



**Implementing the Right to Information Act 2009:
A Strategy Paper for the Information Commission, Bangladesh**

July 2012

Acknowledgement

This strategy paper has been prepared by USAID/PROGATI partner Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI). BEI has closely worked with the Information Commission, government representatives, civil society, media and academia to receive strategic guidance, technical inputs, and institutional support for preparing this strategy paper.

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Part I

The Right to Information Framework in Bangladesh

1.1 Background:

1.1.1 The Right to information Act 2009 (RTI Act 2009) of Bangladesh adopted in the Parliament marks a culmination of a process that can be traced from 1983 when the Press Commission recommended adoption of an RTI Act, through the Law Commission's Working Paper of 2002 and the civil society's demand for an Act. The Caretaker Government passed the RTI Ordinance 2008 leaving it for ratification by the elected Government. In the meantime, the demand for the RTI Act occupied a central position in public discourse as reflected in the media and eventually in the election manifesto of the major political parties. Coupled with continued efforts by the civil society, this resulted in the adoption of the RTI Act 2009 by the present Government. Since its enactment, the RTI Act 2009 has emerged as one of the most significant legislations enacted by the Parliament of Bangladesh. The Act enables establishment of an unprecedented regime of right to information for the citizens of the country. It overrides the Official Secrets Act 1923 and similar laws and rules. The Act seeks to establish that 'transparency is the norm and secrecy is an exception' in the functional disposition of every public authority. It aims to ensure maximum openness and transparency in the machinery and functioning of the government at all levels.

1.1.2 Before the RTI Act 2009, disclosure of government information in Bangladesh was governed by a law enacted during the British rule, the Official Secrets Act of 1889 which was amended in 1923. This law secures information related to security of the State, sovereignty of the country and friendly relations with foreign states, and contains provisions which prohibit disclosure of non-classified information. The Evidence Act 1872, Rules of Business 1996, Government Service (Conduct) Rules 1979, and the oath (affirmation) of secrecy under the constitution imposed further restrictions on government officials in disclosing information to the public. The disclosure in Bangladesh was, therefore, restricted by the aforementioned laws despite Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and of speech to every citizen. The same Article has recognized the freedom of the Press. The RTI Act 2009 has the freedom to override any existing law creating impediments in providing information.

1.1.3 To oversee the implementation of the RTI Act 2009, the Information Commission was established on 1 July 2009. The Article 11 (2) of the RTI Act 2009 states that "the Information Commission shall be an independent body corporate having perpetual succession and a common

seal with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and shall by its own name sue and be sued”. The Commission is responsible for undertaking five main types of functions – issuing directives and guidelines, conducting research and advising the government on improving the access to information regime and compliance with international instruments, building institutional capacity, conducting promotional activities, and resolving complaints¹. The Commission has been authorized to issue directives and guidelines including “regulations” to guide and direct “authorities” in preparing and publishing lists of information that would be available free of cost². Compliance with the regulations is obligatory. The Commission also has the power to act as a court of law. “The Information Commission, or as the case may be, the Chief Information Commissioner or Information Commissioners, may exercise such powers as a civil court may exercise under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Act V of 1908)”³. Therefore, the Commission is vested with the same powers as those of a civil court and it has authorities to take any necessary steps in the event of non-compliance, including awarding compensation to the complainant.

1.2 Methodology:

1.2.1 This strategy paper has been prepared in consultation with the Chief Information Commissioner and the Information Commissioners, Information Commission, Bangladesh. Preparation of this strategy paper also involved consultations with the government officials at the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Anti Corruption Commission, Ministries of Information, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Health and Family Welfare, Food and Disaster Management, and Youth and Sports. Views obtained from these Ministries led to identify priority issues and required actions for implementation of a solid RTI framework in Bangladesh. Consultations, interviews and meetings were held with civil society, media, academia and donor agencies to gain further insights on public perception regarding the Information Commission, the RTI Act 2009, and role of RTI in Bangladeshi society.⁴

1.2.2 To understand the ICT requirements, meetings with A2I at the Prime Minister’s Office, and Bangladesh Computer Council were conducted. Feedbacks obtained from five sub-national level meetings between the key oversight institutions – office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Anti Corruption Commission, and Information Commission, organized by PROGATI/USAID with support from the Information Commission, offices of the Divisional Controller of Accounts in Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong, and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, held between April 2012 and June 2012 in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong, have provided valuable perspectives

¹ Section 13 (5) of the RTI Act 2009

² Section 8 (6) of the RTI Act 2009

³ Section 13 (3) of the RTI Act 2009

of the field offices and the public officials working at the grass-root level. Best practices and strategies for implementation of Right to Information framework, strengthening of the Information Commission, and upholding the right to information in the countries like India, Malaysia, Canada, UK, USA, Ghana, South Africa, Norway, Sweden and Australia have been studied. Minutes and proceedings provided by the Parliament Secretariat, the Cabinet Division, and the Information Commission on inter-Ministerial meetings, public awareness meetings, and reports and decisions on Information Tribunal, and the one-year roadmap of the Information Commission which was submitted to the National Parliament has played a crucial role in preparing this strategy paper. All relevant findings, derived from the aforementioned process, were shared with the Information Commission, Bangladesh to review the practical issues and harmonize the tangible actions reflected in this strategy paper.

Part II

Right to Information Strategy for the Information Commission Bangladesh

2.1 Mission Statement of the Information Commission:

Mission of the Information is to ensure access to information, uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting transparency, accountability and openness by public offices and information privacy for individuals. The Commission has the mandate to oversee the implementation of the Right to Information Act 2009 that guarantees rights about the official information. The Commission ensures that an effective information regime is established that would enable the public to have access to information held by public offices unless there are legal and national security reasons to keep it confidential.

2.2 Vision of the Information Commission:

2.2.1 The Right to Information Act, 2009 makes provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information. The RTI Act 2009 has been promulgated on the basis of the following principles:

“Whereas freedom of thought, conscience and speech is recognized in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh as one of the fundamental rights and right to information is an inalienable part of freedom of thought, conscience and speech; and

Whereas all powers of the Republic belong to the people, and it is necessary to ensure right to information for the empowerment of the people; and

Whereas if the right to information of the people is ensured, the transparency and accountability of all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and of other private institutions constituted or run by government or foreign financing shall increase, corruption of the same shall decrease and good governance of the same shall be established; and

Whereas it is expedient and necessary to make provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and in other private institutions constituted or run by government or foreign financing.”⁵

⁵ P. 7138 of the RTI Act 2009

2.2.2 Based on the objectives laid down in the RTI Act 2009, the following vision of the Information Commission may be adopted:

“To make the Information Commission, Bangladesh as an independent oversight institution for establishing people’s right to information and ensuring high quality, relevant and timely information to the public; to be responsive and forward looking in approach; and to become an effective statutory body in order to ensure transparency and accountability of public institutions by way of information dissemination and safeguarding privacy of individuals”.

2.2.3 The purpose of the Information Commission’s Strategy is to fulfill the Commission’s vision in right ways. To this end, this strategy seeks that the Information Commission falls in line with its statutory duties, as the authoritative institution for guaranteeing information rights to the public. In order to do so, the Information Commission is required to maintain a transparent work environment to implement its mission and to fulfill its statutory duties. To do so, the Commission has designed this strategy paper which explains how IC may maximize movement towards its long-term vision. Therefore, in line with the vision stated in this strategy paper, the Commission seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- i. a large population of the country with a basic awareness of their information rights coupled with ready access to information on how to exercise those rights;
- ii. public and private offices routinely meet their legal obligations in the way they respond to people exercising their rights;
- iii. a high level of awareness among the public officials as well as political leaders regarding the obligations under information rights law;
- iv. good information rights practice embedded in the culture and day-to-day business of public and private offices;
- v. good information rights practice and upholding of information rights through IC’s regulatory mechanism;
- vi. public and private offices and individuals’ awareness of the IC’s investigatory enforcement powers and the consequences of failing to meet the requirements of the Right to Information Act 2009;

- vii. a legislative framework for information rights that is integrated and consistent, and that precipitates the cause of upholding information rights and enables the IC to be an effective authority;
- viii. the law, technology and public policy developed and enforced must be consistent with the RTI Act 2009,
- ix. to reduce disproportionate burden for information disclosure on the public officials; and
- x. the public confidence in information rights law as necessary, serving the public interest, effective in practice and duly enforced.

2.2.4 This strategy, therefore, is concerned with ensuring IC's long term effectiveness in bringing about good information rights practice at a time when IC and its stakeholders face many challenges and opportunities. These range from constraints in financial, technical, and human resources; impact of rapid changes in technologies and information systems; an ever increasing emphasis on transparency; and the pressure that all public bodies are subjected to for timely delivery of deliverables. These constraints significantly hinder implementing the statutory duties of the Commission. Nevertheless, with its limited human and financial capacities, the Commission consistently undertakes a number of activities which include publication of RTI Act, RTI Manual, RTI pamphlets, public consultations, public hearings, sensitization meeting at the district and sub-district levels, tribunal activities, and research works.

2.3 Statutory Duties of the Information Commission:

2.3.1 The RTI Act 2009 has clearly articulated the functions and jurisdictions of the Information Commission, Bangladesh. According to Section 13 (5), the Commission has the following mandates:

- (a) to issue directives for the preservation, management, publication, publicity of and access to information by authority;
- (b) to prescribe the procedure for applying for information from the authority and, as the case may be, to fix appropriate price of information;

- (c) to formulate guidelines and directives as to the preservation and implementation of the right to information of the citizens;
- (d) to consider the provisions recognized under the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh or any other law for the time being in force in order to preserve the right to information and recommend to the Government for their effective implementation by indicating the impediments;
- (e) to identify the impediments against the preservation and implementation of right to information of the citizens and recommend to the Government for appropriate solution;
- (f) to conduct research on the agreements relating to the right to information and other international instruments and to recommend to the Government for their implementation;
- (g) to examine the similarities of the prevailing law relating to the maintenance and implementation of the right to information of the citizens and to make necessary recommendation to the Government or, as the case may be, to the appropriate authority in order to ensure their harmonization with the international instruments;
- (h) to advise the Government to ratify or sign any international instrument on right to information;
- (i) to conduct research on preservation and implementation of the right to information and to assist the educational and professional institution for conducting such research;
- (j) to publicize the issues relating to the preservation and implementation of the right to information among different classes of citizens of the society and to increase their awareness about the right to information by publishing, disseminating or by any other means;
- (k) to advise and provide assistance to the Government in order to make necessary laws and administrative directives for preservation and implementation of right to information;

- (l) to advise and provide assistance to the organizations or institutions working for the preservation and implementation of the RTI and to citizens in general;
- (m) to increase public awareness on right to information by conducting research, seminars, symposiums, workshops and similar other measures and disseminate the result obtained from the research;
- (n) to give the authority technical and other assistance with a view to ensuring right to information;
- (o) to establish a web portal for Bangladesh in order to ensure right to information;
- (p) to oversee the actions taken under any other law relating to the preservation and implementation of the right to information.

2.3.2 To discharge the statutory duties of the Information Commission, the Commission has to undertake a coherent and comprehensive work-plan on a long-term, strategic basis. Its statutory duties focus on the effective functioning of the office in a manner consistent with the Right to Information Act 2009 and the high standards expected from a public body. To fulfill these statutory obligations, the Information Commission needs to overcome its legal, financial, and human resource constraints. This could be done by undertaking strong efforts to strengthen and expand its human resources capacities, and to ensure financial and legal independence. While it is recognized that the Right to Information Act 2009 is sound in terms of its concept and balance, nevertheless, the Commission will stipulate timely and necessary initiatives to modernize that Act from a legislative perspective and to align it with more progressive regimes both nationally and internationally. Part III and IV of this strategy paper provide a detail account of time specific strategies which would enable the Commission to fulfill its statutory duties and to achieve its desired vision. For that matter, the Commission would require strong political support, cooperation from the bureaucracy, and active support from the civil society, NGOs, academia and media.

Part III

Translating Vision into Reality

3.1 Strategy of the Information Commission to implement the mission and the statutory duties of IC

3.1.1 To effectively implement the vision and to fulfill the statutory duties of the Information Commission, the Commission will undertake short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies. The short-term strategies, articulated in this strategy paper, will address the immediate priorities of the Commission achievable in 0-12 months of time. The medium term strategies will ensure the Commission's maximum effectiveness in the society and are achievable in 12-24 months. The long-term components, achievable in 24-60 months, will enhance the capacity of the society as a whole to use information for sustainable good governance in Bangladesh. These strategies have been designed to give enough flexibility in order to respond to new circumstances and opportunities. It is hoped that these strategies will be of use to other actors – oversight agencies, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, and media - that are committed to ensure free flow of information in Bangladesh.

3.2 Short-term strategies of the Information Commission

3.2.1 The short-term strategies are designed to achieve the immediate priorities of the Information Commission and will lay foundation for strengthening statutory and institutional capacities of the Commission. These strategies are:

(i) Establish a Citizen Charter, Service Delivery Statement, and Code of Conduct of the IC Officials in the Information Commission Premises;

(ii) Publish and disseminate meeting minutes, conference and workshop proceedings, audit report, annual report in accordance with the section 30 of the RTI Act 2009, changes in the organogram, directives, legal amendments, research reports, complaints, activities and decisions of the tribunal, and all other relevant legal documents and information, and updated list of the Designated Information Officers (দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত তথ্য কর্মকর্তা), through website and printed publication, whenever appropriate;

(iii) Ensure appointment of Designated Information Officers (DIOs) in all the public offices and NGOs to fulfill the obligations stated in the RTI Act 2009;

(iv) Formulate a strategic human resources management plan to improve and facilitate performance and workload management for IC officials;

(v) Facilitate regular trainings for the IC officials on RTI laws, best practices, investigation, governance, media, and technologies so that they can actively influence the development and deployment of the RTI Act, and ensure regular participation of the IC officials in government meetings, civil society engagements, and consultations with various stakeholders so that the Commission can work in partnership with all the societal actors, other regulators, and public for sharing experiences, obtain advice, and guidance;

(vi) Ensure trainings for the IC staffs for optimal usage of the investigative capacity of IC to expedite justice to the complainants as early as possible;

(vii) Prepare and disseminate handbook on the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Information Officers and the Appellate Authorities;

(viii) Designated Information Officers at the Deputy Commissioner's Offices could be assigned and trained to provide advice to the public, and District, Upazilla and Union level officers regarding RTI law, procedures for requesting information and lodging complaints;

(ix) Establish a formal platform for collaboration and coordination with the oversight bodies such as the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the National Board of Revenue, the Anti Corruption Commission, and the Human Rights Commission, and with the Parliamentary oversight committees such as the Public Accounts Committee to discuss and address the issues of mutual interests;

(x) Prepare an effective and structured communication strategy to maintain sustainable cooperation with various Ministries and public offices, and to strengthen partnership with civil society, NGOs, private sector, and media;

(xi) Continue to collaborate with electronic, print, and social media, and with the telecommunication companies and the corporate bodies to disseminate information on the RTI Act 2009 and IC in the forms of talk show, documentary, public awareness advertisement, articles, and mobile communication;

(xii) Continue to organize and participate in workshops, seminars, and symposiums to promulgate the objectives of RTI Act 2009, and establish an effective Right to Information

regime in Bangladesh, and arrange international and regional level conferences on RTI, sharing of best practices, and legal frameworks, with participations of the Information Commissions in other countries;

(xiii) Regularly update the website of IC to make it interactive and user-friendly, so that the DIOs can upload information, and public can lodge complaints through website, blogs, and documents, and anyone can have download online forms and RTI materials;

(xiv) Undertake initiatives to link the website of the Commission with the websites of all the Ministries and the key oversight institutions in order to integrate information requesting system with wider e-government initiatives of the government; and

(xv) Conduct advocacy for introducing openness into performance review systems at all levels, not only for DIOs but also for all levels of public officials, and not only for individuals but also for sub-departmental units.

3.3 Medium-term strategies of the Information Commission

3.3.1 The medium term strategies will establish good information rights and practice in the public offices and NGOs and create awareness among the mass population through IC's regulatory mechanism. These strategies are:

(i) Undertake necessary initiatives to appoint IC Officer in the District, Upazilla and Union levels to ensure institutional representation at the field levels;

(ii) Provide technical supports to the Ministries of the Government of Bangladesh regarding implementation of proactive disclosure of institutional information, organizational information, operational information, public services information, budget information, open meeting information, subsidies information, public procurement information; lists, registers and databases; information about information held, and publications information through directives, dialogues, and different means of communication to ensure that the public and private offices comply with the RTI Act 2009;

(iii) Provide specialized training, in collaboration with the public training institutions, civil society organizations, and NGOs, for the public officials, the Designated Information Officers, and the appellate authorities regarding RTI Act 2009 and its linkages with development and good governance;

(iv) Encourage public offices to apply institutional systems, by introducing proactive disclosure policy and/or by creating information cell, to treat delivery of information and openness in the same way as the delivery of any other service;

(v) Facilitate initiatives for mainstreaming RTI as a core public service value by introducing training curriculums for the public officials in collaboration with Public Service Commission, Ministry of Public Administration, public service training centers, and academic institutions, which would help integrate RTI into existing public service systems and practices, not only formally but also in terms of operational culture;

(vi) Conduct advocacy initiatives to establish specialist career positions for Designated Information Officers with clear responsibilities, power to make decisions on requests, as well as a wider promotional role, the possibility of upward mobility in the public offices as well as in the private offices and NGOs;

(vii) Encourage and support the raising of information rights awareness through the formal education system and training, and through non-formal channels such as social networking; and develop audio-visual and sign language versions of RTI Act for the physically challenged people;

(viii) Create a sustainable working platform for collaboration between IC and field administration, i.e. the Offices of the Divisional Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, to carry out public awareness programs and for providing training to the grassroots level officials.

3.4 Long-term strategies of the Information Commission

3.4.1 The long-term strategies of the Information Commission are intended to ensure that the training activities, law, technology and public policy developed and enforced are consistent with the RTI Act 2009, and the public confidence in information rights framework is established. These strategies are:

(i) Encourage incorporation of RTI in the high school curriculum by 2013;

(ii) Integrate right to information modules into other training programs offered to officials by the public service training institutes;

(iii) Develop online right to information courses to help promote delivery to large numbers of officials in an efficient manner, and for that purpose establish a 'Central Internet Portal'

providing access to training materials, as well as guidelines and other advice about how to implement the law;

(iv) Collaborate with various government agencies to develop effective plans to link RTI Act with the process of devolution of powers to villages in Union level and to municipal local bodies in towns;

(v) Provide technical support to the organizations and departments which have comparatively larger share of public contact. Such organizations have a greater role in educating their own staff and the groups of people with whom they come in contact at regular intervals;

(vi) Provide financial support to the public training institutions, public universities, private sector academic institutions and civil society organizations to undertake training programs on RTI and associated legal frameworks for the public, civil society organizations and NGOs;

(vii) Liaise with the government to establish a 'National Resource Centre on RTI' which would provide technical and research support to the Commission as well as to all the stakeholders.

(ix) Collaborate with the government for promulgating a 'Data Protection Act' that would enable individuals the right to know what information is held about them, and set out rules to make sure that this information is handled properly in order to protect 'personal' information;

(x) Undertake research works on RTI, openness, technologies, social needs, and public perceptions, so that the Commission can keep pace with the changes taking place in Bangladesh and beyond; and

(xi) The Commission will review and revise this strategy annually in consultation with the government, the civil society and the media representatives.

Part IV

Reviewing and measuring success of the Strategies

4.1 The Information Commission considers that information rights, needs and concerns of all individuals are equal. It does not give undue weight to those who are best able to access its services. In order to ensure access of the people from all segments of the society, and to ensure a transparent information regime, IC will regularly develop, revise, and publish more detailed policies explaining how IC can deliver these strategies in practice. Evaluation of IC's effectiveness will enable IC to learn from experience and improve the delivery of the desired outcomes stated in the short, medium and long term strategies. IC will implement the following measures to review its effectiveness, and measure its impact in the society:

- i. To implement these strategies, the Information Commission will collaborate with the government agencies such as the Ministries of Home Affairs, Education, Finance, Home, Public Administration, Information, Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Religious Affairs, Youth and Sports, and Social Welfare, private sector such as telecommunication and ICT sector, civil society organizations, local youth and voluntary organizations, academic institutions, and local and national media to undertake public awareness programs to create demands for information among the mass population;
- ii. The Commission will host and arrange workshops, seminars, and dialogues with various stakeholders to measure its success and monitor implementation of the strategic components laid out in this strategy;
- iii. The Commission, apart from the government agencies, will seek support of the civil society, NGOs, academia, and international agencies to implement the components laid out in this strategy and to develop training framework to educate the public officials as well as the public regarding RTI;
- iv. The Commission will take necessary initiative, if required, to advise and provide assistance to the Government to make necessary laws and administrative directives for amending the RTI laws;

- v. The Commission may constitute an independent subcommittee for measuring success of the Information Commission in implementing of the RTI framework, and for providing suggestions aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Information Commission;
- vi. Along with its annual report, the Commission may prepare an annual success report that would identify the following items:
 - 1. Public perception on the Information Commission and Right to Information Act 2009 (can be measured through public perception survey conducted by the Commission and/or by an independent research institutions);
 - 2. Stakeholder confidence on the Information Commission and the DIOs on how information is being handled (can be measured through bi-annual stakeholder impact survey);
 - 3. Internal and external audits of the activities laid out in this strategy (can be measured through counting the number and understanding the nature of visits to IC website;, number of stakeholder engagement programs, number of workshops, training programs, meetings, symposiums, media and communication activities, MoUs, publications, annual reports, research publications, media monitoring and so on);
 - 4. The volume and outcome of complaints about the public offices and NGOs referred to the DIOs, Information Commissioner and, beyond that, to the Tribunal;
 - 5. Feedback from civil society and other organizations for promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals;
 - 6. Incorporate a narrative about IC's achievements in influencing developments in the law, technology and public policy.

ANNEX

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RTI ACT 2009

Key Activity	Timeframe	Principal Stakeholders	Measures	Hypothesis	Present status	Remarks
Establish a Citizen Charter, Service Delivery Statement, and Code of Conduct of the IC Officials in the Information Commission Premises;	Short-term process	Information Commission, all stakeholders seeking information	Visible Citizen Charter within the premises of the Information Commission	Information Commission is willing to establish Citizen Charter	N/A	It is mandatory as per the RTI Act 2009
Publish meeting minutes, conference and workshop proceedings, audit report, annual report in accordance with the section 30 of the RTI Act 2009	Short-term and on-going process	All stakeholders seeking information	Publications and updated website	Information Commission is committed to disseminate information	Annual reports are published	It is mandatory as per the RTI Act 2009
Improve the website of IC to make it interactive and user-friendly	Short-term and on-going process	Information Commission, all stakeholders	Updated website	Information Commission periodically interacts with A2I and Bangladesh Computer Council	Periodically updated by the IT officer of the Information Commission	N/A
Linking of the website of the Information Commission with the websites of all the Ministries and the key oversight institutions	Short-term	All stakeholders	IC web link and buttons in the websites of different public offices	This would greatly enhance proactive disclosure practices	Information Commission is holding a number of consultation meeting with different Ministries and public offices	To be synchronized with the government's vision of Digital Bangladesh 2021
Formulate a strategic plan to improve performance and workload management for IC officials	Short-term and on-going process	Information Commission	Strategic Human Resource policy	Information Commission has taken a proactive role to ensure highest quality of human resources	N/A	The policy will provide a guidelines for human resource management, and succession plans in addition to the existing organogram and workplan of the Commission

Facilitate regular trainings for the IC officials	Short-term and on-going process	Information Commission	Training programs, workshops	Training on RTI and associated legal issues is essential	Information Commission takes proactive role in providing trainings	Information Commission can collaborate with training centers, civil society, NGOs, and academia
Prepare and disseminate handbook on the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Information Officers and the Appellate Authorities	Short-term	Information Commission	Handbook of RTI for the DIOs and the Appellate Authorities	These Handbooks will substantially help the DIOs and the Authorities in implementing their responsibilities effectively	Information Commission is willing to obtain supports from various stakeholders	Civil society and international agencies may provide assistant in this regard
Designated Information Officers at the Deputy Commissioner's Offices could be assigned and trained to provide advice to the public, and District, Upazilla and Union level officers regarding RTI law, procedures for requesting information and lodging complaints;	Short term	Information Commission, Ministry of Public Administration	Trainings	Position of DIOs already exists in the DC Offices	Information Commission regularly organizes trainings for the DIOs. However, additional trainings on advisory role would be required	Trainings for 64 District level DIOs could be provided within a short period of time
Establish a formal platform for collaboration and coordination with the oversight bodies such as the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the National Board of Revenue, the Anti Corruption Commission, and the Human Rights Commission, and with the Parliamentary oversight committees such as the Public Accounts Committee	Short-term and on-going process	Information Commission, all stakeholders	Regular consultation meetings, seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences	A need for such collaboration and coordination has been felt by all these actors	Information Commission has already initiated the process	Media and civil society can be included in this process
Prepare effective communication strategies to maintain sustainable cooperation with various Ministries and public offices, and to strengthen partnership with civil society, private sector, and media	Short-term	Information Commission	Communication strategy and plan	A need for such collaboration and coordination exists	N/A	Information Commission can collaborate with training centers, civil society, NGOs, and academia
Collaborate with media, telecommunication companies, and	Short-term and ongoing process	All stakeholders	Media programs, awareness	Private sector, civil society and media are willing to support the	Information Commission	RTI could be incorporated as a part of Corporate Social

corporate bodies to disseminate information on the RTI Act 2009 and IC			campaigns through ICT and mobile phones, newspaper articles and advertisements	process	regularly interacts with media and telecommunication companies	Responsibility
Continue to organize and participate in workshops, seminars, and symposiums to promulgate the objectives of RTI Act 2009, and establish an effective Right to Information regime in Bangladesh	Short-term and ongoing process	All stakeholders	Workshops, seminars, symposiums, roundtable meetings	Information Commission as well as civil society, NGOs and media are working on RTI	Information Commission regularly interacts with all the stakeholders	Information Commission may continue to work in close collaboration with civil society, NGOs and media
Arrange international and regional level conferences on RTI, sharing of best practices, and legal frameworks, with participations of the Information Commissions in other countries	Short-term but annual program	Information Commission	Workshops/ seminars/ symposiums/ roundtable meetings	Information Commission is willing to conduct	Information Commission has participated in a number of such initiatives, civil society organizations have organized such events	Information Commission may collaborate with the international agencies, organizations and local CSOs, NGOs and media to organize such events
Undertake necessary initiatives to appoint IC Officer in the District, Upazilla and Union levels	Medium term and on-going process	Information Commission	District, Upazilla and Union level IC officers	Information Commission has already initiated the process	Government is willing to accept the request of the Information Commission	It is mandatory as per the RTI Act 2009
Carry out advocacy activities to sensitize various stakeholders regarding the Public Procurement rules and regulations, auditing procedures, the ACC Act 2004, and the Whistle Blowers' Protection Act 2011	Medium term and on-going process	All stakeholders	Seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences, Advocacy papers	RTI framework includes management of public funds, and anti corruption measures	Information Commission is closely working with OCAg and ACC	Civil society and media should be integrated in this process
Provide technical supports to the public offices regarding proactive disclosure of information publications information	Medium term	All stakeholders	Directives, dialogues, and different means	The Cabinet Division has already selected 5 Ministries/Divisions for introducing proactive	Information Commission has undertaken	Mandatory according to the RTI Act 2009

through to ensure that the public and private offices comply with the RTI Act 2009			of communication	disclosure policy by September 2012	awareness initiatives regarding proactive disclosure	
Provide specialized trainings for the public officials, the Designated Information Officers and the Appellate Authorities regarding RTI Act and its linkages with development and good governance	Medium term	Information Commission, Public Offices	RTI training materials	Information Commission has taken proactive role to facilitate awareness programs. There is a need for separate curriculums which should be developed for the Appellate Authorities on the specific provisions in the law, in particular, the exemptions provisions, because they are the ones who will be called on to settle disputes	Information Commission will provide specialized trainings	Information Commission may collaborate with public administration training centers, civil society, NGOs for developing training materials and delivering trainings
Encourage the public offices to apply institutional systems to treat delivery of information and openness in the same way as the delivery of any other service	Medium term	Public offices	Directives, guidelines	Public officials are willing to incorporate information and openness as a service	N/A	Strong political and bureaucratic will is required
Facilitate initiatives for mainstreaming RTI as a core public service value	Medium term	Public offices	Training curriculums for the public officials,			Curriculums can be developed in collaboration with Public Service Commission, public service training centers, and academic institutions
Conduct advocacy initiatives to establish specialist career positions for information officers	Medium term	Public offices, NGOs and private sector	Terms of Reference for Information Officers	Information Commission is willing to take initiatives to materialize this objective	N/A	Proactive role of civil society and NGOs are required
Encourage and support the raising of information rights awareness through the formal education system and trainings, and through informal channels such as social networking;	Medium term	All stakeholders	Incorporation of RTI components in the high school level curriculum	Education curriculum reform is a continuous process. The Ministry of Education and the Information Commission has showed interest in incorporating RTI issues in the school curriculums	The government has taken initiatives to incorporate RTI in the high school curriculum by 2013	Information Commission may hold regular consultation with the Ministry of Education, and the National Curriculum and Text Book Board
Create a sustainable working platform	Ongoing	Information	Meetings,	A structured and regular platform	Information	Divisional Commissioners,

for collaboration between IC and district administration to carry out public awareness programs and to provide trainings to the grassroots level officials	process	Commission, Public Offices	seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences	would create a system for structured dissemination of training and information	Commission already collaborates with the district administration	District Commissioners, Divisional Controller of Accounts, and the DIOs can be brought into this process
Conduct advocacy for introducing openness into performance review systems at all levels	Long term	Public offices	Revised Performance review	Information Commission is willing to take initiatives to materialize this objective	N/A	Strong bureaucratic will is required
Develop a training strategy and deliver services aimed at encouraging an openness mindset and best practice in government agencies	Long term	Information Commission, Public Offices	RTI training materials	Change in the mindset of the public officials is required to establish openness to share information in the society	Information Commission has undertaken public awareness programs	RTI training materials may include components that leads to behavioral change
Integrate right to information modules into other training programs offered to officials by the public service training institutes	Long term	Information Commission, Public Offices	RTI training materials Online right to information courses	N/A	Information Commission will provide specialized trainings	Information Commission may collaborate with public administration training centers, civil society, NGOs for developing training materials and delivering trainings
Collaborate with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives to develop effective plans to link RTI Act with the process of devolution of powers to villages in Union level and to municipal local bodies in towns	Long term	Information Commission, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives	seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences, Meeting minutes, Directives	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is willing to provide support Information Commission to expedite the matter with great importance	Information Commission and the Ministry will continue collaboration and communication	
Collaborate with the government agencies, private sector, civil society organizations, local voluntary organizations, academic institutions, and local to create demands for information among the mass population	Long term	Information Commission, Public Offices	Meetings, seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences	A sustainable framework of cooperation will be formed to give ownership to all the stakeholders	Information Commission has initiated such process	A clear communication strategy will be helpful to avoid redundancy and duplication of work
The Commission may provide financial support to the public and private	Long term	Information Commission	Disbursement of funds	This will facilitate capacity building for all the stakeholders	The RTI Act 2009 financially	A consortium could be formed

institutions to undertake training programs on RTI and associated legal frameworks for the public, civil society organizations and NGOs					empowers the Information Commission to undertake such initiative	
Liaise with the government to establish a National Resource Centre on RTI which would provide technical and research support to the Commission as well as to all the stakeholders	Long term	Information Commission	National Resource Centre on RTI	An integrated resource centre will provide technical and research support to all the stakeholders in the long run	N/A	A collaboration with the government agencies as well as with the civil society would be required
Advocacy for Data Protection Act	Long term	All stakeholders	Data Protection Act/Data Privacy Act	To ensure a balance between right to information and privacy of personal data	Information Commission is actively considering advocacy for Data Protection regime	Data Protection Law could be enacted in accordance with article 43 of Bangladesh Constitution
A subcommittee for measuring success of the Information Commission	Annual	Information Commission	A committee formed by the Chief Information Commissioner	This subcommittee would be able to provide useful suggestions to the Commission in strengthening its capacity	N/A	Strong support from the Commission and the Ministry of Information is required
Conduct Research to strengthen the Information Commission	Annual	Information Commission	Research reports	Research on Public perception; stakeholder confidence; Internal and external audits of the activities laid out in this strategy; patterns of complaints about the public offices and NGOs referred to the DIOs, Information Commissioner and, beyond that, to the Tribunal; best practices would be helpful	Information Commission has designated wing for research and training	Collaboration with reputable academic and research institutions should be encouraged
Undertake research works on RTI, openness, technologies, social needs, and public perceptions, so that the Commission can keep pace with the changes taking place in Bangladesh and beyond	Annual	All stakeholders	Research reports	Separate research initiatives could be undertaken on the issues relating to RTI legal framework, best practices, openness, technologies, social needs and gaps, public perception on IC and RTI Act	Information Commission has designated wing for research and training	Collaboration with reputable academic and research institutions should be encouraged

