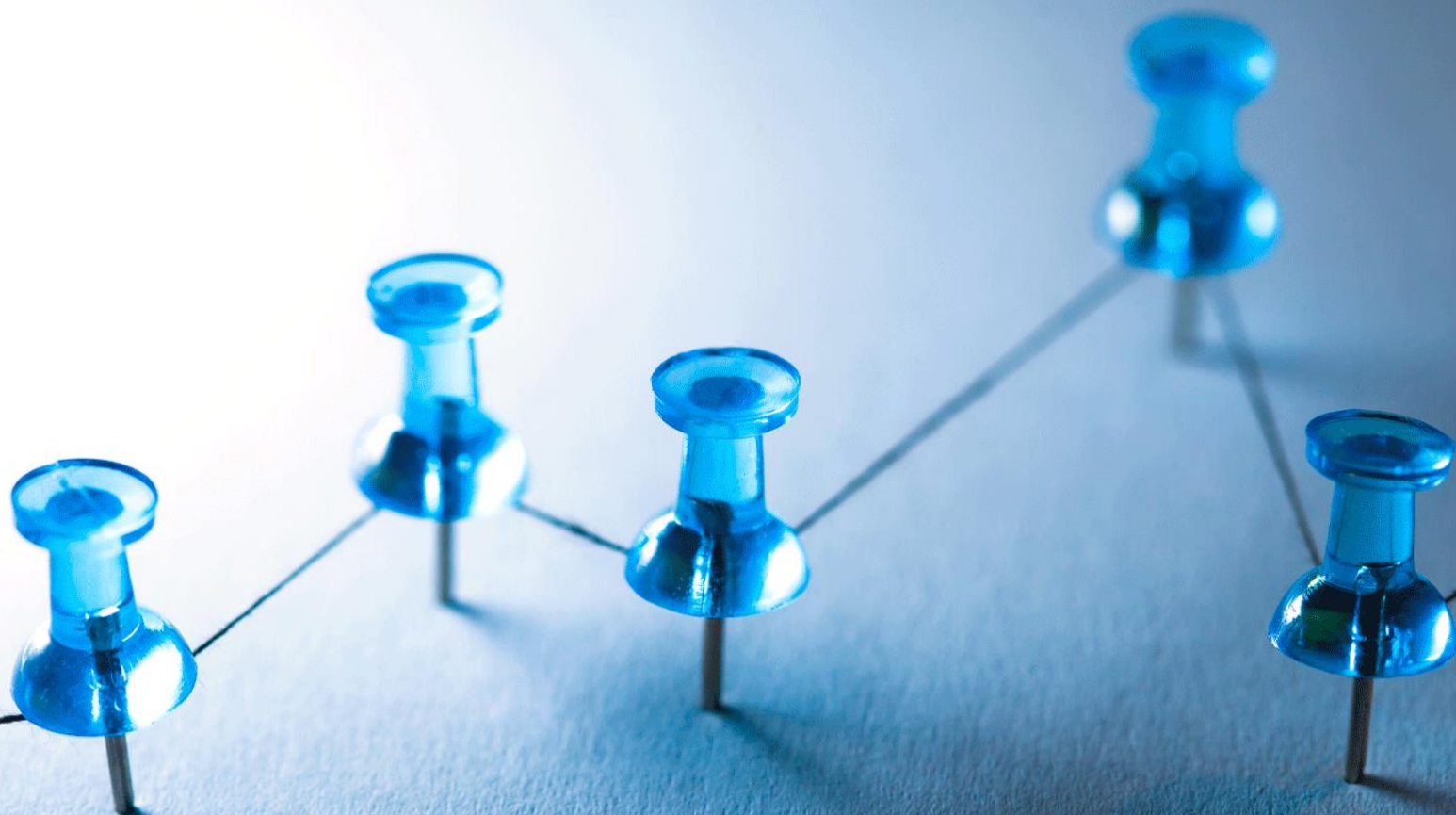


THE PRACTICE OF ALLOCATING BUDGETARY FUNDS FOR ADVERTISING AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN MEDIA



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2021

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Introduction

The following report reflects the 2021 practice of allocating budgetary funds for the purpose of advertising and dissemination of information in media and is based on publicly available data of the State Procurement Agency, and, in selected cases, additional information requested from public agencies. To illustrate the editorial policies of media outlets that received budgetary contracts, the study also includes individual examples of media coverage.

The introductory part of the report summarizes the main findings; The main part dissects the practice of allocating budgetary contracts for the purpose of advertising and information dissemination according to different types of media - television, radio, online, print and social media. A separate chapter is devoted to the allocation of budgetary funds on social media, including contracts that obligate individual media outlets to post materials on various Facebook groups and pages. The last part deals with the editorial policies of those media outlets, which in some cases, carry homophobic and anti-Western content, and, in selected cases, are involved in pro-governmental coordinated campaigns aimed at discrediting its opponents.

Methodology

The study has utilized mixed methodology, namely, document analysis and, in selected cases, content analysis.

Analysis of Documents. In addition to the documentation available in the electronic database of the State Procurement Agency, the study relied on additional data requested from public institutions and other information distributed through open sources.

Content Analysis. Based on the principle of random sampling, the report also includes content analysis of the individual media outlets. The selection was made on the basis of the agreements signed between administrative bodies and media outlets and aimed to determine what kind of editorial policies these media outlets have.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key Findings	7
The Practice of Allocating Budgetary Funds for Advertising and Dissemination of Information in Media	9
1. Online Media.....	10
2. Broadcasters	12
3. Print Media	15
4. Social Media	16
5. Budgetary Funds for Agencies to Disseminate Information on Facebook Pages and Groups	17
6. Budgetary Contracts with Media of Controversial Editorial Policies	19

Charts and Tables

Chart 1. Allocation of Budgetary Contracts for the Purpose of Advertising and Dissemination of Information based on the Typology of Media, 2021	9
Chart 2. Budget Allocation for Advertising and Information Distribution Services in Online Media, 2021.....	11
Chart 3. Budget Allocation for Advertising to Nationwide and Mixed Coverage Broadcasters, 2020-21.....	12
Chart 4. Allocation of Budgetary Contracts on Advertising among Regional Televisions, 2021.....	13
Chart 5. Allocation of Budgetary Funds Among Nationwide and Mixed Radio Stations, 2021.....	14
Chart 6. Allocation of Budgetary Funds among Regional Radios, 2021	15
Chart 7. Allocation of Budgetary Advertisement and Information Services among Newspapers, 2021.....	15
Chart 8. Allocation of Budgetary Advertisement and Information Services among Regional Newspapers, 2021.....	16
Chart 9. Allocation of Advertisement Funds Among Administrative Bodies on Social Media, 2021.....	17
Table 1. Dynamics of Allocation of Budgetary Service Contracts for the Purpose of Dissemination of Information in 2020-2021.....	10
Table 2. Contracts Signed by Budgetary Agencies in 2021 on the Service of Sharing Information on Facebook Groups and Pages.....	18
Table 3. Facebook Groups, Pages and News Agencies where Budgetary Organizations Shared/Disseminated Information.....	19

Key Findings

The study identified the following trends:

- According to the data available in the electronic database of the State Procurement Agency, in 2021, for the purpose of advertising and dissemination of information, budgetary organizations signed service contracts with media worth GEL 4 808 129.
- The largest share of the mentioned amount - 35.6% (GEL 1,713,475) went to online media; 16.4% (GEL 790,125) - to national and mixed coverage broadcasters, 16.4% (GEL 789,847) - to regional broadcasters; 16.7% (802,818 GEL) - to social media; 7.3%- to print media (351,318 GEL); 5.3% (253,831 GEL) - to mixed contracts; 2.2% (106,715 GEL) was allocated for radios.
- Compared to the previous year, in 2021, the value of budgetary contracts for the purpose of placing information in national and mixed coverage TV broadcasters decreased significantly (by 46.6%); At the same time, the value of budgetary contracts has increased for radio (by 55.3%), print media (by 54.8%) and social media (by 4.2%). Additionally, the value of joint budgetary contracts for mixed media outlets has increased by 106.5%.
- In 2021 - the largest amount - a total of GEL 1 713 476 was allocated to online media outlets, the most significant share of which went to online publications included in Palitra Media Holding; followed by pro-governmental Kvira.ge and its affiliates.
- The distribution of budgetary advertisements on nationwide TV channels correlates with their ratings, which reflect the coverage of the TV market by any given channel. The largest share of television contracts went to pro-governmental Imedi TV, which leads in TV ratings. Imedi TV is followed by the oppositional Mtavari Arkhi.
- Local municipalities and their subordinate agencies account for the largest share of contracts signed with regional TV broadcasters. Like in 2016-2020, Kvemo Kartli television again received the largest budgetary financing among regional TV broadcasters, constituting 80% of total revenues.
- Among nationwide coverage radio broadcasters, the biggest budgetary contract was signed with Radio Imedi, followed by Radio Holding Fortuna. As for regional radios, the share of joint contracts through intermediary companies was the highest.
- When it comes to nationwide print media, contracts of the most value were signed with "Resonance." Among regional print media, the contract of the most value was signed with the newspaper "Borjomi."
- Similar to 2020, one could observe the following tendency in 2021: The contracts signed by the administrative bodies on the dissemination of information services also entailed the obligation to share the information on other Facebook groups and pages, in addition to posting the materials on the agency's website.
- Similar to previous years, administrative bodies did not have clear-cut criteria and anti-discriminatory policies for selecting media outlets to disseminate information and place advertisements.
- As in previous years, in 2021, a service contract for information services was again signed with the newspaper "Sakartvelos Respublika" [The Republic of Georgia], whose editorial policy is homophobic, xenophobic and anti-Western.

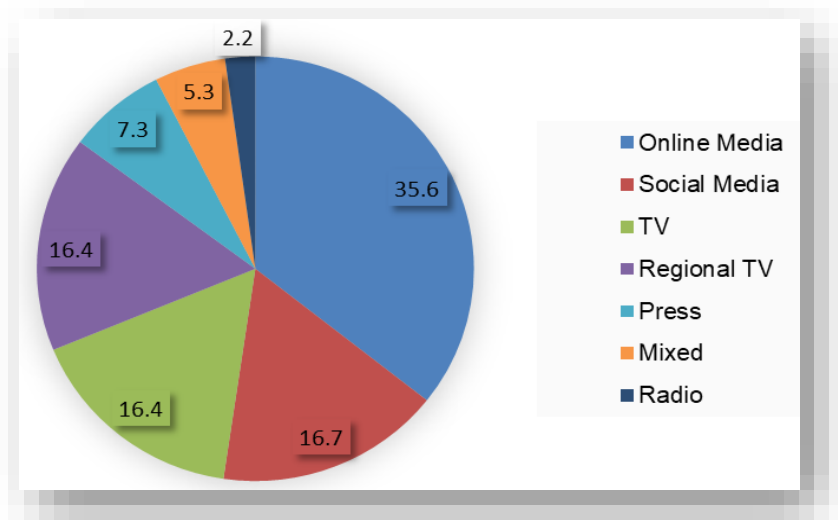
- Similar to the previous year, budgetary contracts were signed with the online outlet "Spacesnews," which, in addition to having a pro-governmental editorial policy, has close links to the satellites of the Kremlin. Apart from spreading disinformation, the outlet has been involved in discreditation campaigns pursued against the opponents of the government.
- In one case, selected media outlets with budgetary contracts published a comment by a troll, who has been stealing the identity of a Russian citizen, presenting him as a real person.

THE PRACTICE OF ALLOCATING BUDGETARY FUNDS FOR ADVERTISING AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN MEDIA

General Data: According to the data available in the electronic database of the State Procurement Agency, in 2021, for the purpose of advertising and dissemination of information, budgetary organizations signed service contracts with media worth GEL 4 808 129. The largest share of the mentioned amount - 35.6% (GEL 1,713,475) went to online media; 16.4% (GEL 790,125) - to national and mixed coverage broadcasters, 16.4% (GEL 789,847) - to regional broadcasters; 16.7% (802,818 GEL) - to social media; 7.3%- to print media (351,318 GEL); 5.3% (253,831 GEL) - to mixed contracts; 2.2% (106,715 GEL) was allocated for radios.

It should be noted that mixed contracts combine different types of media. Since it is impossible to identify which type of media the money was transferred to based on certain contracts, we merged this data into a separate category called "mixed contracts."

Chart 1. Allocation of Budgetary Contracts for the Purpose of Advertising and Dissemination of Information based on the Typology of Media, 2021



Compared to the previous year, in 2021, the value of budgetary contracts for the purpose of placing information in national and mixed coverage TV broadcasters decreased significantly (by 46.6%); By 4.2% in the case of online media, and by 1.6% in the case of regional TV broadcasters.

At the same time, the value of budgetary contracts has increased for radio (by 55.3%), print media (by 54.8%) and social media (by 4.2%). Additionally, the value of budgetary contracts has increased by 106.5% for mixed media (different types of media at the same time).

Table 1. Dynamics of Allocation of Budgetary Service Contracts for the Purpose of Dissemination of Information in 2020-2021

Types of Media	2021	2020	Comparison
Online	1 713 475	1 788 332	Decreased by 4.2%
National and mixed coverage TV	790 125	1 479 230	Decreased by 46.6%
Regional TV	789 847	802 546	Decreased by 1.6%
Social Media	802 818	770 560	Increased by 4.2%
Print Media	351 318	226 974	Increased by 54.8%
Mixed Contracts	253 831	122 935	Increased by 106.5%
Radio	106 715	68 710	Increased by 55.3%

1. Online Media

According to the data available in the State Procurement Agency database, in 2021 - the largest amount - a total of GEL 1 713 476 was allocated to online media outlets for the purpose of advertising and dissemination of information. The most significant share of this amount (GEL 339,791) went to online publications included in Palitra Media Holding (IPN, PalitraTV.ge, Kvirispalitra.ge, Bpn.ge, Ambebi.ge, Allnews.ge); Followed by pro-governmental Kvira.ge and its affiliates kids.kvira.ge, region.kvira.ge - GEL 120 940; Ipress.ge and those media outlets, which are named as partners on Ipress.ge's website and are contracted with it. (ibusiness.ge; iregions.ge; imtavroba.ge¹; mpress.ge²) - GEL 91,059; Primetime.ge - GEL 55 177; Imedinews.ge - GEL 48 133; PIA and its affiliate publication (Daijesti.ge) - GEL 42 501. It should be noted here that the service contract of Clip Art,³ an intermediary company affiliated with PIA, entailed sharing the materials of PIA on Facebook pages and groups. However, due to the fact that the above-mentioned contract also applied to other online agencies, it is impossible to identify the exact amount provided for the distribution of the materials of this agency, while the total value of the contract was GEL 121,221.

The values of contracts made with other media are as follows: EPN and related media outlets (Economic.ge; 1news.ge, www.faxinter.news) - GEL 36 276; Netgazeti and Batumelebi - GEL 35 199; Newspress.ge and NSP.ge - GEL 34 851; Reportiori.ge (qartuliazri.ge, cnobisfurceli.ge) - GEL 34 344; Frontnews.ge - GEL 34 070, Inforustavi.ge - GEL 29 000, Bm.ge - GEL 28 858; Indigo.com.ge - GEL 26 600; GHN - GEL 26 525; Accentnews.ge - GEL 20 450, On.ge - GEL 19 320, Timer.ge - GEL 17 462; Guardian.ge - GEL 16 197, Edu.aris.ge - GEL 15 728, Marshapress.ge - GEL 15 608;

¹ Ipress.ge-linked agencies

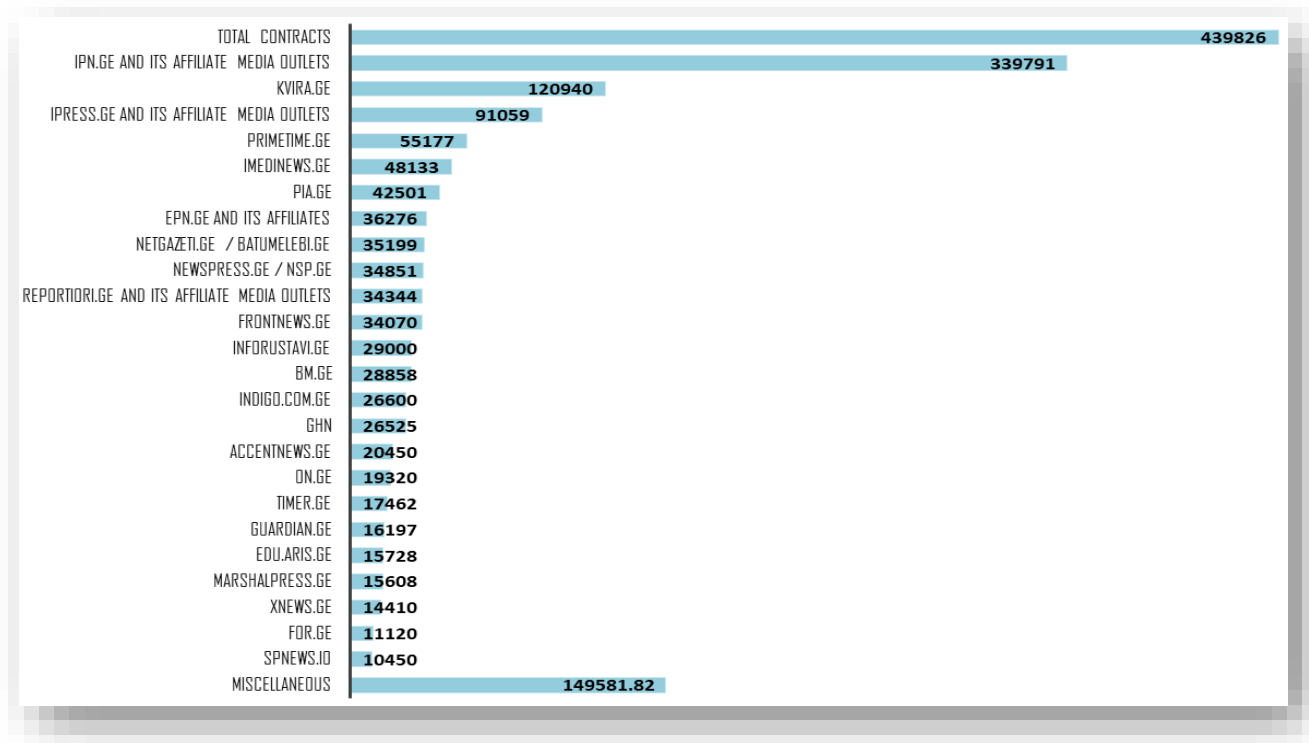
² Ipress.ge partner agencies

³ The contract signed between the Georgian Energy and Water Regulatory Commission and Clip Art. (SPA200003019);

xnews.ge – GEL 14 410; For.ge – GEL 11 120; Spnews.io; spn.ge – GEL 10 450; Other media outlets, whose contracts cost less than 10,000 GEL, amounting to a total is 149 582 GEL, were included in the category "Miscellaneous."

Some budgetary organizations cooperate with news agencies through intermediaries; therefore, it is not possible to search for full information in the electronic database of the State Procurement Agency about what amounts were transferred to specific media outlets. We categorized such contracts in the group of joint contracts (total cost - 439 826 GEL);

Chart 2. Budget Allocation for Advertising and Information Distribution Services in Online Media, 2021



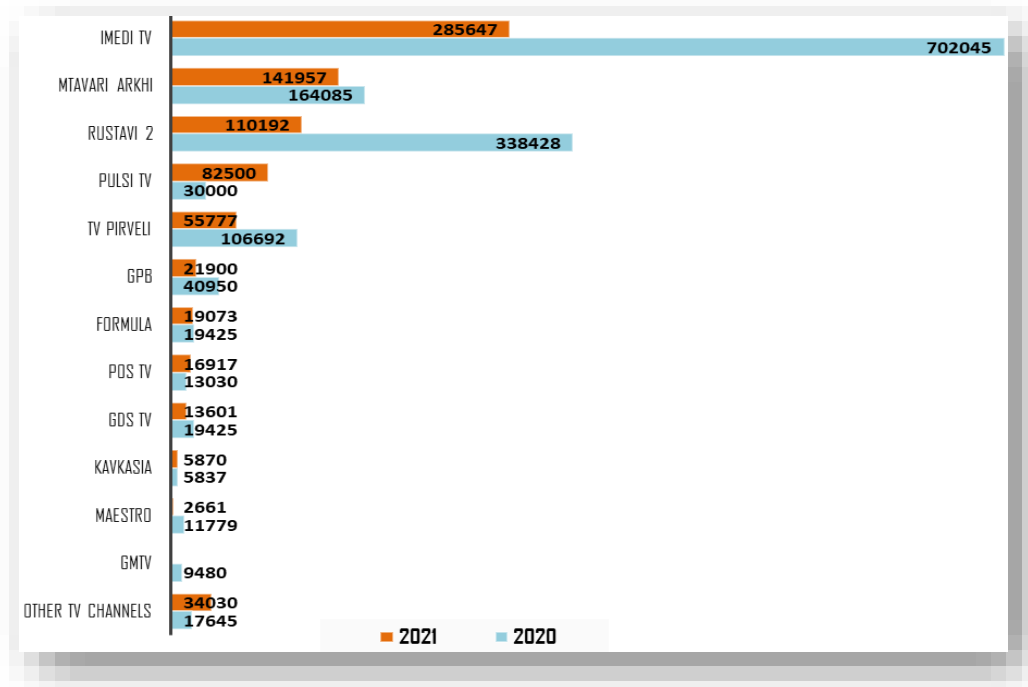
As previous research⁴ of the "Media Development Foundation" demonstrates, part of the online media publishes the funded materials on the website in accordance with professional standards and informs the audience that the posted content is not a media product and is funded by the customer. However, a similar practice is not established in all the analyzed outlets. In addition, as demonstrated in the next chapter, selected media outlets, which have signed budgetary contracts, pursue a pro-governmental editorial policy and are involved in discrediting campaigns of the opponents of the government.

⁴ Financial Transparency of Media in 2014-2020 <https://mediameter.ge/ge/research>

2. Broadcasters

TV Broadcasters. According to the data available in the electronic database of the State Procurement Agency, in 2021, budgetary organizations signed contracts with TV broadcasters totalling GEL 1 579 972. Half of this amount - GEL 790 125 went to nationwide and mixed coverage televisions, followed by regional televisions with GEL 789 847. The distribution of budgetary advertisements on nationwide TV channels correlates with their ratings, which reflect the coverage of the TV market by any given channel.⁵ Among televisions, the largest share of television contracts worth GEL 702 045 went to pro-governmental Imedi TV (GEL 285 647), which leads in TV ratings. Imedi TV is followed by the oppositional Mtavari Arkhi (141 957 GEL), pro-governmental Rustavi 2 (GEL 110 192) and other TV channels: TV company Pulse (82,500 GEL), TV Pirveli (55,777 GEL), Public Broadcaster (21,900 GEL), oppositional "Formula" (19,073 GEL), pro-governmental PosTV (16,917 GEL), GDS TV (13,601 GEL), and Georgian Channel (13,000 GEL). Other televisions,⁶ whose revenues were less than GEL 10,000 in total, received funds worth GEL 29,561 for advertising services.

Chart 3. Budget Allocation for Advertising to Nationwide and Mixed Coverage Broadcasters, 2020-21



In 2021, compared to 2020, the budgetary funds for advertising and information dissemination services have been reduced in the case of two large television stations - "TV Inedi" (416,398 GEL - 59.3%) and Rustavi 2 (228,236 GEL - 67.4%).

⁵ <http://www.tvmr.ge/>

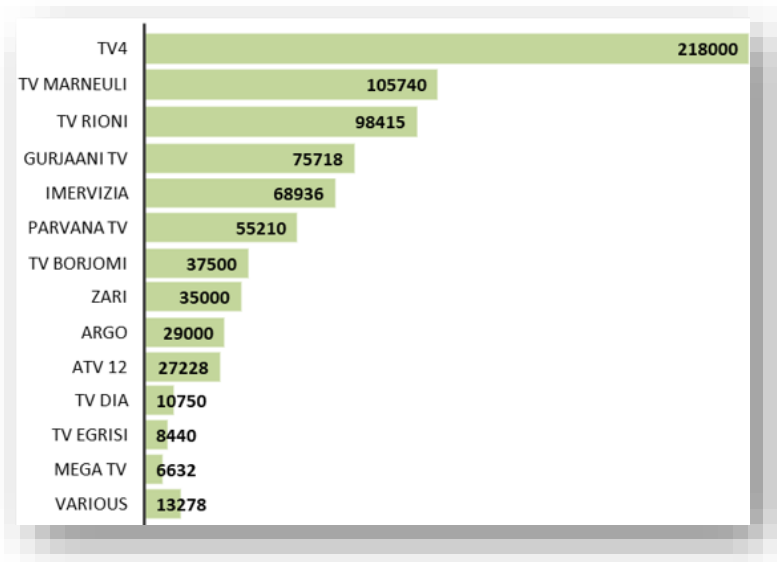
⁶ Music-Box, Kavkasia, Palitraneews, Maestro, Central Television of Georgia, TV Akhali, TV-Radio Company TV 24, Quality Channel

Compared to 2020, the sharp reduction of budget advertising occurred mainly at the expense of TV Imedi and Rustavi 2. In 2021, budgetary funds for Mtavari Arkhi were reduced by only 22,128 GEL, while Formula has received almost the same income as it had in the previous year. As for TV Pirveli, the amount of budget contracts has been halved (46.6% decrease - 2021: 55,777, 2020: 106,692 GEL). In addition, the value of the budgetary contracts of POS TV (by 30%), Pulse TV (175%) and other televisions (93%) has increased in 2021.

Regional TV Broadcasters. Local municipalities and their subordinate agencies account for the largest share of contracts signed with regional TV broadcasters (total amount – GEL 789 847). Like in 2016-2020, Kvemo Kartli television again received the largest budgetary financing among regional TV broadcasters (GEL 218 000), constituting 80% (GEL 271 468) of total revenues. Kvemo Kartli television is followed by “Marneuli TV” – GEL 105 740; Rioni TV – GEL 98 415; “Gurjaani” – GEL 75 718; Imervizia – GEL 68 936; Parvana – GEL 55 210; TV Borjomi – GEL 37 500; Zari – GEL 35 000; TV Argo - GEL 29 000; ATV-12 – GEL 27 228; TV Dia - GEL 10 750; TV Egrisi - GEL 8 440; MEGA TV - GEL 6 632. Other regional TV broadcasters⁷ received contracts worth GEL 13 278.

In 2021, the intermediary company "[Georgian Alliance of Regional Broadcasters](#)" signed a joint contract⁸ (GEL 59,600) between regional television stations (several companies at the same time) and the Central Election Commission. According to the mentioned contract, along with the television service, the placement of information on the radio was also provided, and the cost of the service was not separated; therefore, we included the contract in the category of mixed contracts.

Chart 4. Allocations for Budgetary Contracts on Advertising among Regional Televisions, 2021

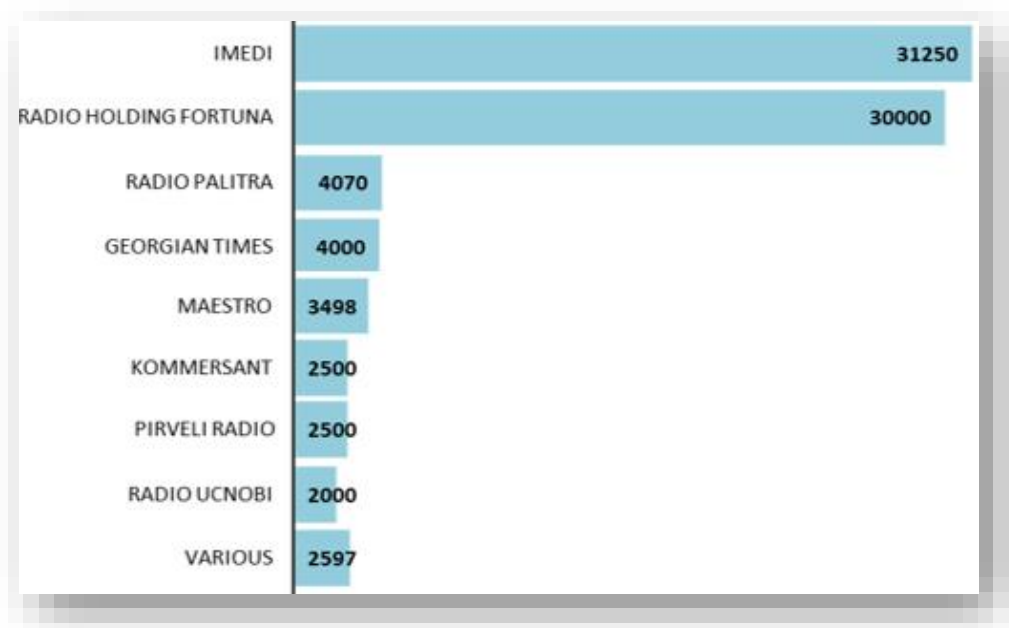


⁷ „TV LTV“, Kolkheti 89“, „Guria TV“, „TV Tanamgzavri“, „TV Odishi“, „TV25“. Poti TV“

⁸ Contact code (CMR210099873), Source: The [webpage](#) of the State Procurement Agency.

Radio. Contracts signed with radio stations totalled GEL 106 715, of which the value of contracts with nationwide and mixed coverage radio broadcasters totalled GEL 82 415. The biggest budgetary contract was signed with Radio Imedi (GEL 31 250), followed by Radio Holding Fortuna (Fortuna, Fortuna +, Ar Daidardo, AvtoRadio – GEL 30 000); Radio Palitra – GEL 4 070; Georgian Times (GEL 4 000), Maestro (GEL 3 498), Kommersant (GEL 2 500), Pirveli Radio (2,500 GEL), Radio Ucnobi (2,000 GEL). Revenues received by other radio stations through budget contracts (not exceeding GEL 1000) totalled GEL 2 797.

Chart 5. Allocation of Budgetary Funds Among Nationwide and Mixed Radio Stations, 2021



Regional Radio stations. As for regional radios, the share of joint contracts through intermediary companies (several companies at the same time) was the highest (22,050 GEL). In 2021, the Central Election Commission of Georgia signed contracts with the Public Educational Association Hereti⁹ (20,000 GEL) and the Alliance of Regional Broadcasters of Georgia¹⁰ (2,050 GEL) for the purchase of information services of regional radios.

Individual contracts, for relatively smaller amounts, were signed in 2021 with Radio "Trialeti" (2,050 GEL) and Radio "Nor" (200 GEL).

⁹ Placement of information in the following radios: Radio Tbilisi, Radio Hereti, Radio Citrus, Radio Mosaika, Radio Bolneli, Radio Odishi+, Radio Dzveli Kalaki, Radio Nor, Radio Marneuli, Radio Samkhretis Karibche;

¹⁰ Placement of information in the following radios: Harmonia, Odishi, Radio Batumi, Radio Vrastan, Radio AGFM, Radio Bolneli, Radio Trialeti

Chart 6. Allocation of Budgetary Funds among Regional Radios, 2021

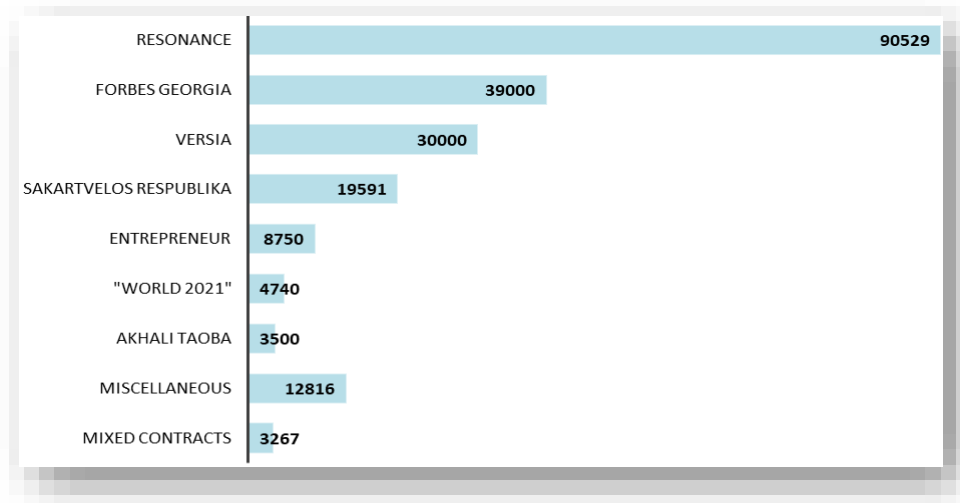


3. Print Media

When it comes to print media, contracts of the most value (GEL 90 529) were signed with “Resonance,” followed by “Forbes Georgia” (GEL 39 000), “Versia” (GEL 30 000), “Sakartvelos Respublika” [Republic of Georgia] (GEL 19 591), Entrepreneur (8 750 GEL), Msoplio 2021 (4 740 GEL), Akhali Taoba (3 500 GEL). Newspapers whose contracts totalled less than GEL 3000 were included in the category of “Miscellaneous,” including: “Georgian Medical News,” “Prof-News,” “Kviris Palitra,” “Homeland of Wine,” “Vrastan,” “ROYAL JOURNAL,” “Literary Georgia,” “New Georgia,” “Science and Energy” - totalling GEL 12 816.

In 2021, the Environmental Information and Education Center signed a joint contract¹¹ (several companies at the same time) with [Agrocommunicator LLC](#) (3,267 GEL).

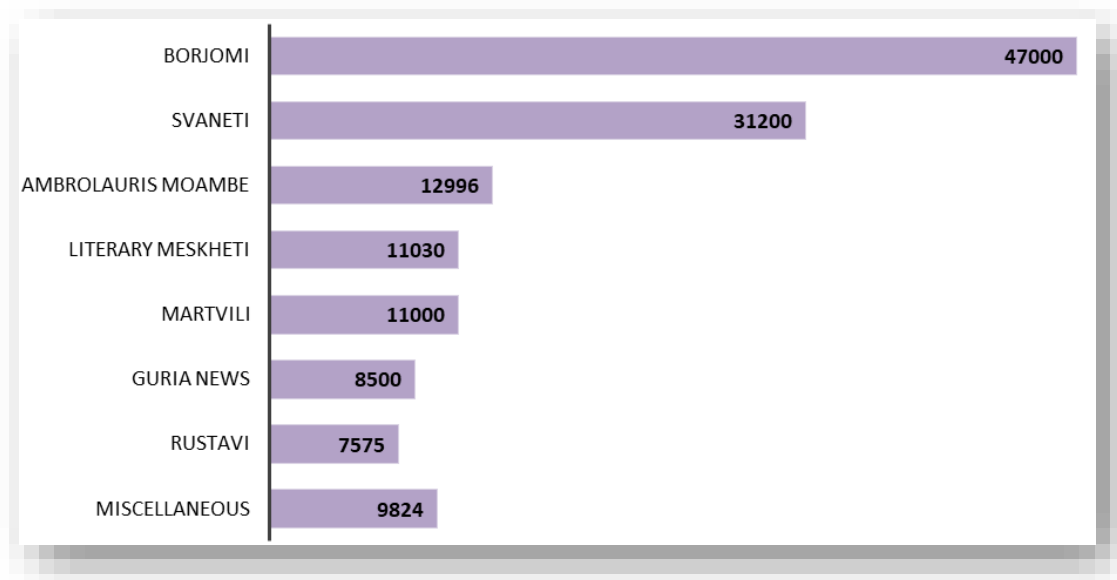
Chart 7. Allocation of Budgetary Advertisement and Information Services among Newspapers, 2021



¹¹ Contact code (CMR210093126), Source: The [webpage](#) of the State Procurement Agency

In 2021, budgetary organizations signed contracts with regional print media worth GEL 139,125. Among regional print media, the contract of the most value was signed with the newspaper "Borjomi" (47,000 GEL), followed by "Svaneti" (31,200 GEL), "Ambrolauris Moambe" (12,996 GEL), "Literary Meskheta" (11,030 GEL), newspaper "Martvili" (11,000 GEL), "Guria News" (8,500 GEL), "Rustavi" (7,575 GEL). Other newspapers: "Under 21", "Alioni", "Guria Today", "Guriis Moambe", "Lanchkhutis Moambe", "Khulo", "Ho da Ara", "Gurjistan", "Bolnisi") signed contracts worth 9,824 GEL.

Chart 8. Allocation of Budgetary Advertisement and Information Services among Regional Newspapers, 2021



4. Social Media

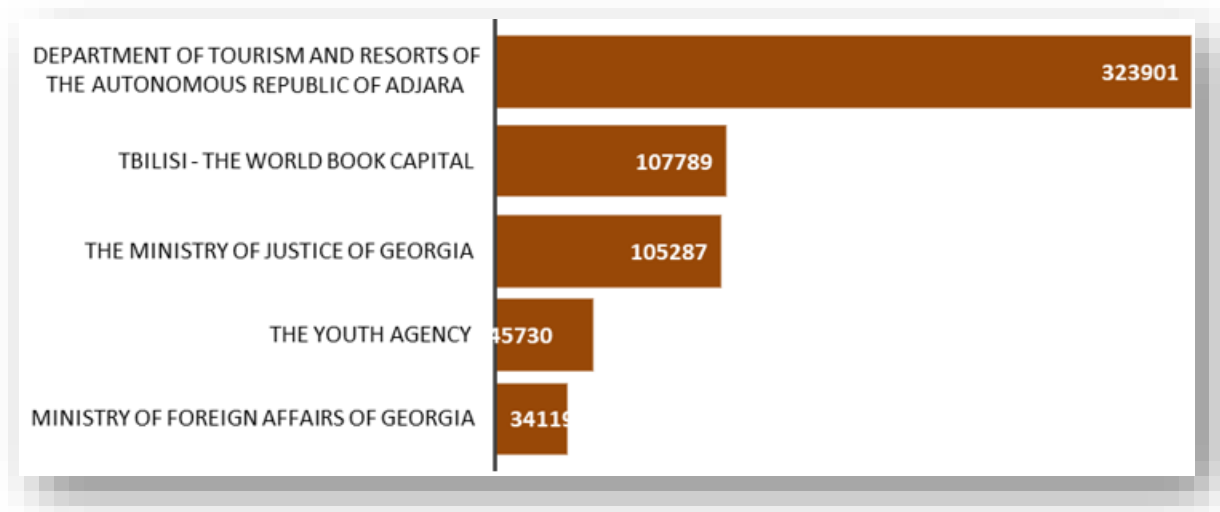
According to the electronic data of the State Procurement Agency, budgetary organizations allocated a total of GEL 802 818 for the purpose of advertising and marketing on social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn).¹² The highest expense for advertisement in social media was made by the Department of Tourism and Resorts of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara¹³ (323,901 GEL); Followed by: Tbilisi - the

¹² The contract signed between Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and GMA Georgia LLC (contract value 33,080 GEL) also entailed the placement of information on LinkedIn along with Facebook and Instagram. Along with Facebook and Instagram, a contract was signed with S/P Zurab Chkhaidze of the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara for posting information on YouTube (contract value 1800 GEL). Report card of the Chairman of the National Communications Commission of Georgia (CMR210099873), source: State Procurement Agency [website](#).

¹³ Contract signed with Mozaika Plus LLC CMR210086354

World Book Capital¹⁴ (107,789 GEL); The Ministry of Justice of Georgia¹⁵ (105,287 GEL), The Youth Agency¹⁶ (45,730 GEL) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia¹⁷ (34,119).

Chart 9. Allocation of Advertisement Funds Among Administrative Bodies on Social Media, 2021



5. Budgetary Funds for Agencies to Disseminate Information on Facebook Pages and Groups

After analyzing the budgetary contract data, similar to 2020, one could observe the following tendency in 2021: The contracts signed by the administrative bodies on the dissemination of information services also entailed the obligation to share the information on other Facebook groups and pages, in addition to posting the materials on the agency's website.

In 2021, the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Commission signed the contract of the highest value of this type (the cost of the contract is 121 221 GEL) through the intermediary organization "Clip-Art Ltd," which is linked to PIA Agency. The Contract (SPA200003019) posted on the website of the Georgian Procurement Agency, in accordance with the technical assignment, entailed sharing of materials in at least five segmentally selected Facebook groups.

¹⁴ Contract signed with Outline LLC CMR210052722

¹⁵ Contract signed with DDB Georgia LLC NAT210001201

¹⁶ The order of the head of the Youth Agency regarding the advertisement (sponsorship) of the information and activities of the Youth Agency on the social network "Facebook." CMR210002701

¹⁷ Contract signed with GMA Georgia LLC SPA210000619

Apart from "Clip-Art", one media organization (For.ge) was identified, with which the National Screening Center signed a budgetary contract with a smaller amount and which, along with the distribution of information for the customer, entailed sharing materials commissioned by state authorities on Facebook groups and pages.

Table 2. Contracts Signed by Budgetary Agencies in 2021 on the Service of Sharing Information on Facebook Groups and Pages

Contractor	Budgetary Agency	Contract Value in GEL
Clip-Art	Georgian Energy and Water Regulatory Commission	121 221
For.ge	National Screening Center	2 200

In order to find out which Facebook accounts were being used to post the predetermined information, the Media Development Foundation requested public information from the contracting authorities. According to the information provided by the Georgian National Energy and Water Regulatory Commission, one could observe the following:

Clip-Art and PIA Agency. Within the framework of the contract signed between the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission and Clip Art Ltd, Clip Art had to post predetermined information into 5 Facebook groups ("[Es Sainteresoa](#)" [This is interesting] - 35 700 members; "[Gaige Pirvelma](#)" [Be the First to Know] - 9 400 members, "[Sasargeblo Rchevebi](#)" [Useful Tips]- 18,600 members, "[Yoveldgiuri Siakhleebi](#)" [Daily News]- 19,200 members;" "[Cnobismokvare](#)" [Curious] - 45,000 members) and 8 news agencies (www.interpressnews.ge; www.pia.ge; www.info9.ge; www.kvira.ge: www.ipress.ge; www.for.ge; www.ambebi.ge; www.2020news.ge).

It should be noted that 5 Facebook groups are linked with "Clip-Art" and its media outlet digestpia.ge and share the materials of this outlet. 4 out of 5 Facebook groups are owned by the Facebook page [Gogaggg](#), which indicates the website [digest.pia.ge](#) and the email address of the Pia Agency in the about us section. The fifth group "[Curious](#)" found in the list of groups linked to [Gogaggg](#), and among its administrators and moderators are [digestpia](#), as well as [funtime.ge](#), which is a page created by Clip-Art.

Table 3. Facebook Groups, Pages and News Agencies where Budgetary Organizations Shared/Disseminated Information

Administrative Body	Media/Intermediary Company	Information Agencies	Various Thematic Facebook Pages	Facebook groups
Georgian National Energy and Water Regulatory Commission	Clip-Art	1. interpressnews.ge 2. pia.ge 3. info9.ge 4. kvira.ge 5. ipress.ge 6. for.ge 7. ambebi.ge 8. 2020news.ge.		1. Es Sainteresoa 2. Yoveldgiuri Siakhleebi 3. Sasargeblo Rchevebi 4. Gaige Pirvelma 5. Cnobismoyvare
National Screening Center	For.ge		Yellow Faqts , Tbilisi news , Freedom , Poezia Front news)	Positive , For.Ge - Information Analytical Portal

For.ge. In 2020, budgetary organizations signed contracts worth GEL 11120 with the news agency “For.ge.” Among them was the contract signed with the National Screening Center that entailed sharing materials to 4 Facebook pages ([Yellow Faqts](#), [Tbilisi news](#), [Freedom](#), [ჰმეზის Front news](#)) and 2 Facebook groups ([Positive](#), [For.Ge - Information Analytical Portal](#)). All mentioned pages and groups, where the information should be placed under the contract, are affiliated with For.ge, since all of them indicate [www.for.ge](#) as their addresses in their respective ‘About Us’ sections. In addition, Facebook groups “For.ge – Informational-analytical Portal” and “Positive” are administered by Rozi Zghamaia, founder and editor of For.ge, in addition to the above-mentioned four Facebook pages run by For.ge.

6. Budgetary Contracts with Media Outlets of Controversial Editorial Policies

Similar to previous years,¹⁸ administrative bodies did not have clear-cut criteria for selecting media outlets to disseminate information and place advertisements. The 2021 data analysis has revealed that budgetary contracts for information services were signed with media with contradictory editorial policies. From this point of view, the practice of cooperation with several types of media was revealed:

- Media outlets with homophobic and anti-Western editorial policies;
- Hybrid editions with mixed editorial policies;
- Media outlets with pro-governmental editorial policies, which were involved in campaigns against the opponents of the government and, in selected cases, disseminated fake news in a coordinated manner.

Homophobic editions. As in previous years, in 2021, a service contract for information services was again signed with the newspaper “Sakartvelos Respublika” [The Republic of Georgia], whose editorial policy is homophobic, xenophobic and anti-Western.

¹⁸ Media Development Foundation (2016). Practice of allocating budgetary resources among media for the release of information and advertisement, 2016 <https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/31/>

Media Outlet	Value of Service Contract	Budgetary Organization
Newspaper "Sakartvelos Respublika"	19 591	"State Electric System of Georgia", Ministry of Finance and Economy of Adjara, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Georgia, "Sakpatenti", Technical University of Georgia, Ivane Beritashvili Experimental Biomedicine Center, "Ferdinand Tavadze Metallurgy and Institute of Materials Science, Sukhumi State University, Vekua Institute of Physics and Technology of Sokhumi;

"Sakartvelos Respublika" continued to publish materials with homophobic content in 2021 as well, with the following headlines:

- "Bishop Anton: A dagger in the heart is better than a dagger in the rear. Why are you scolding the Georgian people, our values?"¹⁹
- "Adopt the law on banning the propaganda of depravity!"²⁰
- "Defilers of Georgian morals and traditions." Exhibition of Asses, that is, if our conscience does not bother us."²¹
- One cannot criticize the law in force in Georgia regarding the sins of Sodomy" (Rubric "Invasion of Immorals").²²
- "Georgian Liberalism i.e my penis is a cucumber."²³



¹⁹ "Sakartvelos Respublika", #153-154, 14-15 July, 2021 https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/336750/1/Sakartvelos_Respublika_2021_N154-155.pdf

²⁰ "Sakartvelos Respublika", #131-132, 16-17 June, 2021 https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/334783/1/Sakartvelos_Respublika_2021_N131-132.pdf

²¹ "Sakartvelos Respublika", #149-150, 7-8 July, 2021 https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/336745/1/Sakartvelos_Respublika_2021_N149-150.pdf

²² Ibid

²³ "Sakartvelos Respublika", #151-152, 9-11 July, 2021 https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/336749/1/Sakartvelos_Respublika_2021_N151-152.pdf

At the same time, the statement of the Patriarchate, which noted that it is unacceptable when some embassies and European MEPs interfere with the events related to Tbilisi Pride on July 5, 2021, was accompanied by a photo of a banner with a request to expel the American ambassador from Georgia for being an LGBT aggressor.²⁴



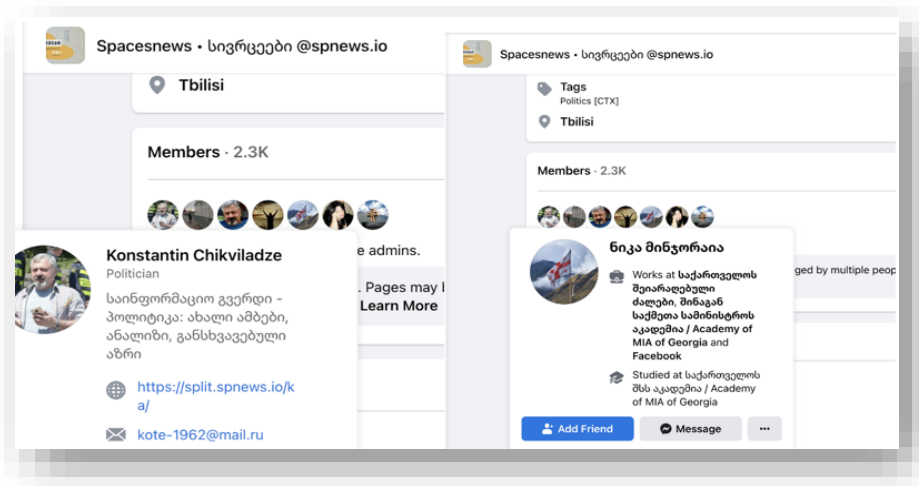
Hybrid Edition. Similar to the previous year, budgetary contracts were signed with the online publication "Spacesnews" (www.spnews.io), whose editorial policy is hybrid (pro-governmental and anti-Western).

Media Outlet	Value of Service Contract	Budgetary Organization
Spacesnews www.spnews.io	10 450	Melioration of Poti Municipality, LEPL SSTC "Delta," Preschool Education Agency of Gori Municipality, Bolnisi Sports Complex.

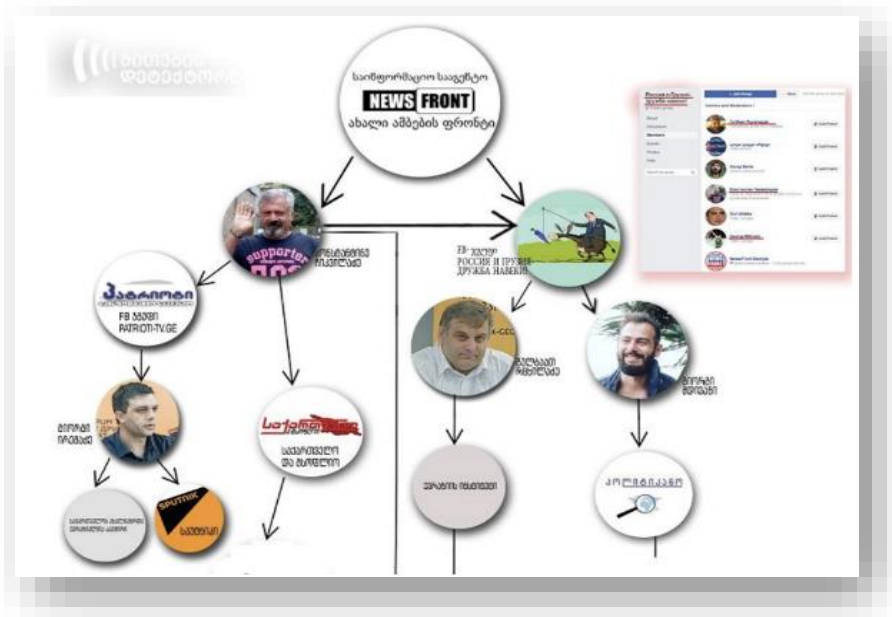
In addition to the pro-governmental editorial policy, the agency hosted the author of the Kremlin-linked media project "Politicano" as the host of the agency's video broadcast.²⁵ The outlet is currently linked to the administrator of the pro-Kremlin media News Front Georgia, Konstantine Chikviladze, who regularly shares the materials of www.spnews.io. In addition, Chikviladze is one of the administrators of the Spacesnews closed group [Spacesnews • სივრცეები @spnews.io](https://www.facebook.com/spacesnews.ge). The closed group, which has 2,300 members, besides Chikviladze, is administered by a [person](#) who indicates the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as his workplace.

²⁴"Sakartvelos Respublika", #147-148, 5-6 July, 2021, https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/336742/1/Saqartvelos_Respublika_2021_N147-148.pdf

²⁵ Myth Detector, 2 July, 2021. "Spaces" for Pro-Russian and Governmental Experts are funded from the State Budget, <https://mythdetector.ge/en/spaces-for-pro-russian-and-governmental-experts-are-funded-from-the-state-budget/>



In April 2019, together with the “Russian World’s” partner organizations and representatives of other ultranationalist groups, Chikviladze participated in an event called “[Reanimation of Fascist Ideology](#).” The event concerned the importance of celebrating the 9th of May by the Immortal Regiment. In addition, Konstantine Chikviladze was also managing an Patrioti TV, an open group by the pro-Russian organization “Youth Eurasian Union.”²⁶



²⁶ Media Development Foundation (2019), Russian World in Georgia, <https://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/117/>

The outlet disseminated materials that:

- were in line with the propaganda message of the Kremlin, as if the initiative of the former Secretary General of NATO entailed giving up on Georgian territories in exchange for integration;²⁷
- were involved in the campaign led by the pro-governmental media against the "Glory to Ukraine" conference organized by the "McCain Institute", "George Bush Institute" and "Economic Policy Research Center." The campaign conveyed the idea that the participants of the conference wanted to drag Georgia in the war.²⁸
- Disseminated disinformation against the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy,²⁹ Public Defender Nino Lomjaria,³⁰ and the opposition;³¹
- were involved in the campaign led by pro-governmental media and Facebook accounts against Aleksandre Lashkarava, the cameraman who was beaten and later found dead after the violent events against Tbilisi Pride on July 5, 2021.³²

Pro-governmental Media Outlets. Budgetary contracts were also signed with other media outlets with pro-governmental editorial policies (Kvira.ge, reporter, qartuliazri.ge, Pos TV, Marshallpress, For.ge), which were also involved in the discreditation campaigns directed against the opponents of the government.

²⁷ Spacesnews, 13 January. "This is a direct trap for Georgia!!!" – Revaz Kilasonia

https://split.spnews.io/ka/archives/129792?fbclid=IwAR1ufbG26i6YyGBesWF7MmYOEib65EVjwN7G0i_djxUx4LCV8n_DytPiQ6k

²⁸ Myth Detector, 8 September, 2022. "Messages of Pro-Governmental and Pro-Kremlin Actors Against the Tbilisi International Conference 'Glory to Ukraine.'" <https://mythdetector.ge/en/messages-of-pro-governmental-and-pro-kremlin-actors-against-the-tbilisi-international-conference-glory-to-ukraine/>

²⁹ Myth Detector, 12 April, 2022. "Wat did Zelenskyy Ban - The Opposition or Pro-Russian Parties and Media??" <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/vin-akrdzala-zelenskim-opozitsa-thu-prorusuli-partiebi-da-mediabi/>

³⁰ Myth Detector, 24 November, 2021. "Pro-Kremlin and Governmental Platforms Disseminate Disinformation about the Public Ombudsman and TV Formula" <https://mythdetector.ge/en/pro-kremlin-and-governmental-platforms-disseminate-disinformation-about-the-public-ombudsman-and-tv-pirveli/>

³¹ Myth Detector, 10 June, 2022. Fabricated Quote of Levan Berdzenishvili about Zhiuli Shartava Disseminated on Facebook <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/sotsialur-qselshi-zhiuli-shartavas-shesakheb-levan-berdzenishvilis-qhalbi-tsitata-vrtseldeba/>

³² Myth Detector, 13 July, 2021 "In the Name of "Informational Agency" and by the Fist of Violent Groups against the Deceased Cameraman of "TV Pirveli"" <https://mythdetector.ge/en/in-the-name-of-informational-agency-and-by-the-fist-of-violent-groups-against-the-deceased-cameraman-of-tv-pirveli/>

Media Outlet	Value of Service Contract	Budgetary Organization
Kvira.ge, kids.kvira.ge, region.kvira.ge	120 940	Special Penitentiary Service, Department of Environmental Supervision, National Bureau of Enforcement, Ministry of Agriculture of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Cyber Security Bureau, Krtsanisi District Administration of Tbilisi, Tbiliservis Group LLC; Tsalka, Chkhorotsku, Kazbegi, Khulo Municipalities; Ambrolauri, Dusheti, Bolnisi, Akhaltsikhi, Kvareli, Kareli, Shuakhevi, Zestafoni, Sachkheri, Kobuleti, Samtredia municipalities and representatives of other sub-departmental or local authorities;
Reporter (qartuliazri.ge, cnobisfurceli.ge³³)	34 344	Special Penitentiary Service, Tbilisi City Didube District Administration, Mayor's Offices of Sachkhere and Martvili Municipalities, "Likani Residence" LLC, LEPL SSTC "Delta," and other sub-departmental or local government representatives;
POS TV	16 917	Central Election Commission of Georgia, Rural Development Agency;
Marshallpress	15 608	Special Penitentiary Service, City Halls of Mtskheta, Khelvachauri, Ambrolauri Municipalities, Dedoplistskaro Municipality, State Trustee-Governor's Administrations in Lanchkhuti, Ozurgeti and Chokhatauri municipalities; My lawyer;
For.ge	11 120	Special Penitentiary Service, Chugureti District Administration of Tbilisi, National Screening Center;

Selected examples: In the case of the following media outlets, the following problematic content was revealed:

- Based on pro-governmental expert Goga Khaindrava, pro-government media outlets: [Imedi](#), POSTV, [PIA.GE](#), media holding "[Kvira](#)", [For.ge](#), news agency "[info 9](#)", [Lider.ge](#) disseminated false information, as if US Congressman Jamie Raskin said that Russia should be destroyed because it is an Orthodox country with traditional values.³⁴
- Some of them were involved in the dissemination of false information against the opposition (PosTV³⁵, MarshallPress, Kvira, Spacesnews³⁶), as well as in the coordinated distribution of the manipulative content by a pro-governmental expert against David Kramer, director of global politics at the George Bush Presidential Center ([POSTV](#), [imedinews.ge](#), [lideri.ge](#), [xnews.ge](#), [for.ge](#), [kvira.ge](#), [reportiori.ge](#)).³⁷

³³ cnobisfurceli.ge is mentioned in the contract of the Ministry of Probation together with Reporter and Kartuli Azri, although the page is not currently available.

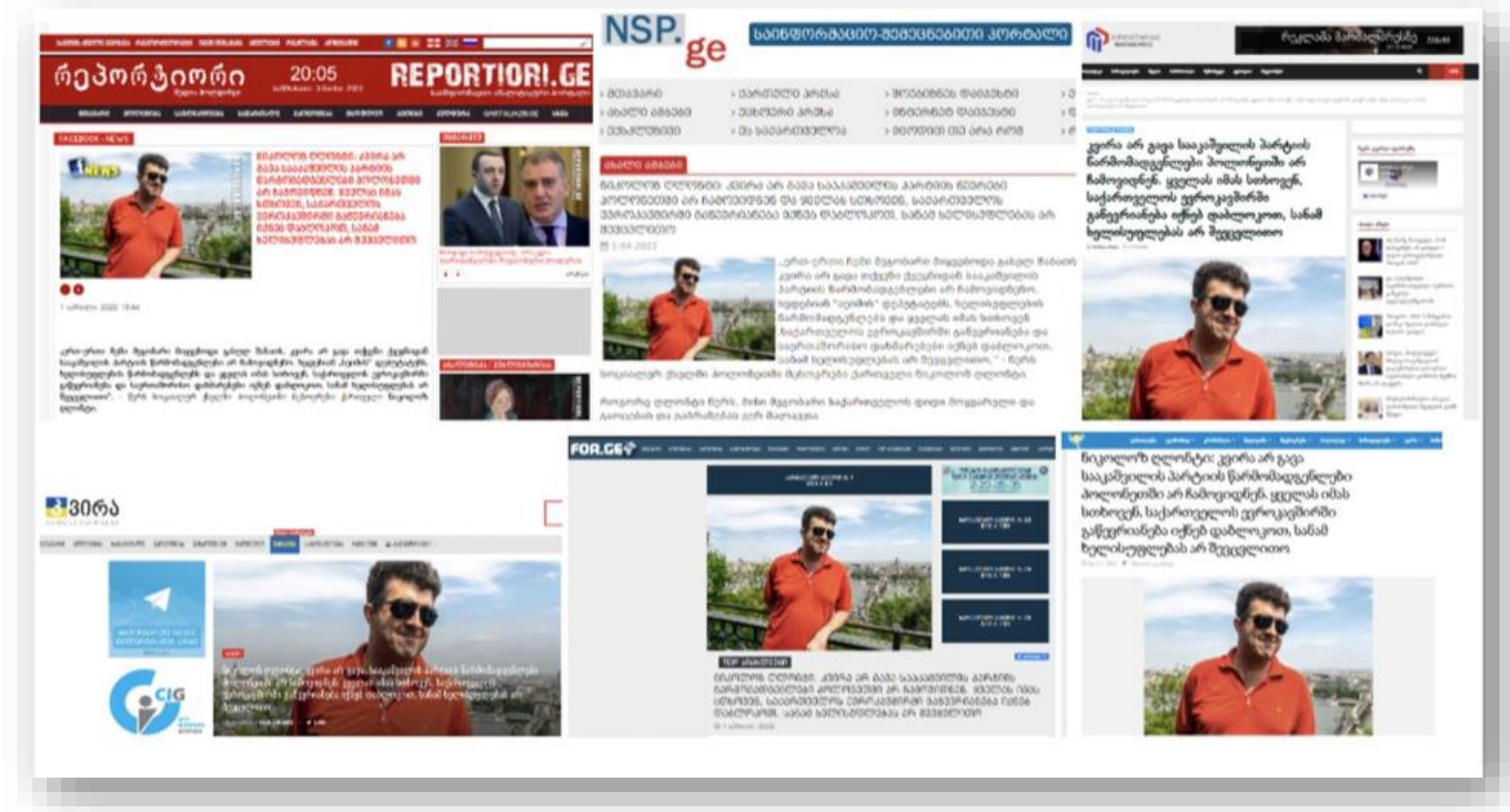
³⁴ Myth Detector, 2 November, False Statement Attributed to a US Congressman Disseminated Among Pro-Governmental Media <https://mythdetector.ge/en/false-statement-attributed-to-a-us-congressman-disseminated-among-pro-governmental-media/>

³⁵ Myth Detector, 9 September, 2022. Altered Video of Levan Berdzenishvili about Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/khvicha-kvaratskhelias-shesakheb-levan-berdzenishvilis-damontazhebuli-videokomentari-vrtseleba/>

³⁶ Myth Detector, 6 November, 2021. Did Saakashvili Undergo Gastrectomy before Coming to Georgia? <https://mythdetector.ge/en/did-saakashvili-undergo-gastrectomy-before-coming-to-georgia/>

³⁷ Myth Detector, 28 November, 2022. NATO Integration at the Cost of Territorial Integrity – Pro-Governmental Actors' Coordinated Manipulation Against David Kramer <https://mythdetector.ge/en/nato-integration-at-the-cost-of-territorial-integrity-pro-governmental-actors-coordinated-manipulation-against-david-kramer/>

- Similar to "Spacesnews", the mentioned media outlets were involved in the discreditation campaigns against the victims of the violent action against Tbilisi Pride on July 5, 2021, cameraman Aleksandre Lashkarava ("Marshallpres"),³⁸ as well as US ambassador Kelly Degnan³⁹ (for.ge, kvira.ge, mpn.ge) and others.
- Some of them circulated the same anti-opposition comment by a pro-governmental troll, Nikoloz Ghloni, as if he was a real person. It should be noted that the photo published in these media outlets (kvira.ge, reportiori.ge, NSP.ge, For.ge, Lid.ge, infopostaliioni.com, mpn.ge) under the name of Nikoloz Ghloni belongs to a completely different person, Russian citizen Artyom Stefanov.⁴⁰



³⁸ Myth Detector, 13 June, 2021 "In the Name of "Informational Agency" and by the Fist of Violent Groups against the Deceased Cameraman of "TV Pirveli"
<https://mythdetector.ge/en/in-the-name-of-informational-agency-and-by-the-fist-of-violent-groups-against-the-deceased-cameraman-of-tv-pirveli/>

³⁹ Myth Detector, 1 August, 2022. Pro-governmental "Fifth Column" and others vs Kelly Degnan
<https://mythdetector.ge/en/did-saakashvili-undergo-gastrectomy-before-coming-to-georgia/>

⁴⁰ Myth Detector, 4 May, 2022. The Ukrainian Front of Georgian Pro-Governmental Trolls, <https://mythdetector.ge/en/the-ukrainian-front-of-georgian-pro-governmental-trolls/>

- In addition, selected outlets (PIA, Kartuli Azri, Kvira) published anti-opposition comments of a non-existent person, in particular, the artificial intelligence-generated blogger Giorgi Agapishvili in the past.⁴¹



⁴¹ Myth Detector, 22 November, 2019. A Pro-Governmental “Blogger” Giorgi Aghapishvili is Actually an AI-Generated Photo
<https://mythdetector.ge/en/a-pro-governmental-blogger-giorgi-aghapishvili-is-actually-an-ai-generated-photo/>