LOCAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX

LTI 2022

Belgrade, May 24, 2022.

About the Research

- Transparency Serbia created this tool and first implemented it in 2015.

- It has been implemented with the support of USAID; Progress has been measured in four consecutive years, 2019-2022

- LTI measures transparency based on pre-set criteria - information are collected from websites, the LSG premises, requests for access to information, obtained from other relevant. They are also obtained from other relevant bodies (Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, Agency for Prevention of Corruption)

- All results are verified in two rounds

- Scores are based on 95 indicators; the final score (index) can be 0 to 100 points. 81 indicators from 8 areas: "Assembly and Councils", "Budget", "Local Government and Citizens", "Free Access to Information", "Public Procurement", "Work Information", "Public Enterprises and Institutions" and "Public Hearings", 14 indicators in the "Other" category. Indicators are the same as in LTI 2021

- **LTI is the cross-section of the situation at the time of data collection (or verification)**

- **Poor scores in some categories do not necessarily mean that corruption is widespread** in the related areas. Similarly, **good scores by no means guarantee that there is no corruption.** Transparency is just a mechanism for easier detection or prevention of corruption

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LTI 2022 – Key Findings

- **145 LSGs is ranked,** 25 city municipalities is rated, but not ranked.

- The average LTI score **has improved: 40** in 2015 and 2019, **46** in 2020**, 48** in 2021. In 2022. the average LTI score is **49** (of the possible 100). The level of transparency, however, remains low.

- 65 LSGs has LTI score equal or higher than the average.

- Half (**49%)** of the municipalities **improved their score**, but **46%** declined.

- **21 of 145 LSGs** have LTI greater than 60, 11 scored over 70, four above 80, and this time none reached 90.

score/year	2015	2017*	2019	2020	2021	2022
max	74	67	67	83	90	87
average	40	NA	40	46	48	49
min	11	11	12	18	21	9

Top Rated LSGs

rank	Municipality/City	Position LTI 2021	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Novi Pazar	4	66	82	78	87
2	Sombor	2	52	80	88	85
3	Sokobanja	5	46	68	75	84
4	Tutin	93	36	45	42	81
5	Kanjiža	3	47	77	83	79
6	Užice	15	64	70	62	78
7	Veliko Gradište	9	64	61	71	76
8	Vranje	5	60	73	75	74
8	Leskovac	5	60	75	75	74
10	Vrnjačka Banja	13	62	63	64	70
10	Subotica	10	51	63	69	70

Surcin (69) and Sevojno (66) have excellent results among the city municipalities.

Worst Rated LSGs

| rank	Municipality /City	Position LTI 2021	2019	2020	2021	2022
140	Bujanovac	*144*	32	34	21	28
140	Knić	*113*	26	34	38	28
142	Kovačica	*113*	28	36	38	25
142	Sečanj	*134*	26	34	33	25
144	Koceljeva	*131*	23	22	35	22
145	Preševo	*144*	13	23	21	9

Specific results

- *Percentage of successful performance of 145 LSGs per fields*
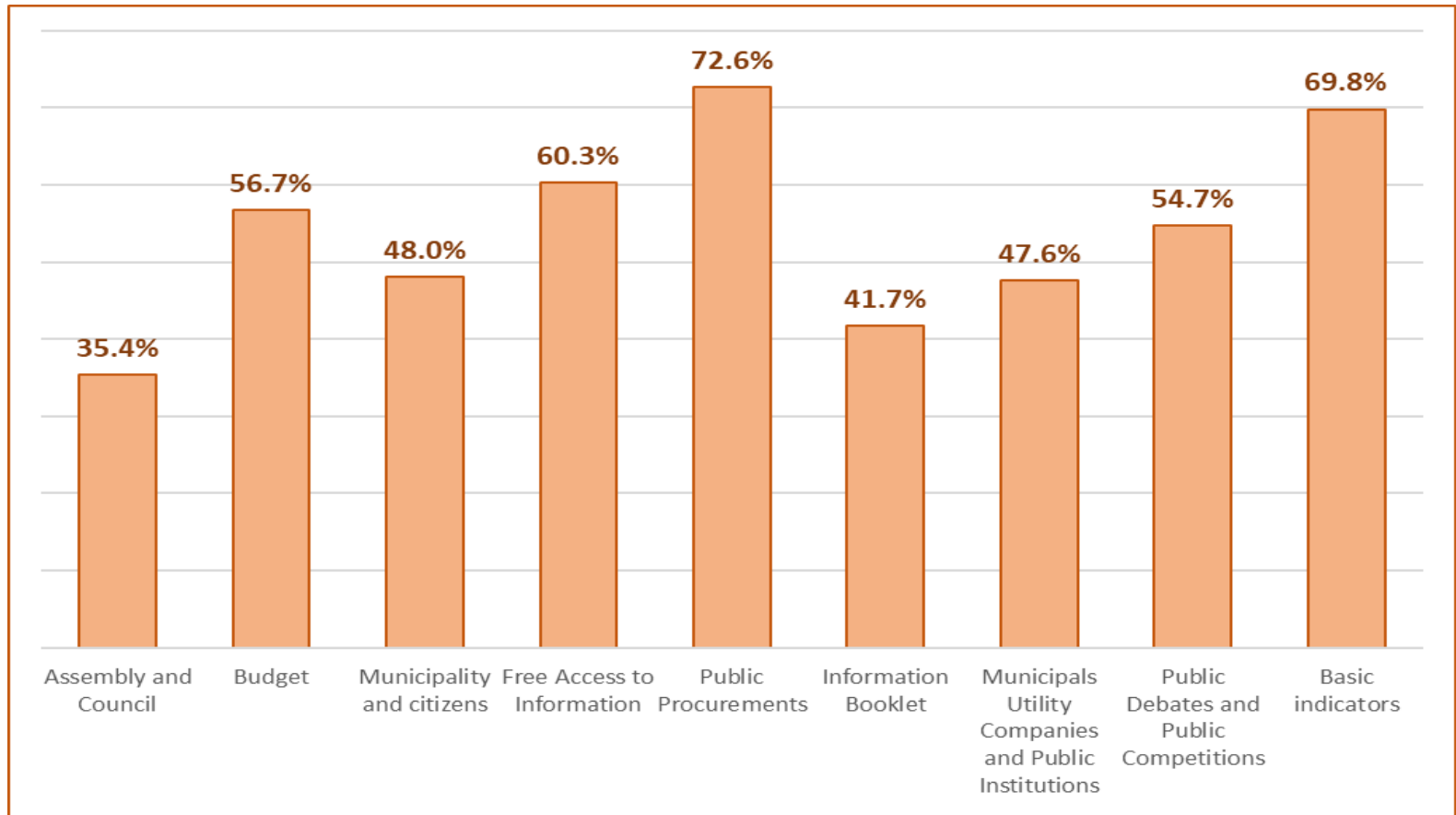
LSGs Overall Performance by 8 Indicators 2019 vs. 2020. vs 2021. vs 2022.

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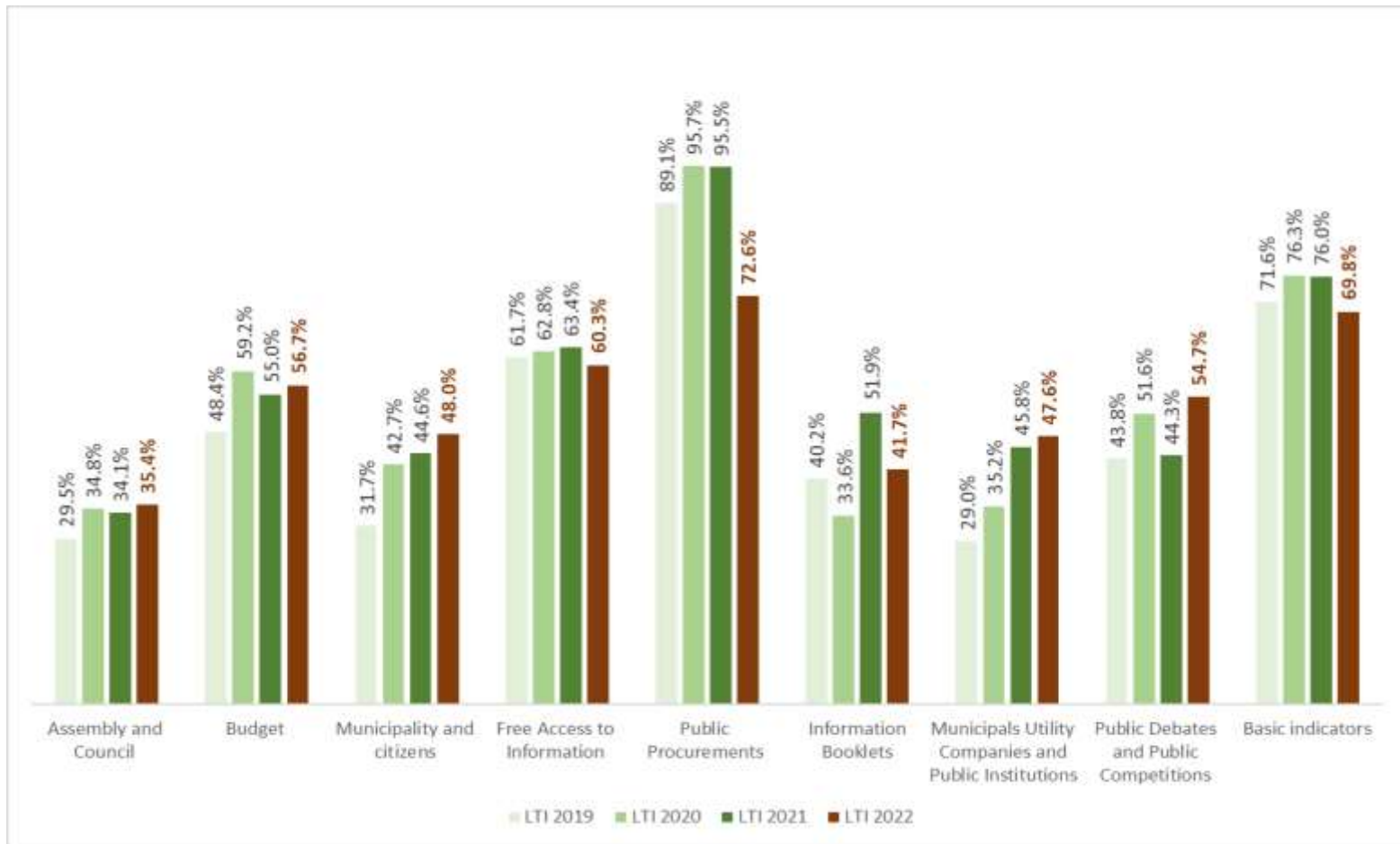
Specific Findings - Budget

- Some examples of good practice persist for many years, and **some have been adopted and implemented by other LSGs**;

- On the other hand, **most bad practices are still present**. These include:

  - An insufficient number of published budget documents. Even the budget was not published on the websites of 18 LSGs (17 in 2021 and 2020, and 34 in 2019).

  - Six-month and nine-month reports on budget execution were published on 57 LSG websites and monthly on 16 (previous year - 12).

  - Citizens' budget was published on 93 observed sites (six in 2015, 60 in 2019, 90 in 2020, and 94 in 2021).

Specific Findings – Decision Making, Use of Property, Competitions

- Lack of information on **the decision-making process** (Assembly, Council); The agenda of the next session of the Assembly is not visible in more than half of the LSGs. Less than half of those who publish the agenda also publish draft documents that will be discussed.

- A big problem is the lack of information on the use of municipal property (lease data), but significant progress has been made compared to 2021 (42: 9).

- There is still insufficient information on distributing money in competitions (media, associations), especially on implementing financially rewarded projects. Still, there is an improvement compared to last year: calls were published in more than 80% of LSGs, competition results in 70% while there was 50% in 2021), and project implementation reports in only 8% of cases (growth from 5%).

Specific Findings– Public Procurement, Public Enterprises (PE) and Public Institutions (PI)

- As in previous years, municipalities and cities have **the best results in public procurement, but there has been a considerable decline** due to changes to the Law.

- Slow but constant growth was noticed in the area of PE and PI. The score, however, remains low. A decade after publishing information on PE websites has become mandatory, 15% of PEs in the sample do not yet have their own websites. The number of LSGs that have published complete documentation from the process of electing directors of public companies has doubled since 2021 (14: 7), and 27 have published at least some documents that provide a relatively high level of transparency (31 in 2021).

Specific Findings – Free Access to Information and Case Tracking

- At least 77% of LSGs ignored (at least once) requests for free access to information, and 15% did not respect all decisions of the Commissioner.

- Publishing and updating the "Information Booklet" remains a serious challenge - more than 58% (50% in 2021) have not published or regularly updated it.

- 77% of LSGs responded to the request of the "Mistery Shopper".

- Only 11% of LSGs provide insight into the status of cases through the website.

Sustainability of Progress

- A total of 67 LSGs achieved a worse result; seven had the same, and **71 had a better score**.

- The room for improvement is vast, and the sustainability of the achieved level of transparency is one of the main challenges.

- Once achieved, the level of transparency is by no means a guarantee of sustainable good practice. Written procedures and independent monitoring could help maintain good results. The result is currently mainly achieved thanks to the individual efforts of interested municipal officials or decision-makers (famous political will combined with administrative will).

Comparison with LTI 2021, 2020 i 2019 - Progress

21 LSGs (out of 170) improved their results by 10 points or more compared to LTI 2021

LSG	LTI 2019	LTI 2020	LTI 2021	LTI 2022	Growth 2922/2021	Growth 2922/2021 (%)
Tutin	36	45	42	81	39	92.90%
Niš	34	46	40	64	24	60.00%
Pirot	46	45	41	65	24	58.50%
Kruševac	52	47	47	69	22	46.80%
Jagodina	21	21	23	43	20	87.00%
Užice	64	70	62	78	16	25.80%
Vrbas	40	54	44	59	15	34.10%
Trstenik	47	49	44	59	15	34.10%

Comparison LTI 2022 and LTI 2019
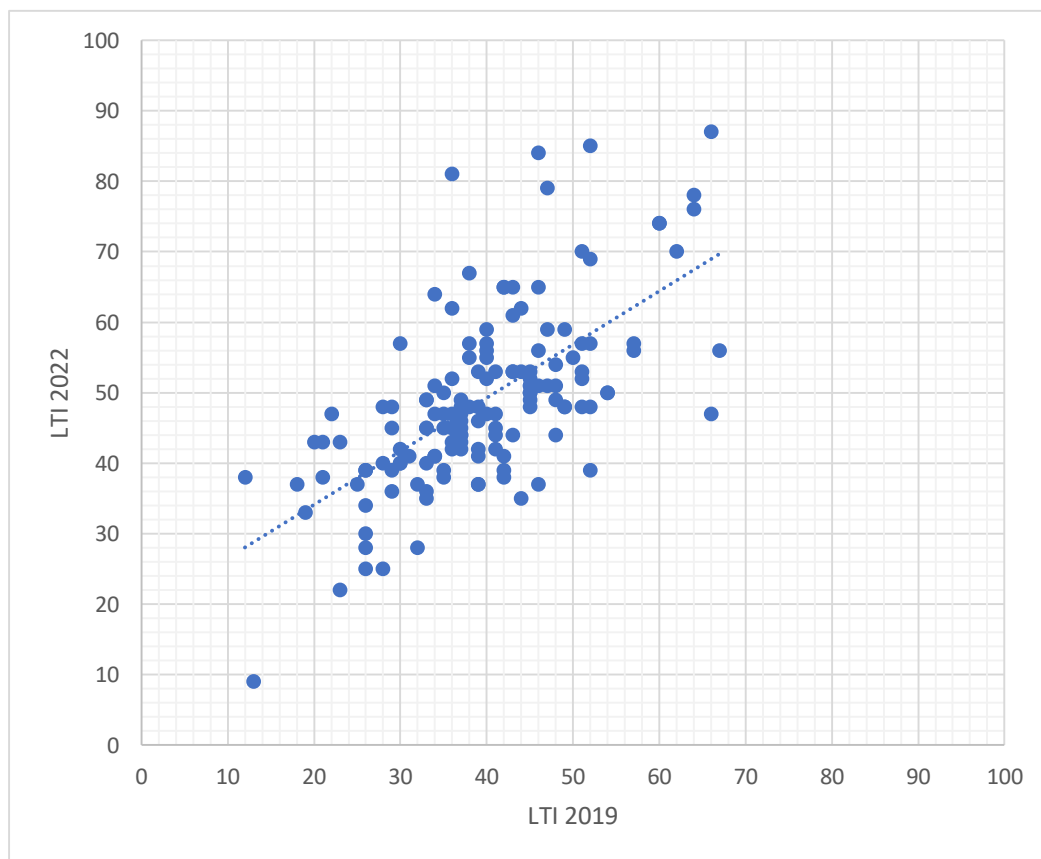
Comparison with LTI 2021, 2020 i 2019

12 LSGs recorded a drop of 10 points or more.

LSG	LTI 2019	LTI 2020	LTI 2021	LTI 2022	Growth 2922/2021	Growth 2922/2021 (%)
Bečej	38	83	90	67	-23	-25.60%
Smederevo	39	51	53	37	-16	-30.20%
Koceljeva	23	22	35	22	-13	-37.10%
Kovačica	28	36	38	25	-13	-34.20%
Petrovac	51	59	61	48	-13	-21.30%
Temerin	52	59	61	48	-13	-21.30%

The Best Performance of LSGs by Indicators

Some of the indicators in which more than 90% of LSGs achieved a positive result:

- Is there a page on the website dedicated to public procurement?
- Has the municipality president/mayor submitted an assets declaration?
- Does the LSG regularly publish a call on the website for the property lease in its ownership?
- Are spatial plans and/or urban plans posted on the website?
- Is the data on the number of employees in LSG published on the website?
- Is there information on applying for free access to information on the website?
- Are the checklists of municipal (city) inspections posted on the website?
- Is the budget for the current year available on the website?
- Is there a list of councilors published on the site?

The Least Transparent Areas

Indicators for which less than 5% of LSGs achieved a positive result:

- Is the information on submitting a request for free access to the information visible in the service center (counter hall) or administration premises?

- Is there a daily or weekly schedule of activities of the president / mayor on the LSG website?

- Is there a record of contacts with lobbyists on the LSG website?

- Are there any data published on the site on how the councilors voted individually and by name?

Systemic Problems and Opportunities for Progress

- Many local government websites have a formal framework for raising transparency to a higher level (relevant segments) but do not publish or update the content of these segments. Frontpage banners often direct users to outdated or invalid information.

- Promoting good practices or good models will help in some areas (e.g. a special page for "public companies", "public procurement", or "budget") throughout the country or in the municipalities involved in specific projects.

- One example of good practice is having special portals or pages on LSG websites dedicated to public procurement, budgeting, urban planning and administrative services.

The Most Important Recommendations for Greater Transparency

- After four consecutive LTI cycles, transparency sustainability is noted as one of the top issues. Apart from a few municipalities that clearly recognize a strong determination to raise and maintain transparency and a number of those that stagnate at lower levels of the table, most other LSGs have had ups and downs. Therefore, it is recommended to maintain the level of transparency through the development of procedures that acts would prescribe. These acts should undoubtedly contain a clear division of responsibilities and prescribed responsibility for fulfilling tasks and models that could serve as a pre-existing model.

- All LSGs should adopt and implement local anti-corruption plans and ensure independent monitoring.

- LSGs should use online mechanisms to communicate with citizens (public hearings and consultations, meetings with mayors, councilors and other officials, etc.)

- The most important information on the website (budget, assembly, councils, public companies, public procurement, public invitations, etc.) should be systematized.

- Electronic registers of administrative procedures should be introduced in all cities and municipalities.

- LSGs should publish data on their property and its use.

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