

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE ASSESSMENT REPORT

DISTRICT PORTAL



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Mohammad Shafiul Alam Cabinet Secretary Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000



The Right to Information Act, 2009, of Bangladesh is the legislative instrument to provide a legal framework for dissemination, management and preservation of information that can be accessed by the public. Disclosure of information brings openness, promotes transparency and makes service providers accountable to people, all of which result in establishment of good governance in the country. Preamble of the RTI Act mentions attainment of good governance as a major objective.

Proactive disclosure of information on public domain is obligatory for the government offices according to a provision of RTI Act. This provision aims to ensure greater access to information of citizens without going through long bureaucratic procedures, saving their cost and time and also reduces the administrative burden of public bodies of responding to multiple similar requests.

As a part of its efforts for consolidating good governance, Cabinet Division has been working in collaboration with the Information Commission to accelerate the implementation of the Right to Information Act. 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. Coordination and Reforms unit of the Division is closely involved with the process of implementation of the RTI Act.

The Bangladesh National Information Portal is one of the largest government portals which connects 25,000 websites and 42,000 government offices. The portal is playing a significant role in providing various services to the citizens within a short time and without any hassle. The portal has over 20 lakh contents including an Edirectory containing profiles of over 7 lakh government officials.

MRDI, as continuation of its assessment of government websites with the support of World Bank, has conducted this assessment at the district level. This holistic review of the websites of the Deputy Commissioner's office in terms of availability, ease of understanding and usability of information will help find the systemic gap between policy formulation authority and field level implementation body. This assessment will sensitise us on the benefits of proactive disclosure through website more effectively.

We do appreciate MRDI's continued initiatives on promoting people's right of access to information and extend thanks to the World Bank for their support.

Message



Martuza Ahmed Chief Information Commissioner Information Commission, Bangladesh



Enactment of the Right to Information Act 2009 is a milestone in Bangladesh's history of legislation which empowers people to apply the law on the authorities by claiming information as their right. This act helps citizens demand for services of improved quality and hold authorities accountable to them.

The six-year strategic plan "Connecting Government to Citizens" has been jointly developed by the Information Commission (IC) and the Cabinet Division (CD) with a view to scaling up implementation of the RTI Act. The proactive disclosure provision of the Act makes it mandatory for the public offices to disclose certain types of information online. Proactive disclosure through websites is part of this mandate. The result indicator of the strategic plan also mentions inclusion of proactive disclosure in the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) indicator by the ministries. Lately it was suggested that the district administration should also update their websites regularly with proactively disclosed information.

Information Commission is working with Government and NGOs for ensuring easy access of people to information. The Cabinet Division is also supporting IC's initiative to strengthen government offices to be more proactive for enhancing transparency and oversight of public resources.

It is praiseworthy to note that MRDI, as an NGO, is working relentlessly to keep the demand - supply chain of information rolling properly by supporting IC and CD to attain the purpose of the Act and also by creating awareness among people through its advocacy activities.

To get a scenario of the proactive disclosure in the websites of the ministries, MRDI conducted two consecutive assessments with the support of the World Bank. In continuation of this initiative, MRDI has now assessed 64 district websites in addition to the ministry websites to find how far the Deputy Commissioner offices place defined types of information in the public domain. This study projects a status of the current situation of proactive disclosure at the district websites.

This assessment report, I hope, will guide the officials update their websites and make them more useful and user-friendly. It will ultimately benefit both the providers and seekers of information.

I take the opportunity to extend my thanks to the Cabinet Division for extending support to us in implementing the RTI Act at all levels of administration.

We appreciate this effort of MRDI and request to continue this annual assessment to guide the Information Commission. We firmly believe that working together, Information Commission and the partner activists can make a difference in responding to the needs of the citizens.





N M Zeaul Alam
Secretary, ICT Division
and
Former Secretary, Coordination & Reforms, Cabinet Division
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



People's right of access to information has been a much talked about issue in Bangladesh for about a decade. The Right to Information Act, 2009 was enacted to protect and promote this right. It aims to empower the people and to ensure transparency and accountability in all spheres of governance. The Government is working hard to reap best benefit out of the Act through research, advocacy and capacity building efforts. The task of creating demand for information and preparing authorities to provide information is a big challenge. Coordination and Reforms Unit of the Cabinet Division is playing an important role in facing this challenge.

Under the supervision of this unit, several committees have been formed for ensuring the Right to Information. These include a working group for RTI and a committee on supervision & monitoring for implementing RTI for every upazila, district and division. The unit also works in collaboration with the stakeholders like civil society organizations of the country.

The government believes in free flow of information and proactive disclosure is one effective way of ensuring this flow. It can help create a positive mindset about an authority in the public eyes and fulfill the authority's goal of ensuring citizens' empowerment, reducing corruption and promoting good governance. This can also lead to a reduction in the number of applications for information and make a change in the old administrative practices.

MRDI, a strong proponent of people's right of access to information and a vocal member of RTI Forum, a civil society platform for promoting RTI, has been working independently and also collaborating with Cabinet Division in taking forward this important issue of citizen's rights. The organization, with the support of World Bank conducted assessment of information disclosure in the websites of ministries in 2014, 2015 and 2018. Significant findings surfaced from these three consecutive assessments and the results were very useful to the public offices.

District portals face greater challenges as they not only serve the local citizens in different geographical locations, but also constitute multifaceted relationship between local governments and public administration. To make the field administration more reliable and friendlier to people, it was felt that a similar assessment of the district websites needs to be carried out. MRDI with its experience and expertise conducted this assessment out of this felt need. The assessment helps to find the level of information disclosure by the district portals covering both overall and defined types of information. Considering the volume of services provided to the citizens by the district administration, availability of APA in the website was also assessed.

Analyzing the findings, some specific recommendations have been suggested to improve the performances. The assessment also provides an option of comparison between district portals which will help CD prioritize the requirements. MRDI closely interacted with CD in conducting the assessment during my tenure as the Secretary, Coordination and Reforms. The report, I believe, will benefit the government officials in specific and other stakeholders and citizens in general.





Dr. Md. Shamsul Arefin Secretary

Coordination & Reforms, Cabinet Division Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



The year 2019 is the 10th anniversary of the enactment of RTI Act 2009. Significance of the act is to ensure proactive disclosure of public data to all. The challenge is the mindset of some public officials for not disclosing information that are necessary for the citizens. Ten years is not a short period. It is not very long either in the context of shifting from the long-cherished culture of secrecy to the desired culture of openness.

The government is committed to ensure good governance in all tiers of administration and services through establishing transparency and accountability of its actions. Authorities and service providers can be made accountable to people by ensuring people's right of access to information they need. RTI Act is the tool to ensure this right.

Coordination and Reforms Unit of the Cabinet Division is playing an active role in keeping the demand-supply chain of information operative by creating awareness among citizens to seek information and developing capacity of authorities to provide information. Working group for RTI and committee on supervision & monitoring for implementing RTI at upazila, district and divisional level are in operation under the supervision of the unit.

Proactive disclosure of information through website and other channels is a very effective way of keeping the flow of information smooth and easy. Ministries and districts are disclosing relevant information through their respective web portals. But depth and breadth of disclosure are not the same for all the portals. Therefore, assessments of the web portals in terms of proactive disclosure of information have been conducted.

I feel extremely happy that MRDI, an active and vocal member of RTI Forum, a civil society platform for promoting RTI, has come forward to conduct the assessment with the support of World Bank. After assessing websites of the ministries, the organization has now conducted assessment of 64 district portals to find the extent of proactive information disclosure by the Deputy Commissioner's office.

The study finds, none of the 64 districts prioritized services based on local importance - that reflects the need for improvement in overall proactive disclosure situation in districts. Deputy Commissioners' offices at least can upload their operational documents including policies, plans, manuals, guidelines and progress reports for the benefit of citizen at large.

This assessment analyzes the findings and puts some recommendations for improvement. A comparison between district portals is also there which will help Cabinet Division to find priorities in future.

I hope, this assessment report will be very useful to the government officials and other stakeholders. We are thankful to our development partners for their continued support. We acknowledge with thanks support provided by MRDI in conducting this important assessment.

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Executive Summary

Under the purview of the Right to Information Act, 2009, of Bangladesh, the government agencies/public bodies have been providing some defined types of information online that ensures easy access of citizens to information. This mechanism reduces time, cost and hassles in terms of both providing and receiving public services. It is encouraging that the internationally recognized and awarded National Portal of Bangladesh connecting 25,000 websites and 42,000 government offices and services has been playing a significant role in providing accessible information to citizens. This portal is interconnected from Ministry/Division to field office. Though these portals are designed and aimed at providing readily available information of certain types to the citizen, they face more challenges than the national portal. Because the district portals not only serve the local citizens in different locations, but also play a complex role in dealing with local governments and public administration.

Following three consecutive assessments conducted for the ministries by the World Bank and MRDI on proactive disclosure, the study aimed to identify the level of information disclosure by the district portals, both overall and defined types of information, and provided some specific recommendations to improve their performances. The assessment has been conducted by assigning scores on the basis of availability and usability of information. In terms of usability, ease of access, ease of understanding and updated information have also been considered while scoring. The assessment also provides an option of comparison among district portals and help prioritize the requirements.

Based on the scoring, it has been observed that the district portals do not show satisfactory results in terms of pro-actively disclosing information. It was found none of the 64 districts covered all aspects of proactive disclosure, and have not made public even 50% information in terms of availability and usability. The main websites provided basic information and, in some cases, relevant information can be obtained from other websites. Performance of 39 districts were found good scoring 10 to 12 out of 12 points. However, those also have limitations in usability and ease of availability. Performance of four district portals are alarming as they do not provide much of information online and scored only 50% i.e. 6 points out of 12. In terms of divisions, Sylhet and Mymensingh have performed well and Dhaka and Khulna have performed poorly. It has been pointed out that the disclosure ratios of fixed information i.e. generic information, organizational and operational are relatively high compared to variable information i.e. service, procurement. Among them procurement disclosure is very poor which is almost close to undisclosed level. The service-related information disclosure needs to be updated as the districts simply provide link to the national portal without any localization. Specific guideline on the information disclosure for the District Portal is needed like that of the ministries. The ministerial websites have clear provisions and institutional obligations to disclose information, defined by the RTI Act.

To increase transparency and accountability of the government bodies, the Annual Performance Agreement was initiated in 2014-15. Since 2017-18, the APA has been made mandatory for all ministries and their allied agencies at the local level. This assessment report also takes a look into the availability of the APA of government agencies and the annual report in their respective websites. It has been found that the districts of Rajshahi and Chattogram divisions have the highest availability of APAs in their portals.

Considering the limitations and based on the scoring, the key recommendations of the study are:

- Omplete list and contact details of DC officials should be made available.
- Information on operations of the DC office should be published both in Bangla and English.
- O Information on procedures related to accessing services, tenders and procurements should be available both in Bangla and English.
- ② Easy navigation and access system have to be ensured using the in-built options and by providing updated, classified and categorized information, so these can be easily accessed.

Background of the Study

The Right to Information Act, 2009 of Bangladesh is the legislative instrument to provide a legal framework for the dissemination, management and preservation of information that can be accessed by the public. The Act emphasizes on the provision of proactive disclosure and obligates the public agencies to provide the defined types of information on public domain. The provision aims to ensure greater access to information of citizens without going through long bureaucratic procedures, saving their cost and time and also reduces the administrative burden of public bodies of responding to multiple similar requests.

The Bangladesh National Information Portal is one of the largest government portals, which connects 25,000 websites and 42,000 government offices. The portal is playing a significant role in providing various services to the citizens within a short time and without any hassle. Services provided by the portal include birth and death registration, utility bill payments, application for passport, tax payments, form downloads and more than 150 other services. The portal has over 20 lakh pieces of content including an archive of 45,000 photographs of historically significant sites and archaeological artefacts. Moreover, an E-directory containing profiles of over 7 lakh government officials has also been included in the portal.

The National Information Portal developed by the A2i Program has received the World Summit on information Society Award, 2015, under the 'Access to Information and Knowledge' category. It is worthy to be mentioned that the WSIS Award is considered a major recognition for contributing to developing the ICT sector.

District Portals are the spin off solution of the National Information Portal, constituted with the interconnected portals of 8 divisions, 64 districts and 491 Upazilas. The portals hold policy-level importance as well. At the policy level the idea of these district portals is directly interlinked with National Integrity Strategy of Bangladesh (NIS 2012), where an innovation team should carry out the responsibility as well as implementation process led by DC at the district level.

Over the last 10 years, the entire landscape of the citizen engagement in Bangladesh has transformed dramatically due to the enormous progress of ICT leading to free flow of information. The transition process, however, was not smooth as different government agencies, based on their functions and contexts, face diversified challenges to transform effective and efficient public policies. In the case of District portals, the challenges are even higher as those portals not only serve the local citizens in different geographical locations, but also constitute multifaceted relationship between local governments and public administration.

This study is a further intervention to the WB-MRDI joint exercise on GoB proactive disclosure assessment where three consecutive assessments have been conducted for ministries in 2014, 2015 and 2018 respectively. The program activities will be aligned with the World Bank strategic plan on implementing the Right to Information Act in Bangladesh: Connecting Government with Citizens. The strategic underpinning of this study is to provide a regular snapshot of proactive disclosure of public information to its two major stakeholders - the Cabinet Division and the Information Commission.

The study has focused on web-based proactive disclosure of the District Portals operating under the umbrella of the National Information Portal of Bangladesh 'www.bangladesh.gov.bd'. Following the assessment of the web-based proactive disclosure of GoB's ministries and divisions, jointly conducted by the World Bank and MRDI, the study has generated quantitative scores for each public body, showing their levels of overall proactive disclosure and also for particular types of information e.g., institutional, services, in accordance with RTIA provision. The quantitative scoring allows targets to be set and progresses to be measured against a baseline score. It also has allowed the performance of different districts to be compared and helped to prioritize the required interventions. The assessment and the scores identified the areas which need higher level of proactive disclosure and provided specific recommendations to get it done. The study also found that mostly citizens with access to internet services have access to the District Portals.

Aim and **Objective**

This 'Proactive Disclosure Assessment Status Report' is an exploratory exercise that would regularly capture data and information relevant to the public bodies at the district level, analyze the data to monitor trends, identify the factors contributing to good performances and those behind poor performances, including the 'structural issues' across the government.

The study broadly aims to address the following questions: 1. What is the best incentive mechanism for a citizen to obtain public services? 2. What is the best way to ensure high quality solutions generated by the District Portals to engage citizen within the RTIA context?

Major objectives of this study are

- To provide a quantitative score for level of proactive disclosure. This provides a baseline against which targets are set and progresses can be measured.
- To make it easy to see where a particular public body is falling short in terms of proactively disclosing information, and make recommendations for improvement for disclosing specific information;
- To assess which public bodies/ agencies are doing well and which ones are lagging behind in proactive information disclosure - the latter could then be prioritized for taking initiatives for improvement;
- To provide an incentive for greater information disclosure. Since the framework gives a score to each public body, it allows ready comparison of proactive disclosure across different government bodies.

Suggested Measures

The following list provides some measures identified by the assessment that could be taken by individual public bodies:

- Information needs to be made available, at minimum on the public body website
- Same information should be posted on the main website, duplicate websites should be shut down and the main website should be comprehensive.
- Website needs to be reorganized so information is easily accessible. A standard way to find information is being proposed by A2I, the assessment can include a review as to whether the standard look and feel has been applied.
- Specific information should be presented in a format/language that is easy for readers to understand. Information should be made available in both Bangla and English language to serve both local and international audiences. Information should be updated.

Types of Information to be **Proactively Disclosed**

The assessment is focused on compliance with the proactive disclosure requirements under the Bangladesh RTI Act 2009. Some of these are detailed in the Act, but most are elaborated in the RTI Regulations. For ease of analysis, the types of information have been classified as follows (this classification is consistent with international best practice)

SL	Type of Information	Details	RTI Act Regulations
1	Generic Information	(a) Basic facts about districts, (b) Geographical, Economical, (c) Historical,(d) Cultural, (e) Tourism Information	
2	Organizational	(a) Organizational structure of the DC office, (b) details of facilities and employees, (c) officers' names and contact information, (d) pay structure	Directory of officers and employees (Regulation 4)
3	Local Government and Other GOB Offices	(a) Information on UPs, Local Governments and Representatives, (b) Information on Other Government offices	Description of activities (Regulation 1) Directory of officers and employees (Regulation 4) Documents and records preserved and used by authorities for delivering business (Regulation 5)
4	Services	Services related to (a) Agriculture, (b) Land (c) Health, (d) Education, (e) Communication and Transportation, (f)Tax (g) Emergency (h) Citizenship and documents (i) Licenses, Entrepreneurship and Economic Activity (j) Housing and Utilities	Description of activities (Regulation 1) Implementation procedure of social safety net, poverty alleviation, health service programs and description of beneficiaries, allocation of fund and amount of resources subject to provisions of Section 7 of RTI (Regulation 9) Description of allotted/guaranteed concession, permit/license, allotment or recipients provided by concerned authorities (including description of necessary conditions) (Regulation 10)

SL	Type of Information	Details	RTI Act Regulations
5	Procurement	(a) Procurement process, criteria, tender notices, (b) decisions, awarded contracts, (c) progress reports	All contracts conducted by the Government/authority related to development/public works/projects (Regulation 5a) Short description of every contract estimated cost/time-frame of contract (Regulation 5b)
6	RTI	(a) RTI explanation, application procedure, (b) details of Designated Officers, contact details	Name, designation and other information of Designated Officer of information providing unit (Regulation 1) Detailed description of name, designation and address of Appellate Authority (Regulation 2) Detailed description of names, designation and address of Information Commission and Commissioners (Regulation 3) Copy of all applications accepted by authorities that contains following information: (a) name of authority which has accepted the request; (b) document requested for (c) date of request (Regulation 4)
7	Sectoral Info	Information on (a) Business and Finance, (b) Religion, (c) Sports, (d) Cultural bodies, (e) NGOs, (f) Insurance, (g) Cooperative and Social welfare offices, (h) Institutions (i) Tourism (j) Legal & Security	

Methodology & Scope

Referring to previous assessments, the government websites have multiple issues on overall information management related to relevance, searchability options, interlinks and user requirements. To make proactive disclosure more effective and comprehensive, the framework has been updated, where Knowledge Management (KM) benchmark has been incorporated as a new assessment question, as KM benchmark allows to depict an overall limitation on information management. However, this time the exercise will be scored separately ensuring precise comparison to the previous assessment.

The methodology entails a review of a public body's website to answer the following questions:

- 1) Availability: Are the types of information listed in the RTI regulations available on the public body's website? - If not, are the information available on some other website?
- 2) Usability: Is the form in which the information is presented consistent with the best practice principles, i.e. easy to access, easy to understand and updated?
- 3) KM Benchmark: Whether the given information is maintaining some basic criteria of KM? Does the website maintain certain KM tools i.e. Searchability, Site Navigation, Relevant Information, Printability, Web Analytics, Social Media options, Proper indication on External Link (Text / Icon) and Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon)?

Questionnaire Design

A structured questionnaire has been designed (Annex-3) aiming to generate information on both availability and usability of proactively disclosed information.

Columns two to four essentially cover the 'Availability' aspect of information disclosure:

- The second column 'Description of category' gave a generic list of the types of information falling under each category. E.g. 'Institutional' refers to any Acts, Rules, Regulations, etc. that govern the setup, functioning, powers and responsibilities of the ministry. This column has already been completed, and provided a guideline to the MRDI researchers on the kinds of information they should be looking for.
- The third column 'Relevant information currently disclosed' listed the information under that category being disclosed by the ministry. Researchers went through the GoB website and listed all the documents/information they found relating to that particular category.
- The fourth column is the calculation of availability (level of disclosure): if information disclosed accounts for at least 50% of the total (disclosed + undisclosed) a 'Y' score is given. If it is less than 50%, an 'N' score is given.

Columns five to eight focus on issues of 'Usability':

- Oclumn five looks at whether the information is provided on the ministry's own website or on another one this determines the 'ease of access'. Since availability depends on finding at least 50% of categorized information on the website, even if the score is 'N' in availability, it should be assessed whether the somewhat available information is usable in terms of easy to access, easy to understand and are updated. Researchers should score 'Y' if the information is available on the pubic entity's main website, and 'N' if it is directly available through link to some other website/not available at all. If the referred link doesn't direct to the particular required information under that category, the score will be 'N'.
- Oclumn six looks at whether a language version is available and both the versions have similar information in terms of quality and quantity and whether the common (reasonably educated) citizen would be able to understand the information provided. Both are important indicators of 'ease of understanding'. Researchers should score a 'Y' if either one of these applies, i.e. if information is given in Bangla and/or it is written in a way that is easy to understand.
- Oclumn seven looks at if the information is up to date. Researchers should give the date when the information was last updated, and then note whether it is fully updated or not (i.e. if the latest information is provided). It is important to note that frequency of updating will vary on the kind of information and hence only need to be posted once.
- Oclumn eight is the calculation of usability of information. A 'Y' score would be given if at least two of the above three criteria - ease of access, ease of understanding and updated information - score 'Y'. The information collected through the questionnaire should be sufficient to allow scoring for each public entity, using the framework below.

Assessment Framework **Scoring**

Using the questionnaire findings, a score for availability and usability of proactively disclosed information will be calculated as follows:

1. Availability

A 'Y' score is given if the information is available on the ministry's own (main) website or on any other website. Here 'Y' = 1 and 'N' =0

2. Usability

- Ease of access a 'Y' score is given if the information is available on the ministry's main website; if not, even if available on another website, the score is 'N' Here 'Y' = 1 and 'N' =0
- Ease of understanding a 'Y' score is given if either the information is available in Bangla and/or it is in a form that is easy for common citizens to understand. Here 'Y' = 1 and 'N' =0
- O Updated information a 'Y' score is given if the information is updated (frequency will depend on the type of information) Here 'Y' = 1 and 'N' =0

If a 'Y' score is obtained for any two of the above three criteria - ease of access, ease of understanding and updated information - the overall score for usability is 'Y'. If only one/none of the above three scores a 'Y' the overall usability score will be 'N'. Here 'Y' = 1 and 'N' =0

The total number of 'Y' for availability and usability are added up, giving scores out of 7 to each, and the overall proactive disclosure score out of 14.

Assessment Findings

The right to access information places two obligations on public bodies. First, the proactive duty to make the key information on the activities of authorities and governments public; second, the reactive obligation to respond to people's requests for information, either by releasing public original documents or copies of the documents held. The web-based Proactive Disclosure Assessment is a simple indicator measuring the use of

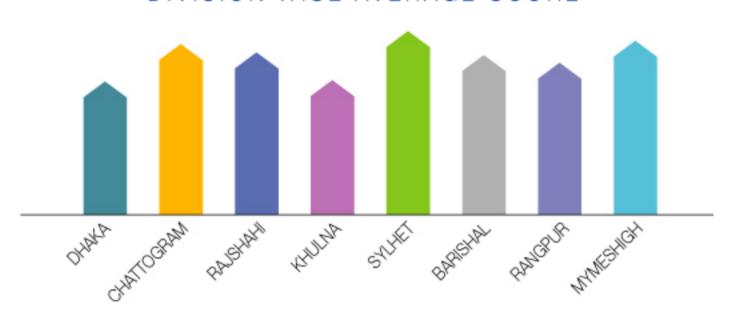
Web portal by the ministries to disseminate information to the citizens. It is based on an all-inclusive Survey of the online presence of all 64 districts Bangladesh. The Survey assesses the information category of the national websites as well as ministries' policies and strategies in general, in Proactive terms of Disclosure.

21 — 4 — 4 — Weak (Score 13-16) (Score 9-12) (Score 8) (Score 4-7)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

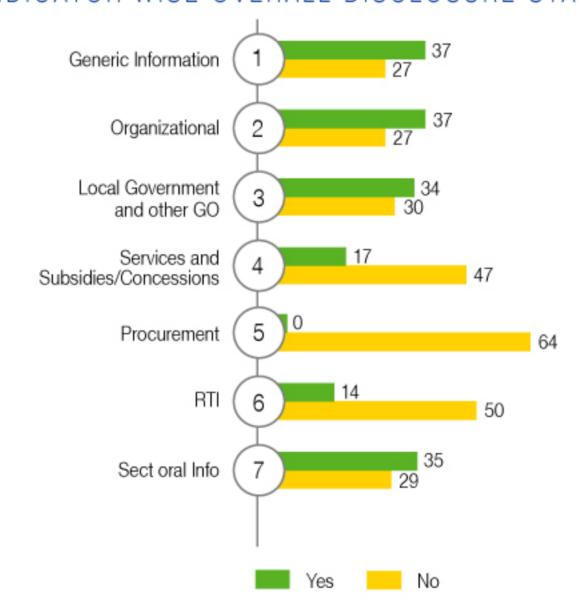
The study shows that the overall level of proactively disclosed information through District Portals are not very satisfactory. It was found that none of the 64 districts covered all aspects of proactive disclosure, and have not publicized at least 50% information. In terms of availability and usability, the main web sites provided basic information and, in some cases, relevant information have to be obtained from other websites. 39 districts have scored considerably well but didn't touch all indicators and have limitations either in availability or usability measure. These districts scored 10 to 12 out of 12. 21 Districts are in moderate position scoring 8 out of 12, and there are rooms for further improvement. In contrary, 4 Districts or divisions are doing poor scoring only 6 out of 12 and for those only a few categories of information are available and usable.





Compared to others, the districts of Sylhet Division along with Mymensingh have obtained good scores (10-12), whereas the Dhaka and Khulna division have performed poorly (5-8). It is worthy to mention that the requirement of the information can be different from one geographical location to another. The seemingly similar info-disclosure approaches in different geographical contexts. therefore, often show different outcomes. Each division has its distinct attributes and challenges depending on its environment. economy, population density, public health, ethnicity, political priorities and so forth.

INDICATOR WISE OVERALL DISCLOSURE STATUS



It has been pointed out that the disclosure ratios of fixed information i.e. generic information, organizational and sectoral are relatively high, 37, 37 and 35 respectively in comparison to variable information i.e. service, procurement. Among these, procurement information disclosures have been found very poor which is actually at the undisclosed level. None of the 64 districts disclosed procurement. The service-related information disclosure is also rather ambiguous as every district simply provides link to the national portal without any localization. All district portals mostly fail to prioritize the important services and also do not indicate district-specific services. In most cases they provide the links to the service portal site. In addition, some indicators, especially generic and sectorial info, are providing only encyclopedic information which may be good for the students but does not fulfil the requirement of the local citizen.

The study also understood that there are no clear terms of reference for the information disclosure for the District portals. Ministerial website or other government agencies have their own mandate as well as institutional obligations to disclose their own information which is also clearly defined by the RTIA provision. District portals are neither providing the information of the DC office nor of the district as a whole. This study also tried to find out GoB circulars or any policy document on the district portal, where Cabinet/Public Administration have ordered field level officials to operate a separate portal/page in their geographical names, within the proactively disclosed documents of its ministerial portal. It is unclear When, How and Why the GoB took the decision to create separate portal/page for different districts, upazila or UPs.

This limitation also leads us to some unidentified questions, and perhaps most important finding for this study so far

- What is the district portal all about? What is its scope of work? What kind of information it supposed to be disclosed? Is it a portal of a district or DC office?
- Onsidering the information category, service and procurement- should it be focused on Local governments, entire districts or the public administration?
- What will the relational matrix be between parliamentarians, along with other LG representatives and public administration in terms of information disclosure? - In case of ministries, it is rather easy as the minister himself/herself is a citizen representative and is directly accountable to the parliament.

Recommendations

More innovations from the government side are necessary to disclose public information to mass level. Different GoB is continuously trying to come up with policies that can digitally publicize their information to the citizens. Amidst limitations, these initiatives are appreciable.

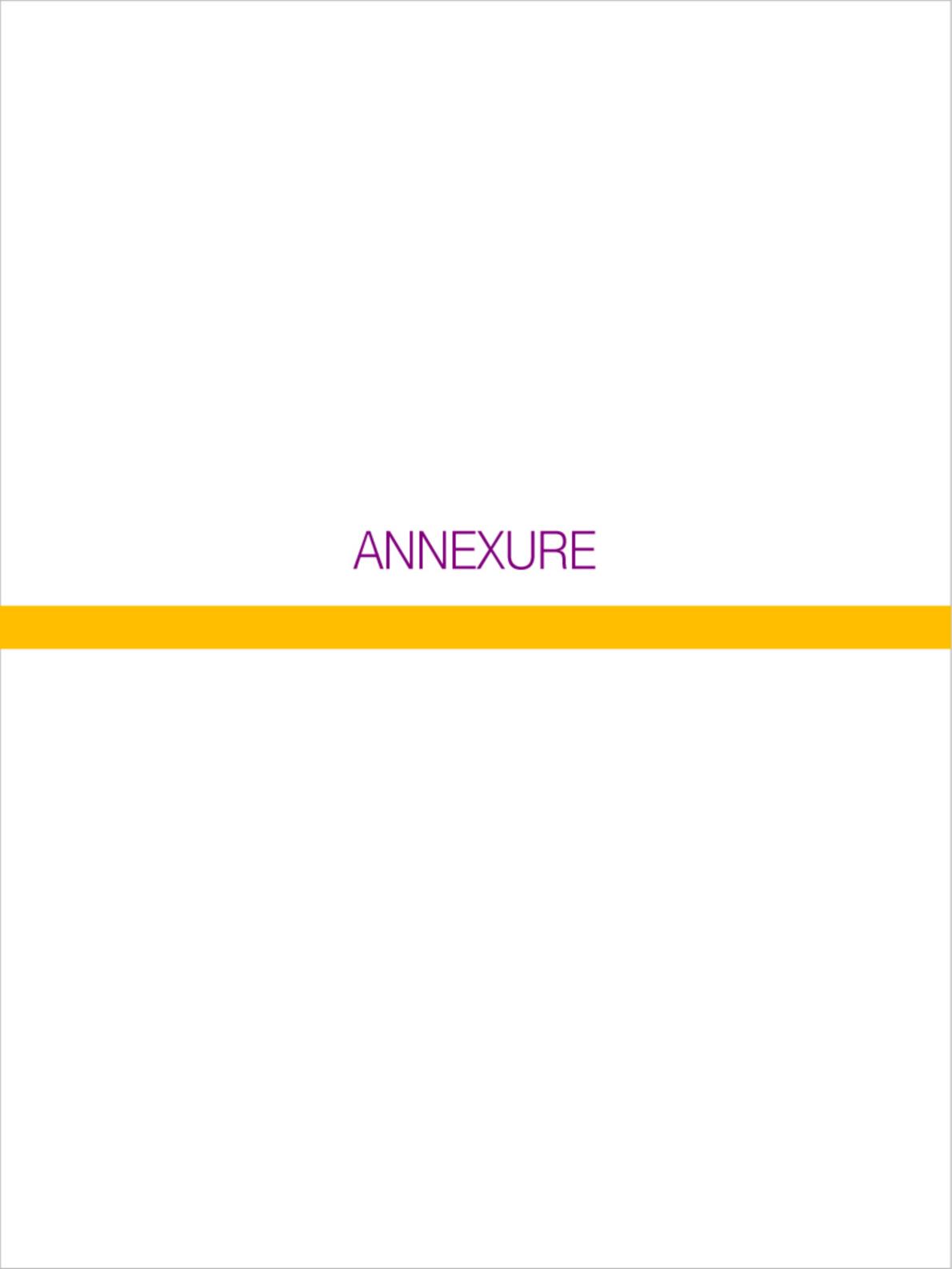
Following are some recommendations

- All DC offices should publish a complete list of their officials with contact details i.e. phone number and email address.
- DC offices at least can publish their operational documents including policies, plans, manuals, guidelines and progress reports. Where only highlights are published, full document should also be uploaded beneath the highlights.
- In all possible cases, both Bangla and English versions of operational documents with proper language indication should be published.
- District portals should publish the descriptions of public services provided by the respective authorities in the local level, including procedures of accessing those, guidelines, fees and documents required.

- 5. In applicable cases, the respective DC offices should publish information on award of stipends, grants, scholarships, concessions, grants, permits etc., including application procedure, number of beneficiaries, amount etc. Where this information is available on the website of a subordinate office of an agency, the agency website should contain, at least a link thereof.
- 6. District portals should publish procurement related detailed information, including procurement process, criteria, tender notices, decisions, awarded contracts and progress reports.
- 7. Internal and external circulars could be published by categorizing them.
- 8. All public agencies of a district, should provide names, designation and contact details of designated officers and Appellate Authorities of their own and subordinate offices.
- Information on procedure for filing upon RTI application, format of application form, fee, procedure and time limits for providing information should also be provided.

Apart from the thematic analysis of this assessment, policy makers and officials should recognize couple of issues to make their efforts more effective.

- 'Universe' of Relevant Information Developing a 'Comprehensive list' of the information/ documents which should be made public under proactive disclosure is a rigorous/continuous process. This baseline assessment concentrates only on 'what actually has been or being disclosed' so far, rather than 'what else are supposed to be disclosed'. A comprehensive list of information would be of much help. Consultations are required for ministries to develop their own information disclosure policies and to identify the 'Universe' Of Relevant Information.
- Ounused Existing Tools District sites can use their inbuilt facilities to disseminate information within their site i.e., proper and easy navigation system, information categorization and classification, management of audio-visual information, or using of newsletter, e-mail for updating their target citizen group for products or services. Some of the websites have mail addresses for individual contact. Online interactivity in the web system can strengthen communications.
- Quality Content- Usefulness of any website depends on the quality of its content. Information should be factual, well written, clear, accurate and up-to-date. Language should be lucid and communicative for all citizens. In case of bilingual option, the similarity between two languages also needs to be cross checked. High quality content may be manifested in-but should not be limited to-popularizing government activities in ways that government bodies are accountable to the public and they want to reduce burden of responding to greater number of RTI requests.



ANNEX 1

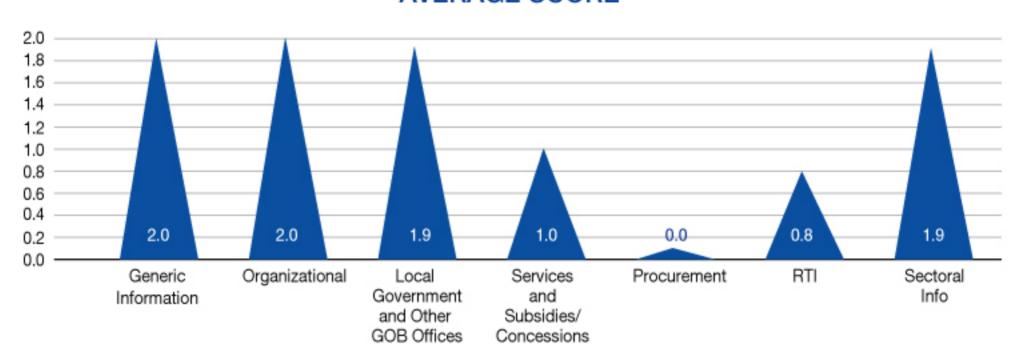
Summary of Proactive Disclosure* Assessment of Districts

Score	District	Division	Score AVAILABILITY	Score USABILITY	Total Score
	Barishal	Barishal	6	6	12
	Patuakhali	Barishal	6	6	12
	Bandarban	Chattogram	6	6	12
	Brahmanbaria	Chattogram	6	6	12
	Chandpur	Chattogram	6	6	12
	Chattogram	Chattogram	6	6	12
	Cumilla	Chattogram	6	6	12
	Jamalpur	Mymensingh	6	6	12
	Mymensingh	Mymensingh	6	6	12
	Netrokona	Mymensingh	6	6	12
	Bogura	Rajshahi	6	6	12
	Chapainawabganj	Rajshahi	6	6	12
	Joypurhat	Rajshahi	6	6	12
	Dinajpur	Rangpur	6	6	12
	Habiganj	Sylhet	6	6	12
	Sylhet	Sylhet	6	6	12
STRONG	Sunamganj	Sylhet	6	6	12
Score 9- 12)	Meherpur	Khulna	6	6	12
	Jhalakathi	Barishal	5	5	10
	Pirojpur	Barishal	5	5	10
	Coxsbazar	Chattogram	4	6	10
	Feni	Chattogram	5	5	10
	Khagrachhari	Chattogram	5	5	10
	Lakshmipur	Chattogram	5	5	10
	Noakhali	Chattogram	5	5	10
	Dhaka	Dhaka	5	5	10
	Faridpur	Dhaka	5	5	10
	Gazipur	Dhaka	5	5	10
	Naogaon	Rajshahi	4	6	10
	Natore	Rajshahi	5	5	10
	Pabna	Rajshahi	4	6	10
	Gaibandha	Rangpur	4	6	10
	Kurigram	Rangpur	5	5	10
	Lalmonirhat	Rangpur	5	5	10
	Nilphamari	Rangpur	5	5	10
	Moulvibazar	Sylhet	4	6	10
	Jhenaidah	Khulna	5	5	10
	Chuadanga	Khulna	5	5	10
	Jashore	Khulna	5	5	10

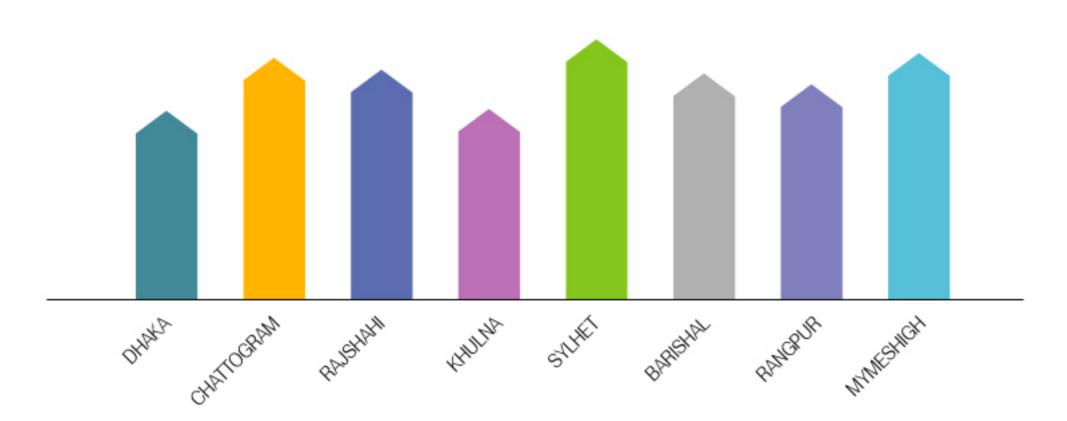
Score	District	Division	Score AVAILABILITY	Score USABILITY	Total Score
	Bhola	Barishal	4	4	8
	Barguna	Barishal	4	4	8
	Rangamati	Chattogram	4	4	8
	Gopalganj	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Kishoreganj	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Madaripur	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Manikganj	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Munshiganj	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Narayanganj	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Narsingdi	Dhaka	4	4	8
Moderate	Rajbari	Dhaka	4	4	8
(Score 8)	Shariatpur	Dhaka	4	4	8
	Sherpur	Mymensingh	4	4	8
	Rajshahi	Rajshahi	4	4	8
	Sirajganj	Rajshahi	4	4	8
	Panchagarh	Rangpur	4	4	8
	Rangpur	Rangpur	4	4	8
	Thakurgaon	Rangpur	4	4	8
	Satkhira	Khulna	4	4	8
	Kushtia	Khulna	4	4	8
	Narail	Khulna	4	4	8
	Tangail	Dhaka	4	2	6
WEAK	Magura	Khulna	3	3	6
WEAK (Score 4- 7)	Khulna	Khulna	3	3	6
(00016 4- 1)	Bagerhat	Khulna	3	3	6

 $[\]star$ As per July-August 2018

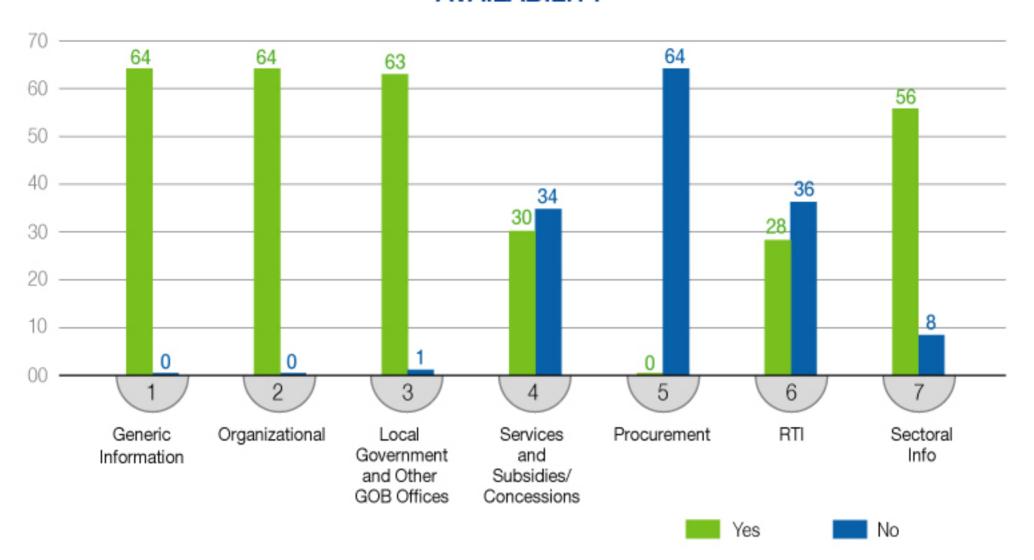
DISTRICT PORTAL ASSESSMENT 2018 AVERAGE SCORE



DIVISION WISE AVERAGE SCORE



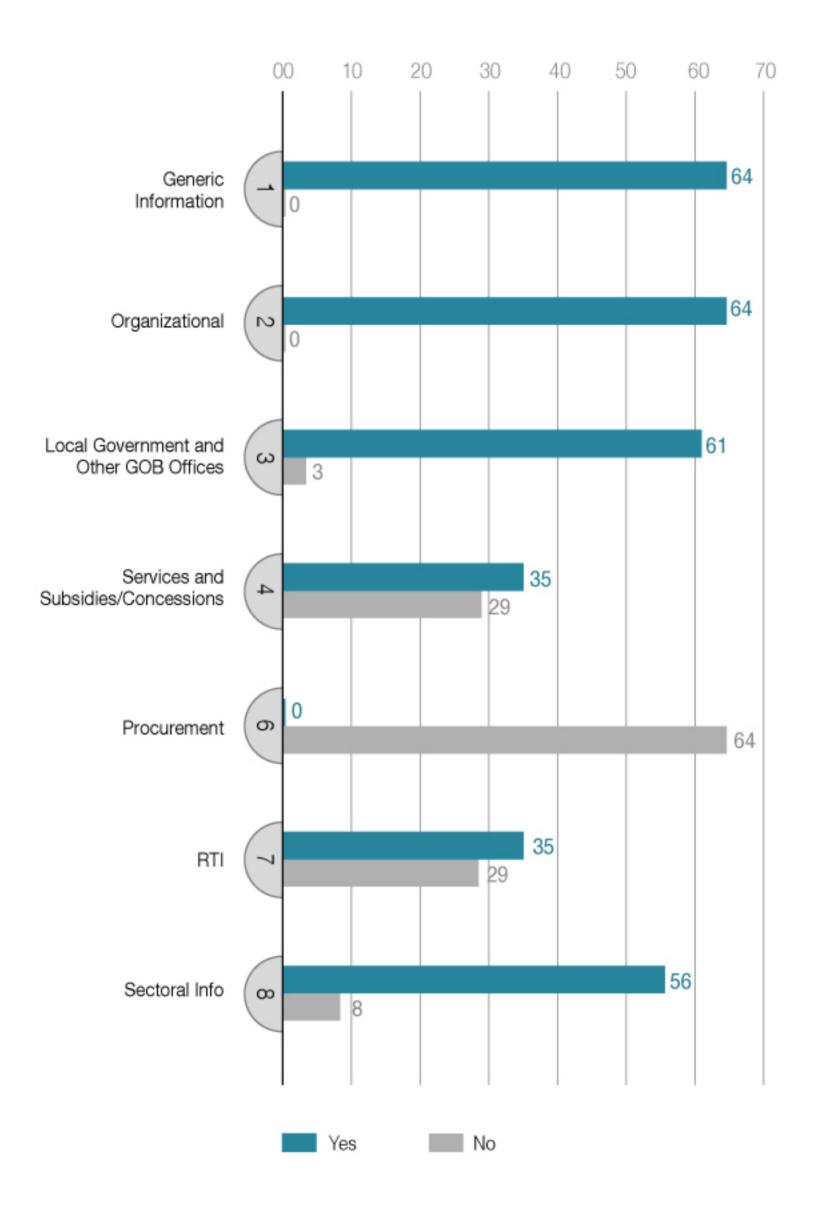
AVAILABILITY



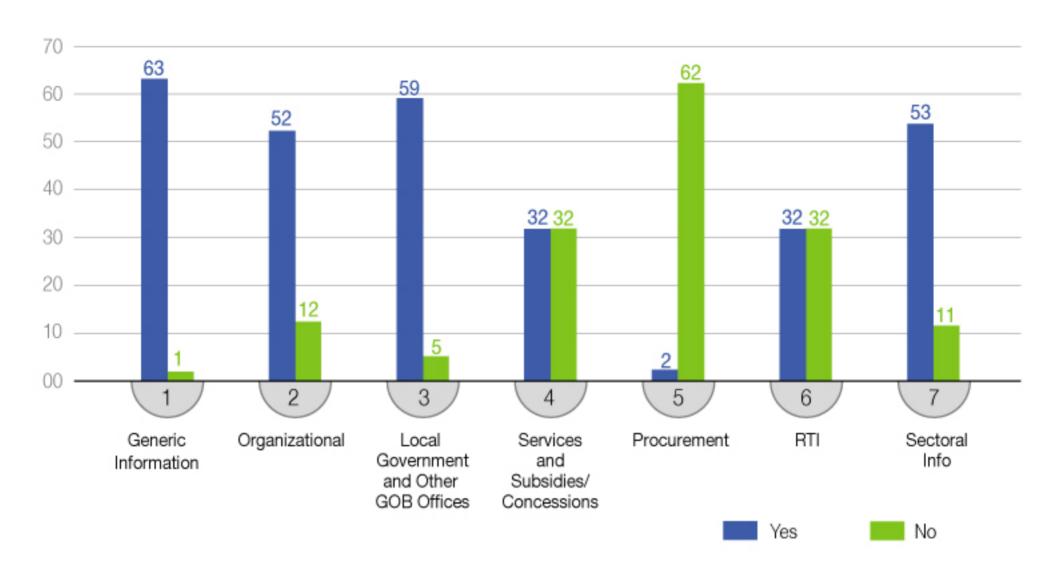
EASE OF UNDERSTANDING



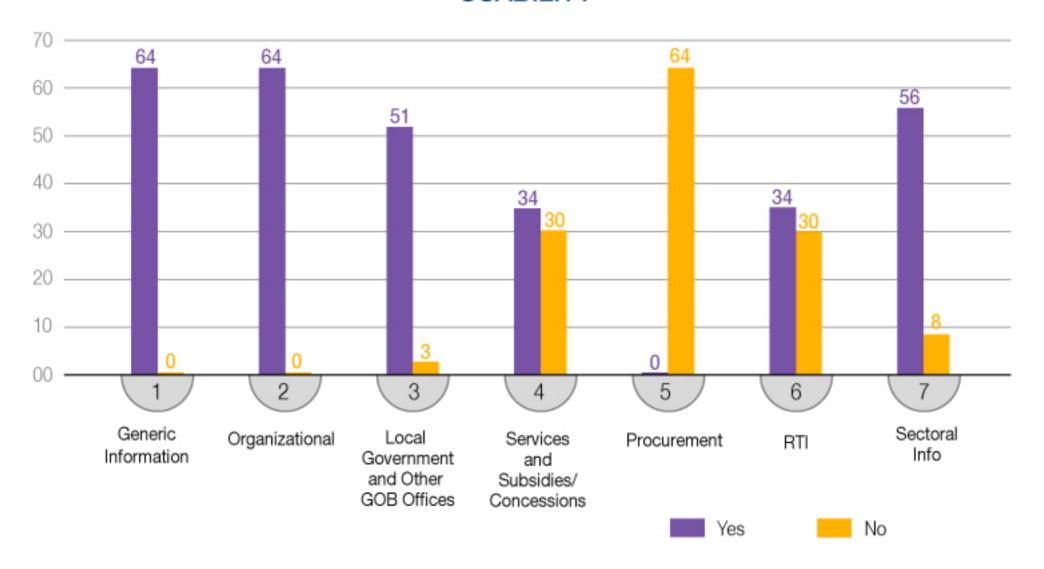
EASE OF ACCESS



UPDATED INFORMATIOM



USABILITY



* As per July-August 2018

Knowledge Management (KM) Benchmark

It has been reviewed whether the given information is maintaining some basic criteria for overall Knowledge Management (KM) of a particular site. To make this assessment simple, we have selected some elementary categories. Those are Searchability, Site Navigation, Relevant Information, Printability, Web Analytics, Social Media options, Proper indication on External Link (Text / Icon) and Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon).

If the websites have search option and those work properly, the given score is Y. If not, the given score is N. The same rules have been applied to other indicators.

For KM benchmark - number of 'yes' marks - 0.5 score has been given for each category of the indicators where total marks is 4.

It is very important to maintain a comprehensive knowledge management (KM) approach based on consistency and standard to provide right information to the right user at the right time. The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time. Though using of the system without documentation is better, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and should not be too large.

Relevancy - No information is isolated or independent by nature, rather every piece of information is integrated and inter-linked. A circular has dependence on service, service is determined by organizational mandate, that has some budgetary implication, citizen need relevant form and follows a certain procedure to obtain that service, entire business process is institutionalized based on a legal framework Act/regulation. Therefore, information should be presented in a way that any piece of information can direct their web-users to the other relevant information without moving the page. Connecting the relevant information [From "Legislation to Service, Service to Form, Form to Process, Process to Report"] as all can be accessed from any point in cross-linked manner.

Site Navigation- The site navigation is a structure that makes communication possible, informing the user what actions are possible, the current state of the page and allowing user to move forward or backward. It is expected that it has dropdown menu, page navigation path, and in case of long information within the page "Back to Top" option, also using media indication to connect with their users.

Searchability- A website's internal site search is an instrumental option to assist site-users to quickly find the pages with specific words in a limited environment, and the functional internal search also indicates the website's quality. Considering user perspective a quality of website content on the results is supposed to come up from the search queries.

Social Media - Social media is a powerful instrument to promote the effective and responsible use of social data for improving citizen services and cutting costs. It is expected that there should be an option where user can share the information through email or any other third-party social media platform - i.e. Facebook, tweeter, YouTube etc.

Web Analytics - Collecting user data is very important as the browsing habit and information requirement of different region and socio-economic groups vary significantly. Web analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of web data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage. However, web analytics is not just a process for measuring web traffic but can be used as a tool for identifying measures based on organizational goals and using the website data for decision making.

Summary of Knowledge Management Scoring

Total	0.8	
Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon) 0.5	0.5	64
External Link (Text / Icon) 0.5	0	0
Social Media 0.5	0.3	33
Web Analytics 0.5	0	0
Printability 0.5	0	0
Relevant Information 0.5	0	0
Site Navigation 0.5	0	0
Searchability 0.5	0	0
Feature	Average Score	SCORE

Scores of Individual Districts

Total		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	-
Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
External Link (Text / Icon)	6.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5
Web Analytics	6.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Printability 0.5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relevant	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Navigation	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Searchability	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feature		Bhola	Barguna	Barishal	Jhalakathi	Patuakhali	Pirojpur	Bandarban	Brahmanbaria	Chandpur	Chattogram	Cumilla

Feature	Searchability 0.5	Site Navigation 0.5	Relevant Information 0.5	Printability 0.5	Web Analytics 0.5	Social Media 0.5	External Link (Text / Icon) 0.5	Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon) 0.5	Total
Coxsbazar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Feni	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Khagrachhari	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Lakshmipur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Noakhali	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Rangamati	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Dhaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Faridpur	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Gazipur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Gopalganj	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Kishoreganj	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Madaripur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Manikganj	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Munshiganj	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Narayanganj	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Narsingdi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Rajbari	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Shariatpur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Tangail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Jamalpur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5

Seal	earchability 0.5	Site Navigation 0.5	Relevant Information 0.5	Printability 0.5	Web Analytics 0.5	Social Media 0.5	External Link (Text / Icon) 0.5	Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon) 0.5	Total
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
0 0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-

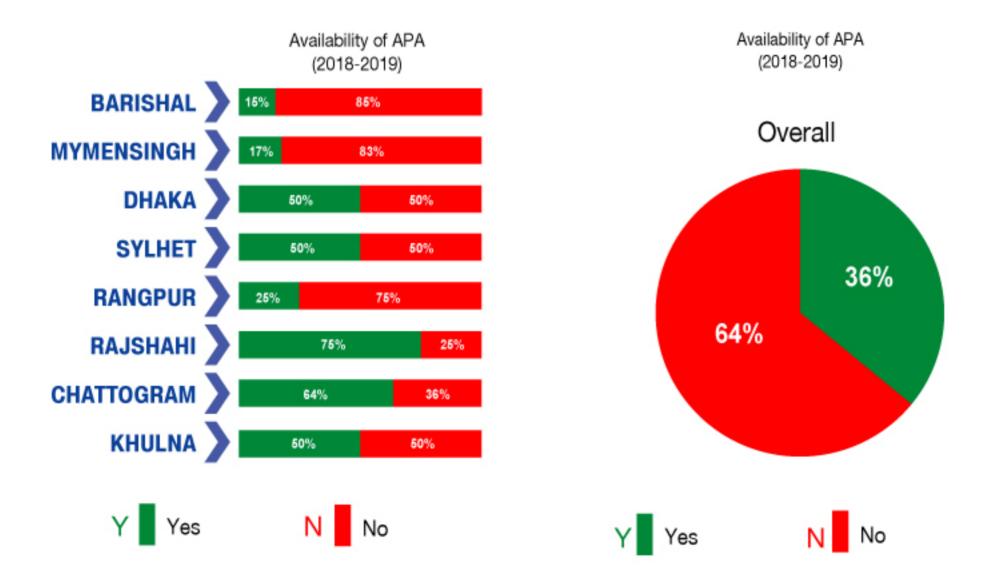
Feature	Searchability 0.5	Site Navigation 0.5	Relevant Information 0.5	Printability 0.5	Web Analytics 0.5	Social Media 0.5	External Link (Text / Icon) 0.5	Downloadable Doc (Text / Icon) 0.5	Total
Sylhet	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Sunamganj	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Moulvibazar	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Meherpur	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Jhenaidah	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Chuadanga	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Jashore	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Satkhira	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Kushtia	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Narail	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Magura	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1
Khulna	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-
Bagerhat	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	-

* As per July-August 2018

Availability of Annual Performance Agreement

As part of the government's plan to increase transparency and accountability of the government bodies, the Annual Performance Agreement was initiated in 2014-15. Since 2017-18, the APA has been made mandatory for all ministries and their allied agencies, divisional, district and Upazila-level offices. Considering the fact that the district-level or field offices provide the most number of direct services to the citizens, APAs of the district offices should be given higher importance. The citizens must know the initiatives and strategies taken for them by the local government.

The proactive disclosure provision also emphasizes on the availability of the APA agreements of government agencies and the annual report in their respective websites so the citizens can access those information easily. The assessment report also takes a look into the availability of these two.



Even the divisional headquarters of Chattogram, Dhaka and Sylhet have not updated their Annual Performance Agreement of the FY 2018-19.

^{*}As per October 2018



Name of District : Web Portal Address :

Date of Assessment:

	Comments			
	Calculation of Usability	At least 2 of 3 criteria fulfilled? Y/N Only 1/none of the criteria fulfilled? Y/N	At least 2 of 3 criteria fulfilled? Y/N Only 1/none of the criteria fulfilled? Y/N	At least 2 of 3 criteria fulfilled? Y/N Only 1/none of the criteria fulfilled? Y/N
USABILITY	Updated Information	Date of last update Is the information up to date?	Date of last update ls the information up to date? Y/N	Date of last update Is the information up to date? Y/N
USAE	Ease of Understanding	Bangla version Y/N Is it easy to understand? Y/N	Bangla version Y/N Is it easy to understand? Y/N	Bangla version Y/N Is it easy to understand? Y/N
	Ease of Access	Given on main website Y/N Given on other website Y/N	Given on main website Y/N Given on other website Y/N	Given on main website Y/N Given on other website Y/N
ILITY	Calculation of Availability	At least 50% information disclosed Y/N Less than 50% information disclosed Y/N	At least 50% information disclosed Y/N Less than 50% information disclosed Y/N	At least 50% information disclosed Y/N Less than 50% information disclosed Y/N
AVAILABILITY	Information Currently Disclosed	জেলা পরিচিত্তি ইতিহাস-ঐতিহ্য ভৌগলিক ও অর্থনৈতিক অন্যান্য	জেলা প্রশাসক জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয উপ-পরিচালক/ অতিরিক্ত জেলা প্রশাসক কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীবৃন্দ শাখা সম্পর্কিত গুরুতুপূর্ণ তথ্য	স্থানীয় সরকার; জেলা পরিষদ; পৌরসভা সরকারি অফিস; আইন- শৃঙ্খলা ও নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক শিক্ষা ও সংকৃতি বিষয়ক; কৃষি, মৎস, প্রাণি ও খাদ্য বিষয়ক; প্রকৌশল এবং তথ্য বেষয়ক; প্রকৌশল এবং তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি মানব সম্পদ উন্নয়ন বিষয়ক অন্যান্য অফিস
	Description of Category	Generic Information Is the Following information is given a) Basic facts about districts, (b) Geographical, Economical, (c) History, (d) Cultural, (e) Touristic	Organizational Is the organizational structure, details of facilities and employees, officers names and contact information given?	Local Government and Other GOB Offices (Information on UPs, Local Governments and Representatives, Information on Other Government offices)
	SL	-	2	m

se of Ease of Cess Understanding	Access	Unformation Calculation of Ease of Ease of Currently Disclosed Availability Access Understanding
en on website //N en on website //N	st 50% Given on main website y/N y/N an 50% Given on other website sed Y/N y/N	At least 50% Given on information main website disclosed Y/N Y/N Size পাবেন Information other website disclosed Y/N Y/N Y/N Y/N
vebsite N In on vebsite	st 50% Given on mation main website Y/N Y/N an 50% Given on nation other website Y/N Y/N	At least 50% Given on information P/N Y/N Eless than 50% Given on information other website disclosed Y/N Y/N
vebsi	st 50% Given on mation main website Y/N Y/N an 50% Given on nation other website ed Y/N Y/N	ভথ্য প্ৰদানকারী কৰ্মকৰ্তা aভিয়েণ নিস্পৃত্তি (অনিক) প্ৰাহিন্ত বিশ্বালা ভথ্য আইন ও বিধিমালা ব্যৱহাত বিধ্যালা ব্যৱহাত ব

Currently Disclosed বিষয় প্রতিষ্ঠান সংস্থা/সংগঠন বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠান পর্যটন ও প্রতিষ্ঠ প্রান্থ্য প্রান্ধ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান পর্যটন ও প্রতিষ্ঠ্য প্রান্ধ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান পর্যটন ও প্রতিষ্ঠ্য প্রান্ধ্য প্রত্তির্গ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রত্তির্গ্য প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্য প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ প্রক্রিক প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান স্বান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ্র প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ প্রক্রিক প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ প্রক্রিক প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রান্ধ প্রক্রিক ক্রিক প্রক্রিক প্রক্রিক প্রক্রিক ক্রিক প্রক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রেক ক্রিক ক্রিক

*As per July - August 2018

