

Commitment #3

Increase the use of Right to Information (RTI) among citizens and improve public authorities' response to RTI implementation by 2020

1st March 2019– 31st August 2021

Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry in charge of implementing the Right to Information Act
Commitment description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	Access to information is a constitutional right of the people of Sri Lanka. Citizens have the ability to use the Right to Information Act (RTI) to seek information from public authorities on the services they are entitled to and the progress of complaints, have their grievances redressed quickly without any need for paying bribes, and to hold public institutions accountable. Due to limited awareness, however, the number of citizens making RTI requests is still low. An issue leading to public sector opacity is that records are not maintained in a systematic and accessible manner. Proactive disclosure of certain categories of information is a mandatory requirement under the RTI Act, but it is also one of the most poorly implemented provisions of the Act.
What is the commitment?	The purpose of this commitment is to enhance opportunities for citizens to file RTIs and improve responsiveness of public authorities to such requests and thereby contribute towards improving service delivery, exposing corruption and fostering participation in decision-making.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	The Ministry will establish an online disability friendly RTI request portal with 50% of public authorities listed. Having such online request portal run by the government, where many public authorities are listed, will increase accessibility to citizens, including disabled persons. E-record management systems will be introduced in 50% of public authorities. Introducing e-record management would require the digitization of available information, which will in turn lead to greater accessibility to the people. An accelerated awareness raising programme will be conducted with the intention of increasing the proportion of people using RTI and increasing public authorities' response to RTI both proactively and in response to RTI requests. The Ministry will conduct awareness-raising programmes for the public in each Grama Niladhari division. As a result of such programmes, the Ministry expects an increase in RTI requests filed in those areas compared to previous years. The Ministry will also work with 15 public authorities to spearhead compliance with the mandatory proactive disclosure provisions of the RTI regime.
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	This commitment addresses the values of access to information as it strengthens the provisions of the current RTI Act. It enhances public participation as it shifts the role of citizens from being mere spectators to that of being active participants in the process of governance. It also promotes public accountability as citizens can evaluate and determine whether public authorities are delivering the expected results.
Additional information	The commitment will strengthen the operation of Right to Information Act

		No. 12 of 2016. It is in line with Sustainable Development Goal No. 16 and will also complement proposed National Anti-Corruption Strategies.	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable		Start Date:	End Date:
1. A disabled-friendly online RTI request portal will be established by the Ministry with the support of Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) /other contracted entities with 10 public authorities enlisted initially, and with 50% of all public authorities enlisted and accessible by end of NAP period. The Ministry will conduct testing for user and disability friendliness, prior to the launch of the portal. The portal will track gendered data on RTI usage on the portal.		March 2019	December, 2019
2. E-record management system is developed and introduced to 10 public authorities. The number of public authorities will be increased to 50% of all public authorities by end of NAP period.		March 2019	February, 2021
3. There is a 50% increase in RTI requests made over the previous year, and information given, by 30th August, 2019 based on RTI Commission Annual Report; 75% on top of 2019 baseline, by 30th August, 2020. A summary data sheet will be available for public access by the Ministry.		March 2019	February, 2021
4. Ministry in consultation with citizens and engaged CSOs will guide 5 selected Divisional Secretariats, 5 District Secretariats and 5 Ministries each NAP year, to continually make available proactive information as per Regulation 20 of Gazette No. 66/2004 (mandatory) on their respective websites and physical premises on a monthly basis. The names of these public authorities will be made publicly available each year.		March 2019	February, 2021
Contact information			
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Other Actors	State actors involved	Ministry in charge of Public Administration & Management; Ministry in charge of Home Affairs, Ministry in charge of Information Technology; Right to Information Commission, Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA)	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	TISL and other engaged CSOs	