



ZAMBIA

TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT 2017

The Citizens' Analysis of
Government Openness

INTRODUCTION

In a functioning democracy, openness and transparency are key ingredients of accountability and trust. Ideally, open governments encourage the public participation in decision-making.

The existence of appropriate and effective legislation can facilitate an environment of openness; legislation such as an access to information law which guarantees open and accountable government and public institutions. The access to information environment in Zambia however, has not changed significantly as the process of enacting the draft Access to Information (ATI) Bill is still limited to vain assurances from government officials.

In August 2016, Zambia held a national referendum alongside its general elections which gave hope to many champions of access to information. A positive vote would have led to an amendment of the Constitution to expand the Bill of Rights to include civil, political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and special rights. Under civil and political rights, the expanded Bill of Rights provided for access to information.

The referendum however failed as the threshold requiring a minimum of 50 percent of eligible voters to participate in the referendum was not met. Many attributed this failure to a lack of public awareness about the referendum as well as the fact that it ran concurrently with the general elections.

The Civil Society Coalition on Access to Information urged the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Chishimba Kambwili, to speed up the adoption of the ATI Bill and to avoid tying the tabling of the Bill in Parliament to the failed referendum.

In February 2017, the Minister of Justice, Given Lubinda announced that the draft ATI Bill was ready to be shared with the public and that it would be re-tabled in Parliament. When the announcement was made, many civil society organisations commended Government on this move but cautioned that the passing of the Bill should be speedy as it was long overdue.

MISA Zambia also added its voice by welcoming the pronouncement of the Ministry of Justice, but implored the Minister to provide a roadmap for the enactment of the Bill as a concrete sign of commitment.

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflections (JCTR) expressed delight at the government's decision to re-table the ATI Bill, adding that JCTR will keep supporting the ATI Bill as part of a well-run democratic governance system.

Unfortunately, Government later announced that the Bill could not be tabled in Parliament as during its current session, there were already too many items on the agenda.

As it stands, many Zambians and civil society organisations are hoping the Minister of Justice will fulfil his promise to table and enact the ATI Bill. However, the ATI Bill was not even mentioned in the last sitting of Parliament. Nonetheless, MISA Zambia remains hopeful and continues to push for the enactment of the Bill.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The objective of this research was to determine how transparent and open public institutions are to the general public. This openness and transparency is with regards to how public institutions handle and respond to requests for information from the public. It is believed that public and government institutions hold information on behalf of citizens, and when citizens request that information, it should be provided to them.

This study is meant to encourage transparency and openness in government and public institutions.

For this particular research eight (8) public institutions were randomly selected. The study was conducted from 4 July – 7 August 2017 in Lusaka, Zambia.

Written requests for information were submitted to all selected institutions and their online platforms were assessed, including their websites and social media pages.

The following public institutions were surveyed:

1. Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU)
2. National Housing Authority (NHA)
3. Ministry of Education (MoE)
4. Ministry of Finance (MoF)
5. Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH)
6. Ministry of Tourism and Arts (MoTA)
7. Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC)
8. Zambia Development Agency (ZDA)

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Category 1: Website analysis

- All institutions, except for the National Housing Authority, whose website was under maintenance, have working websites.
- All the institutions have Facebook pages although most public bodies do not update their content regularly and have little to no interaction with their audience.
- Budgets and expenditures were unavailable on all of the websites analysed.
- Most of the websites did not indicate working hours.

Category 2: Requests for information

- Of the eight selected institutions, only the Ministry of Transport and Communications provided the requested information.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Arts acknowledged receipt of the request for information and scheduled a meeting with the researcher. When the researcher arrived for the meeting, the person assigned to attend to her had gone to another meeting. Even after several follow-up attempts, she was told that the Ministry would get back to her—which has yet to happen.
- Generally, few institutions have a designated person to receive and respond to requests for information; usually all queries have to be addressed to the Permanent Secretary, who then decides upon the response to the specific request for information.
- All organisations acknowledged receipt of the request and promised to get back to the researcher.
- The National Housing Authority asked the researcher to resend the request for information and address it to the Chief Executive Officer.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU)

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.dmmu-ovp.gov.zm/>

The DMMU's website is not up-to-date; it was last updated in 2014. The institution has a Facebook page with over 400 followers, which is not up-to-date either; it was last updated four months ago. The institution has little to no interaction with its audience through the Facebook page.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programmes?			•	The website only has a little information which is outdated.
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?			•	It only has a tenders section under the Media Centre which has no posts.
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	The website contains the address and telephone number but has no working hours of the institution.
h) The contact details of specific public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?			•	The website has a response mechanism but no addresses have been provided especially for electronic requests of information.

Total Score: 10/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit:

1. His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu announced that a committee had been set up to assist those that lost their items and money in the unfortunate fire at City Market; is the DMMU working with this Committee?
2. How is your institution assisting those that have been affected?
3. There have been other fire disasters in various parts of the country since the newly instituted Committee is Lusaka-based, is the DMMU able to work with the Committee (as the DMMU has been in existence longer and thereby could give technical know-how)?
4. What are some of the challenges that the DMMU has faced in the last two years and how has it been able to handle them? What is the current human resource capacity of the DMMU and how widespread are your offices?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?		•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

2. National Housing Authority (NHA)

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.nha.co.zm/>

The website of the National Housing Authority is not functional. The institution has a Facebook page with over 3000 followers, even though it rarely updates the page. Using the messaging option on Facebook, the researcher requested the NHA to provide the link to a working website. The institution replied after 7 days stating that the website was under maintenance.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		Both the website and the Facebook page have no up-to-date information.
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?		•		
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programmes?		•		
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?	•			Their Facebook page has the telephone number, address and their working hours.
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the National Housing Authority:

- How many housing units has the National Housing Authority constructed in the last two years?
- There are some housing units near the stadium which have been unoccupied for many years, even after completion; is this because they are too expensive and cannot cater for the ordinary Zambians?
- What is the state of affairs with regards to the Macgor Project which was signed with Magcor International, and what progress has been made so far?
- What policies does your institution have to help bridge the housing infrastructure deficit and how best can the nation address the housing deficit?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		When doing follow-ups, the researcher was asked to explain the reasons for requesting the information and was asked to resend and address the request for information to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		The researcher was not given information as the CEO questioned the researcher's motives.
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

3. Ministry of Education

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.moe.gov.zm/>

The Ministry of Education's website is up-to-date with its last update having been on July 2017. It also has two Facebook pages with a combined following of over twenty-five thousand (25,000) followers. However, only one of the Facebook pages is updated and has interaction with the audience.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programmes?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	The website has an address and telephone number but no working hours.
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?			•	The website has an email address for electronic requests of information. Additionally, its Facebook page has that provision.

Total Score: 10/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Education:

1. How many institutions of higher learning are registered under your Ministry?
2. What criteria are used in the issuing of practicing licences to higher learning institutions considering that Zambia has a lot of them?
3. What measures have you put in place to further cushion the teacher-pupil ratio in public schools?
4. Recently TEVETA suspended some higher learning institutions and Cavendish issued a press release disputing this. What is your position on this?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

4. Ministry of Finance

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mof.gov.zm/>

The website of the Ministry of Finance is active with the last update made in July 2017. It also has a Facebook page with over forty-nine thousand (49,000) followers. The Facebook page is up-to-date and interactive.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programmes?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?			•	The website only has information on procurement procedures but no signed contracts.
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	This information is only available on the Facebook page.

h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?			•	The website only has information on procurement procedures but no signed contracts. This information is only available on the Facebook page.

Total Score: 9/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Finance:

1. What is the current official debt position and revenue performance of the nation?
2. The Kwacha has been performing relatively well and has been quite bullish against the major currencies even with the invocation of Article 31. What measures has the Ministry put in place to ensure that this performance continues?
3. How far has the implementation of the e-voucher system gone and when should we expect it to be fully operational?
4. What policies have been put in order to achieve financial inclusion for the youth and women?
5. What benefits does Government expect from engagements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

5. Ministry of Local Government and Housing

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mlgh.gov.zm/>

The website of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing is not updated. The Ministry has no social media accounts.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?		•		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programmes?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?			•	The website has the Ministry's email address which can be used as alternative.

Total Score: 6/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Local Government and Housing:

1. How many local authorities does the country have as of January 2017?
2. How much revenue did the Ministry of Local Government collect from city councils last year?
3. Are there any policies that have been put in place to provide for accountability especially for constituency projects, such as the building of feeder roads? If yes, kindly highlight the policies.
4. What criteria does your Ministry use in issuing out liquor licences considering that most groceries sell liquor in their stores?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

6. Ministry of Tourism and Arts

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mota.gov.zm/>

The Ministry of Tourism and Arts has a website which is up-to-date. Their Facebook page has 1000 active followers.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?			•	The website only has information on its functions and responsibilities.
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programmes?		•		
d) Budget and expenditure?			•	Only information about the National Budget is provided.
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?		•		
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

Total Score: 8/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Tourism and Arts:

1. How widespread are your offices across the nation?
2. I once visited a Zambian embassy abroad and found no information on tourism in Zambia. Is there any new material provided as a way of selling the country's tourism?
3. Minister Charles Banda has been working towards making local tourism affordable for ordinary Zambian; what progress has been made thus far? Have the numbers improved since then?
4. What major challenges has the Ministry faced in marketing tourism to both local and foreign tourists?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?	•			
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			The institution scheduled a meeting with the researcher three (3) days after receiving the request for information. The meeting did not take place.
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 4/20

7. Ministry of Transport and Communications

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mtc.gov.zm/>

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has an updated website with its last update in June 2017. It has a relatively active Facebook page with over two thousand (2,000) followers.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?			•	The website has information on functions and responsibilities of the Ministry but has no information on the organisational structure.
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programmes?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	It has the address and telephone number but no working hours are displayed.
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

Total Score: 10/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to Ministry of Transport and Communications:

1. What measures has the Ministry put in place to curb the nation's cyber threat?
2. What benefits do Zambians stand to gain from facilities such as the Zambia National Data Centre (ZNDC)?
3. Are there policies that have been put in place by the Ministry to encourage private sector to help in the development of Information Communication Technology's (ICTs) in the country? If yes, kindly outline.
4. ICTs is the way to go in terms of development for the country; does the Ministry have any plans to build a local "Silicon Valley" to encourage use of innovation technology in the country?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?	•			
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?	•			The Communications Department contacted the researcher to tell her that the answers to the request for information were ready.
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?	•			
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?	•			
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	•			
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?		•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	•			

Total Score: 12/20

8. Zambia Development Agency (ZDA)

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.zda.org.zm/>

The website of the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) is up-to-date. It has a Facebook page with over nine thousand (9,000) followers.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?		•		
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programmes?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?			•	It has a provision for tenders which may stand in for procurement information.
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The address, telephone number, and working hours of the institution?			•	It has the address and telephone number but no working hours. The Facebook page displays working hours.
h) The contact details of specific public officials?		•		
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

Total Score: 12/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Zambia Development Agency:

1. How many capacity-building centres does the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) have countrywide?
2. What is ZDA doing to allow Micro Small enterprises (MSEs) to access available market opportunities?
3. Does ZDA provide financial assistance to MSEs? If yes, what conditions allow for them to access the assistance?
4. What challenges has the ZDA faced in trying to help SMEs?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests?		•		
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days?		•		The Communications Department contacted the researcher to tell her that the answers to the request for information were ready.
3. Did the institution respond to the request for information?		•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested?		•		
6. Does the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•		

Total Score: 2/20

SUMMARY IN NUMBERS

Institution	Website	Request for information	Total score
1. Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU)	10	2	12
2. National Housing Authority (NHA)	2	2	4
3. Ministry of Education (MoE)	10	2	12
4. Ministry of Finance(MoF)	9	2	11
5. Ministry of Local Government and Housing(MLGH)	6	2	8
6. Ministry of Tourism and Arts (MoTA)	8	4	12
7. Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC)	10	12	22
8. Zambia Development Agency (ZDA)	12	2	14

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

From this year's study, it appears, most public institutions in the country still lack transparency and openness as they do not place sufficient public information into the public domain, despite having websites and social media pages.

However, the effort some of these public institutions make cannot be overlooked. The majority of institutions have websites and social media pages, although these are not always updated or lack relevant information. This year's study also brought to light an undesirable centralised authority in public institutions, especially with regards to availability and accessibility of public information. For instance, some public institutions acknowledged the receipt of the information request but were hesitant to give out information until they received authorisation from a higher office.

THE MOST SECRETIVE PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN ZAMBIA

The National Housing Authority (NHA) had the lowest score in this survey which makes them the most secretive public institution in Zambia in 2017. The NHA neither has a functional website nor any active social media pages. The researcher was told that the institution has no public relations officer.

Housing is a basic human need and as the NHA is an authority for the regulation and development of housing for Zambians, this institution should open and receptive to public requests. Due to their lack of openness, the average Zambian is reluctant to approach the NHA for information as they deem the organisation to be accessible only by the wealthy.

Considering that the institution's website is under maintenance, it should have kept its social media pages active so that citizens can easily reach them and receive the necessary information they may need.

The winner of the 2017 Golden Padlock Award is the **National Housing Authority**.

THE MOST OPEN PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN ZAMBIA

The Ministry of Transport and Communications was the most open institution during the study. Even though there is room for improvement regarding their website, their Facebook page is relatively active providing regular updates and engagement with their followers.

This institution was helpful; they acknowledged the receipt of the request and called to ask the researcher to collect a written response to the information request submitted to their offices eight days earlier.

The winner of the 2017 Golden Key Award is the **Ministry of Transport and Communications**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Yet again, public institutions have not considered the importance of having public relations or information officers who are ready to receive and answer requests for information from the public. The institutions should train staff or employ qualified information and public relations officers to make information available. Otherwise, organisations should at least consider creating a communications and documentation department.
- Public institutions should train their staff or employ qualified officers to manage their online presence to guarantee effective, timely and relevant online communication.
- Organisations should invest more in their social media pages and engage more often with the public.