

# RIGHT TO INFORMATION COMMITMENTS FACT SHEET

Open, accountable, and participatory government can only occur if citizens have access to information held by the government. Right to information legislation requires the publication of information held by public bodies and enshrines citizens access to it. Such laws allow citizens to hold their government accountable on a variety of issues and gives them the information they need to participate in democratic decision-making beyond elections. Given its fundamental importance to the open government movement, it is one of OGP's four eligibility criteria and remains a popular topic.

## Key Takeaways:

- Focus on implementation of Right to Information (RTI) commitments.
- Push to combine RTI reforms with Open Data platforms and other online resources.
- A majority of OGP's members tackle right to information in their action plans and seven of the world's ten top-rated countries for RTI legislation improved their legislation or its implementation through OGP.<sup>1</sup> This includes: Croatia, Mexico, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Albania, Liberia, and El Salvador.

## Numbers at a Glance

**60** OGP members have included RTI commitments in their action plans to date.

**256** RTI commitments to date  
**43** currently being implemented

**217** commitments have been assessed by OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).  
**32** have transformative potential impact.  
**13** are starred.  
**26** have shown significant early results in increasing government transparency, citizen participation, or public accountability.<sup>2</sup>

## How many OGP participants are doing right to information?

More than a quarter of OGP members (**28**) are currently doing right to information commitments. It is a fairly common topic in OGP, although not the most popular.

<sup>1</sup>Global Right to Information Rating, <https://www.rti-rating.org/country-data/>.

<sup>2</sup>As of November 1, 2018. Since delays can occur between Action Plan submission, IRM report releases, and when data are updated in OGP databases, data may not reflect the most up to date information for every country/local entity. Scored Major or Outstanding on the Independent Report Mechanism's (IRM) Did It Open Government metric.



## What are OGP participants doing about the right to information?

- **99 of 256 (39%)** RTI commitments use e-government tools to improve information access such as online platforms to submit and service RTI requests.
- **78 of 256 (30%)** RTI commitments deal with legislation or regulation.
- **51 of 256 (20%)** RTI commitments explicitly aim to improve government records management frameworks and practices.
- **26 of 256 (10%)** RTI commitments have an open data element.
- **60%** of RTI commitments focus on the implementation of existing legislation while the rest concern the creation of new legislation.

## So what?

The IRM assesses commitments for whether they are verifiable, relevant to open government principles, would create change on the ground, and are on their way to credible completion. We call these “**starred commitments.**” Based on these criteria, **13 out of 217 (6%)** right to information commitments are starred, which is just above the overall average (**5%**).

## Do we know anything about early results?

- Less than half of right to information commitments (**87 out of 217, 40%**) are complete or near completion. However, this is higher than the overall completion rate for all commitments, **36%**.
- **26 out of 74 (35%)** right to information commitments assessed for early results made “major” or “outstanding” improvements to government openness. This is significantly higher than the overall average (**20%**). Note, assessment comes at the end of the second year of action plan implementation.

## What does it all mean?

- **Shift to implementation and narrowing exceptions:** Given low levels of implementation of OGP commitments, members should ensure that RTI commitments are credibly executed. Specifically, they should establish institutional structures for carrying out RTI legislation, train officials on records management and information provisioning, expand the scope of proactive publication of government information, and develop appropriate oversight and redress mechanisms.
- **Increase Information Availability – Combine RTI with Open Data:** Members should integrate right to information and open data frameworks to strengthen and expand the scope of proactive disclosure of government-held information.

## Notable Commitments

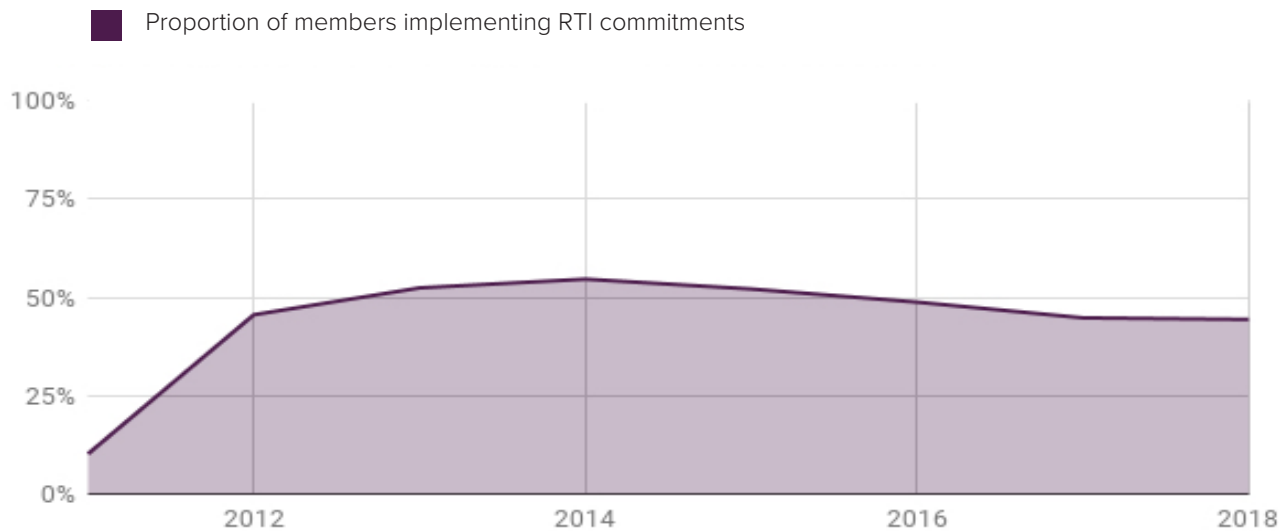
### Sierra Leone: An eye on implementation

In 2013, Sierra Leone passed its Right to Information Act and developed regulation to implement this new law. The government also trained 250 public information officers in 13 districts within the first year and launched public awareness campaigns on the publication of new data.

### Sri Lanka: RTI online infrastructure

In 2016, Sri Lanka committed to creating a robust right to information infrastructure with the goal of reducing government corruption. The country created a Right to Information Commission to ensure that citizens’ requests are addressed efficiently. Sri Lanka also undertook mass trainings for public servants to guarantee that the new Commission functioned properly.

# Right to Information Commitment Growth



## Members Working on RTI

Members with Active Commitments in 2011:

- Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, United Kingdom, United States

Members with Active Commitments in 2012:

- Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Jordan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Peru, Spain, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, United Kingdom, United States

Members with Active Commitments in 2013:

- Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Liberia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, United States, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Israel, Jordan, Macedonia, Montenegro, Peru, Spain, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uruguay

Members with Active Commitments in 2014:

- Armenia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Mongolia, Paraguay, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Spain, Tunisia, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Liberia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, United States

Members with Active Commitments in 2015:

- Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Liberia, Malta, Panama, Peru, Philippines, United States, Armenia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Mongolia, Paraguay, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Spain, Tunisia, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uruguay

Members with Active Commitments in 2016:

- Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Bojonegoro Regency, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Macedonia, Malawi, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Romania, Serbia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Liberia, Malta, Panama, Peru, Philippines, United States

Members with Active Commitments in 2017:

- Argentina, Burkina Faso, Finland, Ghana, Israel, Liberia, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Bojonegoro Regency, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Macedonia, Malawi, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Romania, Serbia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay

Members with Active Commitments in 2018:

- Argentina, Burkina Faso, Finland, Ghana, Israel, Liberia, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bojonegoro Regency, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kaduna State, Macedonia, Malawi, Morocco, Romania, South Cotabato, Uruguay

Open  
Government  
Partnership

