

# LOCAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX

## LTI 2024

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Belgrade, October 2024

# About the Research

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- Transparency Serbia created this tool and first implemented it in 2015.
- In 2024 implemented with the support of SDC.
- 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 bodies. 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. There are 81 indicators from 8 areas: “Assembly and Council”, “Budget”, “LSG and Citizens”, “Free Access to Information”, “Public Procurement”, “Information Booklet”, “Public Enterprises and Institutions” and “Public Hearings and Competitions”; 14 indicators are in the “Other” category.
- **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 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.

# LTI 2024 – Key Findings

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- **The main conclusion of LTI 2024 is that there is no progress in transparency, but also that, given the circumstances, the same score as in LTI 2023 is not disappointing.** It is necessary to continue working on establishing sustainable mechanisms, primarily by adopting regulations that will precisely prescribe procedures and obligations, but more importantly – responsibilities for the implementation of these procedures.
- The introduction of legal obligations, at the national level, related to the transparency of local self-governments could raise the level of transparency, provided that the regulations are respected and their implementation is monitored.
- The level of transparency is positively influenced by the capacities (budget, number of employees) that municipalities have, but the will is a much more important factor.
- The sustainability of transparency, i.e. results, is evidenced by the data: less than half (63 out of 145) of municipalities and cities improved their results, while 73 recorded a decline. Nine of them have the same result.

# LTI 2024 – Key Numbers

- **145 LSGs are ranked, 25 city municipalities are rated, but not ranked.**
- The average LTI score same as in LTI 2023: 40 in 2015 and 2019, 46 in 2020, 48 in 2021, 49 in 2022, 52 in 2023 and **52 in 2024** (out of the possible 100). The level of transparency remains low.
- 63 LSGs has LTI score equal or higher than the average.
- **36 od 145 LSGs have** LTI over 60, 12 more than 70, six over 80, and one has LTI higher than 90 (97).

score/year	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
max	74	67	83	90	87	94	97
average	40	40	46	48	49	52	52
min	11	12	18	21	9	25	9

# Top Rated LSGs

Municipality/City	2024	2023	2022	2021
Novi Pazar	1/97	1/94	1/87	4/78
Veliko Gradište	2/88	3/82	7/76	9/71
Kanjiža	3/87	4/81	5/79	3/83
Leskovac	4/83	7/77	8/74	5/75
Sombor	5/82	2/84	2/85	2/88

Surčin (67) and Sevojno (61) have excellent results among the city municipalities.

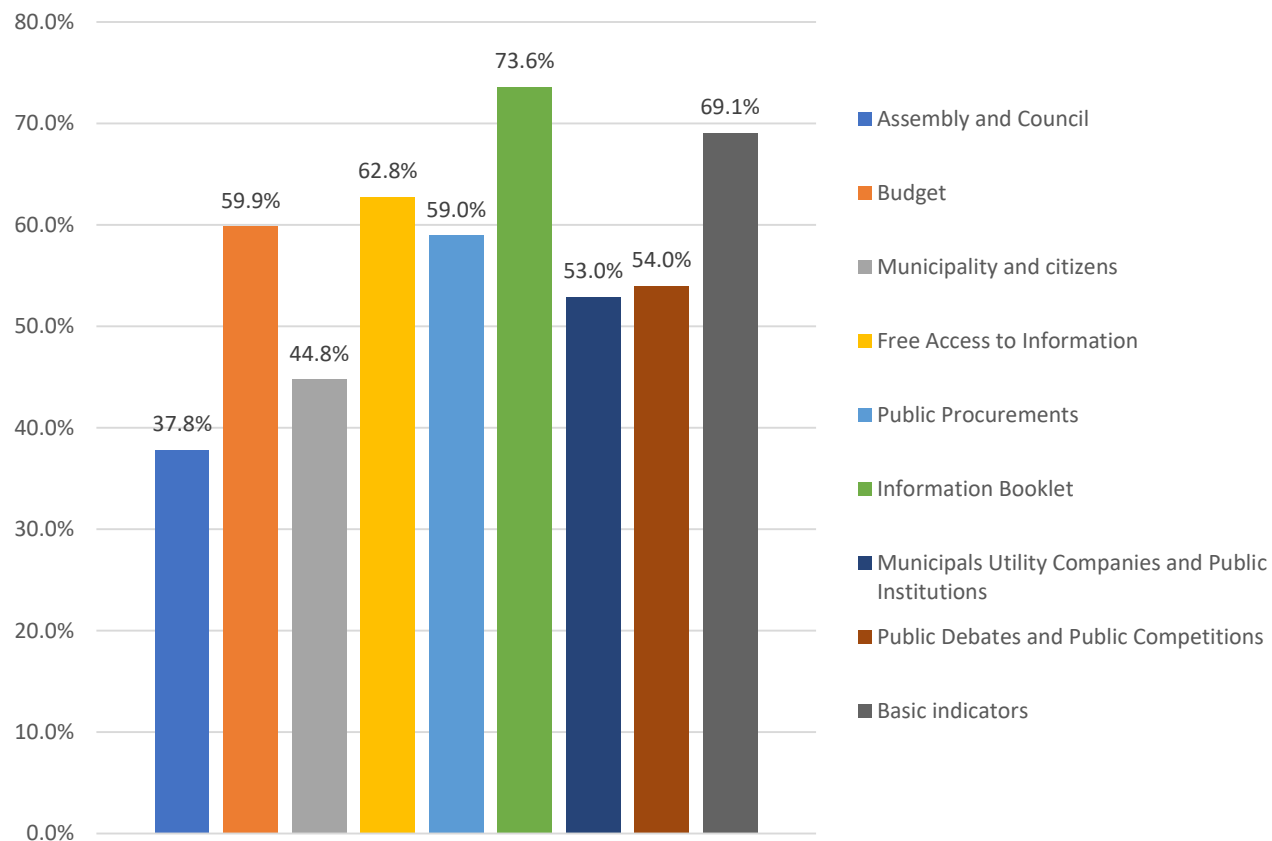
# Worst Rated LSGs

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Municipality/City	2024	2023	2022	2021
Svilajnac	141/31	137/35	127/37	142/23
Kovačica	142/30	143/32	142/35	113/38
Bujanovac	143/29	143/32	140/28	144/21
Gadžin Han	144/27	105/45	127/37	88/43
Preševo	145/9	145/25	145/9	144/21

# Specific results

- **Percentage of successful performance of 145 LSGs per fields**



# Specific Findings - Budget

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- Expected drop, due to elections, temporary financing, absence of JR - from 63.2% to 59.9%.
- More and more budget portals; some missing information and documents, some excellent and comprehensive.
- Some examples of good practice persist:
- On the other hand, **most bad practices are still present**. These include:
  - An insufficient number of published budget documents. The budget itself was not published on the website of eight LSGs.
  - Six-month and nine-month reports on budget execution were published on 69 LSGs' websites; monthly reports on 20 (22 in 2023).
  - Citizens' budget was published on 69 observed sites (six in 2015, 95 in 2022, 85 in 2023).



# Specific Findings – Decision Making, Use of Property, Competitions

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- Insufficient transparency in the area of "Assembly and Council" significantly affects the possibility for citizens to recognize what impact the decisions made by these bodies will have on their lives. Some LSGs decide to publish only certain documents, without clear criteria why they publish them and not others. The average score in the area "Assembly and Council" is the lowest since almost the beginning of the LTI survey and varies between 34% and 39% in the last five cycles.
- A big problem is the lack of information on the use of municipal property (lease data).
- There is still insufficient information on distributing money in competitions (media, associations), especially on implementing financially rewarded projects. Calls published in more than 85% (media) and 87% (assoc.) of LSGs, competition results in 68% and 77%. Project implementation reports in 8% of cases.

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

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- **Public procurement** – fall continues due to the abolishment of legal obligations.
- Constant but very slow growth in the area of PEs and PIs. The score, however, remains low. A decade after publishing information on PE websites has become mandatory, 14,5% PEs in the sample do not yet have their own websites.

# Specific Findings – Free Access to Information and Case Tracking

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- Publishing and updating “Information Booklet” continues to grow - more than 90% (73% in 2023) published and regularly updated them.
- 26 out of 170 LSGs did not respond to the request of the “Mystery Shopper” (47 in 2023).
- Only 13 LSGs provide insight into the status of cases through the website.

# Comparison with LTI 2023

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- Only five LSGs improved the score by 10 or more points - Opovo (by 14, to 51), Čajetina, Čačak and Zaječar (by 12) and Negotin (by 10).
- On the other hand, the biggest decline was in Gadžin Han (18), Preševo (16), Žitište (13), Beočin (11), Crna Trava, Bosilegrad and Jagodina (10 each).
- Beočin and Žitište, which in LTI 2023 had an index growth of 16 and 14 points respectively, are confirmation of the problem of maintaining results and the necessity of establishing permanent and stable procedures if there is a desire to permanently increase transparency.

# Women and men in top positions

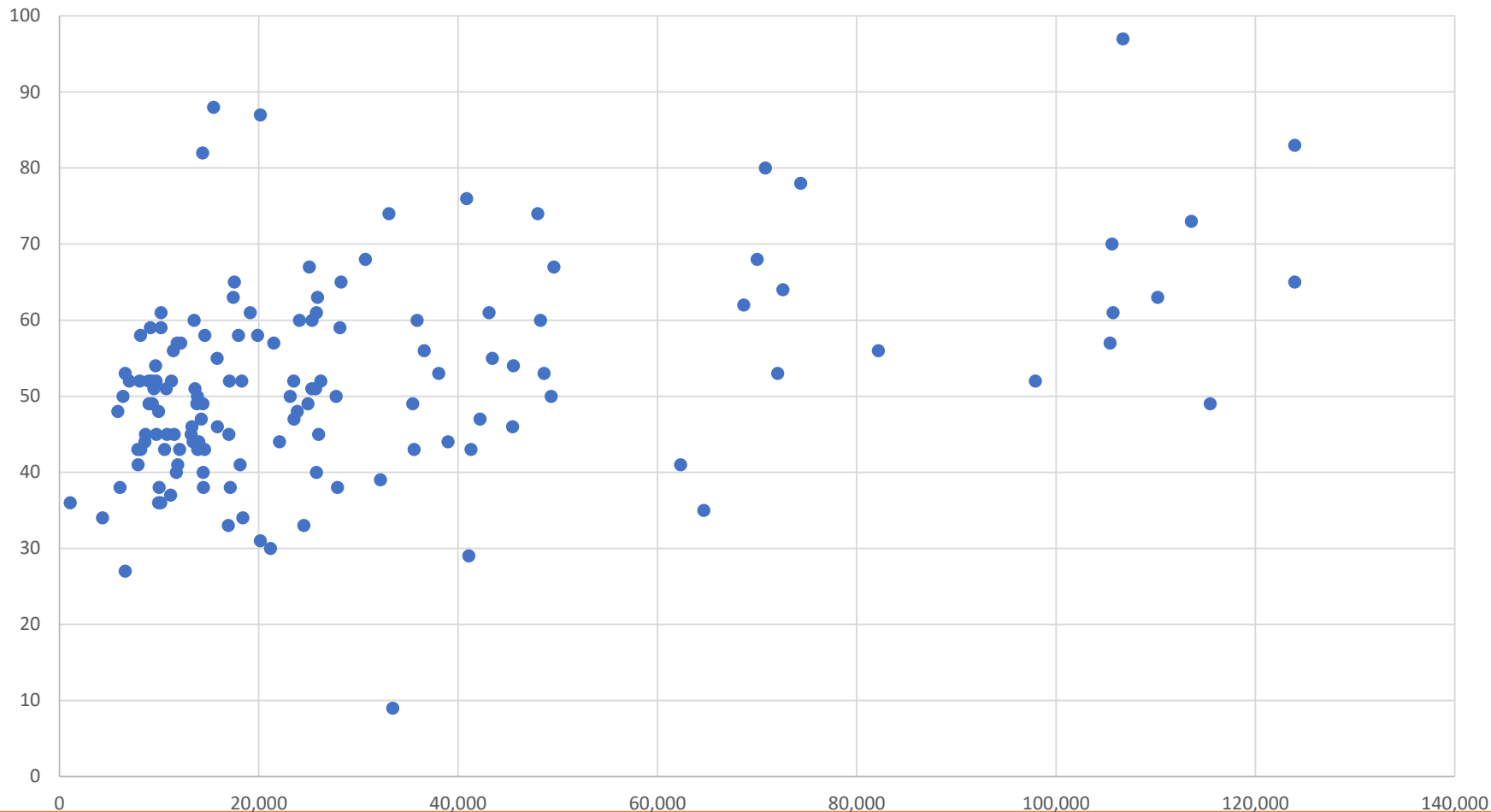
- Data on gender representation in management positions in local self-governments are not directly related to transparency, nor are they part of the evaluation and ranking within the LTI survey.
- Out of 170 cities, municipalities and in-city municipalities, 32 mayors are female, while 132 are men.
- In administration – out of 161 LSGs, 86 women (53,5%) and 75 (46,5%) men.

Mayors		
170 JLS	m	f
2024	138	32
2023	147	23
<b>32 woman mayors:</b>		
Cities: 4		
Municipalities: 24		
In-city municipalities: 4		

Heads of administration			
	m	f	No head appointed
2024	75	86	6
2023	77	84	9

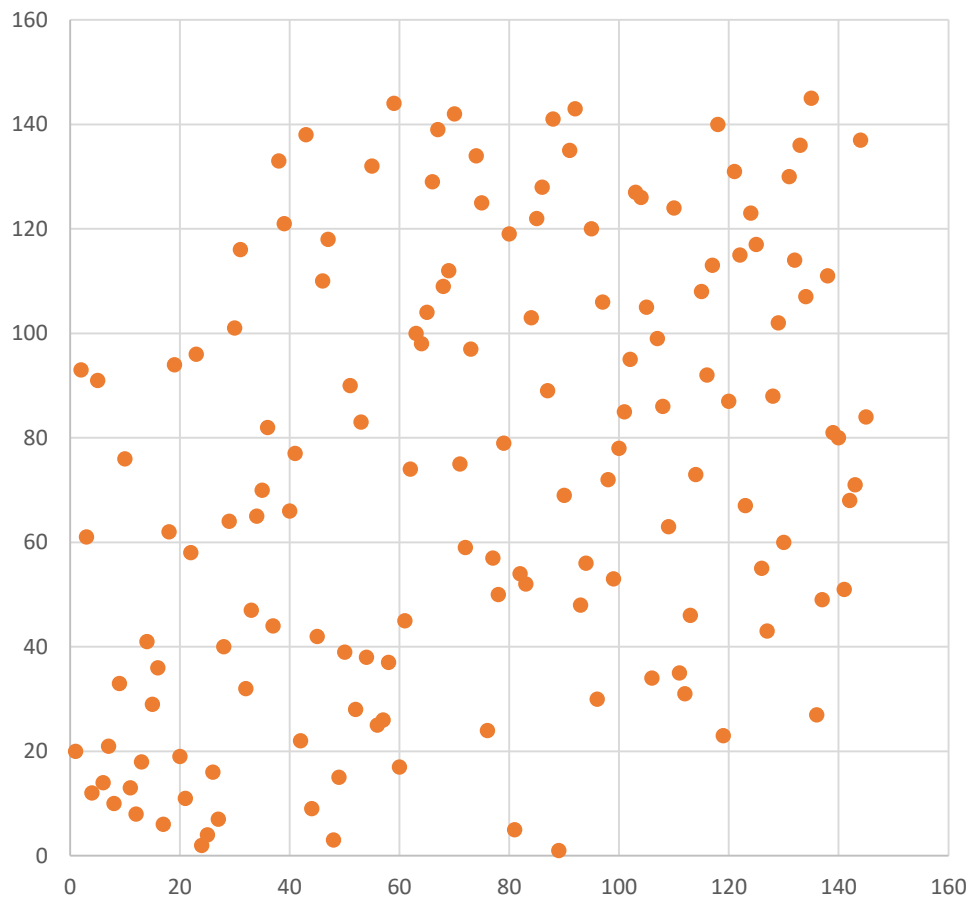
# Larger municipality - greater transparency? Not always

LTI score and LSGs' budget in 000 RSD (without BG, NS, NI, KG )



# How much do cities spend and how transparent are they?

LTI 2024 LSGs' ranking (vertical) and LSGs' budget (horizontal)



# The Most Important Recommendations

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- LSGs should adopt an act that would clearly regulate the scope of information that should be published on the municipal website, deadlines for updating this information, as well as duties and responsibilities within the administration, in order to improve transparency and ensure sustainable progress.
- TS recommends to LSGs to adopt or further develop examples of good practice when creating new websites, while respecting certain prescribed norms. Some of such practices are presented in this report.
- Budget portals significantly contribute to transparency, but in certain LSGs they are neglected - they are not functional or lack data. TS calls on local self-government units to establish as many budget portals as possible, and to regularly maintain them and publish all relevant documents.
- The National Anti-Corruption Strategy, adopted in July 2024, recognizes the problem of insufficient transparency of the work of local self-government units, but the activities have yet to be specified. The TS calls on the Ministry of Justice and the Government to incorporate the key recommendations from this report into the Action Plan for the first year of implementation of the Strategy
- The TS recommends to the Government of Serbia and responsible ministries to promote good practices identified at the local level, both in the preparation of state policies and in the work of national institutions, especially when it comes to budget transparency and public procurements