



# **Connecting Government To Citizens**

**Implementing Right To Information Act, 2009**

**in Bangladesh**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021**



## Abbreviations

APA	Annual Performance Agreement
CD, CRU	Cabinet Division, Coordination and Reforms Unit
CIC	Chief Information Commissioner
DAC	District Advisory Committee
DO	Designated Officer
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
IC	Information Commission
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
MoI	Ministry of Information
MoLand	Ministry of Land
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PD	Proactive Disclosure
RTI	Right to Information
TBD	To be Decided



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## Preface from the Chief Information Commissioner

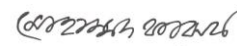
The Information Commission was established under the Right to Information Act 2009 with a mandate to ensure that the Act is used to its full potential to empower citizens by articulating their “right to know”. The right to information (RTI) is based on the principle that information belongs not to government but to the people. RTI helps ordinary citizens obtain services and entitlements, improve quality of service delivery and hold public officials accountable. The Bangladesh RTI Act has given citizens this fundamental right to access key information, both in relation to the State and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The 2009 Act was the first of its kind in Bangladesh, and came about thanks to sustained efforts by diverse groups. The Act covers all bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed either directly or indirectly by the government, including private organizations state-owned enterprises and banks, and also NGOs, and any private institution carrying out public functions. Each of these is required to appoint Designated Officers to ensure effective implementation of the RTI Act, in particular that RTI requests are handled properly. The Act also mandates all organizations covered under it to proactively disclose an extensive body of information to the public.

After six years of implementation of the Act, Bangladesh has made significant progress, as is evident from the Information Commission’s Annual Reports. Approximately 21,000 Designated Officers have been appointed, including in all Districts and Upazilas. The Information Commission has taken various steps to publicize the RTI Act and train most of the designated officers across Bangladesh in collaboration with civil society groups and local officials.

While the progress is laudable, these achievements need to be sustained and scaled-up. This Strategic Plan is designed to achieve that. The Information Commission is a key partner in this Strategic Plan. We have already taken steps to implement the Action Plan. For example, the Commission has started a Training of Trainers (TOT) programme for increasing the number of resource persons – a total of 500 - on the use of the law. The trainer group consists of government officials, teachers and NGO executives. We are systematically visiting all districts to meet with the newly appointed District Advisory Committees to encourage them in their mandate to promote the use of the Right to Information Act within their respective communities.

This Strategic Plan and Action Plan will continue to guide the Information Commission, as well as our partners take critical actions for effective implementation of the 2009 Act. This will eventually result in increased transparency, enhanced accountability and improved service delivery to the citizens of Bangladesh. We are convinced that, by working together, stakeholders who are committed to the right to information in Bangladesh can make a clear difference in the way the government responds to the needs of its citizens.



**Mohammed Farooq**  
Chief Information Commissioner  
Information Commission, Bangladesh

## Preface from the Cabinet Secretary

It is a fundamental responsibility of the State to ensure good governance in all spheres of national life. Right to Information (RTI) is globally recognized as essential element of good governance. It promotes openness and transparency in the functioning of the Government, and thereby, empowers citizens, upholds rule of law and reduces corruption. One of the major objectives of the Right to Information Act, 2009 of Bangladesh, as mentioned in its preamble, is to establish good governance.

The RTI Act of Bangladesh is characterized with some unique features, which are not available in similar legislations of many other countries, such as keeping non-governmental organizations using government or foreign funds within the purview of the law, provision of penalty for non-disclosure, providing information relating to life and liberty within 24 hours, and extending assistance to handicapped persons seeking information. Despite its uniqueness, the RTI law of Bangladesh is yet to play a vibrant role in improvement of governance to the expected level. Different studies suggest that weakness in both supply and demand sides is a major reason for this situation. This calls for an effective implementation drive for tapping the optimum advantage of this flagship law.

The Cabinet Division has been working on consolidating good governance through various measures. Accelerating the implementation of the Right to Information Act in collaboration with the Information Commission is one of these initiatives. For this purpose, an RTI Sub-Committee has been set up under the framework of National Integrity Strategy (NIS) and a Working Group on RTI is in operation at the Cabinet Division. Undertaking necessary initiatives for implementation of the RTI Act has been incorporated in the charter of duties of the newly-created positions in the Coordination and Reforms Unit of this Division. The process of implementation of the RTI Act has been being institutionalized through different measures. In this process, preparation of this Strategic Plan for implementing RTI is a milestone initiative.

The preparation of the Plan was initiated by the Information Commission in collaboration with the World Bank. The RTI Working Group based at the Cabinet Division was actively engaged in preparing the draft. Senior bureaucrats, members of the civil society and other stakeholders were consulted. The RTI Working Group at the Cabinet Division also examined the document and provided with some inputs. It is expected that the Implementation Plan presented in this document will facilitate implementation of the RTI Act at all levels and help develop a visible RTI regime across the country. I also believe that RTI actors and practitioners will find this document helpful.

Proper implementation of this Strategic Plan is expected to further connect the Government to the citizens through an effective operation of RTI. I am confident that the Information Commission, different Ministries/Divisions and various Government agencies as well as the NGOs, media, academia and other stakeholders will come forward to implement this Plan which in turn will help achieve the objectives of the RTI Act and ultimately improve the state of governance in the country.



**M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan**

Cabinet Secretary  
Cabinet Division

## Background

- 1. The Right to Information Act 2009 was enacted by the Government of Bangladesh in the first session of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The Act provides opportunities for government and non-government institutions to significantly improve their responsiveness to citizens.** The Act was passed in response to both domestic and international demand for greater transparency within the various sectors. Over the last two decades, the issue of governance has been central to Bangladeshi politics, and the major political parties have given much emphasis to policy reform in their manifestoes. Among many initiatives, ensuring that citizens have greater access to information has found a prominent place in the agenda of both the two major political parties.
- 2. While passing the RTI legislation was a critical step, the most difficult aspect of any new legislation or policy is its implementation.** The implementation stage is much more of a challenge than that of drafting or the passage through the legislature. Some of the implementation challenges in relation to a right to information act are: (a) the mindset of officials who are tasked to provide information; (b) the capacity constraints in terms of record-keeping and record making; (c) the lack of resources and infrastructure to implement the Act; (d) the need for training and capacity of staff<sup>1</sup> and (e) the need for public awareness about the Act. All of these factors are applicable in the Bangladesh context, and any institutional framework for the implementation of the RTI Act will have to take them into account.
- 3. Under the Act, a major institutional step has been taken: an independent Information Commission has been established while relevant rules and regulations have been framed.** After the enactment of the RTI Act the government promptly established the Information Commission (IC) and appointed the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and two other Commissioners. The IC has undertaken a number of very important activities since its inception. The Ministry of Information has formulated the necessary rules under the Act, while the Information Commission has framed the required regulations. Designated Officers (more than 20,000 at December 2014) have been appointed by various organizations for providing information under RTI Act. The IC has successfully involved the media, particularly the electronic media, to encourage citizens to take advantage of the newly established right to access information. The IC continues to make considerable progress in the implementation of the RTI by carrying out public consultations in all districts to raise awareness among citizens, and providing training to Designated Officers.
- 4. Despite the progress, a 2013 survey found low levels of awareness of the RTI Act among members of the public, leading in turn to few RTI requests being submitted.**<sup>2</sup>In addition, the Information Commission's annual reports note that more than 10,000 RTI requests were filed annually, but many of these actually related to general information requests which could

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<sup>1</sup>Neuman, L; Calland, R. *Making the Access to Information Law Work The Challenges of Implementation*, 2007, page 4 available here: [http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/americas/making\\_the\\_law\\_work.pdf](http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/americas/making_the_law_work.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>World Bank, *RTI Baseline Survey for Bangladesh* by The Nielsen Company, March 2013 available here: [http://www.transparencyadvisorygroup.org/uploads/Bangladesh\\_Neilson\\_RTI\\_Report\\_Interim\\_Dec\\_30\\_\\_2012\\_7\\_P M\\_-\\_FINAL\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.transparencyadvisorygroup.org/uploads/Bangladesh_Neilson_RTI_Report_Interim_Dec_30__2012_7_P M_-_FINAL__1_.pdf)



have been handled by proactive disclosure. Recent annual reports of the IC have given more realistic figures. On the supply side, the survey found that many Designated Officers were not aware that they had been appointed as such; and only one quarter said they had received any RTI training, even though the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) had introduced RTI training in its regular programme for officials, which clearly indicates that this has not been sufficient.

- 5. This Strategic Plan 2015-2021 represents a joint undertaking of the Government and the IC to ensure that there are more strategic and sustainable efforts to implement the RTI Act.** In 2014, an RTI Working Group was established comprising representatives of the Cabinet Division, Information Commission, and the Ministry of Information. The Working Group has overseen the development of this Strategic Plan to implement the RTI Act. The Information Commission as the independent statutory institution will play the lead role in implementing the Act. The Cabinet Division has agreed to provide all cooperation to the Information Commission as well as all other stakeholders within the spirit of the National Integrity Strategy and the implementation of the RTI Act 2009, and they have exercised their convening authority and leadership to bring together the relevant stakeholders, such as, various line ministries, Information Commission, district and upazila administrative units.
- 6. To conclude, a lot has been achieved through six years since the RTI Act was introduced.** Nonetheless, more strategic and sustainable efforts will be required for the Act to really fulfill its potential to enhance opportunities for improving government's responsiveness to the citizens in Bangladesh. Towards that end the present Strategic Plan 2015-21 has been formulated and hopefully it will provide the necessary impetus to further fulfillment of people's right to information.

## Introduction

- 7. The key to success of any strategic plan is the ownership of the process and the results; this Strategic Plan has been formulated based on broad consultations and is endorsed by both the Chief Information Commissioner and the Cabinet Secretary of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.** This strategic plan is the outcome of a nationwide consultations that took place in 2013 with grass roots organizations on the role of information and the needs of communities. The strategic plan recognizes the need for institutional arrangements to address both the constraints to the ‘demand’ for information and to the ‘supply’ of information. The high-level consultation of the draft plan in February 2014 led to a strong commitment from the upper echelons of the administration together with a sense of ‘inclusiveness’ at the level of different ministries. Ultimately, the responsibilities to implement the RTI Act lie not only with the champions supporting this Strategic Plan, but also with various other entities in pursuit of implementing the RTI Act.
- 8. Under the Strategic Plan, leadership and coordination for boosting the *demand-side* for information and activities to strengthen the *supply-side* lie broadly with the Information Commission.** The Information Commission can generate ‘demand’ through its policy and research advocacy activities, and working with the Ministry of Information to boost awareness raising activities. Non-governmental and civil society organizations play also a key role in this aspect by working with communities to enhance awareness of the opportunities available under the Act.
- 9. On the *supply-side* the responsiveness of Government will be broadly led and coordinated by the Cabinet Division.** Under the Annual Performance Agreements introduced in 2015, the majority of ministries and divisions have signed an annual contract which includes increasing compliance with the RTI Act, especially in terms of proactive disclosure. The Information Commission will continue to play a key role on the supply side too, particularly in terms of training activities and ensuring Designated Officers have the skills to play their role under the Act. As an independent body, the Commission may also work with other training bodies, such as, the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) or Bangladesh Institute for Administration and Management (BIAM) as well as other civil service training academies, the Ministry of Information, Cabinet Division and civil society organizations.
- 10. On their side, the non-governmental actors are also called upon to align their own responsiveness with the RTI Act, and to ensure the responsiveness of the NGO sector for both demand and supply side activities. NGOs themselves can be more proactive in terms of activities, such as:**

  - Increasing awareness among citizens, especially at the grass-roots level;
  - Increasing demand for good governance;
  - Conducting research and assessment on RTI implementation;
  - Promoting civil society activism for RTI implementation; and
  - Monitoring activities of the Government organizations on RTI implementation.
- 11. In terms of independent monitoring of the implementation of the Act, the NGOs are also called on to play their role in monitoring the activities and outputs under the Strategic**

**Plan.** The Strategic Plan includes a results framework in Annex 2, which NGOs are called upon to monitor and report. In addition, there is a proposed survey to take place in 2017 and 2021 to gauge citizen's awareness and use of the RTI Act, and measure change from the 2013 survey results. Third party monitoring can also be undertaken by non-profit organizations (there are several qualified organizations operating in Bangladesh) that can also contribute with technical expertise involving ICT tools for on-line access to information through the internet and mobile phones. Such independent third party monitoring could inject additional elements of accountability in Bangladesh and support the reduction and incidence of malfeasance and corruption, which to some extent prompted the call for the legislation in the first place.

- 12. The RTI Working Group, established by the circular no 04.221.085.00.01.025.2010.611 on 22 June 2014 and revised by the circular no 04.00.0000.221.14.043.14.715 on 22 December 2014 will be responsible for the regular monitoring of the strategic plan and actions.** The RTI Working Group, which meets at least on quarterly basis, will be responsible for ensuring that the institutions involved will play their part under the Strategic Plan. The minutes of the Working Group meetings will be displayed on the Cabinet Division website. The Working Group will also be responsible for keeping the RTI Sub-Committee under the National Integrity Strategy informed of its work. Within the Cabinet Division the Reforms and Coordination Unit will continue to play the role of an apex agency and secretariat to the RTI Working Group.

## Challenges

- 13. There are several challenges for implementing the Strategic Plan, particularly in terms of reaching higher-level outcomes of good governance.** Many of the actions required to successfully implement the RTI are small steps towards resolving the complex problems of improving the transparency, accountability and governance in Bangladesh. These actions are also complex, and involve introducing new skills to a large number of government officials, shifting culture and mindset, and using technology, which may also bring challenges in terms of the reliability of the internet and electricity infrastructure.
- 14. Frequent transfers of Designated Officers and an overall deficit of RTI skills.** While the plan will tackle the challenge of training the large number of designated officers under the Act, the issue of the irregular and repeated transfer of government officials in Bangladesh will exacerbate the challenge of reaching a large number in a cost effective and sustainable way. Having RTI-skilled Designated Officers in place remains a challenging task, as transfers are routine activities of the Government. The possibility that the new Designated Officers will have low RTI skills as all civil servants generally have not been given such skills through training. As such, the issue of capacity building will be a continuous need and existing resources may not be enough to address this issue.
- 15. The political will to implement the Act will need to be sustained.** Even though the RTI Act is being implemented, the provision of required resources will depend on the political will of the present and future governments to sustain the efforts initiated so far. Development partners can play an important role supporting the Cabinet Division, IC and other interested actors in maintaining their efforts to implement the RTI Act through their own programs.

## Vision

16. The Vision of the Strategic Plan is to create an open and responsive Government which is connected to citizens.

## Mission

17. The Mission is to implement the RTI Act to ensure that the government is disclosing information and responding to RTI requests in a timely and appropriate manner, and citizens are aware of and exercising their rights to information.

## Strategic Objectives and Results

18. Towards the vision the overall objectives are to improve compliance with the RTI Act, and promote citizens' awareness and use of the Act.

Although the administrative data systems are nascent, several high-level indicators are included in the Plan, in order to measure results, as best as can be done, and to ensure there is a demand for more reliable data in due course.

19. There are two high level indicators of achieving the Plan's objectives:

- Number of requests filed for information.<sup>3</sup>
  - Baseline: 11,000 per annum, by 2014<sup>4</sup>
  - Intermediate target 15,000, by 2017
  - Target: 20,000, by 2021
- Percentage of Government Ministries and Divisions that are compliant with proactive disclosure policies
  - Baseline: 30 percent in 2014<sup>5</sup> of Government Ministries and Divisions
  - Intermediate result 70 percent by 2017
  - Target 90 percent of Government Ministries and Divisions by 2021.

20. In addition to these high level indicators, it is also possible to identify other indicators for the different results to be achieved, and the full results table is provided at the Annex 2.

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<sup>3</sup> Although increased compliance with the proactive disclosure side of the RTI Act may reduce demand for filing RTI requests, 20,000 in a country of almost 160 million people is considered a reasonable target.

<sup>4</sup> Information Commission Annual report, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Proactive Disclosure Assessment, Cabinet Division 2014. Thirty percent of 48 Line Ministries and Divisions scored 70 percent or higher on the assessment of availability and usability of information under the Proactive Disclosure Regulations of the RTI Act.

# Programmatic Results, Indicators and Activities

## Demand-side

**Result 1: Citizens are progressively aware of RTI Act, the process of using it, and are willing to file a request for information**

❖ **Indicator:** Proportion of citizens that are aware of RTI

- **Baseline:** 23% in 2012<sup>6</sup>.
- **Target:** 70% in 2021

**21. Problem analysis:** Despite the effort of the IC in raising the level of knowledge among citizens, the awareness of RTI remains low. In the rural area the awareness level is particularly at minimum level. Service delivery agencies are typically not accountable to citizens locally and are generally less well-resourced to do so. Even in urban areas the applications of RTI are very few. Moreover, groups such as journalists, professional and civil society organizations, who are traditionally the major exponents of RTI Act, are also not properly aware of the Act.

## 22. Activities

- 1) Form a group of advisors in every district (District Advisory Committee- DAC) from among the Government officials, lawyers, journalists or civil society members for providing necessary guidance and advice to citizens for filing request, appeal and complaint;
- 2) Form RTI strategic partnerships among institutions (NGOs, private organizations, professionals, civil society groups) with communication skills and sustainable outreach programmes to citizens to initiate, augment and scale-up awareness campaign on RTI;
- 3) Undertake audience analysis (e.g., target groups, farmers, students, women, people with disabilities) to identify specific communication strategies for target groups and service delivery;
- 4) Develop different communication materials (radio, theatre, poster, leaflets, TV adverts, etc.) and approaches to reach identified target-groups
- 5) Roll-out advocacy programme focusing on the service delivery agencies at the lower administrative tiers, to promote higher levels of ‘demand’ for information from the general public.

**Result 2: Media, National and Regional NGOs with outreach network, civil society actors and political organizations practice and promote RTI (existence, benefits, use)**

<sup>6</sup>Based on the baseline survey report 2628 respondents. See World Bank report by The Nielsen Company, *RTI Baseline Survey for Bangladesh*, March 2013 available here: [http://www.transparencyadvisorygroup.org/uploads/Bangladesh\\_Neilson\\_RTI\\_Report\\_Interim\\_Dec\\_30\\_\\_2012\\_7\\_P M\\_-\\_FINAL\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.transparencyadvisorygroup.org/uploads/Bangladesh_Neilson_RTI_Report_Interim_Dec_30__2012_7_P M_-_FINAL__1_.pdf)

❖ **Indicator:** Increased frequency of RTI promotional activity and media coverage.

- **Baseline:** 1 per year (Right to Know day)
- **Target:** Average two promotional campaigns per year (2015-2021).

**23. Problem analysis:** RTI related activities have remained confined to a very small segment of Bangladeshi society, with very little involvement and interaction at the grassroots level. The evolution of RTI ‘movement’ in Bangladesh needs to have more grassroots support. Lack of ‘buy-in’ has meant that some group of people such as journalists and NGO activists have perceived the RTI Act negatively. Even though the political parties committed to the promotion of RTI in their manifestoes, they have failed to draw up a realistic strategy enabling the mainstreaming of access to information policy. Public is gradually taking the advantage of the RTI law, but more rigorous campaigns are needed to motivate citizens at the grass-root level.

#### **24. Activities**

- 1) Undertake campaigns on specific issues, for example, availability of social safety-net programmes involving low-income households;
- 2) Educate citizens, particularly poor communities with limited literacy, on RTI.
- 3) Encourage newspaper and television owners and senior management to become ‘supporters’ of RTI Act,
- 4) Encourage popular television and radio programmes such as talk show, success stories and documentaries highlighting the use of RTI Act;
- 5) Encourage civil society organizations to monitor and report widely on the RTI Strategic Plan and its implementation.

**Result 3: More citizen-friendly and efficient technology (cell phone, internet, and other advanced technology) for filing RTI request is available.**

❖ **Indicator:** Number of request filed on-line for information is increasing.

- **Baseline:** 0 per annum (2014).
- **Target:** 6,000 per annum (2021).

**25. Problem analysis:** Given the prevalent ‘culture’ of secrecy, the assumption on the part of ordinary citizens is that they are not entitled to information from public bodies. The legal onus is presumed to be on the citizens to show that they require the information for legitimate reason. Furthermore, due to many ‘gatekeepers’, citizens face harassment when trying to obtain information from public offices. Due to the RTI Act the situation has slightly changed and citizens have been legally empowered, and the onus has shifted to the ‘providers’ of information – the presumption is that information will have to be supplied on filling of requests under RTI Act. The challenge facing the implementation of such a request process is the high incidence of illiteracy. This is particularly acute among the poor and the marginalized communities in both rural and urban areas. It is important that new and suitable ‘tools’ are found for citizens to request information from different agencies. New and innovative

technology (such as, mobile telephony, internet) is now available for citizens to file requests under the RTI Act.

## 26. Activities

- 1) Launch national English and Bangla on-line and mobile application RTI request filing system;
- 2) Government agencies' websites provide link to the on-line RTI filing option;
- 3) Ensure that citizen's charters are available on websites and in hard copy with details of service delivery standards, grievance redressal mechanisms and contact information of DOs;
- 4) Introduce RTI filing help desk at Union Digital Centers which are equipped with visible information;
- 5) Examine the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive web portal and call center for RTI for filing application, appeal, and response.

## Supply-side

**Result 4: Designated Officers have access to RTI service delivery skills (materials, CD, online training)**

❖ **Indicator:** Percentage of Designated Officers trained on RTI

- **Baseline:** 25% (2012).
- **Target:** 75%(2021)

**27. Problem analysis:** Despite the growing number of Designated Officers (20,000 in 2014) who have been appointed by the Government and the NGOs under the RTI Act the challenge is to empower them to effectively discharge their responsibilities. Particularly the factors such as frequent transfers, competing work demands, lack of a support system and lack of knowledge of RTI Act and training limit the DOs' ability to work effectively to implement the Act.

## 28. Activities

- 1) Ensure that all government bodies have a DO appointed under the RTI Act;
- 2) Develop a database containing up-to-date information of the Designated Officers (contact details, RTI training received);
- 3) Develop a standard information package (RTI Act, rules, regulations, a handbook on the Information Commission and its functions and guidelines for each Designated Officer);
- 4) Ensure that the Designated Officers have access to such information package (hand-over or mail);

- 5) Conduct regular training for Designated Officers at different levels, such as, National, District and Upazila and other local government bodies (traditional classroom context, distance learning using audio and print materials, electronic-content off- and on-line);
- 6) Establish a well-resourced help desk at the IC which will respond to queries from Designated Officers (letters, telephone calls, email messages, Skype calls, and live on-line chat);
- 7) Establish an interactive website for exchange of experience between Designated Officers and stakeholders;
- 8) Develop RTI professionals in Bangladesh (trainers, researchers, IT professionals).

**Result 5: Back-end systems at the most frequently-visited departments are in use for efficient RTI service delivery.**

- ❖ **Indicator:** Number of back-end systems integrated with RTI portal increased.
  - **Baseline:** No benchmark.
  - **Target:** 5 (e.g., real estate records, car registration, education, pension, national ID) by 2021.

**29. Problem analysis:** Generally, Bangladesh’s records management is either non-systematic or very weak. The existing system of records management is very traditional and still predominantly undertaken manually despite the introduction of ICT. But over the last decade, particularly the last five years, ICT has started to make headway under the ‘Digital Bangladesh’ policy initiative of the present government. Nevertheless, due to lack of specific legal framework the process of information collection, storage and retrieval lacks overall coordination and policy direction. RTI Act 2009 provides sufficient legal basis for initial activities to commence in records management. The IC has also formulated an Information Preservation and Management Regulations along with a chapter on electronic record management in 2010. This needs to be upgraded and followed by incorporating the modern management tools and procedures. As manual data is time consuming web-based will be more appropriate. Departments that have large public interface (e.g., land records) deserve special attention for digitalization.

### **30. Activities**

- 1) Review and improve the existing Records Management policy and archive processes;
- 2) Develop back-end systems for selected ministries divisions
- 3) Integrate selected back-end systems with the (to be developed) national web portal for informing, filing, appealing, and responding on RTI through call center and internet.

**Result 6: Selected Government Departments, which regularly offer service delivery at different levels and points (e.g., health & education) increasingly practice proactive disclosures.**



❖ **Indicator 1: Compliance with proactive disclosure regulations of the RTI Act.**

- **Baseline:** 30% of Ministries and Divisions have 70 percent score or higher on assessment (availability and usability of information).
- **Target:** 90% of Ministries and Divisions score 70 percent or higher on proactive disclosure (availability and usability assessment).

❖ **Indicator 2: Performance Agreements between Ministries/Divisions and Cabinet Division include Proactive Disclosure provisions**

- **Baseline:** 48 Ministries include proactive disclosure in the APAs.
- **Target:** 100% of Performance Agreements between Ministries/Divisions and Cabinet Division include Disclosure Policy provisions

❖ **Indicator 3: Number of pro-active disclosures by sub-national public offices available as e-services increased at all levels (national, district, Upazila and Union Parishad).**

- **Baseline:** No baseline
- **Target:** 100% Number Ministries and Divisions have a system in place to regularly update websites and notice-boards of national and sub-national offices.

**31. Problem analysis:** Despite tremendous effort by successive governments to provide increased and better quality services to citizens many, particularly the poorer sections, are deprived of their entitlement. This is largely due to the fact that they are ignorant of their entitlements. It is to be noted that the level of awareness has gradually increased due to concerted effort of successive governments, NGOs and media but there is still much room for improvement. It is in this context that the enactment of the RTI Act has become particularly pertinent and its effective implementation can address the issue of ‘ignorance’ by way of proactive disclosure of available services. Proactive disclosure of information will address the issue of ‘ignorance’ if two issues are factored in: target groups and appropriate means.

**32.** Research findings indicate that there are some segments of the population which are lagging behind in receiving services such as health care and education. Such groups are: ultra-poor and marginalized, single and divorced women, Dalits, members of various minority groups, among others. These groups are difficult to reach given their socio-economic status. Therefore, any proactive disclosure of information vis a vis these groups will have to address the dual challenges of ‘how to reach these groups?’ and ‘how to encourage them to avail basic services?’ A Committee has been formed by the Cabinet Division for monitoring updates of web portals headed by the Additional Divisional Commissioner. This Committee needs to be made functional for ensuring regular updates of web portals at sub-national levels.

### 33. Activities

- 1) Develop capacity at the facility levels (District, Upazila and UP-level service points) to respond to and track RTI requests and dissemination of information, especially to target groups.
- 2) Develop concepts and guidelines for pro-active disclosure strategies for ministries, particularly those with a high level of government-citizens interface and encourage adoption of these guidelines by those ministries.
- 3) Include Proactive Disclosure requirements in the Annual Performance Agreements between Ministries and Divisions and Cabinet Division

**Result 7: A policy reform proposal is in place to enable RTI to function without frictions with existing inhibiting rules, practices, and laws.**

❖ **Indicator:** Proposals for policy amendments are with the Government for consideration.

**34. Problem analysis:** The plan will identify laws, administrative rules and practices that impede the institutionalization of RTI Act in Bangladesh, such as the Official Secrets Act, Rules of Business, Government's Servants' Conduct rules, the manual of office procedures, and other laws/rules that need reforming if RTI Act is to work well in the country.

### 35. Activities

- 1) Undertake research (desk and empirical) to determine the various laws, administrative rules and practices contradicting RTI practices;
- 2) Prepare a policy proposal for amendment of rule, procedures and laws;
- 3) Encourage and support the Law Commission and appropriate 'think tanks' and advocacy organizations to undertake research on specific issues and to put forward reform proposals;
- 4) Create forums and platforms to bring stakeholders together (relevant ministries, to discuss rationalization of laws and policies in relation to RTI Act;

**Result 8: An effective organizational framework at national level is in place for implementation of RTI Strategic Plan**

❖ **Indicator:** RTI Working Group meets on a quarterly basis. The IC is the custodian for the RTI supported by the Cabinet Division.

**36. Problem analysis:** The Ministry of Information is responsible for providing support to the IC as the former is the only entity (other than the IC) which is closely involved with the implementation of the RTI Act. The IC sets in place various policies, rules and regulations for

the implementation of the RTI Act, but given the fact that it is fundamentally an independent statutory body situated outside the Government it, therefore, cannot easily lead the process of implementation being ‘outside’ the sphere of the Executive. However, the strategic objectives elaborated above have touched different ministries and district and Upazila-level administrators, and their activities can only be coordinated by an appropriate and competent agency. The Cabinet Division appears to be the most suitable entity to carry out this coordinating function, as it is responsible for the overall coordination of the different ministries, district and Upazila administrators directly.

### **37. Activities**

- 1) Ensure IC, CD, CRU staff are empowered and trained to implement the RTI Strategic Plan;
- 2) RTI Working Group should be empowered and trained;
- 3) Develop an annual plan based on the strategic plan involving the key implementing partners;
- 4) Develop and introduce a web-based monitoring system for CD, CRU;
- 5) Develop a RTI webpage for the CD, CRU;
- 6) Seek resources from the Government of Bangladesh and Development Partners to implement the Strategic Plan.

## Implementation Plan

**38.** The High-level Implementation Plan is outlined in Annex 1. The implementation plan provides the key milestones to be achieved for each activity and broadly indicates the timeline and the institution responsible. The Plan will also be the basis for the annual implementation plans and the monitoring and reporting on progress.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

**39.** The RTI strategic plan is subject to monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The monitoring framework (Annex 2), as below, is based on Results, Indicators, and Activities along with their milestones proposed in the plan. Internal or external monitoring will use this framework to gather information and assess the progress of the implementation and make necessary remedial measures. To that end, the framework helps to document progress against plan, deviations and the causes behind deviation for each Activity and Result. Upon adoption of the Strategic Plan, when the real scope and administrative anchorage are clear, the implementing agency may develop a research design to support this monitoring framework.

**40.** Given the Indicators for each Action and Results, the concerned officials of the Cabinet Division's Coordination and Reforms Unit will be responsible for gathering the information from the relevant agencies and organizations. An on-line monitoring system will be developed for collecting, storing and reporting on the results framework.

**41.** Upon successful implementation of the monitoring framework, the implementing agency will have sufficient information to prepare half-yearly and annual reports.

**42.** There will be an annual independent monitoring exercise to review progress with the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The findings of the independent review will become an essential part of the yearly report to the RTI Working Group and will be disclosed to the public. The independent review will draw upon the NGOs working in the field of RTI to provide inputs.

## Conclusion

**43.** The Strategic Plan 2015-2021 is a means to accelerate implementation of the RTI Act 2009. It is clear that the success of the Plan will depend on various public institutions (relevant ministries, IC), private sector, civil society and NGOs in Bangladesh. The political parties should continue to provide support and align with the vision' to have government connected to citizens, and bring to bear sufficient political 'will' and allocate adequate resources to achieve the objectives of this Plan. Development partners too are called upon to align their programmes with the RTI Act, especially in terms of supporting proactive disclosure and training officials in the Act. Above all, in order to ensure success of this Plan the Government will have to declare its intention to attach 'top' national priority to this Plan, among many other competing policy initiatives.

## ANNEX 1: Implementation Plan

### DEMAND-SIDE ACTIVITIES

	Result 1	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>Citizens are progressively aware of RTI Act, the process of using it, and are willing to file a request for information.</b>	Percentage increase of RTI awareness of citizens. Baseline: 23% in 2012. Source: Survey 2012 <sup>7</sup> .		35%			55%		70%	Survey
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
1.1	Form a group of advisors in every district (District Advisory Committees DACs) from among the Government officials, lawyers, journalists or civil society members for providing necessary guidance and advices to citizens for filing request, appeal and complaint	64 DACs created and functioning								CD
1.2	Form RTI strategic partnerships among institutions (NGOs, private organizations, professionals, civil society groups) with communication skills and sustainable outreach programmes to citizens to initiate, augment and scale-up awareness campaign on RTI	A RTI forum/network with a secretariat of the institutional member formed (on rotational basis) and regularly meets to work together.								IC, CD, NGOs

<sup>7</sup> Based on the survey of 2628 respondents

1.3	Undertake audience analysis (e.g., target groups, farmers, students, women, people with disabilities) to identify specific communication strategies for target groups and service delivery.	An audience-specific communication strategy (for whom, which message, how to reach, feedback) is available for implementation.									NGOs, DACs
1.4	Develop different communication materials (radio, theatre, poster, leaflets, TV adverts, etc.) and approaches to reach identified target-groups	Audience specific communication materials are available to support the communication strategy. RTI Network/Forum is providing outreach to citizens and Government providing information at Union Digital Centers.									DACs, IC, MoI, NGOs and CRU, CD
1.5	Roll-out advocacy programme focusing on the service delivery agencies at the lower administrative tiers, to promote higher levels of 'demand' for information from the general public.	Annual advocacy campaign.									IC, NGOs, media, DAC

	Result 2	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>Media, National and Regional NGOs with outreach network, civil society actors and political organizations practice and promote RTI (existence, benefit, use)</b>	Frequency of RTI promotional activity Baseline: 1 campaign per year in 2012.Source: Right to Know Day.	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	IC, NGO and media reports
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
2.1	Undertake campaigns on specific issues, for example, availability of safety-net programmes involving low-income households.	The low income households entitled to safety net programs access them.								IC and NGOs Survey
2.2	Educate citizens, particularly poor communities with limited literacy, on RTI.	NGO workers discuss RTI issues using communication materials in their regular group meetings. Publication of RTI booklets in easy language (সহজপাঠ) for common people and distribute.								IC NGOs
2.3	Encourage newspaper and television owners and senior management to become 'supporters' of RTI Act	Media training events held leading to more use of RTI in journalism								IC, MoI and media
2.4	Encourage popular television and radio programmes such as talk show, success stories and documentaries highlighting the use of RTI Act	Television and radios have screened/aired programmes on RTI practices and discuss critical issues in talk shows.								IC and MoI
2.5	Encourage civil society organizations to monitor and report widely on the RTI Strategic Plan and its implementation	Media and civil society organizations prepares annual monitoring report periodic 'RTI Watch' report highlighting what 'promised' and what 'prevailed'.								IC, NGOs

	Result 3	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>More citizen-friendly and efficient technology (cell phone, internet, and other advanced technology) for filing RTI request is available.</b>	On line RTI Requests Filed per year (thousands)  Baseline: 0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	IC
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
3.1	Launch national English and Bangla on-line and mobile application RTI request filing system.	Citizens can file for information from website.								IC
3.2	Government agencies websites provide link to the on-line RTI filing option	Citizens can be directed to online filing application from government website.								CD,CR U
3.3	Ensure that citizen's charters are available on websites and in hard copy with details of service delivery standards, grievance redressal mechanisms and contacts of DOs.	All public offices with service delivery points at local level have citizens charter and updated information board responding to FAQs (health, education, safety net projects of different organizations, etc)								IC, CD,CR U
3.4	Introduce RTI filing help desk at Union Digital Centers which are equipped with visible information	Citizens are receiving information from each service delivery point at Upazila and UP (Help Desk and 'Help Person' respectively) visible or on inquiry.								IC CD,CR U
3.5	Examine the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive web portal and call center for filing RTI requests, appeal, and response through call center and internet.	A feasibility report and a strategic plan is available for consideration.								IC



## SUPPLY SIDE ACTIVITIES

	Result 4	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>Designated Officers have access to RTI service delivery skills (materials, CD, online training)</b>	% of DOs who have undergone training on RTI  Baseline: 25 % Source: Survey 2012.	25%						75%	Survey
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
4.1	Ensure all government bodies have a DO appointed under the RTI Act	DO's are appointed for all central, District, Upazila and other local government bodies.								IC, CD, CRU
4.2	Develop a database containing up-to-date information on the Designated Officers (contact details, RTI training received).	An updated database is available online and can be accessed.								IC
4.3	Develop a standard information package (RTI Act, rules, regulations, a handbook on the Information Commission and its functions and guidelines for each Designated Officer).	A standard info package for Designated Officers is available on IC website.								IC
4.4	Ensure that the Designated Officers have access to such information package (hand-over or mail)	The Designated Officers receive email/letter indicating where to get access to the information within one month of being assigned to the task.								IC and CD,CRU
4.5	Conduct regular training for Designated Officers at different levels, such as, National, District and Upazila and other local government bodies (traditional classroom context, distance learning using audio and print	Strategy for the training of DO strategy is completed.  The Designated Officers at different levels received IC-led RTI trainings following a declared training								IC and CD,CRU, NGOs

	materials, electronic-content off- and on-line).	programme (different levels, mode of delivery).								
4.6	Establish a well-resourced help desk at the IC which will respond to queries from Designated Officers (letters, telephone calls, email messages, Skype calls, and live on-line chat).	The Designated Officers are receiving guidance from 'Help Desk' of IC on online or messaging or Skype or chatting basis or mobile phone.								IC
4.7	Establish an interactive website for exchange of experience between Designated Officers and practitioners.	Interactive website is established								IC
4.8	Develop RTI professionals in Bangladesh (trainers, researchers, IT professionals)	Training of trainers programme developed and implemented								IC

	Result 5	Indicator	Time Frame							Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
	<b>Back-end systems at the most frequently-visited departments are in use for efficient RTI service delivery.</b>	Number of Ministries/Departments with systems connected to the online RTI request application  Baseline: 0 Source: MOPA	0			2				5	MOPA
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame							Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
5.1	Review and improve Records Management and archive processes.	Records management and archives process strategy adopted									CD,RC U, MOPA
5.2	Develop back-end systems for selected ministries divisions	Selected back-end systems exist and downloadable by competent authorities.									CD,RC U
5.3	Integrate selected back-end systems with the (to be developed) national web portal for informing, filing, appealing, and responding on RTI through call center and internet.	Available back-end systems are compatible with a standard web portal for possible (allowable) downloading and filing.									CD,RC U

	Result 6	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>Selected Government Departments which regularly offer service delivery at different levels and points increasingly practice proactive disclosure</b>	Proactive disclosure compliance by Service Delivery Ministries and Divisions.  Baseline: 30% of Ministries and Divisions have 70% score or higher in assessment	30%		70%		80%		90%	CD and Survey
		Performance Agreements between Ministries/Divisions and Cabinet Division include Disclosure Policy provisions  Baseline: 48 Ministries include proactive disclosure in the APAs.	48 ministries						100%	
		Number Ministries and Divisions have a system in place to regularly update websites and notice-boards of national and sub-national offices.  Baseline: no baseline							100%	
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
6.1	Develop capacity at the facility levels (district, Upazila and UP-level service points) to respond to and track RTI requests and dissemination of information, especially to target groups.	The respective supervisor and Designated Officers have a list of applications, appeals from target groups and follow up.								CRU, CD
6.2	Develop concepts and guidelines for pro-active disclosure strategies for ministries, particularly those with a	Concepts and guidelines are available and shared with respective ministries.								CRU, CD

	high level of government-citizens interface and encourage adoption of these guidelines by those ministries.	Ministries adopt strategies								
6.3	Include Proactive Disclosure requirements in the Annual Performance Agreements between Ministries and Divisions and Cabinet Division	APAs signed with 48 ministries with a mandatory objective to increase proactive disclosure compliance.								CD

	Result 7	Indicator	Time Frame						Source	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
	<b>A policy reform proposal is in place to enable RTI to function without conflicting with existing inhibiting rules, practices, and laws</b>	Policy reform papers published.  Baseline TBD		2			2		2	CD
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame						Resp	
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		2021
7.1	Undertake research (desk and empirical) to determine the various laws, administrative rules and practices contradicting RTI practices.	A research report with specific recommendations for policy changes is available.								IC, CD, CRU
7.2	Prepare a policy proposal for amendment of rule, procedures and laws.	Make Rules of Business compliant with RTI Act. List of amendments are submitted to the Government for consideration.								IC, CD, CRU
7.3	Encourage and support the Law Commission and appropriate 'think tanks' and advocacy organizations to undertake research on specific issues and to put forward reform proposals.	Law Commission, 'Think Tanks' and advocacy organizations regularly receive reports, case studies and policy proposals for deliberations and discourse.								IC, CD, NGOs, Academia, Think Tanks
7.4	Create forums and platforms to bring stakeholders together (relevant ministries, to discuss rationalization of laws and policies in relation to RTI Act.	At least one national level workshop/seminars held per years to discuss progress, critical issues and propose changes in the practice with RTI.								IC, CD, NGOs, Academia, Think Tanks

	Result 8	Indicator	Time Frame							Source
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
	<b>An effective organizational framework at national level is in place for implementation of RTI Strategic Plan</b>	RTI Working Group meets on a quarterly basis.  No of Meetings held per year. Baseline: 3 in 2014	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	CD
	Activities	Milestone	Time Frame							Resp
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
8.1	Ensure IC, CD, CRU staffs are empowered and trained to implement the RTI Strategic Plan	Annual 10 officials attend training on average every year.								IC, CD, CRU
8.2	RTI Working Group should be empowered and trained	The Members received training or exposure to RTI practices at home and overseas.								IC, CD, CRU
8.3	Develop an annual plan based on the strategic plan involving the key implementing partners.	Annual plan approved by the RTI Working Group is available for implementation.								CD, CRU
8.4	Develop and introduce a web-based monitoring system for CD, CRU.	Real-time monitoring is possible and auto-generated reports are available.								IC, CD, CRU
8.5	Develop a RTI webpage for the CD, CRU.	Enhancement of existing website to communicate the progress against the strategic plan								CD, CRU
8.6	Seek resources from the Government of Bangladesh and Development Partners to implement the Strategic Plan.	Both Government and development partners committed resources.								IC, CD, CRU

## ANNEX 2: Monitoring Framework

Strategic Objective: Improve compliance with the RTI Act, and promote citizens awareness and use of the Act												
Indicators	Unit of measure	Baseline	Target values							Frequency	Data source	Responsibility for data collection
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>General indicators</b>												
Number of citizens filing for information	Number of RTI requests filed (thousands)	11 (2014) <sup>8</sup>	11	12	15	16	18	19	20	Annual	IC annual report	IC
Proactive disclosure of Government Ministries and Divisions	Proportion of Ministries and Divisions compliant with PD policies	30% (2014) <sup>9</sup>		50%		70%		80%	90%	Semi Annual	Proactive Disclosure Assessment	CD
<b>Relevant Indicators per results</b>												
<b>Result 1</b> Increase in RTI awareness of citizens	Percentage of citizens aware of RTI	23% (2012)			45%				70%	4-5 years	Survey	IC

<sup>8</sup>Information Commission Annual report, 2014.

<sup>9</sup>Proactive Disclosure Assessment, Cabinet Division 2014. Thirty percent of 48 Line Ministries and Divisions scored 70 percent or higher on the assessment of availability and usability of information under the Proactive Disclosure Regulations of the RTI Act.



**Strategic Objective:** Improve compliance with the RTI Act, and promote citizens awareness and use of the Act

Indicators	Unit of measure	Baseline	Target values							Frequency	Data source	Responsibility for data collection
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Result 2</b> RTI promotional activity and media coverage	Number of promotional campaigns per year	1 (2015)	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	Every year	IC annual report	IC
<b>Result 3</b> On line and mobile RTI request application.	Number of on-line requests filed (thousands)	None	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Every year	IC report	IC
<b>Result 4</b> Percentage of DO trained on RTI	Percentage of DO trained on RTI	25% (2012)	30%	35%	40%	50%	60%	70%	75%	Every year	IC annual report	IC
<b>Result 5</b> Back-end systems are in use for efficient RTI service delivery	Number of Ministries/Departments with systems connected to the online RTI request application	0		1		2			5	Every two-three years	Cabinet Division Assessment	Cabinet Division

**Strategic Objective:** Improve compliance with the RTI Act, and promote citizens awareness and use of the Act

Indicators	Unit of measure	Baseline	Target values							Frequency	Data source	Responsibility for data collection
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Result 6:</b> disclosure of Government Ministries and Divisions	Proportion of Ministries and Divisions compliant with PD policies	30% (2014) <sup>10</sup>			70%		80%		90%	Semi Annual	Proactive Disclosure Assessment	CD
<b>Result 7:</b> Reform proposals to facilitate RTI	Reform Policy Proposals published.	TBD		2			2		2	Every year	CD	CD, IC
<b>Result 8:</b> Effective organization in place to implement RTI Strategic Plan	RTI Working Group meets on a quarterly basis.	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	Every year	CD	CD

<sup>10</sup>Proactive Disclosure Assessment, Cabinet Division 2014. Thirty percent of 48 Line Ministries and Divisions scored 70 percent or higher on the assessment of availability and usability of information under the Proactive Disclosure Regulations of the RTI Act.

## ANNEX 3: The Information Commission and its Mandate

The IC has been given a clear mandate to implement the RTI Act 2009. The Act states:

- (i) *After the commencement of this Act, a commission to be known as the Information Commission shall be established for carrying out the purpose of this Act and in accordance with its provisions.*
- (ii) *The Information Commission shall be an independent body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal.*

The Commission has been given the following obligatory powers:

- (i) to issue directives for the preservation, management, publication, publicity of and access to information;
- (ii) to lay down procedures for application for information;
- (iii) to implement the right to information;
- (iv) to identify and remove impediments for effective implementation;
- (v) to undertake research and solicit recommendation for effective implementation;
- (vi) to follow international best practices;
- (vii) to undertake awareness activities;
- (viii) to formulate rules and regulations;
- (ix) to assist other organizations or institutions to implement the right to information;
- (x) to provide technical assistance to authorities; and
- (xi) to oversee the actions of others under other laws for implementation of right to information.

The rules and regulations under the 2009 Act provide further guidance regarding the functioning of the IC. It is also to be noted that several sections of the Act have given the Government (without specifying any particular Division or Ministry of the Government) some role to play vis-à-vis the IC.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, according to section 21 of the Act the IC has full financial independence, is subject to audit oversight by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Act provides a very transparent selection process for the appointment of the Chief Information Commissioner and the two Commissioners (Section 14), and the Act specifies in sections 15 and 16 the process of appointment, tenure, resignation and removal of the Chief Information Commissioner and other Commissioners. At least on paper the CIC and IC have been given much authority and independence to operate but in reality the IC has not fully exercised its powers to implement RTI. Mainly due to this reason the performance of IC has been rather mixed.

Under section 23 the Government has retained significant administrative control and influence over the IC. Section 23(3) states “[T]he salary, allowance and other terms and conditions of service of the Secretary and other officers and employees shall be determined by the Government.” The Government may also appoint officers and employees on request from the Information Commission on deputation to the Information Commission (Section 23(4)). The Secretariat of the IC is made up of civil servants, and several positions within the IC are occupied by the Administrative cadre of the civil service on deputation.

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<sup>11</sup> See sections 17, 20, 22, 23, 33 and 34 of the Act

## ANNEX 4: The RTI Working group circular

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Cabinet Division

Administrative Reform Branch

[www.cabinet.gov.bd](http://www.cabinet.gov.bd)

Memo no. 04.00.0000.221.14.043.14.715

Dated: 08 Poush 1421/22 December 2014

### **Circular**

Subject: Reconstitution of Working Group to exercise on and determine the Action-Plan on implementation of Right to Information.

The Working Group on Right to Information formed by the Cabinet Division under memo no. 04.221.085.00.01.025.2010.611 on 22 June, 2014 is hereby reconstituted as follows:

1. Secretary (Coordination and Reforms), Cabinet Division - Convener
2. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information - Member
3. Secretary, Information Commission - Member
4. Joint Secretary (Reforms), Cabinet Division - Member
5. Representative of the World Bank - Member
6. Deputy Secretary (Administrative Reforms), Cabinet Division - Member Secretary

### **2. Terms of Reference of the Working Group:**

- a) Prioritizing issues relating to the implementation of Right to Information;
- b) Formulation of Action-Plan for implementation of the priorities;
- c) Coordination with the concerned organizations involved in implementation of Right to Information;

- d) Formulation of necessary recommendations for strengthening the implementation of Rights to Information and proactive disclosure initiatives;
3. The Working Group would meet at least once in every month and inform the concerned authority of the progress made against the activities mentioned above; and
  4. The Working Group, if necessary, may invite any expert on the relevant issues or representative of any organization involved with this task to attend the meeting.
  5. This circular is issued in public interest and be effective immediately.

Signed/-

(Dr. Abu Shahin M. Ashaduzzaman)

Deputy Secretary

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Distribution:

1. Acting Secretary (Coordination and Reforms), Cabinet Division
2. Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division
3. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information
4. Secretary, Information Commission
5. Joint Additional Secretary (Reforms), Cabinet Division
6. Country Director, The World Bank, Dhaka Office, Agargaon, Dhaka
7. Deputy Secretary (Administrative Reforms), Cabinet Division
8. Personal Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary , Cabinet Division.

