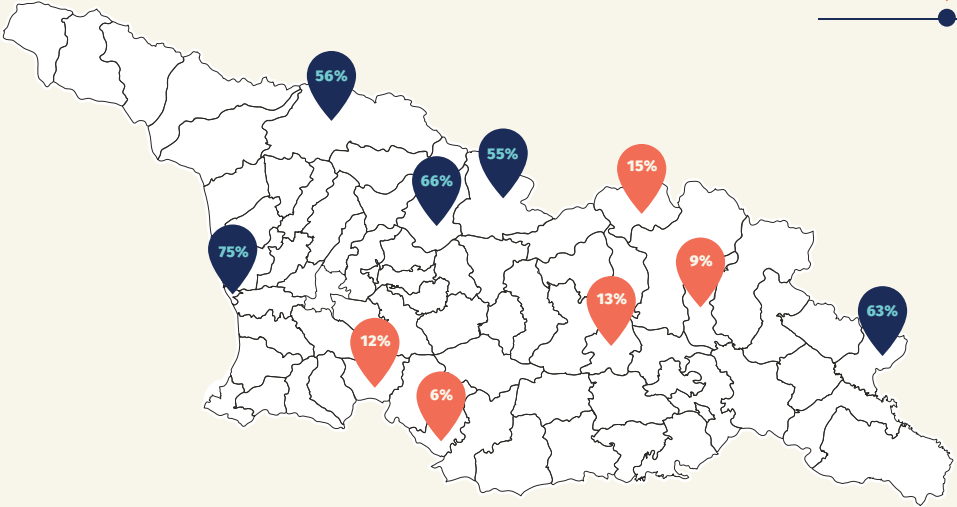
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF GEORGIAN  
MUNICIPALITIES (2023)

[www.lsgindex.org](http://www.lsgindex.org)

NOVEMBER, 2023

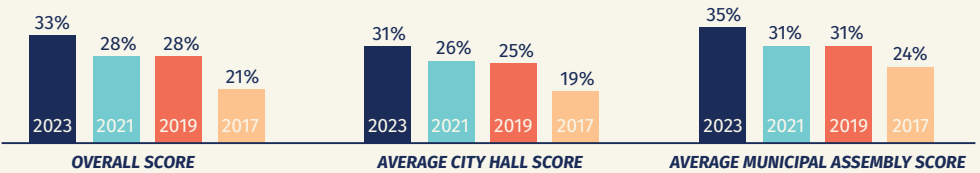


# RESULTS FOR 2023



1	POTI CITY MUNICIPALITY	75%	60	KAZBEGI MUNICIPALITY	15%
2	AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY	66%	61	KASPI MUNICIPALITY	13%
3	LAGODEKHI MUNICIPALITY	63%	62	ADIGENI MUNICIPALITY	12%
4	MESTIA MUNICIPALITY	56%	63	TIANETI MUNICIPALITY	9%
5	ONI MUNICIPALITY	55%	64	ASPINDZA MUNICIPALITY	6%

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX (LSG INDEX)



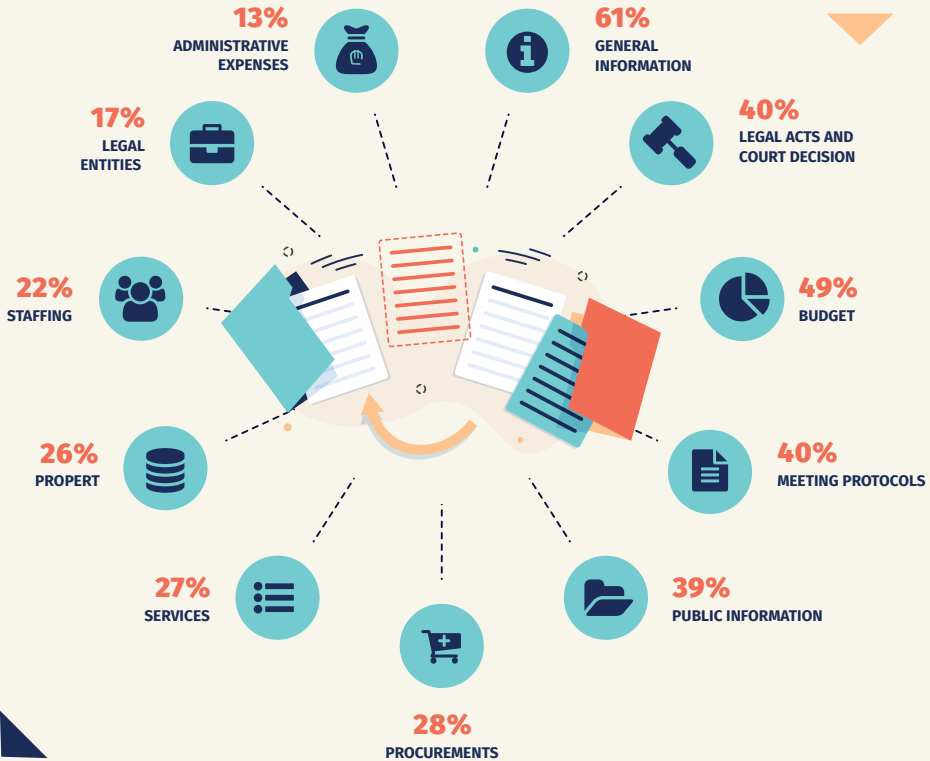
## MUNICIPALITIES WITH HIGHEST IMPROVEMENTS





**34%**

# PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION



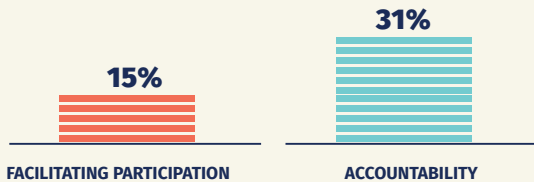
# ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE

**38%**



# FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

19%



THE AVERAGE INDICATOR OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY DECLINED BY **10%** BETWEEN 2019 AND 2023.

THE AVERAGE INDICATOR FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION DECLINED BY **24%** BETWEEN 2017 AND 2023.

THE ACTIVITY OF MUNICIPALITIES IN TERMS OF FACILITATING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS OF MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES DECLINED BY **24%** BETWEEN 2017 AND 2023.



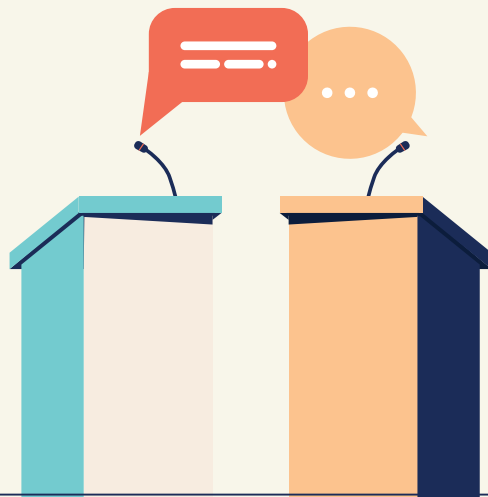
CIVIL (PARTICIPATORY) BUDGET IN 2021 - 2023  
FUNCTIONED IN  
**16 MUNICIPALITIES.**

HEARINGS OF THE MAYORS' ACTIVITY REPORTS  
WERE HELD IN ONLY  
**25 MUNICIPALITIES.**

THE ACTIVITY REPORTS OF MEMBERS OF MUNICIPAL  
ASSEMBLIES WERE PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC IN ONLY  
**20 MUNICIPALITIES.**

CITIZENS ADDRESSED MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES  
WITH PETITIONS IN ONLY  
**19 MUNICIPALITIES.**

SESSIONS OF THE MAYOR'S CIVIL ADVISORY  
COUNCIL WERE HELD IN ONLY  
**30 MUNICIPALITIES.**





## LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INDEX: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2023 assessment of municipalities based on the Local Self-Government Index was conducted by the Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), in collaboration with its partner organizations, with financial support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Danish government. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP and the Danish Government.

See the 2023 report on the website: [www.lsgindex.org](http://www.lsgindex.org)



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
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The Local Self-Government Index (heretofore, the Index) was created by the Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC), Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), and the Management Systems Development Center (MSDC) in 2016-2017.

The Index aims to establish transparent and accountable self-governance through a unified national evaluation of municipalities in Georgia and to increase the level of public participation in tackling important local issues. The 2023 assessment was conducted with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Danish Government.

The assessment of municipalities for the Index is carried out every two years. Therefore, the first, second, and third national assessments were conducted in 2017, 2019, and 2021, while the fourth assessment was conducted in 2023, the main findings, trends, and recommendations of which are presented in this report.

The Index consists of 3 blocks and 17 sub-blocks.

The blocks and sub-blocks form the list of the criteria for the Index, for a total of **107 evaluation criteria**.

	<b>I BLOCK</b>	<b>PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION</b>	<b>11 SUB-BLOCK 54 CRITERIA</b>
	<b>II BLOCK</b>	<b>ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>4 SUB-BLOCK 28 CRITERIA</b>
	<b>III BLOCK</b>	<b>FACILITATING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>2 SUB-BLOCK 25 CRITERIA</b>



## A) WHAT DOES THE INDEX EVALUATE?

The Index is an instrument for the assessment of Georgian municipalities, evaluating the quality of openness and transparency, proactive disclosure of public information, electronic governance, facilitation of citizen participation, and accountability across the municipalities according to predefined criteria.

### LSG INDEX -

The index of transparency and accountability of local self-government is determined based on the evaluation of all relevant criteria: according to the average results of the assessment of all municipalities of Georgia, separate groups of municipalities and city assemblies and mayors, as well as according to the result of the evaluation of the municipality, its city assembly, mayor.

The 2023 assessment report presents results both according to the three blocks and according to two thematic areas: **transparency and openness (TO Index) and participation and accountability (PA Index).**

Evaluation of thematic areas was carried out using the combined criteria of different blocks. The use of combined criteria from different blocks in the assessment provides an opportunity to present a complete picture of the current situation in a given municipality in the thematic areas of transparency and openness, as well as participation and accountability.

For example, for the evaluation of the thematic area of participation and accountability (PA Index), criteria that concern the quality of citizen participation and accountability in the municipalities from block 3 as well as block 1 and 2 are taken into account. Specifically, from block 1, criteria related to the proactive disclosure of the municipal activity reports are relevant, while from the 2nd block, criteria that evaluate electronic participation by citizens are used. Similarly, for the transparency and openness (TO Index) thematic area, criteria that concern the quality of transparency and openness in municipalities from blocks 2 and 3 are taken into account.

Below is the list of criteria involved in determining the indexes of the thematic areas.

<b>TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS (TO INDEX)</b>	<b>I BLOCK</b>	<b>54 CRITERIA</b>
	<b>II BLOCK</b>	<b>7 CRITERIA</b> 2.1.1 – 2.1.6; 2.2.1; 2.2.8.
	<b>III BLOCK</b>	<b>2 CRITERIA</b> 3.2.1, 3.2.5

<b>PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY (PA INDEX)</b>	<b>I BLOCK</b>	<b>7 CRITERIA</b> 1.1.2; 1.2.4; 1.3.3; 1.7.3; 1.7.6; 1.9.6.
	<b>II BLOCK</b>	<b>10 CRITERIA</b> 2.2.2-2.2.5; 2.2.8-2.2.10; 2.3.2-2.3.4.
	<b>III BLOCK</b>	<b>25 CRITERIA</b>

The results of the evaluation of municipalities in 2023 are presented both in terms of thematic areas and blocks. The results of 2025 will be presented according to three thematic areas: the transparency and openness index of municipalities (TO index), the e-Governance Index (EG Index)<sup>1</sup>, and the Participation and Accountability Index (PA Index).




<sup>1</sup> The criteria for assessing the Electronic Governance Index (EG Index) fully coincide with the block II criteria.

## B) ASSESSMENT PROCESS



The index uses different methodologies when evaluating different blocks. Proactive disclosure of public information by municipalities (block 1) and electronic governance (block 2) were evaluated based mainly on the monitoring of their official websites. Citizen participation and accountability (block 3) was evaluated by analyzing public information requested from municipalities and observing the practice of citizen participation on the ground. Municipalities that failed to provide the requested information during the evaluation received the minimum score in the corresponding criterion.

In addition, the following means were used to obtain and verify information:

-  Communicating with the municipal body by telephone;
-  Studying legal acts published through the Legislative Herald of Georgia;
-  Using other official (online) sources that contain relevant information for the evaluation of specific criteria.

The Index evaluates both the executive and the representative bodies of the municipality.

The fourth national assessment of transparency and accountability of municipal bodies was conducted between May 1 and July 1, 2023. All municipalities of Georgia except Ajara, Akhalgori, Eredvi, Tighvi, and Kurta municipalities were evaluated. 19 representatives of 10 regional civil society organizations participated in the process as assessors.

The evaluation was carried out using the online platform - [WWW.LSGINDEX.ORG](http://WWW.LSGINDEX.ORG).

Following the initial evaluation, representatives of municipal bodies were given an opportunity to register on the platform, view their preliminary results, and leave comments. The project team took all substantiated comments into consideration in the final evaluation report.

It should also be noted that in early 2021, a self-administered e-learning course on index evaluation methodology and criteria was established, which was then successfully completed by over a hundred municipal representatives.



The Index methodology was updated in 2021 and 2023, with the primary goal of harmonizing the methodology and criteria of the Index with the changes in the legislation of Georgia during the past few years as well as revising existing criteria in response to the current challenges facing transparency and accountability in Georgia and developing new criteria. Specifically:

**In 2021**, indicators for several criteria were specified and **three new ones** were added. The following criteria were added to the Index:

- 1.1.6. Contact information of the administrative units of the municipality and the representatives of the mayor in the administrative units;
- 3.1.16. Participatory budget (civil budget);
- 3.1.17. Gender Equality Council.

In 2023, six new criteria were added to the Index, Specifically:

- 1.10.4. Information regarding local fees;
- 2.4.7. Accessibility of the websites for persons with disabilities;<sup>2</sup>
- 3.1.18. Mechanisms of engagement of persons with disabilities in the decision-making process of the municipality;
- 3.1.19. Minimum standard of accessibility of municipal bodies for persons with disabilities;
- 3.1.20. Engagement of the youth in the municipal decision-making processes;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The reason for adding criteria focused on persons with disabilities is to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in the public decision-making process in municipalities, especially "in maximum proximity to the residential community." The reason derives from the international agreements ratified by Georgia - the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and the "Right to Participate in the Activities of Local Authorities" from the obligations stipulated by the Additional Protocol of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

<sup>3</sup> The reason for adding criteria focused is to encourage the involvement of the youth in the public decision-making process in municipalities. This is also based on the 2004 N13 recommendation of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on "Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life" and the tasks of the "State Youth Strategy 2023-2026" approved by the Government of Georgia.

- 3.2.5. Assessment of access to public information according to the statistics presented in the December 10 reports.

In the assessment carried out in 2023, the criteria added in 2023 play a role only as incentives function (except for criterion 3.2.5). Specifically, when the criteria are met, the score of the municipality increases, but in case of non-compliance with the criteria, the municipality does not lose a point. In this way, the municipalities were given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new criteria and ensure that the criteria are met for the 2025 assessment.

For the analysis of the evaluation process of municipalities and its results, it is important to review the environment and development trends of local self-government in Georgia in the past few years.

In the first half of 2019, the Parliament of Georgia ratified an additional protocol, the "Citizens' Right to Participate in Local Government Activities" (the so-called Utrecht Protocol) of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which further strengthened the legal guarantees of citizens' participation in local self-government. However, it should be noted here that the ratification of the additional protocol was not followed by a reevaluation of Georgian legislative acts with the goal of improving citizen participation mechanisms.

On December 31, 2019, the Government of Georgia approved the Decentralization Strategy 2020-2025 and the Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2023. For the purposes of the Index, the third strategic goal—"establishment of a credible, accountable, transparent, and results-oriented local self-government"—is of particular importance.

In the framework of the implementation of the mentioned goal, the steps taken towards the introduction of a unified electronic system for managing information flows in 63 municipalities of Georgia should be noted in a positive light. These steps included: the online electronic service portal for citizens ([ms.gov.ge](https://ms.gov.ge)), electronic system of proceedings ([mm.gov.ge](https://mm.gov.ge)), and interactive map for geospatial data management ([maps.gov.ge](https://maps.gov.ge)). However, it should be taken into account that despite the introduction of electronic systems, complete data on the practical use of said systems by the population and municipalities is not yet available.

It is also notable that, for the "implementing a high standard of transparency and accountability" goal, the strategy determined a minimum of 55% in the LSG Index by 2025 as the indicator for successful implementation. The benchmark for the LSG Index according to the evaluation results of 2023 is thus far significantly behind the target benchmark as defined by the Strategy.

The improvement in the area of access to information regarding municipal statistics should also be evaluated positively. Statistical data by municipalities is already available on the website of the National Statistics Office — <https://regions.geostat.ge/regions/>. Before this change, only regional statistical data was available in Georgia.

The third goal of the Strategy also encompasses supporting the Open Government Partnership program. As of now, 6 municipalities of Georgia are participating in the Open Government Partnership Local initiative (OGP Local)—Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Ozurgeti, Khoni, Kutaisi, Rustavi).

Among these, Kutaisi and Rustavi were chosen through an international competition in 2022. The mentioned municipalities have already submitted their action plans developed within the framework of OGP Local.

Despite some positive steps and improvements, however, it should be noted that significant challenges remain in the area of local self-government. In particular, financial decentralization reform, including the formation of an effective and equitable financial equalization policy; Completing the process of transferring non-agricultural and agricultural lands to municipalities; Reviewing existing mechanisms in the area of citizen participation and developing new mechanisms. It should also be noted that the decentralization strategy covers most of the issues listed above, although achieving real results depends on the rapid and effective implementation of the goals and plans.

According to the results of the 2023 National Assessment of Transparency and Accountability of Georgian Municipalities (LSG Index), the average score of municipalities is 33% (on a 100% rating scale), 5% higher than the indicator achieved in 2021. It can be thus said that, according to the 2023 data, the LSG Index has shown growth.

Significant, double digit growth (between 10% and 38%) was observed in 18 municipalities, although similarly significant decline (between 10% and 32%) was shown in 6 municipalities.

According to the results of the 2023 assessment, the block I indicator—proactive publication of public information—improved by 7% compared to the results in 2021 (from 27% to 34%). An approximately similar increase in the indicator was observed in block II—e-Governance (from 32% to 38%), while in the third block—Facilitating Citizen Participation and Accountability—the indicator, on the contrary, worsened by 4% and amounted to 19% (decreasing from 23% to 19%).

According to the opinions expressed by the assessors involved in the evaluation process, the results were affected by a number of factors:

**First**, by improving the access of municipalities to electronic resources and the capabilities of websites of municipalities. Among them, with the development of the electronic management portal of municipal services—<https://ms.gov.ge/>, which is available to all municipalities.

**Second**, the restrictions imposed during the 2020-2021 pandemic significantly reduced the ability to communicate with the public. Therefore, some indicators in 2023 returned to the pre-pandemic benchmark. This especially affected the assessment results of the criteria of block III—Facilitating Citizen Participation and Accountability.

**Third**, the evaluation period (2021-2022) did not coincide with the local self-government election period, and as such, some municipalities used the organizational and personnel stability, as well as the positive experience received in the 2021 assessment, to improve and/or maintain results.

**Fourth**, during the assessment process in the previous years, a lack of knowledge regarding the standards/requirements of the Index in the municipalities became clear. In response to this challenge, a distance learning tool ([www.tvitmmartveloba.ge](http://www.tvitmmartveloba.ge)) for the Index methodology was developed in 2021. The course is free and available to any interested persons. In 2021-2023, over a hundred people completed the course, which may be one of the most important reasons for the improvement in the indicators in the municipalities.



**Fifth**, a significant positive influence on the results of the assessment was due to current programs by international donor organisations aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability in municipalities, as well as individual initiatives by civil society organizations and expert support. Positive results in this direction and increases in the LSG Index were observed especially in the municipalities of **Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, Imereti, Samegrelo, and Zemo Svaneti regions**. It should be noted that after the completion of some international and civil society organization programs, the results of the municipalities in the Index declined sharply—an unfortunate tendency. However, some municipalities maintained high results and further developed the acquired experience.

Based on the overall results of all of the national assessments (2017, 2019, 2021, 2023), it has become possible to point out municipalities with consistently high results, these being: Telavi, Ozurgeti, Lagodekhi, and Zugdidi municipalities, the indicators for which **have not fallen below 39%** during any of the assessments. It should be noted that during each assessment year, transparency and accountability underwent **a dynamic growth** in the following municipalities: **Poti City, Lagodekhi, Ambrolauri, and Oni**. These results point to a readiness and institutional attitude aimed at implementing high standards of transparency and accountability.

Additionally, the assessment results indicate that geographic (mountainous areas) and demographic (ethnic minorities) factors influence the quality of transparency and accountability in municipalities. The average results of municipalities with these characteristics lag behind those of other municipalities. However, 2023 showed an improvement in their results.

It is also noteworthy that the municipality of the capital of Georgia, where 1/3 of the total population of the country resides, has been showing a decreasing trend in the LSG Index results since 2019.

A growing trend in the awareness and use of the Index has been observed both in the state and nongovernmental sectors. For example, the Index was used as an indicator for one of the strategic goals outlined in the 2020-2025 Decentralization Strategy and the 2019-2023 Mountainous Areas Development Strategy. Additionally, local non-governmental or international organizations often rely on the indicators from the Index when assessing the degree of transparency and accountability of municipalities.

Below are the important results of the 2023 assessment presented according to thematic blocks, indicators, municipal bodies, and municipalities.

### 3.1 PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

According to the 2023 Index assessment results:

- ▶ The average score of proactive disclosure of public information in municipalities is 34%, which is 7% higher than the figure for the 2021 assessment.
- ▶ 35 municipalities improved the proactive disclosure rate of public information. A decline was observed in 24 municipalities.
- ▶ 16 municipalities still could not pass the 20% threshold for proactive disclosure of information, and only 12 municipalities exceeded 50%.
- ▶ The highest score of proactive disclosure of information was 85% (Poti Municipality), which is 4% higher than the best assessment score from 2019 (81% - Poti Municipality). The lowest results (0%) was once again observed in the Aspindza Municipality, which has not had a website at all for multiple years.
- ▶ The highest improvement in proactive disclosure of public information (increase by 55%) was observed in Martvili and Terjola Municipalities.
- ▶ In terms of sub-blocks, compared to the results of the Index from 2021, the highest improvement was observed in publishing information about municipal budgets (increased by 14%) and procurements (increased by 11%). Meanwhile, a decline was observed only in the availability of information regarding municipal services (declined by 4%).
- ▶ As in the previous assessment, despite some minor improvement, the worst practice is the non-disclosure of information on municipal administrative expenditures (13%) and equity-based entities or entities under governance (17%). Complete data on administrative expenditures is usually only available in budget execution reports, which does not meet the standard of proactive disclosure of information. It is noteworthy that municipalities have begun incorporating the annual budget execution reports for these entities as an annex to the municipal budget execution reports, which positively affected the assessment result.
- ▶ Municipalities still have the highest results in the sub-block of publishing general information about municipalities: contact information (71%), municipal strategies and action plans (67%), description of organizational structure and functions (66%), information about the heads of the municipality and members of municipal assemblies (63%).

- ▶ Various municipalities continue to publish information on their websites that was not present on the websites of any municipal bodies during the first 2017 assessment. For example, the register of public information, advertising expenditures, representation costs, the annual activity and financial reports of the legal entities of the municipalities, court decisions, and others.
- ▶ Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, as well as Imereti, were regions where the total score of the municipalities improved significantly—an increase of 18 and 15 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, the largest declines were observed in Tbilisi (by 6%) and Guria (by 3%).
- ▶ 13 municipalities do not proactively provide citizens with information about even one municipal service.

## 3.2 ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE

According to the results of the 2023 assessment:

- ▶ The average e-government indicator for municipalities is 38%, which is 6% higher than the 2021 assessment result (32%)
- ▶ 45 municipalities have improved e-governance, while a decline was observed in 18 municipalities.
- ▶ The highest result for e-governance observed in municipalities was 82% (Poti Municipality), which is 15% higher than the best indicator in 2021 (67% - Ozurgeti Municipality). The lowest result was obtained by the Aspindza Municipality (10%), which does not have a website.
- ▶ The highest improvement in e-governance (29% increase) was observed in Bolnisi Municipality.
- ▶ By sub-blocks, as compared to the 2021 Index results, in 2023 the technical characteristics of websites improved by 10%, electronic participation improved by 8%, use of social networks – 1%. The results for electronic participation are the same as 2021 (16%), but fall short of the 2019 assessment result (19%).
- ▶ The MSDA.GE platform created by the Municipal Services Development Agency, the electronic modules of which present a mechanism for ensuring the delivery of municipal services, was a reason for the significant increase in the municipal electronic services indicator. For example, the indicator for the opportunity to acquire permits online increased by 38%.
- ▶ Municipalities once again have the highest results in sub-block – 2.3.municipality in social networks – where 98% compliance was observed when evaluating the criterion “the possibility of leaving comments on social networks”. More than 80% compliance with the requirements of the criteria was also observed in the case of the municipalities’ activity on social networks (Facebook), as well as the compliance of the domains of municipal websites with the existing standard and adaptation of the websites to mobile platforms.
- ▶ For the 2023 assessment, a new criterion was added for the first time - 2.4.7. Accessibility of the website for persons with disabilities, with the assessment finding that 7 municipalities of the country meet this criterion (municipalities of Poti, Ozurgeti, Senaki, Abasha, Kobuleti, Chokhatauri, and Martvili).

- ▶ According to the criteria, as in the previous evaluation, the worst practices were revealed in the publication of information regarding the meetings of the Council of Civil Advisors (10%). Similarly, online payments (11%), availability of information about citizens' participation forms (12%), and live streaming of municipal assembly meetings (13%) remain a problem. The situation with regard to the publication of information on municipal assembly and assembly commission meetings has worsened when compared to the previous assessment.
- ▶ Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti and Imereti had the biggest improvements in e-governance among regions, 18% and 13% respectively. No significant decline was observed in any of the regions.
- ▶ Aspinda Municipality has not had a website in any of the assessment periods. The municipal assemblies of Kareli and Rustavi City do not have websites and only use social media to publish information.

### 3.3 FACILITATING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

According to the results of the 2023 assessment:

- ▶ The average rate of facilitating citizen participation and accountability in municipalities is 19%, which is 4% lower than the same indicator for the 2021 assessment and 10% lower than the result for 2019.
- ▶ Citizen participation and accountability rates have improved in only 18 municipalities. A decrease was observed in 39 municipalities, while it remained unchanged in 7 municipalities.
- ▶ 38 municipalities, almost 2/3 of the municipalities of Georgia, could not exceed the 20% threshold of the assessment of citizen participation and accountability. Results of 50% and more were observed in only two municipalities - Batumi and Zugdidi.
- ▶ The highest rate of facilitating citizen participation and accountability observed was 52% (Batumi Municipality), which is 3% short of the best assessment result of 2021 (55% - Batumi Municipality) and 17% lower than the best result for 2019 (79% - Batumi Municipality).
- ▶ The lowest assessment result of 4% was in Tianeti Municipality, only 1% higher than the lowest indicator in the 2021 evaluation - 3%, in Bolnisi Municipality.
- ▶ The average indicator in the block shows the highest improvement (an increase of 21%) in Bolnisi and Gori municipalities, while the largest decrease of 23-24% was observed in the municipalities of Kazbegi and Shuakhevi.
- ▶ In the facilitating citizen participation sub-block, the average indicator of the municipalities is 15%, which is a 3% decrease compared to the 2021 results. In the accountability sub-block, municipalities have an average indicator of 31%, indicating a 2% decrease compared to the 2021 results.
- ▶ The highest average indicators in the block were observed in the following criteria: periodic information on municipal projects - 60%; observing procedures for reviewing petitions - 41%; membership of the Civil Advisory Councils - 40%; accessibility of public information - 40%; ensuring citizen participation in municipal assembly meetings - 35%.
- ▶ Similarly to the 2021 evaluation, a 0% indicator was observed again in 2023 for the activities of the general assembly of settlements.

- ▶ A significant decrease of more than 10% has been observed in the following criteria: observing procedures for reviewing petitions - 48%; accessibility of public information - 14%; ensuring citizen participation in municipal assembly meetings - 13%; activities aimed at raising public awareness - 12%; membership of the Civil Advisory Councils - 11%. It is important to note that a significant reduction in these criteria was also observed in the 2021 results, and this trend continued into 2023, a fact that requires special attention. The trend of a high decrease in results for the criteria of ensuring access to public information and citizens' participation in municipal assembly meetings is particularly noteworthy.
- ▶ It should be noted that a significant increase of over 10% was observed in only one criterion - hearings of the activity reports of municipal assembly members (an increase of 14%). A somewhat high increase of 7% was observed in the hearings of the mayors' activity reports and mandatory issues/documents for consideration by the Mayor for the Civic Advisory Council criteria results.
- ▶ In the process of budget planning, the absolute majority of municipalities still do not consider programs supporting citizens' participation, with the exception of Batumi and Kharagauli. In order to implement such a program, the municipality of Kharagauli has established the "Municipal Center for Citizens' Involvement and Awareness".
- ▶ When evaluating the criteria added in 2021 - civil (participatory) budget and the Gender Equality Council - a positive result was observed in 16 and 30 municipalities, respectively. In addition, it should be highlighted that only Batumi Municipality has a 100% performance score in the civil (participatory) budget criterion, and in the case of the Gender Equality Council - only 3 municipalities.
- ▶ With regard to the four new criteria added to the block - the mechanisms for the involvement of persons with disabilities in the decision-making process of the municipality; Minimum standard of accessibility of municipal bodies for persons with disabilities; Involvement of youth in the decision-making process of the municipality; Assessment of access to public information according to the statistics presented in the December 10 reports - a positive assessment was recorded in 34, 50, 22, and 38 municipalities, respectively.
- ▶ When analyzing the results of the evaluation through a regional perspective (10 regions), there was a decrease in the facilitation of citizen participation and accountability in 8 regions and an increase in 2. Only the Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti region has a somewhat significant improvement of 6%. A substantial 13% deterioration in the score was observed in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region.
- ▶ It should be noted that, after a 21% decrease in 2021, a 15% increase was observed in the municipality of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, although the indicator did not even match the results of the 2019 assessment (32%) and still remains low (26%).

- ▶ With the support of international and local civil society organizations, municipalities are actively introducing additional tools for citizen participation ("Citizens' Assembly", "Civil Laboratory", and others). However, thus far, these do not constitute sustainable institutional mechanisms supported by normative acts. For example, in 2021, the mayor of Tsalenjikha Municipality approved the "Charter of Freedoms of Tsalenjikha", which defines several additional mechanisms for citizens' participation. A public hall of the municipal assembly has been created in Ozurgeti municipality, and a budgetary program for selecting projects initiated by youth councils is operating in Lagodekhi municipality.

The report will highlight the findings and trends that are directly related to the executive and representative bodies separately.



### 3.4 EXECUTIVE BODIES/INSTITUTIONS (MAYOR/CITY HALL)

According to the results of the 2023 Index:

- ▶ Only 19 of the City Halls published (albeit, in most cases, incomplete) information on certain types of administrative expenses in the municipality. Among these, telecommunication costs were reported by 16 City Halls, and expenses for business trips - 13. Labor remuneration and fuel costs were presented in the case of 12 City Halls. Vehicle maintenance expenses were published by 11 City Halls, and representation expenses were proactively disclosed only by 9 City Halls.
- ▶ Every year, the rate of proactive disclosure of information regarding legal entities by municipal city halls is improving. The average rating of municipalities in this category in 2023 is 17%, which is a 5% improvement compared to the 2021 results. In 2019, municipalities had 11% in this indicator, and in 2017, 8%. However, proactive access to legal entities' annual reports, procurements, audits, and information on employees remains a problem.
- ▶ 77% of municipal city halls did not publish information regarding ongoing tenders. The indicator in this criterion decreases every year: according to the 2017 assessment, 40% of city halls did not publish information on ongoing tenders, with the number growing to 66% in 2019 and 72% in 2021.
- ▶ Over a third of city halls (23) still do not publish annual mayoral reports. The rate of availability of strategic documents of the municipality has improved - only 6 municipalities have not made strategies and corresponding action plans available.
- ▶ The accessibility of the protocols of the meetings of the Civil Advisory Council on the website of the town halls improved (from 32% to 42%). However, the percentage increase is due to the fact that in a significant part of the municipalities, the advisory council did not meet during the last one year. In total, protocols were fully or partially available in 22 municipalities.
- ▶ Meetings of the mayor's Civil Advisory Council were held in only 30 municipalities. In municipalities where such Councils have been established and its sessions are held, the rate of submission of initiatives by the council to the mayor has slightly increased, in addition to an increase in the rate of topics presented by the mayor to the council. In 50% of municipalities, the mentioned mechanism prescribed by the organic law either does not exist at all or does not function. Civil Advisory Councils are particularly active in 8 municipalities (Rustavi, Batumi, Zugdidi, Ambrolauri, Khelvachauri, Gori, Oni, Khulo).

- ▶ According to the 2023 assessment, the rate of the practice of holding a public hearing of the mayoral report matched the pre-pandemic results of the 2019 evaluation. However, it should be noted that in more than half of the municipalities (39 municipalities), a public hearing of the reports is not held at all. In addition, in the majority of municipalities, the process has a formal character, and proper advance notice to the population, communication with voters in a question-and-answer format, and public hearings are practically non-existent.
- ▶ The quality of informing citizens about the forms of participation by the municipality's mayor's office remains low (12%) in 2023 as well. According to this year's assessment, full information is available on the websites of only the city halls of Batumi, Khelvachauri, and Mestia municipalities.

### 3.5 REPRESENTATIVE BODIES - MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

According to the results of the 2023 assessment:

- ▶ Only 18 of the municipal assemblies published (also incomplete) information on certain types of administrative expenses. Of these, only 16 disclosed fuel and business trip expenses. Remuneration expenses were available in the case of 14 municipal assemblies, telecommunication expenses - in 13 cases, vehicle maintenance expenses - in 10 cases, and representation expenses in 10 representative bodies.
- ▶ 21 municipal assemblies published the protocols of sessions held in the past year, a worse result compared to the assessment of 2021 and 2019 (in previous years, 29 assemblies published the protocols). Only 13 made the protocols of all sessions available online, while in the case of the rest, the documents of individual sessions were absent.
- ▶ Critically negative trends were observed in the sessions of the municipal assembly and assembly commissions when evaluating the criterion of ensuring citizen participation in the sessions. Between the 2019 and 2023 assessments, the average score for the above criteria dropped from 59% to 35% and from 53% to 31%, respectively. In the majority of municipalities, only minimal, formal guarantees have been created for citizens' participation, both in the sessions of the assembly and of the commission.
- ▶ In the absolute majority of municipalities, it is not possible to participate remotely in the sessions of the municipal assembly and commission, as well as in the process of hearing the reports of the assembly members.
- ▶ According to the 2023 assessment results, the score in the practice of holding a public hearing of the report of the municipal assembly members returned approximately to the pre-pandemic results of the 2019 assessment. However, in the case of the members of the assembly, it is noteworthy that the public hearing of reports is not held at all in approximately 3/4 of municipalities. In addition, in the majority of municipalities, the process has a formal character, and proper advance notice to population and communication with voters in a question-and-answer format is practically nonexistent.
- ▶ In 2021-2022, citizens petitioned the assembly only in 19 municipalities, and petitions were considered in 10 municipalities following the proper procedures.
- ▶ According to the 2023 assessment result, the sessions of the municipal assembly are broadcast only in 10 municipalities of the country.

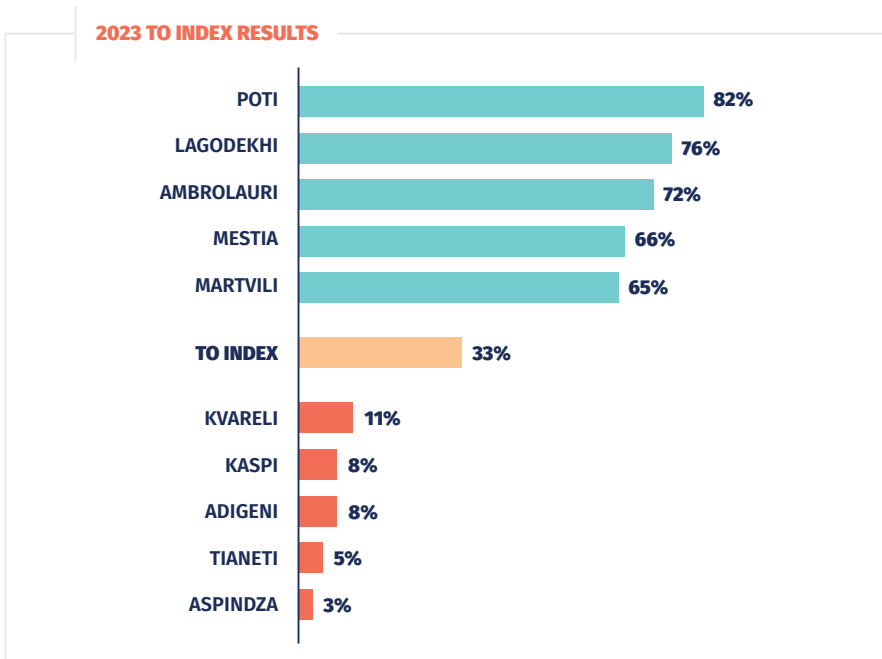
# 04.

## RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THEMATIC AREAS

### 4.1 TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS INDEX (TO INDEX)

The Municipal Transparency and Openness Index (TO Index) was determined through the combined use of the criteria of all three blocks that concern the degree of transparency and openness of municipalities.<sup>4</sup>

According to the 2023 assessment, the TO Index of Georgian municipalities is 33%. The municipality of Poti has the highest average percentage of meeting the transparency and openness criteria (82%). The municipalities of Lagodekhi (76%), Ambrolauri (72%), Mestia (66%), and Martvili (65%) also have high results. The lowest results were observed in the municipalities of Aspindza (3%), Tianeti (5%), Adigeni (8%), Kaspi (8%), and Kvareli (11%).

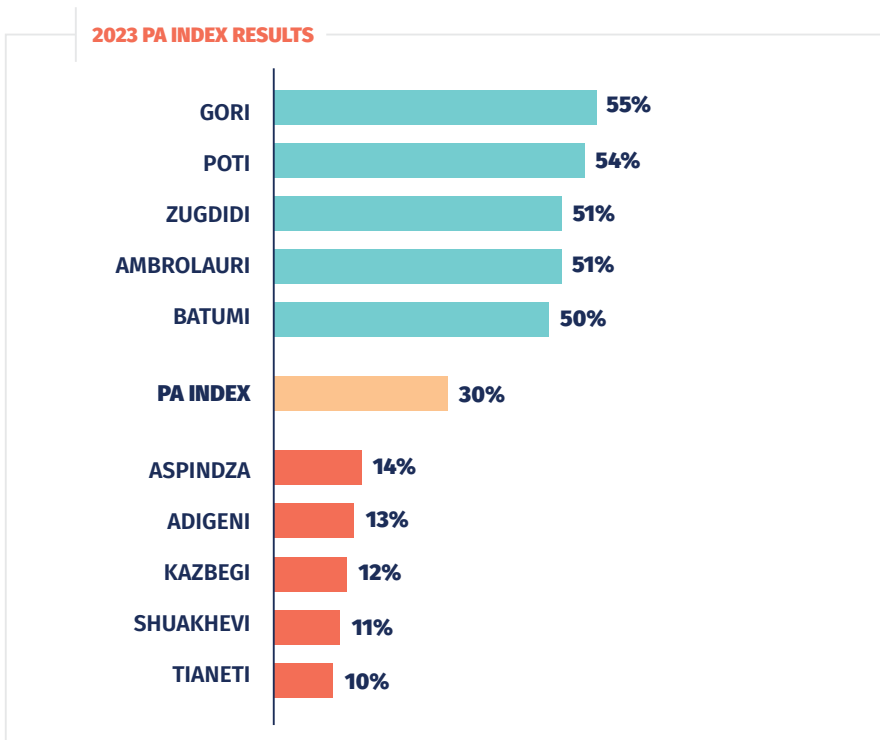


<sup>4</sup> For details, see pages 7-8 of the report.

## 4.2. PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX (PA INDEX)

The Participation and Accountability Index (PA Index) was determined by combining the criteria of all three blocks that concern the quality of participation and accountability in municipalities.<sup>5</sup>

According to the 2023 assessment results, the PA index of the municipalities of Georgia is 30%. Gori municipality (55%) has the highest average percentage of meeting the index criteria in the area of accountability and citizens' participation, followed by Poti (54%), Zugdidi (51%), Ambrolauri (51%), and Batumi (50%) municipalities. The lowest results were observed in Tianeti (10%), Shuakhevi (11%), Kazbegi (12%), Adigeni (13%), and Aspindza (14%) municipalities.



<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

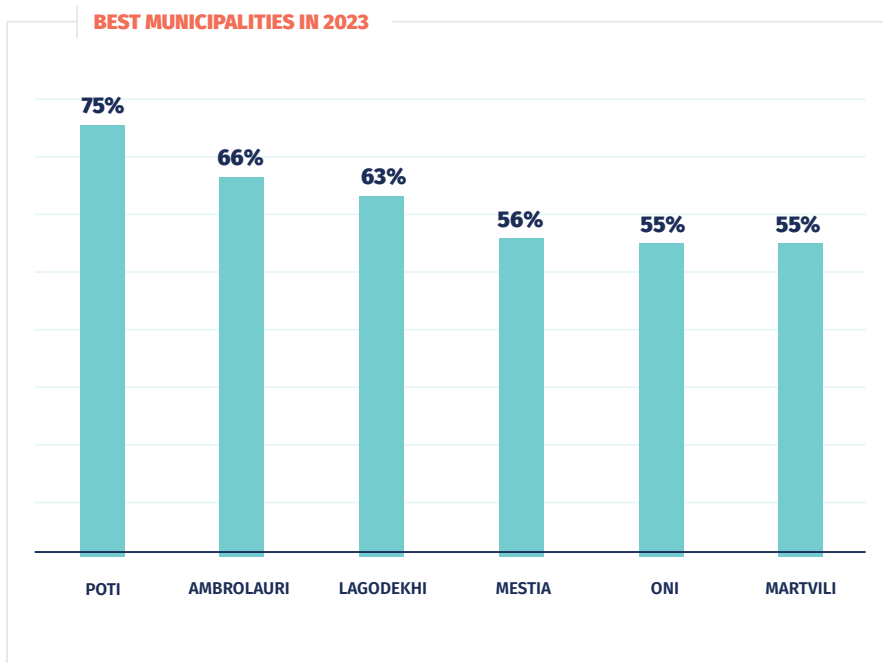
## 05. LSG INDEX RATINGS ACCORDING TO THE 2023 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

In 2023, the average indicator of the LSG Index of Georgian municipalities improved by 5%, although the overall average result remains low - 33%.

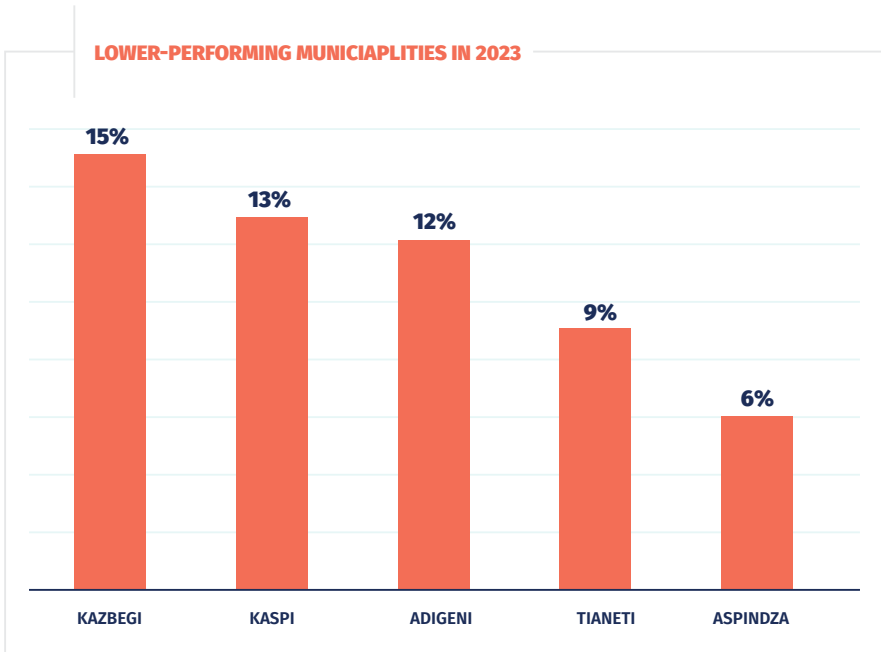
### 5.1 RATING BY MUNICIPALITIES

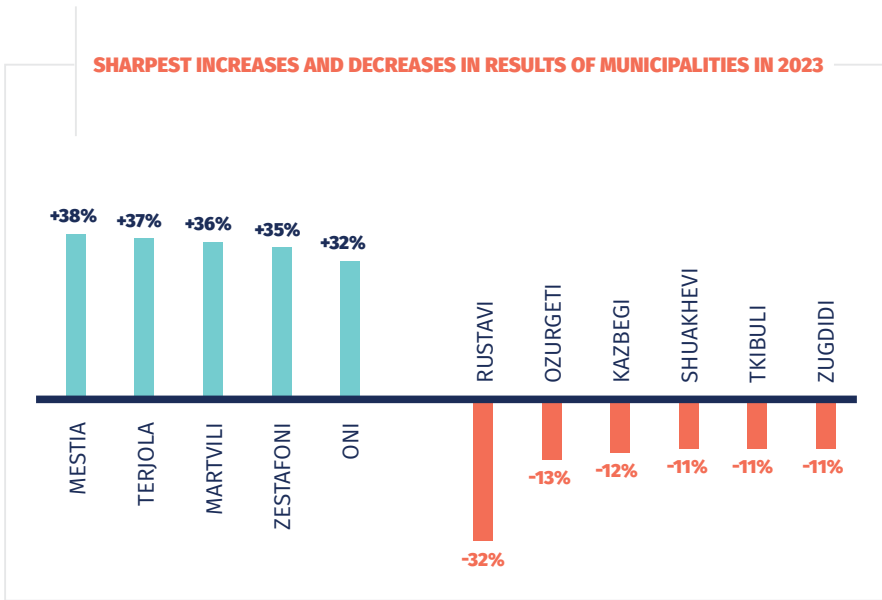
According to the evaluation results, Poti Municipality was identified as the municipality with the best performance in 2023. On a 100% evaluation scale, its result is equal to 75%, which is 5% higher than the best result observed in 2021, also from the same municipality.

Along with Poti Municipality, the five best results are from Ambrolauri (66%), Lagodekhi (63%), Mestia (56%), Oni (55%), and Martvili (55%) municipalities.



As for municipalities with the lowest indicators in the 2023 rating, these include the municipalities of Aspindza (6%), Tianeti (9%), Adigeni (12%), Kaspi (13%), and Kazbegi (15%). Twelve municipalities also failed to meet the 20% minimum threshold.





The sharpest increase of 38% in the results was observed in the municipality of Mestia. The rate of improvement is higher than 30% in Terjola, Martvili, Zestafoni, and Oni municipalities. The municipalities of Rustavi, Ozurgeti, Kazbegi, Shuakhevi, Tkibuli, and Zugdidi showed a sharp decline of over 10%.

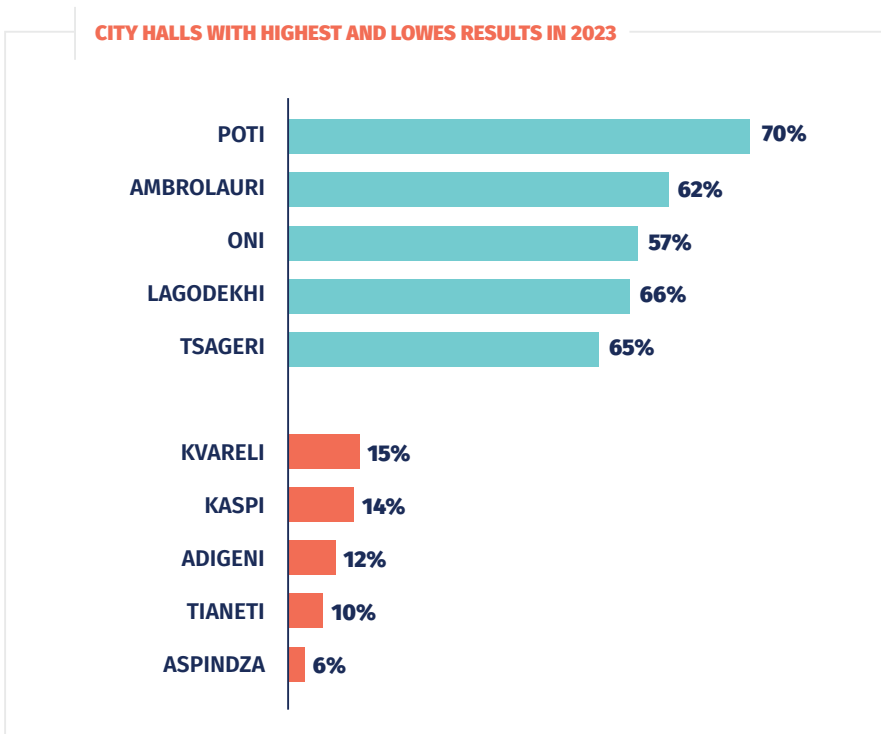


## 5.2 LSG INDEX RANKING BY MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

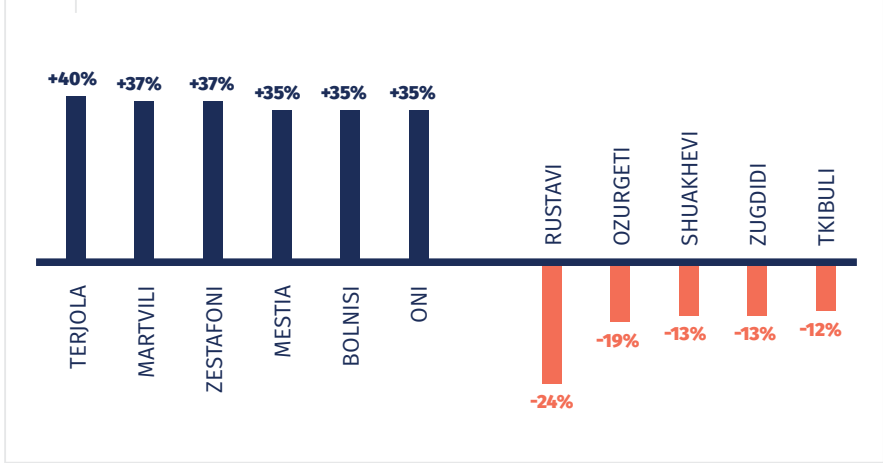
### 5.2.1 MUNICIPAL CITY HALLS

The average for City Halls is 31% on a 100% rating scale, which is 6% higher than the 2021 average. Poti City Hall has the best result among executive bodies—70%. It is followed by the City Halls of Ambrolauri (62%), Oni (57%), Lagodekhi (56%), and Tsageri (53%). The City Halls of Aspindza (6%), Tianeti (10%), Adigeni (12%), Kaspi (14%), and Kvareli (15%) have the lowest results.

The sharpest increase of 40% was observed in the case of Terjola Municipality's City Hall. The City Halls of the municipalities of Martvili and Zestafoni (37%), as well as Mestia, Oni, and Bolnisi (35% each) also showed a high increase. Rustavi City Hall showed a sharp decline (-24%), and the rate of deterioration is also higher than 10% in the cases of Ozurgeti, Shuakhevi, Zugdidi, Tkibuli, and Kazbegi municipalities.



**CITY HALLS WITH THE SHARPEST INCREASES AND DECREASES IN RESULTS IN 2023**



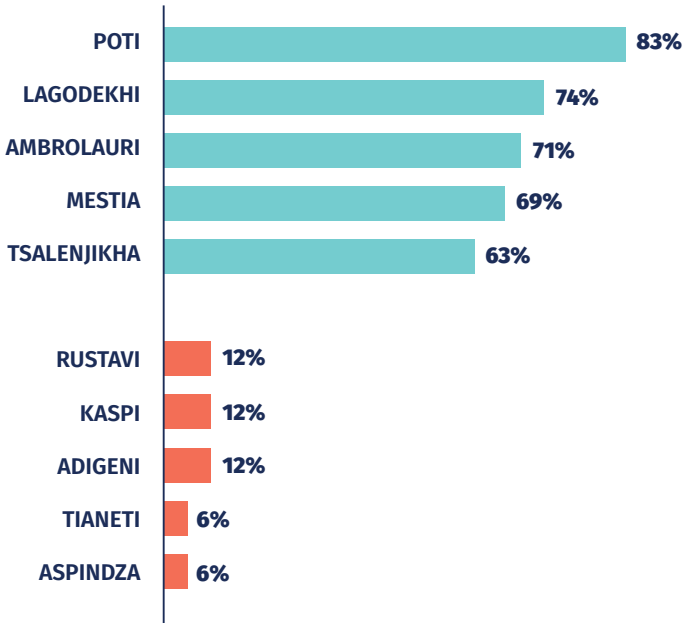
**5.2.2 MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES**

The average rating of the municipal assemblies is 36% on a 100% rating scale, which is 5% higher than the average rating of the executive bodies of the municipalities. The overall average rating of the assemblies has improved by 5% compared to the results of the 2021 evaluation.

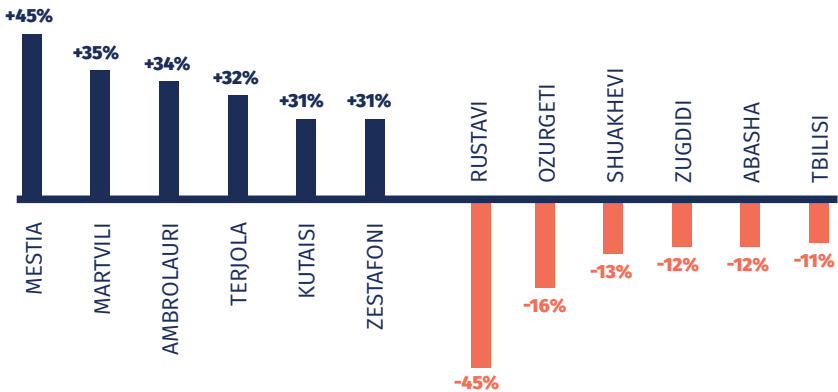
In terms of transparency and accountability, the best result in this category was also observed in the Poti City Assembly - 83%, followed by Lagodekhi (74%), Ambrolauri (71%), Mestia (69%), and Tsalenjikha (63%) assemblies. The lowest results were recorded in Aspindza (6%), Tianeti (6%), Adigeni (12%), Kaspi (12%), and Rustavi (12%) city assemblies.

The sharpest increase of 40% was observed in the case of the Mestia municipal assembly. A high rate of increase was observed in the assemblies of the municipalities of Martvili (35%), Ambrolauri (34%), Terjola (32%), Zestafoni (31%), and the city of Kutaisi (31%). A sharp decrease was seen in the assembly of the city of Rustavi (-45%), and the rate of deterioration is higher than 10% in the cases of the assemblies of Akhmeta, Gardabani, Kazbegi, Abasha, and Tbilisi municipalities.

**MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST RESULTS IN 2023**



**MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES WITH THE SHARPEST INCREASES AND DECREASES IN RESULTS IN 2023**



### 5.3 LSG INDEX BY REGIONS

The operational territories of the state representatives and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara are considered as the regions for the purposes of the assessment results (total of 10 regions).

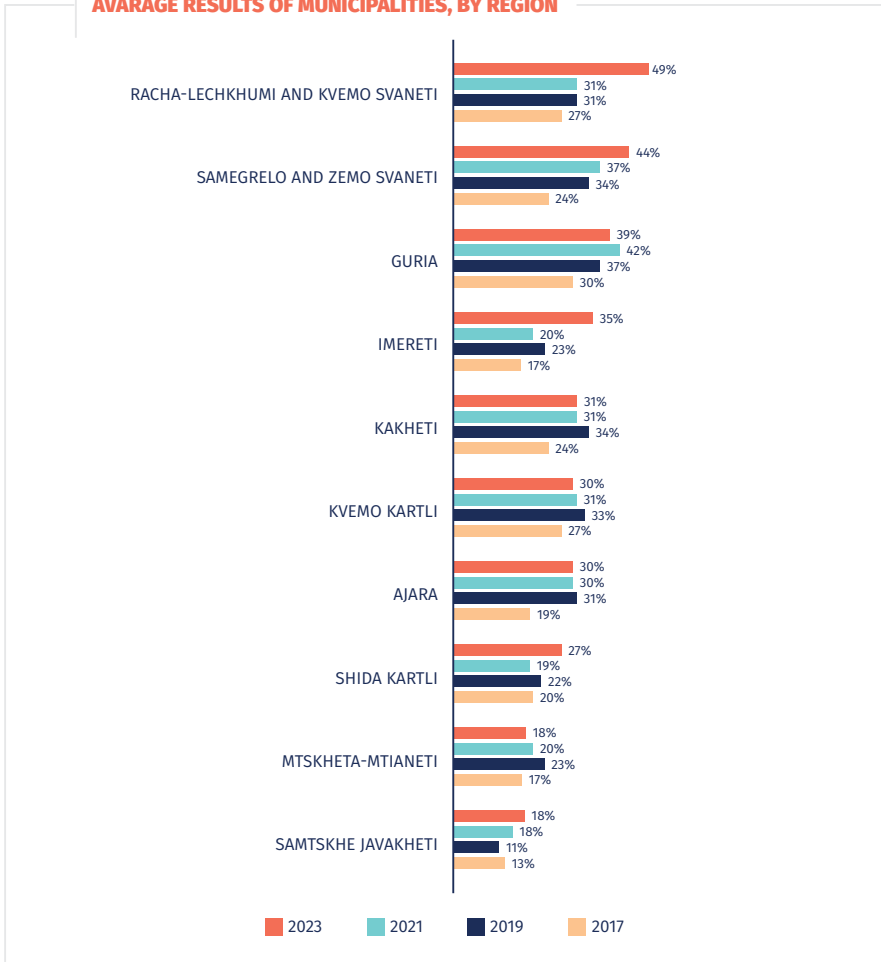
According to the 2023 evaluation result, the improvement of the LSG Index indicator was observed in five regions, while it declined in three regions. The percentage is unchanged in two regions.

According to the results of the assessment, by region, the municipalities of Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti region have the highest average indicator of transparency and accountability (49%), which is almost three times higher than the average indicator of the municipalities of the Samtskhe Javakheti region, which has the lowest indicator (17%) in the Index.

The Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti region has the highest percentage of improvement (18%). The average indicator of the municipalities of the Imereti region has also improved by 15%. No significant deterioration of the results was observed in any region.

According to the results of the assessments carried out between 2017 and 2023, a steadily growing dynamic is recorded only in the case of the average indicator of the municipalities of Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. The average indicator of the municipalities of Mtskheta-Mtianeti is experiencing a dynamic decline.

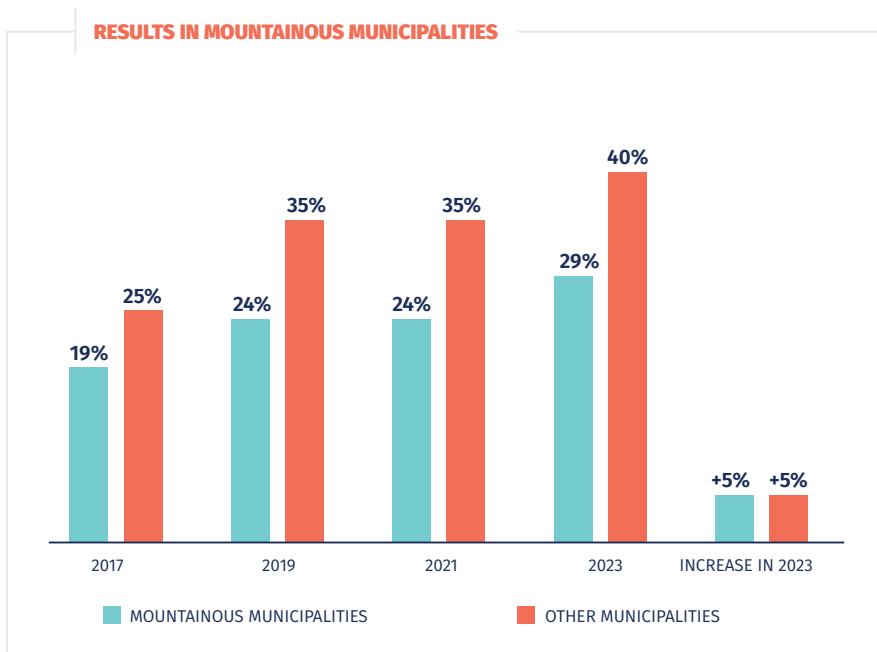
## AVERAGE RESULTS OF MUNICIPALITIES, BY REGION



### 5.4 MUNICIPALITIES OF MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS

The Transparency Index of municipal bodies is one of the indicators of the improvement in the availability of public services in the 2019-2023 strategy for the development of mountainous settlements of Georgia. For the purposes of the objectives of the strategy, a municipality with at least one mountainous settlement can be considered a mountainous municipality (a total of 43 municipalities). According to the results of 2023, the total average indicator of mountainous municipalities is 29%, which is 11% lower than the average indicator—40%—of other municipalities (a total of 21 municipalities).

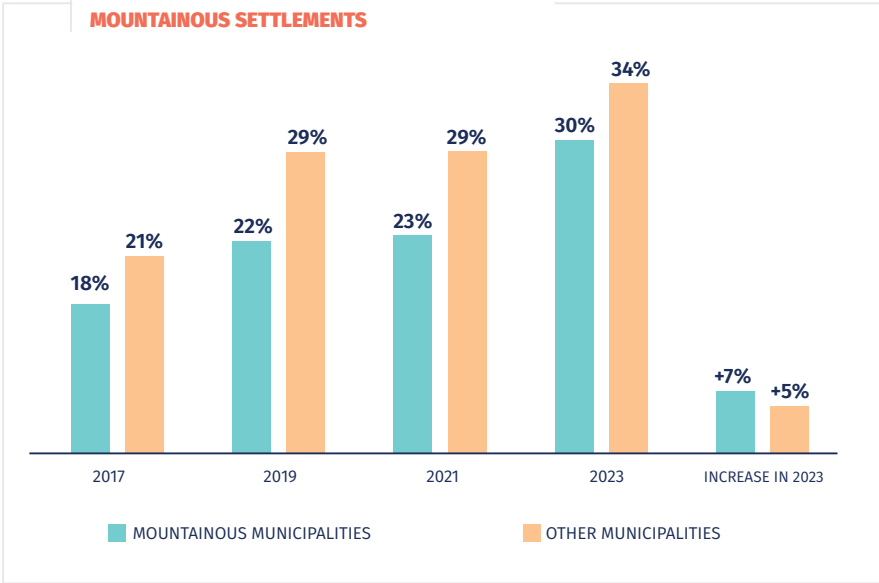
The 2023 rate of improvement in mountainous municipalities is equal to that in other municipalities, but the average LSG Index in mountainous municipalities is still very low at only 29% on a 100% scale.



As mentioned previously, the data indicated above is based on the results of municipalities with even one mountainous settlement and includes approximately 3/4 of the municipalities of Georgia. Accordingly, the results of municipalities where almost all settlements (more than 90% of settlements) are mountainous settlements (16 municipalities in total) were processed separately. According to the 2023 assessment results, the total average indicator of the mentioned municipalities is 30%, which is 4% lower than the average indicator of the rest of the municipalities (48 municipalities in total), at 34%.

According to the 2023 evaluation results, the increase of the average rate of the Index in the mentioned municipalities is 2% higher than the increase of the average rate of the Index in other municipalities. However, the average LSG Index is still very low, at only 30% on a 100% scale.

## RESULTS OF MUNICIPALITIES WITH OVER 90% MOUNTAINOUS SETTLEMENTS



### 5.5 MUNICIPALITIES DENSELY POPULATED BY ETHNIC MINORITIES

The report presents the results of the LSG Index for municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities.

For the purposes of the report, municipalities where more than 50% of the population, according to the 2014 state census data, is an ethnic minority, are considered in this category. These include: Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Marneuli, and Gardabani. According to the 2023 results, the total average rate of the mentioned municipalities was 28%, which is 5% lower than the average rate of 33% of the remaining municipalities (57).

According to the 2023 assessment results, the increase in the average in the Index in the municipalities inhabited by ethnic minorities (+7%) exceeds the increase in the average of other municipalities (+4%). However, the average LSG Index score is still very low, at only 28% on a 100% scale.

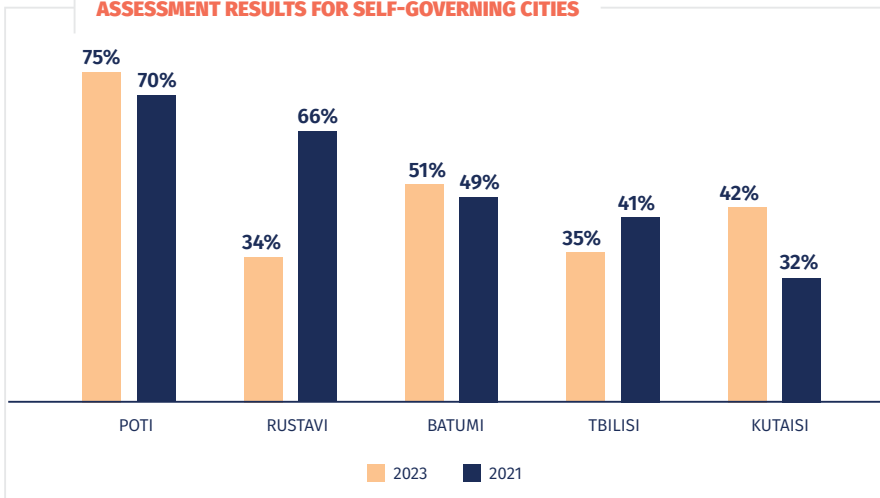
### MUNICIPALITIES WITH DENSELY POPULATED ETHNIC MINORITIES



## 5.6 SELF-GOVERNING CITIES

According to the 2023 results, Poti (75%) and Batumi (51%) have the best score among self-governing cities. The rest of the cities are significantly behind them. It should be noted that, compared to the 2021 assessment results, the City of Kutaisi has improved by 10%, while the City of Rustavi's score has practically halved, and the score of the capital city has also decreased.

### ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR SELF-GOVERNING CITIES

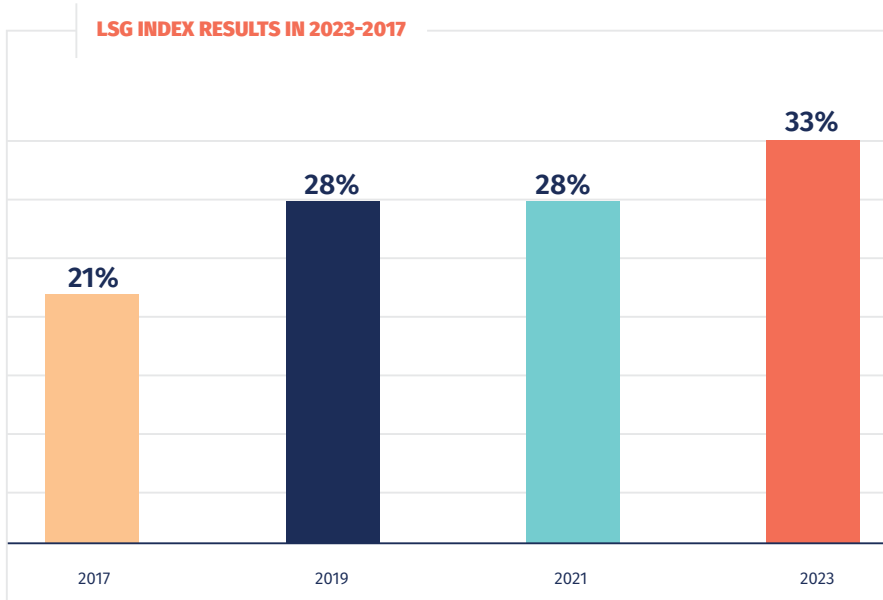




# 06.

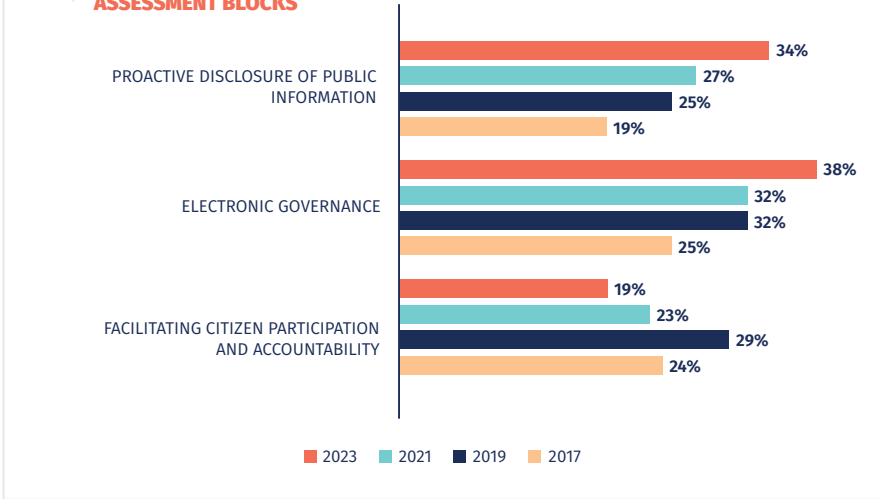
## MAIN DATA ANALYSIS OF THE LSG INDEX

According to the 2023 LSG Index assessment results of the municipalities of Georgia, the average score of municipalities on a 100% scale is 33%, 5% higher than the 2021 assessment. A 12% increase was observed between 2017 and 2023.



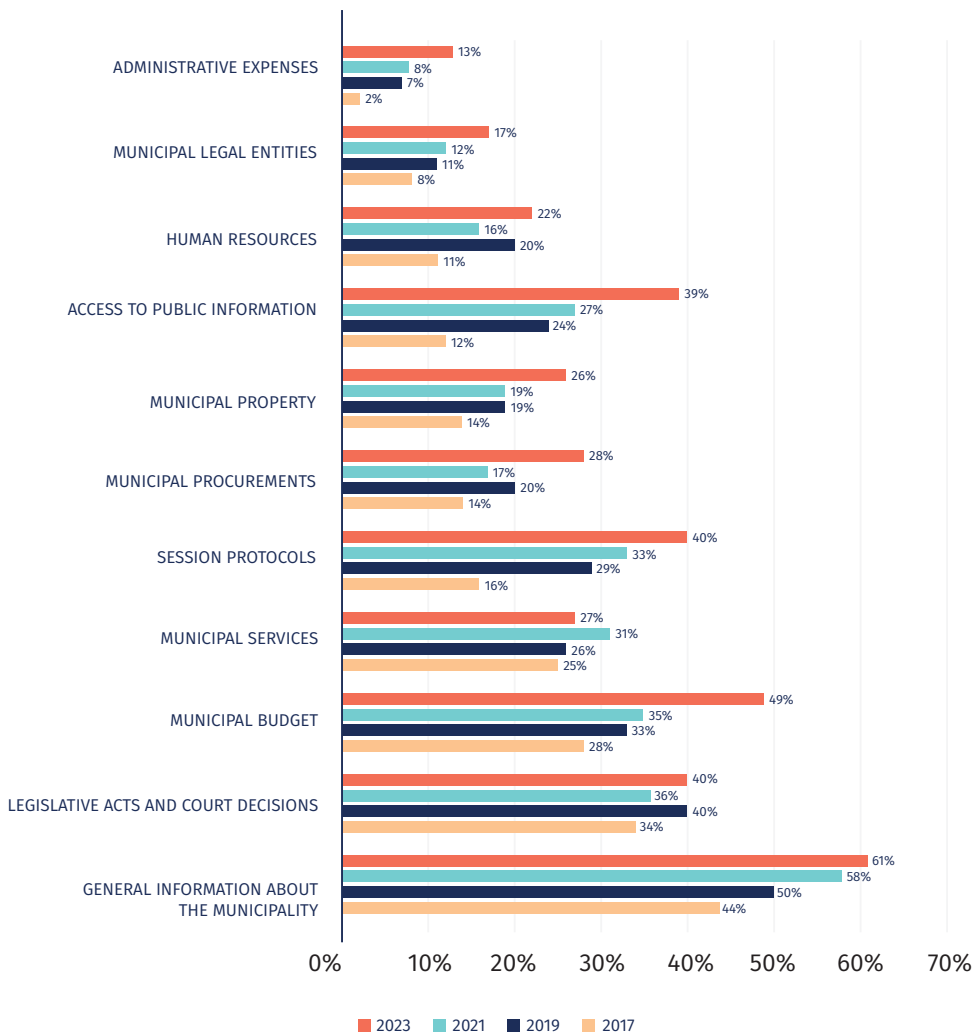
The average results of municipalities according to the 3 evaluation blocks were distributed as follows: Proactive Disclosure of Public Information - 34%; Electronic Governance - 38%; Facilitating Citizen Participation and Accountability - 19%. Compared to the results of the previous evaluation in 2021, improvements were observed in the components of proactive disclosure of public information (7% increase) and e-governance (6% increase), while, as in previous years, indicators of facilitating citizen participation and accountability decreased (a decrease of 4%).

**COMPARISON OF AVERAGE RESULTS IN 2023-2017 ACROSS ASSESSMENT BLOCKS**



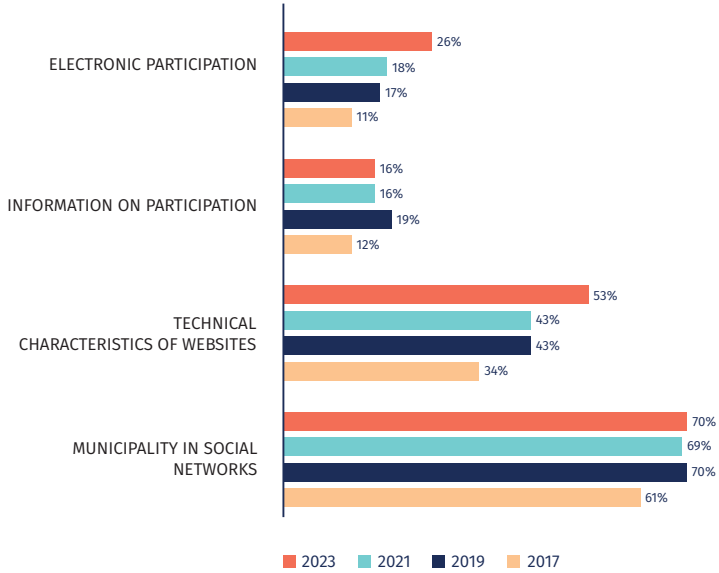
Similar to the 2021 evaluation, the results of the assessment in the block of proactive disclosure of information were impacted negatively to a significant degree by low rates of proactive disclosure of information on various administrative costs and municipal legal entities (13% and 17%, respectively). The situation is better, in relative terms, in terms of proactive disclosure of general information about the municipality (61%) and municipal budgets (49%) in the mentioned block. The greatest rate of improvement was observed in the availability of information on the municipal budget (+14%), public information (+12) and procurement (+11%). Meanwhile, the results worsened only in the component of access to information about municipal services (-4%).

## AVERAGE RESULTS OF MUNICIPALITIES IN 2017-2023 IN PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION



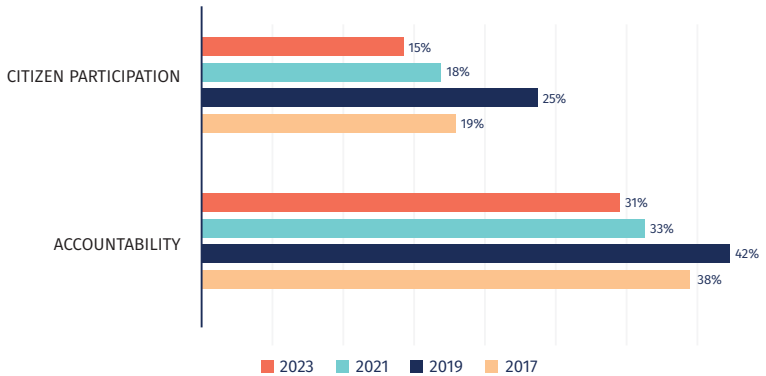
In the remaining two thematic blocks, the highest average result was recorded in the area of e-governance - 38%.

**AVERAGE RESULTS OF MUNICIPALITIES IN 2017-2023  
IN ELETRONIC GOVERNANCE**



In 2023, the indicators for facilitating citizen participation and accountability deteriorated by 3% and 2%.

**AVERAGE RESULTS OF MUNICIPALITIES IN 2017-2023  
IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2023, the overall average score of transparency and accountability of Georgian municipalities is 33%, which means that the indicator has improved by a small margin—5%—compared to the 2021 assessment results. The average municipalities' result of 33% on a 100% rating scale is still unsatisfactory and low.

The formula for improving outcomes remains unchanged for each municipality, namely the clear political will and active action by the municipality's senior officials to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

The recommendations presented below are based on the views of the expert-evaluator team, many years of work experience, and the successful practice of particular municipalities. Adherence to the recommendations will help interested municipalities in meeting the standards set by the Index, which is an important contributor to achieving a high degree of transparency and accountability.

Some of the recommendations, due to their continued relevance, are identical to recommendations presented in previous reports.

### A) PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

- ▶ The executive and legislative bodies of each municipality must ensure the creation of their own or a unified municipal website and its proper operation.
- ▶ Each municipality must create a public information section on their website, where relevant public information will be published thematically and in open data formats.
- ▶ Municipalities must update the list of public information subject to proactive disclosure. It will be beneficial to use the Local Self-Government Index, as well as follow the best practice standards of good governance and transparency of public institutions when updating the list.
- ▶ Municipalities should not be limited only to proactive disclosure of information required by Georgian law. It is desirable that any other public information of public interest be posted on the website. In addition, it is recommended that the publication of information requested by 3 or more applicants from the public institution during the same year be made mandatory. This practice, on the one hand, will reduce the number of requests for public information received in the municipality, and on the other hand, will increase the level of trans

- ▶ pency. This will significantly help the municipalities in fulfilling the tasks of the third goal provided by the new decentralization strategy—Establishing a reliable, accountable, transparent, and result-oriented self-government.

## B) ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Despite the improvement of the basic capabilities of e-governance in municipalities, there is no complete data to assess the degree of use of electronic services by the population. Circumstances revealed during the assessment process indicate that the population in practice makes little use of the improved electronic capabilities offered by municipalities. Thus, it is important for municipalities to conduct an effective information campaign and, if necessary, implement relevant municipal programs to ensure the improvement of the knowledge and skills of the population.
- ▶ In order to increase timely dissemination of information and citizen participation in municipal decision-making processes, it is recommended that the municipal authorities use the website, social networks, and/or mobile applications as one of the main means to do so.
- ▶ Websites that function well technically are one of the main means of disseminating official information, for the effective management of which, the annual mobilization of relevant financial resources and regular updating of the website is required.
- ▶ For the online payment service, the municipality can use already existing electronic payment services and publish information/banners about this possibility on the website.
- ▶ Municipalities should offer citizens innovative electronic services, as well as ensure wider popularity of electronic services available on already existing electronic databases (for example, <https://ms.gov.ge/home/dashboard>) and properly inform the public. The following e-services may be prioritized: spatial planning, architecture and supervision, recreation, giving mountainous settlement status, landscaping and cleaning, infrastructure and transportation, property management, and social services.

## C) FACILITATING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- ▶ In order to raise public awareness of the importance of citizen participation and to increase trust in the process, it is recommended that municipalities implement appropriate educational and information programs, ensuring the allocation of funds from the municipal budget to this purpose.
- ▶ In order to increase citizen participation in issues of local importance, in parallel with the forms of citizen participation prescribed by law, municipalities should consider the development of additional forms and ensure their institutional sustainability by reflecting them in relevant normative acts and budget programs. For example, in 2021, the Municipality of Tsalenjikha approved the "Charter of Freedoms of Tsalenjikha", which defines several additional mechanisms for citizens' participation. A public hall of the municipal assembly has been created in Ozurgeti, and a budgetary program for selecting projects initiated by youth councils is operating in Lagodekhi municipality.
- ▶ In order to ensure that the interests of settlements far from the administrative center and those of citizens with disabilities are taken into account, it is critically important for municipalities to provide electronic forms of citizen participation, as well as to develop technical capabilities for broadcasting of and remote participation (speaking, asking questions and receiving answers) in the sessions of the municipal assembly, assembly commissions, and Citizen Advisory Council.
- ▶ In order to ensure citizen involvement in the activities of the representative body of the municipality, more guarantees should appear in the regulations of the Municipal Assembly that will ensure the effective implementation of the opportunities for citizens to attend meetings and express their opinions. In particular, it is necessary for citizens to have access to information about the time of the planned sessions, the agenda, and the issues to be discussed at the session no later than one week before its planned date.
- ▶ It is important to ensure that the mechanisms for citizen participation prescribed by law grow and are adapted to local conditions. In particular, it is recommended to reduce or delegate to the municipality the right to determine the minimum quorum (20% of the population) for holding general assemblies of the settlement and to delegate the discretion of the detailed regulation of the general assembly procedure to the municipality. This approach will create the possibility of maximum adaptation of the procedure to local conditions. At the same time, the mayors of the municipality should review the rules for forming a mayor's civil advisory council and establish open, transparent, and competitive procedures for its composition.

- ▶ It is necessary to take steps to increase the accountability of the mayor and assembly members to voters. These officials should hold meetings with citizens within the deadlines and according to the rules established by law. Remote mechanisms for public hearings of reports may also be used. In order to ensure the interactivity of the reporting procedure, it is important to take into account the good practice of some municipalities that involves publishing the text of the reports in advance.
- ▶ Municipalities should share the good practice of having a civil (participatory) budget that has been implemented in other municipalities of Georgia. At the same time, in order to ensure greater foresight of the procedure and public confidence in the city budget, it is important that civil budget issues be defined through a normative act of the municipal assembly, and that the decision made by the population when planning the civil budget be implemented. However, for the sustainability of the civil budget, it is important for the funds of the civil budget to be tied to any indicator of the budget (for example, 2-5% of the volume of own revenues).
- ▶ Municipalities should pay special attention to and develop mechanisms to ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities in local public life. To this purpose, it is important to adapt the websites of municipalities and municipal buildings to the needs of people with disabilities, as well as to develop special consultation mechanisms to encourage their active involvement in the public decision-making process.
- ▶ It is recommended that municipalities create and develop special consultation mechanisms to ensure the encouragement of civic activism among the youth. At the local level, young people should have the opportunity to participate in the municipal decision-making process in both youth policy and other areas. In addition, the mechanism for this should not be limited to one-time activities and should be characterized by sustainability.



## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ One of the goals of the 2020-2025 Decentralization Strategy is to achieve a high standard of transparency and accountability, the performance indicator of which is the increase of the LSG index to at least 55% by 2025. According to 2023 assessment results, the rate of the LSG index is 33%, which indicates the need for significant efforts to achieve the set task. To this purpose, the central government needs to take active steps and implement measures, including, if needed, legislative changes, in order to create better conditions for increasing transparency and accountability in municipalities. Standards from the Index, evaluation results and recommendations, as well as positive experiences from other municipalities can be used in the mentioned process.
- ▶ Similar to previous years, the 2023 assessment practice shows that some municipalities begin taking steps to meet the Index standards immediately before the start of the assessment process or directly during the assessment process, which is not enough to achieve a high degree of transparency and accountability. Therefore, it is critical that municipalities plan improvement measures immediately after the evaluation process is completed, based on the results of their own municipality's evaluation and taking into account the positive practices of other municipalities. This approach will give them enough time to implement changes as well as to train their human resources.
- ▶ Municipalities should approve improvement measures in the form of a written plan that will facilitate consistent change and sustainability of results. It is recommended that the Municipal Assembly and the City Hall develop such plans separately. To this purpose, a responsible person or a working group should be appointed through a decision of the chairperson of the municipal assembly and the mayor to develop a 2-year plan for the improvement of the quality of transparency and accountability (the plan should outline the measures to be implemented, deadlines, resources, and responsible entities). The mayor/chairperson of the municipal assembly directly and/or with the help of a responsible person designated by them must ensure constant monitoring and regular reporting of the implementation of the plan.

**APPENDIX- 2023 ASSESSMENT RESULTS  
BY MUNICIPALITY**

N	MUNICIPALITIE	FINAL SCORE	CITY HALL	MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY
1	POTI CITY MUNICIPALITY	75%	70%	83%
2	AMBROLAURI MUNICIPALITY	66%	62%	71%
3	LAGODEKHI MUNICIPALITY	63%	56%	74%
4	MESTIA MUNICIPALITY	56%	49%	69%
5	ONI MUNICIPALITY	55%	57%	52%
6	MARTVILI MUNICIPALITY	55%	52%	59%
7	BATUMI CITY MUNICIPALITY	51%	50%	52%
8	TELAVI MUNICIPALITY	50%	43%	63%
9	TSAGERI MUNICIPALITY	49%	54%	41%
10	TSALENJKHA MUNICIPALITY	47%	36%	64%
11	KHARAGAULI MUNICIPALITY	46%	47%	46%
12	TSKALTUBO MUNICIPALITY	46%	44%	50%
13	OZURGETI MUNICIPALITY	45%	33%	63%
14	ZUGDIDI MUNICIPALITY	44%	41%	50%
15	BOLNISI MUNICIPALITY	43%	49%	33%
16	TERJOLA MUNICIPALITY	42%	44%	38%
17	KUTAISI CITY MUNICIPALITY	42%	30%	60%
18	GORI MUNICIPALITY	41%	43%	39%

19	ZESTAFONI MUNICIPALITY	41%	42%	38%
20	LANCHKHUTI MUNICIPALITY	40%	31%	54%
21	KHONI MUNICIPALITY	39%	38%	40%
22	KHASHURI MUNICIPALITY	36%	29%	48%
23	BAGHDATI MUNICIPALITY	36%	34%	39%
24	VANI MUNICIPALITY	35%	37%	33%
25	GARDABANI MUNICIPALITY	35%	32%	40%
26	TBILISI CITY MUNICIPALITY	35%	31%	42%
27	CHKHOROTSKU MUNICIPALITY	35%	34%	38%
28	SIGNAGHI MUNICIPALITY	35%	31%	41%
29	RUSTAVI CITY MUNICIPALITY	34%	47%	12%
30	CHOKHATAURI MUNICIPALITY	33%	30%	38%
31	SENAKI MUNICIPALITY	31%	26%	39%
32	KOBULETI MUNICIPALITY	29%	24%	37%
33	KHELVACHAURI MUNICIPALITY	29%	29%	28%
34	KEDI MUNICIPALITY	29%	27%	32%
35	SAMTREDIA MUNICIPALITY	28%	29%	25%
36	ABASHA MUNICIPALITY	28%	27%	28%
37	DMANISI MUNICIPALITY	28%	23%	35%
38	KHOBI MUNICIPALITY	28%	22%	36%

39	DUSHETI MUNICIPALITY	26%	24%	31%
40	AKHALTSIKHE MUNICIPALITY	26%	25%	28%
41	KHULO MUNICIPALITY	25%	24%	27%
42	SACHKHERE MUNICIPALITY	25%	25%	25%
43	LENTEKHI MUNICIPALITY	25%	26%	24%
44	TETRITSKARO MUNICIPALITY	25%	25%	24%
45	TSALKA MUNICIPALITY	24%	18%	34%
46	GURJAANI MUNICIPALITY	24%	26%	21%
47	AKHALKALAKI MUNICIPALITY	24%	22%	27%
48	SAGAREJO MUNICIPALITY	24%	19%	31%
49	MARNEULI MUNICIPALITY	24%	22%	27%
50	CHIATURA MUNICIPALITY	22%	27%	15%
51	MTSKHETA MUNICIPALITY	22%	25%	17%
52	AKHMETA MUNICIPALITY	20%	17%	26%
53	BORJOMI MUNICIPALITY	19%	17%	22%
54	DEDOPLISTSKARO MUNICIPALITY	18%	16%	23%
55	NINOTSMINDA MUNICIPALITY	18%	17%	20%
56	KARELI MUNICIPALITY	18%	20%	14%
57	TKIBULI MUNICIPALITY	18%	19%	16%
58	SHUAKHEVI MUNICIPALITY	16%	17%	15%

59	KVARELI MUNICIPALITY	16%	15%	18%
60	KAZBEGI MUNICIPALITY	15%	16%	14%
61	KASPI MUNICIPALITY	13%	14%	12%
62	ADIGENI MUNICIPALITY	12%	12%	12%
63	TIANETI MUNICIPALITY	9%	10%	6%
64	ASPINDZA MUNICIPALITY	6%	6%	6%



