Web monitoring of transparency of government agencies

Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) has been conducting 'Web monitoring on public organizations' official websites for six times since 2010. First 2 years' monitoring funded by UNDP and Independent Authority Against Corruption of Mongolia, then since 2014 IRIM decided to continue funding and undertaking this monitoring itself.

Monitoring objective :

to measure and evaluate implementation of "Law on Information Transparency and Right to Information" and "Law on Glass Account" by monitoring websites of regulatory and implementing agencies of the government and state-owned enterprises and to develop recommendations and a policy brief based on the research findings so that transparency in the government action will enhance.

Transparency is one of the three pillars of good governance. For government agencies, this means that they allow their processes and transactions to be observable to outsiders. The official websites of government agencies are supposed to ensure transparency.

To evaluate transparency in websites of regulatory and implementing agencies of the government with 4 main indicators, transparency in operations, human resource, budget allocations and purchase decisions, all of which are set forth in the "Law on Information Transparency and Right to Information"

The 5 main indicators are used for monitoring and important elements of the indicators used in the monitoring are **MEASURABILITY**, **FEASIBILTY** and **ACCURACY**.

Independent Research Institute of Mongolia

MAIN INDICATORS

Graph 1. The percentage of importance of the indicators in measuring transparency
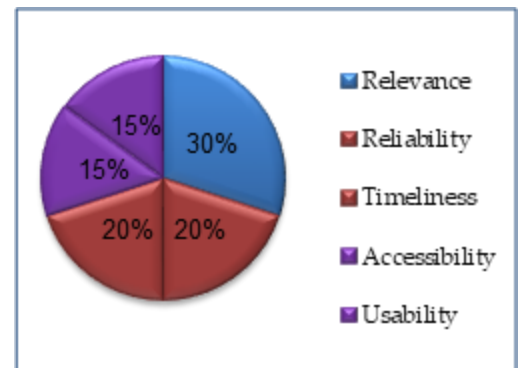
- **Indicator1.Relevance of Information:** Information accessibility of service and production provided by the state.

- **Indicator2.Reliability of Information:** Accountability of information presented on the organizational websites.

- **Indicator3.Timeliness of Information:** (Harris, 2010). Timeliness is the dynamic, fluid nature of information and the fact that constant change means constant changes in timeliness.

- **Indicator4. Accessibility of Information:** Accessibility of information measure if website is accessible for users to retrieve information and provide environment where 2 side relationships is ensured without any effort required.

- **Indicator5. Usability of Information:** Usability of information ensures that if design and presentation of information can ensure people's need, including assistant devices of website, design and appearance.

Out of total of 5 indicators are used, including 3 main indicators used by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD to define transparency and 1 indicator used by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia.

Findings from latest monitoring - 2017

The monitoring lasts between August 2nd and August 18th, 2017, surveying a total of 81 websites of agencies and enterprises.

Graph 2. Best and worst performers of 2017
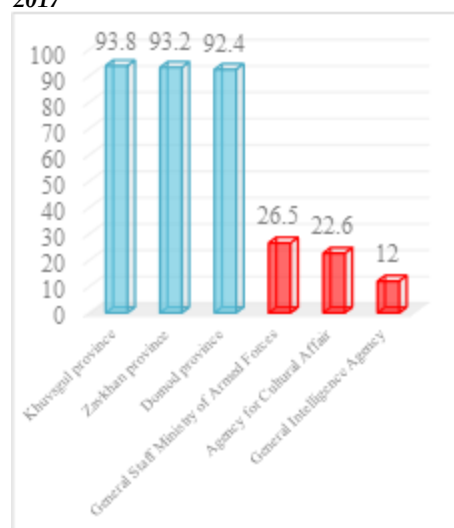
The below information on transparency indicates that agencies were generally most transparent when it came to budget, operational issue, and least transparent about procurement. This is problematic because of the inherent corruption risk related to the procurement process.

70. 6 score on Budget
61.5 score on Operational

47.9 score on Procurement
48.5 score on Human Resource

As per data from monitoring surveys of the six times, performance on the transparency of government agencies have been increasing steadily over time, except the sudden drop in 2016, which can be explained by turn-over due to election result. However, in 2017, it increased again in all branches that we surveyed, but the average score was 55.5% which indicates that there is still significant work to be done.

Graph 3. Performance of surveyed government agencies over time
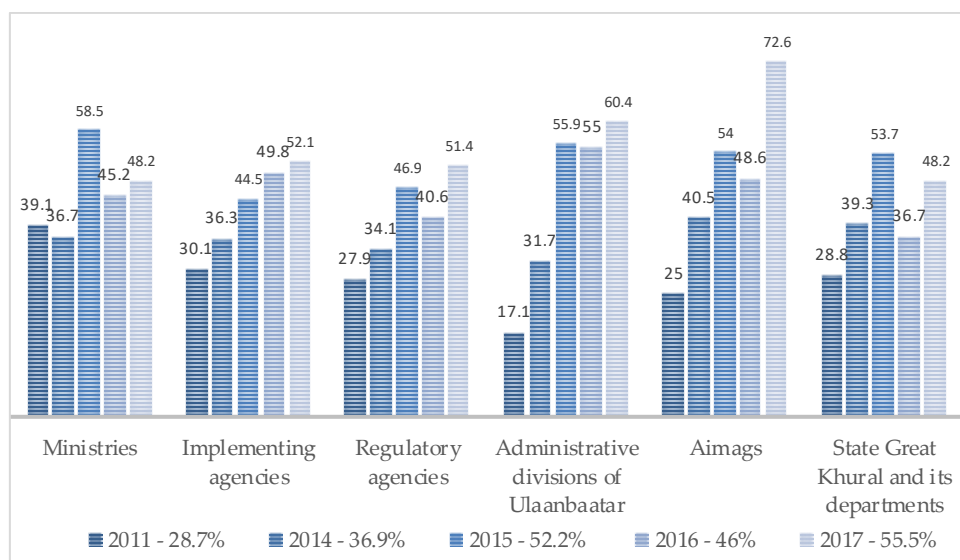
Conclusions and future directions

From our analysis, we were able to identify a number of strengths and weaknesses in current government practices, show in following figure.

Table 1. Strenghts and weaknesses of current government website

Strenghts	Weaknesses
Government agencies have generally improved their website transparency since 2011.	Information are often unreliable and out of date
All government agencies now have official websites and use these to provide information to citizens.	Information delivery is not sufficient to ensure citizens' participation and providing feedback.
Websites are generally not too technical and easy to use.	Less attention to the quality, timeliness of the information.

The results of previous years' evalutions are available on our website, and we plan to continue building on this information base by undertaking this review annually.