

This policy aims to regulate the procedures governing data freedom in a manner that serves public entities, the private sector, and individuals. It seeks to enhance integration and connectivity with clients regarding data freedom, thereby contributing to the advancement of studies and research.

## 1 Transparency

Individuals have the right to know information related to GASTAT's activities, enhancing the framework of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

## 2 Necessity and proportionality

Any restrictions on requests to access or obtain protected information received, produced, or handled by GASTAT must be clearly and explicitly justified.

## 3 The default principle for public information is disclosure

Every individual has the right to access public information—excluding protected information—without the need to demonstrate a specific status or particular interest in the information. Furthermore, individuals exercising this right are not subject to any legal accountability related to it.

## 4 Equality

All requests for access to or obtaining public information are handled on the basis of equality, without discrimination among individuals.

## 5 Contracting

GASTAT, when contracting with other entities—such as companies providing public services—must periodically verify the compliance of these entities with the fundamental principles and guiding rules, in accordance with the mechanisms and procedures determined by the organization. This must also include any subsequent contracts entered into by those entities.

## 6 Individual rights regarding access to or obtaining public information.

- 6.1 The right to access and obtain any non-protected information held by any public entity.
- 6.2 The right to know the reason for the denial of access to or obtaining the requested information.
- 6.3 The right to appeal a decision to deny a request for access to or obtaining the requested information.

## 7 Key steps for requesting access to public information or filing a complaint.

- 7.1 Requests are submitted by completing the «Public Information Request Form»—either electronically or in paper form—and submitting it to the entity holding the information.
- 7.2 Within a specified period (30 days) from receiving the request for access to or obtaining public information, GASTAT shall take one of the following decisions:
  - **Approval:** If GASTAT approves the request for access to or obtaining information, whether fully or partially, the individual must be notified in writing or electronically about the applicable fees. GASTAT must make the information available to the individual within a period not exceeding ten (10) working days from the receipt of payment.
  - **Rejection:** If the request for accessing information is denied, the rejection must be communicated in writing or electronically and must include the following information:
    - o Indicate whether the request was denied fully or partially.
    - o Provide the reasons for the denial, if possible.
    - o Notify the individual of their right to appeal the decision and explain how to exercise this right.

- **Extension:** If it is not possible to process the request for access to information within the specified time frame, GASTAT must extend the response period by a reasonable duration based on the volume and nature of the requested information—for example, not exceeding an additional 30 days—and provide the individual with the following information:
  - o Notification of the extension and the expected date for completing the request.
  - o Reasons for the delay.
  - o Notification of the right to appeal the extension and instructions on how to exercise this right.
- **Notification:** If the requested information is available on GASTAT's website or does not fall under its jurisdiction, the individual must be notified in writing or electronically, including the following details:
  - o Type of notification, for example, whether the requested information is available on GASTAT's website or does not fall under its jurisdiction.
  - o Notification of the right to appeal this notification and instructions on how to exercise this right.

7.3 If an individual wishes to file a complaint regarding GASTAT's denial of a request, they may submit the complaint in writing or electronically. GASTAT must take the necessary actions in accordance with its internal policies.

## 8 Freedom of information and open data

Open data programs and policies are typically designed and developed to support the growth of the national economy and innovation agenda. Undoubtedly, making a specific set of public information available to researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and startups helps create a favorable environment for business growth and signals the presence of an open and transparent government.

Open data programs and policies represent a proactive step by GASTAT to uphold the right to access public information by making or publishing specific sets of information—designated as open data—available prior to any requests for access or retrieval.

Effective open data programs and policies significantly reduce the volume of requests for access to public information, leading to a decrease in government expenses associated with processing such requests.

## 9 Roles and responsibilities

9.1 The General Department for Cybersecurity and Data Governance must:

- Implement this policy.
- Oversee compliance with the policy, monitor violations, manage exceptions, and resolve disputes.
- Balance the right to access and obtain information with other essential requirements, such as ensuring national security and protecting personal data privacy.
- Prepare the necessary forms for information requests.
- Notify the National Data Management Office in cases where a request for access to or obtaining public information is denied or the specified period for providing the information is extended.
- Establish additional rules for processing requests related to specific types of public information based on their nature and sensitivity, in alignment with the regulations of the National Data Management Office.

9.2 The General Department for Strategic Communication and Client Support

- Receive information requests.
- Follow up on the request and coordinate with relevant stakeholders.
- Notify the information requester of the request's readiness or denial, providing reasons for the decision.

9.3 The General Department for Information Technology

- Prepare the requested information that requires processing.
- Provide and develop technological platforms for information sharing in accordance with cybersecurity regulations.
- Provide technical support for the information-sharing process.

## 9.4 The General Department for Legal Affairs

- Review complaint requests related to information requests in accordance with GASTAT's internal policies.
- Users of GASTAT's assets are responsible for adhering to this policy and reporting any security incidents or non-compliance to the General Manager of Cybersecurity and Data Governance, as well as to the data asset owners.

## 10 Related Policies

- Data and Cybersecurity Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Data Privacy Policy.
- Open Data Policy.
- Complaints Management and Customer Satisfaction Policy.

## 11 Compliance

11.1 All employees and external parties contracted with GASTAT must comply with the policy requirements. The General Manager of Cybersecurity and Data Governance within GASTAT is responsible for ensuring continuous monitoring of compliance and reporting updates to the head of GASTAT on an annual basis.

11.2 Appropriate measures must be implemented to ensure compliance with the provisions of this policy. Any violation of this policy will result in corrective actions taken by the Head of GASTAT, with disciplinary actions outlined as follows:

- Revocation of access privileges to information assets.
- Issuance of a written warning or termination of the employee's service, or any other appropriate actions deemed necessary by GASTAT.

11.3 Non-compliance with this policy without prior exemption from the General Department for Cybersecurity and Data Governance shall result in appropriate actions in accordance with GASTAT's policies, regulations, and laws, or as deemed suitable. This will also be in line with the contractual terms and agreements between GASTAT and the authorized individual or entity.