Local Transparency Index for 2025

Final report

January 2026

Content

1. Introduction

During 2025, Transparency International–Macedonia conducted a pilot assessment of the Local Transparency Index, in accordance with the Transparency International methodology, with the aim of determining the extent to which municipalities are transparent towards citizens, how they publish information on their operations, how accessible this information is to the public and in what ways citizens can access both municipal institutions and the services provided by municipalities.

The municipalities were assessed on the basis of a questionnaire consisting of 91 questions covering multiple areas of municipal competences. The sample included the largest municipality by population in each planning region, namely: Aerodrom, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Strumica, Tetovo, and Shtip.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, there is a single-tier system of local self-government. Local self-government is regulated by the Law on Local Self-Government, which divides the country into 80 municipalities, with the City of Skopje having a special status and consisting of 10 Skopje municipalities.

The Law regulates: the competences of the municipality; the direct participation of citizens in decision-making; the organization and functioning of municipal bodies; municipal administration; acts of municipal bodies; municipal property ownership; supervision over the work of municipal bodies; dissolution of the municipal council; mechanisms for cooperation between municipalities and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia; local self-government units; protection of local self-government; determination of official languages in municipalities; and other issues of importance for local self-government.[1]

The main bodies of the municipality are the Mayor and the Municipal Council. These bodies are elected through direct local elections held every four years. The most recent elections were held in October 2025.

Municipalities have competences in several areas[2], including:

- Education (primary schools and part of secondary schools)
- Healthcare (primary healthcare – partially)
- Urbanism and spatial planning
- Communal services (water, waste, public cleanliness)
- Local transportation
- Culture and sports
- Environmental protection
- Local-level social protection

Municipalities are financed from their own sources of revenue, such as local taxes, fees and charges; through state grants and other sources of income; and by borrowing on domestic and foreign capital markets.[3]

---

[1] Law on local self-government: https://portal.mdt.gov.mk/post-body-files/zakonii-file-1bsL.pdf
[2] Ibid, article 1
[3] Ibid, article 22

In addition to the Law on Local Self-Government, other laws were considered in accordance with the indicators, such as the Law on Budgets, the Law on Public Procurement, the Law on Access to Information of Public Character and others related to transparency in various aspects of local government competences. Importantly, the assessment does not focus solely on compliance with legal provisions, but also evaluates higher standards of transparency that lead to genuine accountability to citizens.

Poor results overall or in specific categories do not necessarily indicate that corruption is widespread in those areas or within those local self-government units (LSGs). Similarly, good results do not guarantee the absence of corruption in an LSG, but they reduce the likelihood that poor governance or corruption will go unnoticed.

The assessment reflects the situation at the time the research was conducted, that is, when the results were verified, and the current situation may differ from the snapshot presented here.

2. Methodology

The Local Transparency Index is a sum of positive points obtained from indicators that include analysis of websites, documents, responses to requests for access to information of public character and direct observation of administrative work, i.e., service centers, as well as data obtained from other bodies. The TI–Macedonia team collected this information throughout 2025. After completing the analysis, which included multiple elements, the results were sent to the assessed municipalities for verification. The municipalities had the opportunity to review the indicators, see how they were evaluated, provide feedback on areas where they disagreed with the assessment, and submit additional materials to ensure that the scores were accurate. Out of the eight municipalities, only three responded to this verification procedure.

The Local Transparency Index conducted in North Macedonia consists of 91 questions, with a total score of 100 points. The questions are divided into 8 sections. The first section relates to the Municipal Council and contains 11 questions. These questions focus on the transparency of publishing Council decisions, accompanying acts and documents, information on voting and decision-making within the Council, as well as whether citizens are timely informed about the Council's meeting agendas and whether these meetings can be followed live. This section also covers the availability of information about the councilors who are part of the Council, including their contact information.

The second section relates to the municipal budget. This part examines the availability of data on the current budget, including the budget rationale, amendments and revisions (rebalancing), monthly and quarterly reports, the final account, audit reports, invitations to public budget hearings and reports from these hearings, as well as other documents related to the preparation, adoption and monitoring of budget implementation. The information is assessed based on 13 indicators.

The third section, LSGs and Citizens, consists of 16 questions. This section includes questions that require direct observation of the municipalities and whether they have a service center (counter hall) through which all services are provided. Some of the indicators assess the existence of a service center where citizens can obtain information about their rights and how to exercise them, thereby reducing discretion in interactions with municipal staff. This section also covers questions regarding the ability of citizens to report irregularities, including corruption, the availability of information on the administration's working hours with citizens, scheduling meetings with the Mayor, information on the handling of complaints, representations and objections, opportunities for citizens to attend Council sessions, guidance on reporting issues and similar aspects.

The section on access to public information, which consists of 5 questions, evaluates the availability of guidelines on how to submit such requests and the timeliness of municipalities in providing responses to requests for free access to information of public character.

The public procurement section is assessed based on 4 indicators.

To improve the transparency of public enterprises and public institutions, this index also assesses the publication of data related to these entities. A sample of one public enterprise and one public institution is taken from each municipality. This section examines whether the LSGs, as well as the enterprises and institutions themselves, including their managers, fulfill primarily the legal obligations regarding transparency and additionally the standards established within the Local Transparency Index.

The indicators related to public debates, the allocation of property for lease, funding for media, funding for associations, and reports on all funds distributed to external entities are grouped in the Public debates and competitions section, which consists of 18 indicators.

The final section contains the remaining 14 indicators, which include an assessment of the accessibility of municipal development strategies, ethical plans and plans on integrity and anti-corruption, rules on organizational structure, employee salaries, reports on municipal operations and contacts with lobbyists.

The methodology has been implemented by Transparency International chapters in multiple countries since 2015. In North Macedonia, this pilot assessment was conducted in 2025, covering 8 municipalities, the largest in each planning region.

3.General Findings

Local authorities are still not at a high level in terms of transparency and accountability and additional efforts are needed to ensure timely information on their operations and the services they provide to citizens.

The highest-rated municipality is Bitola with 67 points, followed by Veles with 60, Shtip with 55, Strumica with 54, Kumanovo with 51, Aerodrom with 49, Tetovo with 43, and the lowest-rated municipality is Ohrid with 39 points. The average score is 52.
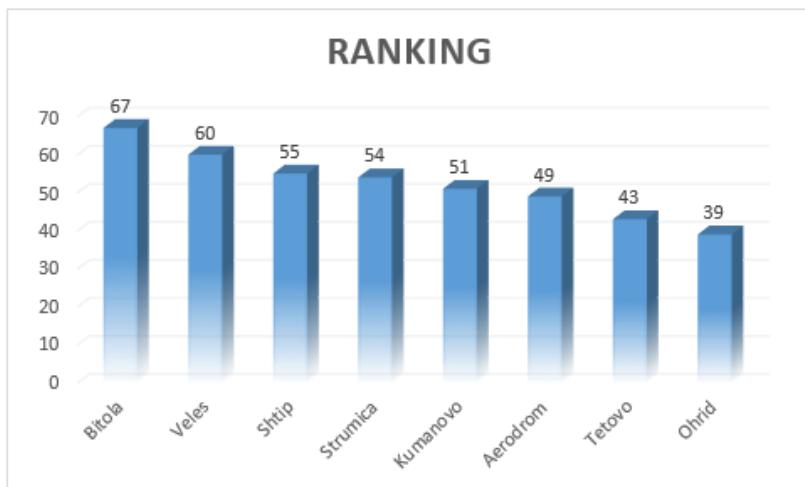
Each of the sections was assessed as follows:

Municipality	Council (max 14)	Budget (max 15)	LSGs and citizens (max 16)	Free access to information (max 7)	Public procurement (max 5)	Public enterprises and institutions (max 18)	Public debates and competitions (max 10)	Other indicators (max 15)	Total
Veles	7	11	11	4	5	11	3	8	60
Bitola	11	11	9	7	5	12	4	8	67
Strumica	9	9	8	6	5	6	4	7	54
Ohrid	8	4	6	1	4	5	4	7	39
Kumanovo	9	6	9	4	5	7	4	7	51
Shtip	9	8	10	4	5	8	3	8	55
Tetovo	5	5	6	3	5	7	3	9	43
Aerodrom	10	10	5	6	2	5	3	8	49
	Average score per section								
	8.5	8.0	8.0	4.4	4.5	7.6	3.5	7.8	
	Percentage of awarded points per section								
	60.7%	53.3%	50%	62.5%	90%	42.4%	35%	51.7%	

Municipalities have rarely scored over 60% of the points in any given section, except for public procurement, which received the highest scores. They are borderline in the indicators related to the work of the Municipal Council and access to public information. The lowest-rated sections are public hearings and public tenders, as well as public enterprises and public institutions.

3.1. Findings for Section 1: Municipal Council

The first section relates to the work of the Municipal Council and contains 11 indicators, each scored with one or two points. The total points available in this section are 14. The questions focus on the transparency of publishing Council decisions, accompanying acts and documents, information on voting and decision-making within the Council, as well as whether citizens are timely informed about the Council's meeting agendas and whether these meetings can be followed live. This section also covers the availability of information about the councilors who are part of the Council, including their contact details.

The assessed municipalities were scored as follows:
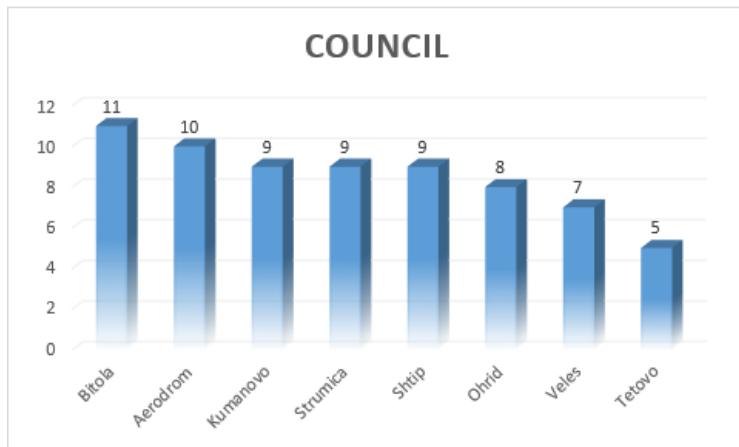
The highest number of points was received by the municipality of Bitola, followed by Aerodrom with one point less. Kumanovo, Strumica and Shtip each scored 9 points, followed by Ohrid, Veles and Tetovo.

Most municipalities publish the decisions adopted by the Municipal Council on a dedicated section of their website for the Council, as well as in the official gazette. What is missing, however, is the publication of draft acts prior to their consideration in Council sessions. Municipalities do publish the number of votes by which decisions are adopted, but there is no practice of publishing the individual votes of each councilor.

The municipalities included in this index regularly publish the agenda for the next session and provide a list of councilors with contact information, allowing citizens to communicate with them.

3.2. Findings for Section 2: Budget

Each municipality has its own budget. In this section, municipalities were assessed based on 13 indicators, carrying a total of 15 points. These indicators relate to citizen participation in the preparation of the municipal budget, the comprehensibility of the budget, the availability of information on municipal websites, information on budget implementation, and other data that allow citizens to have a clearer overview of how budgetary funds are spent.
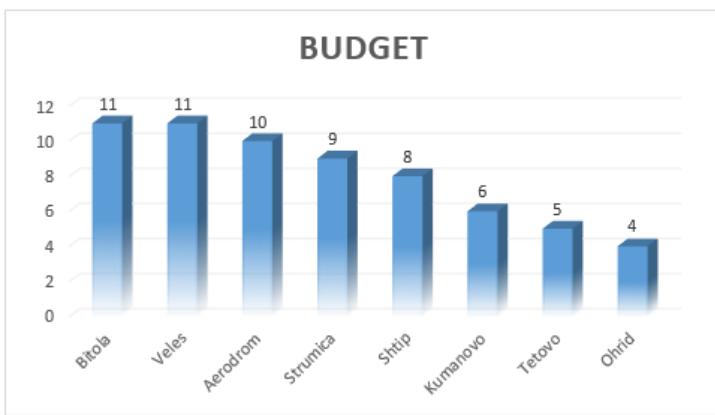

All municipalities have their budgets available on their websites, and the budget is most often published together with an explanatory note. What is missing, however, is that budgets are not always published in a readable and easily searchable format. Instead of allowing information to be easily viewed, copied, and analyzed, budgets are often posted in scanned form.

Municipalities publish quarterly reports on budget implementation in accordance with the Law on Budgets. This index also examined whether municipalities publish monthly reports, even though this is not a legal requirement. No such reports were found in any of the municipalities, but with amendments to the Law on Budgets, budget users will have a legal obligation to provide these on a monthly basis.
Citizen budgets are published, but this is not yet an established regular practice. Calls for public budget hearings are generally published, although information about the discussions and proposals arising during the meetings is often missing.

What is lacking is the audit of budget execution. External audits of municipalities are conducted by the State Audit Office, which audits based on its own program and annual audit plan. There is no information in municipalities regarding internal audits or audits conducted by external audit firms.
Finally, what should also be included in the budget are financial plans of indirect budget users, making the structure of funds allocated to them visible.

3.3. Findings for Section 3: Local Self-Government Units (LSGs) and Citizens

This section also involves direct observation of the municipalities to assess the existence of a service center (counter hall) through which all services are provided, whether there is information on deadlines for issuing documents and instructions, or guidance on where this information can be found online. It also evaluates the ability to directly report irregularities, including corruption. Additionally, it assesses whether municipal websites provide information about inspection services, whether citizens can track cases, whether information on the handling of complaints, representations and objections is available, and whether contact details are provided for council members, local community presidents, and the Mayor of the municipality.
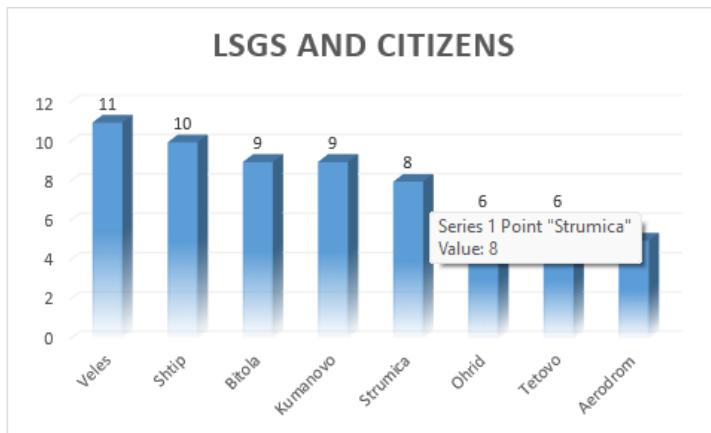
A large number of municipalities do not have service centers, and those that do exist are not organized in a way that effectively informs citizens. Municipalities need to ensure that service centers are functional and serve the purpose of providing information to citizens.

3.4. Findings for Section 4: Free Access to Information of Public Character

This section's indicators assess whether municipalities regularly respond to requests for access to information of public character. This is evaluated through 5 indicators, carrying a total of 7 points. The highest-rated municipality is Bitola with 7 points, followed by Aerodrom and Strumica with 6 points, and the remaining municipalities.
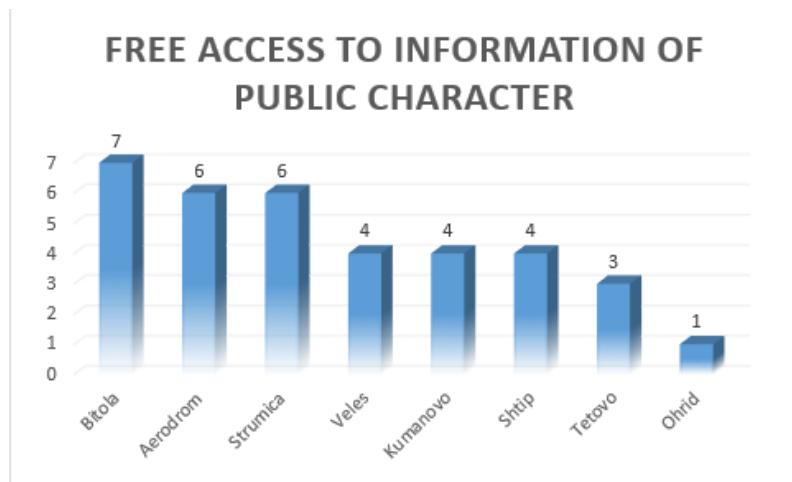
To obtain information for the indicators in this section, requests for access to public information were submitted in person to each municipality. All municipalities, except for Ohrid, responded to these requests in a timely manner. Information was also requested from the Agency for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information to determine whether complaints had been filed against municipalities for failing to respond to such requests.

Complaints were filed against some municipalities for failing to provide (ignoring) information of public importance and some of these municipalities had unresolved cases during 2024, which is why they were not positively rated.

This section also evaluates whether information on submitting requests for access to information of public character is published on municipal websites and whether citizens can find such information directly at service centers. All municipalities provide information on their websites regarding how to submit such requests, but only a few municipalities provide this information in their service centers for citizens.

3.5. Findings for Section 5: Public Procurement

This section consists of 4 indicators, carrying a total of 5 points and assesses transparency in the area of public procurement. It examines the available information on municipal public procurements, current announcements, annual plans and public procurement contracts.

All municipalities, except Aerodrom, received the highest score and have accessible information on public procurement. In addition to publication on municipal websites, this information is also available through the electronic public procurement system.
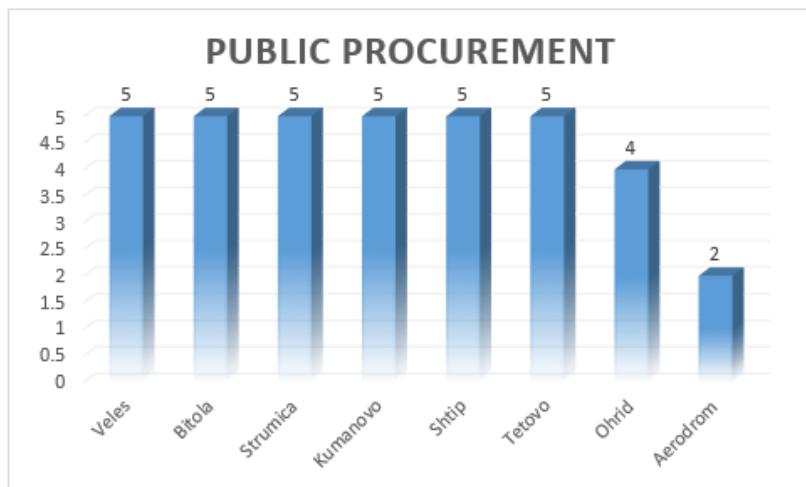
3.6. Findings for Section 6: Public Enterprises and Public Institutions

This section provides a more detailed examination of public enterprises and public institutions within the municipalities. These entities are assessed through 18 indicators, carrying a total of 18 points. For the purposes of this index, one public enterprise and one public institution were evaluated in each municipality. Each municipality provides information on its website about which enterprises and institutions operate within its jurisdiction.

Most public enterprises and public institutions have their own websites, but transparency remains at a very low level. The information is either outdated or entirely absent. Just as at the central level, local-level information about these entities is lacking, and analysis of their operations, fulfillment of obligations, appointment of responsible persons, and similar matters is very limited. Transparency in this area needs significant improvement.

The scores by municipality are as follows:
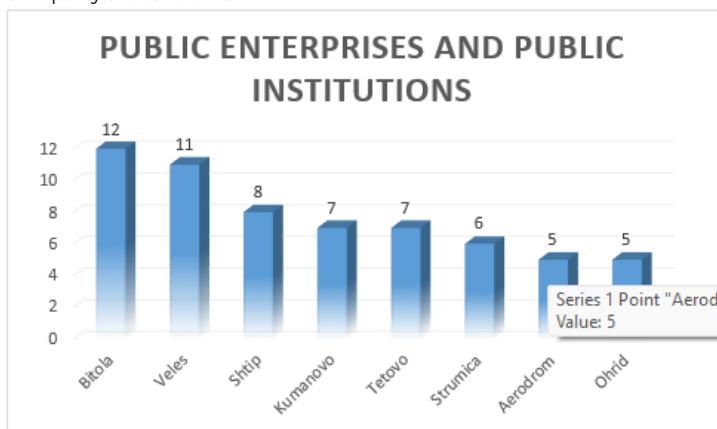
Again, the highest-rated municipality is Bitola, while the lowest-rated, with the same number of points, are Aerodrom and Ohrid. In this section, since Aerodrom is part of the Skopje municipalities, the public enterprises fall under the jurisdiction of the City of Skopje.

In most municipalities, information on the selection of directors is missing, and there are no additional documents indicating when a director was last elected, when an acting director was appointed, or information on candidates who applied during an open competition for managerial positions. Unfortunately, public enterprises and public institutions very rarely publish annual work plans or annual reports on completed activities. Accountability to citizens is at a very low level and additional efforts are needed from municipal authorities and the management of these entities to provide timely and updated information on their operations.

Regrettably, these public enterprises and institutions also lack information on the number of employees and the organization of job positions.

3.7. Findings for Section 7: Public debates and Public Competitions

Part of the funds available to municipalities is allocated to organizations and media, and municipalities also have property that they lease. This section assessed the availability of information on announced public competitions, reports on activities carried out by other organizations receiving municipal funds, and reports on property leases through 10 indicators, carrying a total of 10 points. In this section, the municipalities of Bitola, Kumanovo, Strumica and Ohrid each received 4 points, while Aerodrom, Veles, Tetovo, and Shtip received 3 points.
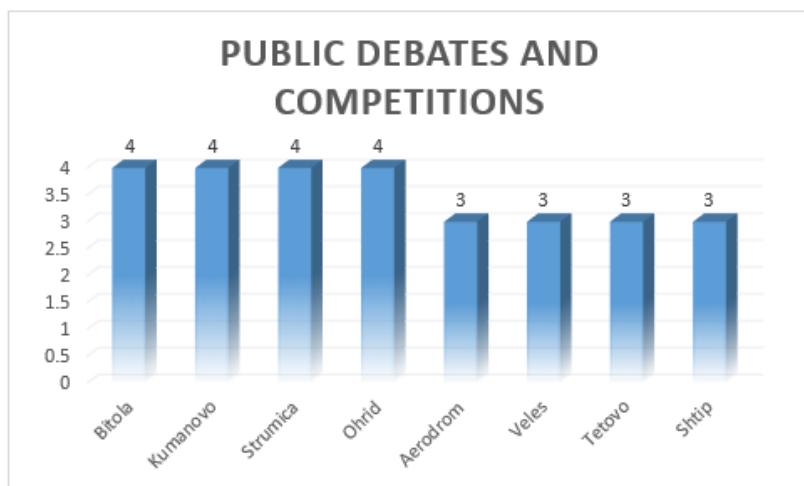
All municipalities were positively rated for holding public debates on the municipal budget, but none of the municipalities publish the proposals received regarding the budget or whether those proposals were incorporated into budget items. They do publish information on property put up for lease and on funds planned to be allocated to associations.

What is missing for property leases is information on how the leases were awarded, while for funds allocated to associations, there is information on where the funds were given, but no reports on how these funds were spent or for which activities. Within this index, one of the indicators also includes funds allocated to media, but the municipalities reviewed do not allocate funds specifically for media purposes.

3.8. Findings for Section 8: Other Indicators

The final section of this index includes 14 indicators, carrying a total of 15 points, which relate to existing strategies and work plans of the municipalities, reports on implemented activities, information related to anti-corruption efforts, integrity and lobbying. In this section, the highest-rated municipality is Tetovo with 9 points, followed by Aerodrom, Bitola, Veles and Shtip with 8 points each and then Kumanovo, Strumica and Ohrid with 7 points each.

OTHER INDICATORS

Municipality	Points
Tetovo	9
Aerodrom	8
Bitola	8
Veles	8
Shtip	8
Kumanovo	7
Strumica	7
Ohrid	7
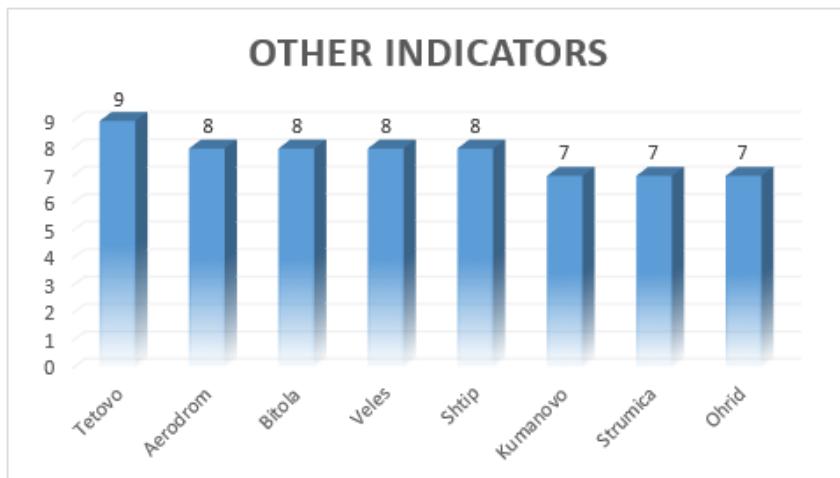
All municipalities prepare strategies covering various sectors of their work. Annual work plans are missing in half of the municipalities assessed, while only one municipality, Shtip, has a published annual report. Although this is not a legal obligation for municipalities, to ensure transparency and accountability for spent funds, it would be beneficial to prepare a report alongside the final budget statement, allowing users of municipal services to understand how the municipality manages its budget. Most municipalities publish acts regarding internal organization and staffing, including the number of employees, but salary information remains largely unavailable to the public. Only one municipality provides information on the honoraria of council members. Most municipalities have adopted integrity plans and anti-corruption plans. Urban planning documents are also publicly accessible. What is missing, however, is information about municipal property leased to others—that is, what property the municipality owns, how much is leased, and how much revenue is generated from these leases.

Information on lobbyists is not available on the municipalities' own websites, nor is it accessible through the Lobbyist Register, which falls under the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. All mayors have submitted information about their assets to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

In this pilot assessment, the eight largest municipalities from each region in North Macedonia were included. All municipalities have their own websites. In some municipalities, these websites are regularly updated, while in others only certain information is updated. Transparency is not at a high level, and a series of measures need to be taken to improve municipal accountability. Citizens should be well informed about the services provided by the municipality and how to access them, as well as how the budget is utilized and the benefits citizens receive from local authorities. A large amount of information is missing from municipal websites, which makes it difficult to create a clear picture of how municipalities contribute to regional development and how the funds allocated to them are managed and used for activities that positively impact the lives of citizens.

TI-Macedonia provides the following recommendations:

- Information about Council sessions is regularly published, but the decisions and documents to be discussed are not made available prior to the sessions. Each municipality should have a dedicated section where all information about Council sessions is published, including: the agenda, the decisions and documents to be discussed, the adopted decisions, and the voting results for each individual decision;
- Municipal budgets should be published in a searchable format, allowing the data to be easily analyzed and compared;
- Citizen budgets should be published regularly;
- Financial reports are published regularly, but there is a need for strengthened oversight of budget spending through regular audits;
- The transparency of public enterprises and public institutions under the authority of the municipalities is at a very low level. Each of these entities should establish a functional website containing information about their operations, such as: annual work plans and annual reports on implemented activities; number of employees and job classifications; procedures and documents for the selection of directors; price lists and other documents of interest to citizens;
- Detailed information on the property owned by the municipalities, as well as information on municipal property that has been leased out;

- Reports on the funds that municipalities allocate to organizations, specifying which activities were financed by the municipality and what has been implemented;

- Publication of an annual report on the work of the municipalities;

- Well-equipped service centers that are functional and beneficial for citizens;

- Possibility for citizens to track the status of their cases within the municipality;

- More transparent information about public hearings in which citizens can participate.

Annex 1. List of Local Transparency Index indicators

Annex 1. Local Transparency Index Indicators

Indicators
1. Are the decisions adopted by the Council published and available on the website?
2. Are the decisions adopted by the Council in the past 24 months available on the website?
3. Have the draft acts been published on the website prior to consideration at the Council session?
4. Are the results of voting at the last session of the Council published on the website?
5. Is there any information on how the councilors voted individually?
6. Have the amendments, together with their explanatory notes, that were considered at the last session of the Council been published?
7. Is the agenda of the next session of the Council published on the website?
8. Is there a list of councilors published on the website?
9. Is there any information on the contact of citizens with councilors on the website?
10. Is the Official Gazette available on the website?
11. Are the sessions of the Council broadcast (or is the integral recording available) on the website of the local self-government units, the local self-government website on one of the social networks and/or the YouTube channel of the local self-government units?
12. Is the budget for the current year available on the website?
13. Is the explanation of the budget available on the website?
14. Is the budget published on the website in machine-readable or searchable form?
15. Are the quarterly budget implementation reports available on the website?
16. Are the quarterly reports on the implementation of the budget published in the 6 digits of the economic classification?
17. Are the monthly reports (or cumulative monthly reports) on the implementation of the budget available on the website?
18. Has the Citizens' Guide to the Budget (Citizens' Budget) been published on the website?
19. Was there a public debate on the budget – citizen surveys or consultative gatherings?
20. Is there a public invitation to the public debate on the budget published on the website?
21. Has the report on the public debate on the budget been published on the website?
22. Has the draft of the final accounts of the budget been considered and published in the last 12 months, or has the final account of the budget been adopted?

23. Has the audit of the final accounts of the budget been considered and published in the last 12 months?
24. Have the financial plans of indirect budget beneficiaries been published, i.e. is the structure of funds intended for indirect beneficiaries visible?
25. Does the municipal administration have a service center (counter hall) through which it provides all services?
26. Are the deadlines for issuing documents and instructions visibly displayed in the service center (counter hall) or in the premises of the administration, or is it pointed out where deadlines and instructions can be found on the internet?
27. Is there a possibility for citizens to report irregularities in the work or violation of the law, including corruption, in the service center (counter hall) or in the premises of the administration?
28. Is there an option on the website for citizens to report irregularities in their work or violations of the law, including corruption?
29. Do all mechanisms for reporting corruption and irregularities allow anonymous reporting?
30. Is there information on the working hours of the administration with citizens available on the website or data on the phone number through which it is possible to obtain this information?
31. Are checklists of municipal (city) inspections published on the website?
32. Can a user of local government services monitor the flow (status) of cases on the website?
33. Is there information on the handling of complaints, petitions and objections available on the website?
34. Is there any information on the services provided by the municipality on the website?
35. Does the website contain data on the services provided by the municipality and the deadlines for their provision?
36. Is there a contact information on the members of the councils/presidents of local communities on the municipality's website?
37. Is there a notice on the website that citizens can attend the sessions of the Assembly and instructions on how to apply?
38. Are there defined dates for the meeting of the mayor/president of the municipality (or deputy) with the citizens?
39. Are the contact details of the Mayor with the citizens visibly available?
40. Has the municipality conducted a survey of citizens' satisfaction with users of municipal administration services in the last four years?
41. Did the local self-government units provide the requested information on time?
42. No complaints were filed against local self-government units in 2024 for failure to submit (ignore requests) information of public character?
43. The local government has no outstanding decisions by the Agency for access to information of public character in 2024?
44. Is the data on the submission of the request for free access to information on the website?
45. Is the information on submitting a request for free access to information visible in the service center (counter hall) or in the administration premises?
46. Is there a page on the website dedicated to public procurement?

47. Are the data on public procurement published on the website - calls/competitions, documentation, amendments, questions and answers?
48. Have you provided information on the conducted PP in the past 12 months on the website?
49. Does the website contain the current annual public procurement plan or a link to the plan?
50. Is there a separate section on the website dedicated to public enterprises with data on PE?
51. Is there a special section on the website dedicated to public institutions with data on the Public Institution?
52. Does the observed PE have its own website?
53. Does the observed PI have its own website?
54. Have there been competitions for the selection of directors of public enterprises?
55. Has there been a competition for the election of directors of public institutions?
56. Has the systematization of the PE been published on the website of the LSGs or on the website of the monitored PE?
57. Has the systematization of the Public Institution been published on the website of the LSGs or on the website of the monitored Public Institution?
58. Is there a website of the Commission for the Election of PE Directors on the website of the LSGs with all documents, including minutes from sessions?
59. Have the documents from the procedure for the election of the director of the PE been published on the website of the PE or the LSG?
60. Have the documents from the procedure for the election of the Director of the Public Institution been published on the website of the Public Institution or the Local Government Authority?
61. Are the annual work plans of PE published on the website of PE or LSG?
62. Have PE or LSGs reports been published on the PE or LSGs website?
63. Are the annual work plans of public institutions published on the website of public institutions or on the website of local self-government units?
64. Have reports on the work of public institutions been published on the website of the Public Institution or the LSG?
65. Are the data on the number of employees in the Public Institution published on the website?
66. Are the data on the number of employees in public enterprises published on the website of the local self-government unit?
67. Is the price list of services of local institutions/companies available on the website of local self-government units or PE/PI?
68. Is there any data on the website on public debates conducted in the last 12 months (except for the budget)?
69. Does the report on public debates contain information on the proposals put forward by citizens and the reasons for acceptance/rejection?
70. Does the local self-government unit regularly publish on the website an invitation for the lease of property in its ownership?
71. Are reports on the allocation of property for lease published on the website?

72. Have there been any competitions for the allocation of funds to the media in the last 12 months?
73. Have the results of the competition/decision for the allocation of funds to the media in the last 12 months been published on the website?
74. Are there any competitions for the allocation of funds to associations published on the website?
75. Are the results of the competition (decisions) for the allocation of funds to associations published on the website?
76. Are there any reports on the implementation of media projects funded by local self-government units published on the website?
77. Are reports on the implementation of projects of associations financed by the municipality published on the website?
78. Is the current development strategy of local self-government units published on the website?
79. Is the annual work plan of the administration published on the website?
80. Has the report on the work of the municipality for the previous year been published?
81. Is the Act on Internal Organization and Systematization of Administrative Jobs published on the website?
82. Are the data on the number of employees in the LSGs published on the website?
83. Is there a code of ethics for employees and is it available on the website?
84. Does the website contain information on officials' salaries?
85. Is there a record of property (real estate) owned by local self-government units that have been leased on the website, with information on tenants, price and duration of lease?
86. Are spatial plans and/or urban plans published on the website?
87. Is there a record of contacts with lobbyists on the website?
88. Is there a daily or weekly schedule of activities of the mayor of the municipality on the website?
89. Has the integrity plan been adopted (and has the LSGs reported on its implementation)?
90. Has the Local Anti-Corruption Plan been adopted?
91. Has the mayor submitted an assets declaration to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption?