

# **BUDGET PROMISES: BEYOND PARLIAMENT**

## **2017 END YEAR ASSESSMENT**

2021

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## BUDGET PROMISES: BEYOND PARLIAMENT

“**Budget Promises: Beyond Parliament**” is a pioneering online platform that tracks the government’s performance in delivering on its budget promises.

The platform was launched in 2017 and seeks to answer two basic questions about the promises the government makes in its annual Budget Speech:

- Is the government doing what it is saying?
- Is the government saying what it is doing?

By giving the public access to the answers to these questions, the platform aims to

- (i) Improve visibility of the government’s budget promises; and
- (ii) Hold it accountable for these promises.

## HOW IT WORKS

BudgetPromises.Org tracks new expenditure proposals or ‘promises’ in the Budget Speech (listed in Annex 2 of the Speech) which have an allocation of over LKR 500 million. In 2019, the platform also begun tracking policy proposals, such as changes to legislation and regulations, which do not have an expenditure allocation.

Year	Expenditure proposals			Policy Proposals
	Selection Threshold <sup>1</sup>	Number of proposals	Total value of proposals	Number of proposals
2017	Above LKR 1 Bn	37	LKR 116,910 Mn	None
2018	Above LKR 1 Bn	38	LKR 149,350	None
2019	Above LKR 500 Mn	37	LKR 100,875	22

The platform is updated twice a year and assesses each of expenditure proposals using two indicators: **Openness** and **Progress**. The implementation of policy proposals is tracked using a single **Progress** indicator. The status of policy proposals were mainly assessed through publicly

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<sup>1</sup> In 2017 and 2018, the selection threshold was based only on the proposed allocation of expenditure for the proposals. In 2019, the selection threshold was based on the addition of the proposed allocation proposal and its already allocated amount, due to the change in reporting format of the Budget Speech.

available information, and did not rely on requests filed under the Right To Information Act. Hence, the assessment of policy proposals does not have an indicator on openness.

A mid-year assessment of performance for the first six months is released in October of the year and an assessment of performance for the full year is released in April/May of the following year.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

### 1.1. OPENNESS TRACKER

This tracks to what extent the government is **saying what it is doing** about each promise. It measures the government’s level of disclosure of information about the implementation of each promise. The tracker uses information obtained via relevant government websites and requests filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. In 2017 and 2018, information was also collected via visits to government agencies and informal requests with the agencies. However, this method of information collection has been discontinued.

The mid-year assessment measures the extent to which the government has been open about disclosing information on the implementation of the first six months of progress on budget promises. The year-end assessment measures the government’s openness on disclosing information on progress for the full year.

Openness is based on the information available at the time of assessment and is categorised as follows:

	<b>Closed</b>	No information is available to determine progress for full period of assessment
	<b>Restricted</b>	Information is insufficient to determine progress of the promise for the full period of assessment
	<b>Uncooperative</b>	Information available on the promise required considerable effort to obtain and/or assess progress
	<b>Responsive</b>	Information on progress of the promise was available upon request in a timely manner
	<b>Open</b>	Information on full progress of the promise is proactively disclosed

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<sup>2</sup> As the Budget Speech for 2019 was delayed and only presented to Parliament in March 2019, only a year-end assessment was carried out in 2019.

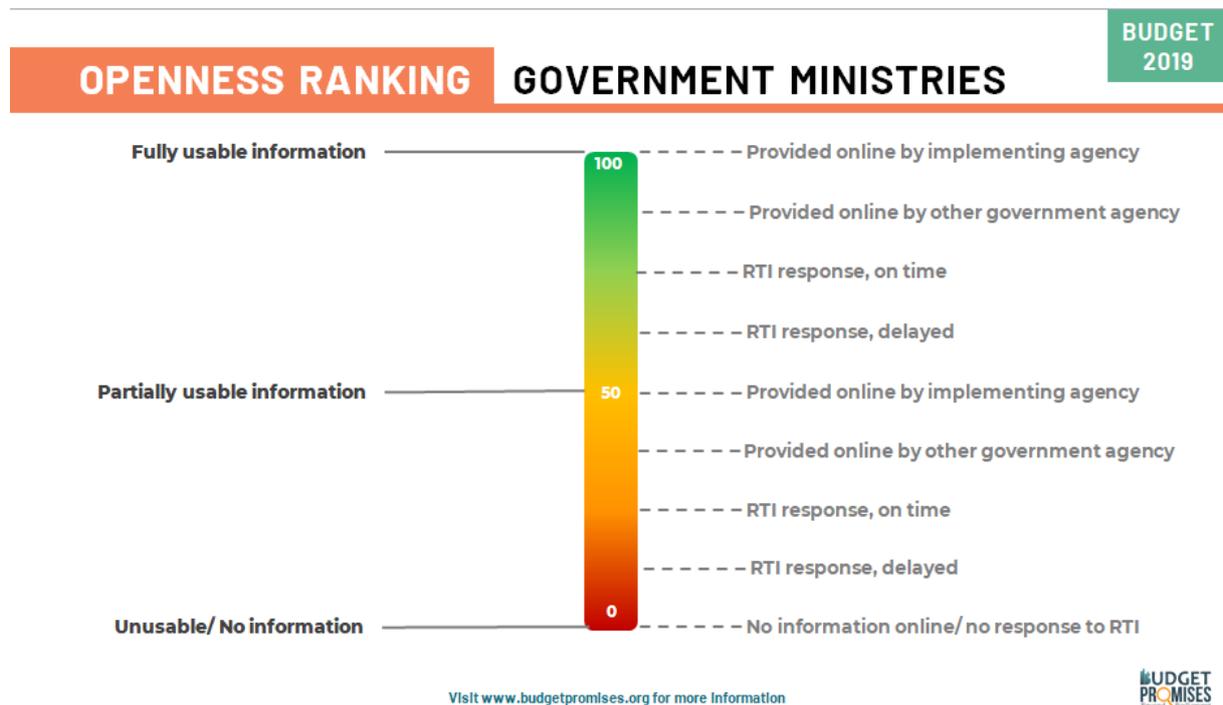
## 1.2. OPENNESS RANKINGS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

This provides a comparative ranking of the openness of government agencies in disclosing information about the promises they are responsible for. Each agency receives a score between 0 to 100, with a score of 100 indicating the highest level of openness. Government agencies are then ranked from highest to lowest, indicating their relative performance during the year.

The aggregate score for the government agency is calculated as a weighted average of the scores of each promise under the purview of the agency. Each promise is scored on a scale of 0 to 100. The score for each individual promise is calculated based on (i) The usability of the information in evaluating the progress of the promise and (ii) the ease of obtaining this information.

**Usability of information:** Each promise receives an initial score of 100, 50 or 0 based on whether the information available is fully usable, partially usable or unusable.

**Ease of obtaining information:** The initial score on usability is adjusted based on the ease of obtaining the information. Proactive disclosure, i.e. providing information online is given a higher score comparison to reactive disclosure, i.e. obtaining information through requests filed under the Right to Information Act (RTI Act).



### 1.3. PROGRESS TRACKER

This tracks to what extent the government is **doing what it is saying**. It evaluates the level of progress of the government in implementing the promises, based on timelines and milestones established by the agency responsible.

For the mid-year assessment progress is categorised as follows:

	<b>Undisclosed</b>	No information is available on the promise or available information is unusable
	<b>Broken</b>	The promise has been dropped or postponed and is not scheduled for implementation in the year of assessment
	<b>Neglected</b>	The promise is scheduled for implementation but not initiated
	<b>Lagging</b>	The promise is being implemented but is behind schedule
	<b>Progressing</b>	The promise is being implemented and is on track or ahead of target <sup>3</sup>

For the year-end assessment progress is categorised as follows:

	<b>Undisclosed</b>	No information is available to determine the status of the promise or available information is insufficient/unusable
	<b>Broken</b>	No progress has been made on the promise or the promise has been removed from the action plan
	<b>Poor</b>	Progress on the promise is less than 33% of the target
	<b>Partial</b>	Progress on the promise is between 33% - 66% of the target
	<b>Substantial</b>	Progress on the promise is between 66% - 80% of the target
	<b>Fulfilled</b>	Progress on the promise is over 80% of the target

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<sup>3</sup> A promise is considered to be progressing if progress achieved as at 30 June of the budget year is within 90% of the target set for the period.

## 2. POLICY PROPOSALS

In 2019, *BudgetPromises.Org* expanded its scope to track the progress of policy commitments made by the government in the Budget Speech. These proposals do not have an expenditure allocation.

The proposals were selected on the basis of requiring legislative enactment or regulatory notification (gazettes) to be considered “Implemented” or “Partially implemented”. Information was obtained from publicly available information such as gazette notifications, government circulars, and Department of Government Information communiques on cabinet decisions. When no public information on the policy was available, ministries were directly contacted for information via letters, phone calls, and emails.

### 2.1. PROGRESS TRACKER

This tracks the level of progress made by the government in implementing the policy proposals introduced in the Budget Speech.

	<b>Undisclosed</b>	No information is available to determine the status of the proposal or available information is insufficient/unusable.
	<b>Not implemented</b>	The required legislative enactment or regulatory notification (gazette) has not been published for any part of the proposal. This has been confirmed in writing by the relevant ministry/ government institution.
	<b>Partially Implemented</b>	The required legislative enactment or regulatory notification (gazette) has been published for some but not all parts of the proposal.
	<b>Implemented</b>	The policy proposal has been fully implemented. The legislative enactment or regulatory notification (gazette) required has been published for the full scope of the proposal and no further action is required.

### 3. DETAILS OF PROGRESS, OPENNESS, AND RANKING ASSESSMENTS.

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Improve fishery villages in 10 coastal districts including Hambantota, Jaffna and Batticaloa	OPEN	SUBSTANTIAL
	The Ministry has provided comprehensive information including action plans, financial and progress reports as well as other supporting documents.	The project undertakes activities ranging from infrastructure/livelihood development to aquaculture of which many have seen substantial physical and financial progress.
Yan Oya Project	OPEN	POOR
	The Ministry has provided comprehensive information including action plans, financial and progress reports as well as other supporting documents.	Construction of dam and canal were hampered due to public protests and adverse weather conditions. Resettlement work and compensation have seen considerable progress. Progress has been assessed on the entire Yan Oya project and not the Rs.1000 Mn allocation.
Infrastructure development including provision of laboratory equipment and furniture		SUBSTANTIAL
	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. There was no response to the RTIs to the implementing Ministry, even after Appeal to the Designated Officer.	According to the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report, the promise has seen 75 percent progress. However, of the Rs. 5000 Mn project cost, only Rs.1000Mn has been allocated for 2017. Rs. 4000Mn has been reallocated for weather related rehabilitation and reconstruction activities.

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Basic facilities such as electricity, water and sanitation facilities to all schools	RESTRICTED	SUBSTANTIAL
	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. There was no response to the RTIs to the implementing Ministry, even after Appeal to the Designated Officer.	According to the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report, the promise has seen 73 percent progress.
Free tabs to AL teachers and students	RESTRICTED	PARTIAL
	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. There was no response to the RTIs to the implementing Ministry, even after Appeal to the Designated Officer.	According to the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report, the promise has seen 40 percent progress.
Provision to rent a maximum of 50 computers per school	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	The Ministry has provided some information regarding the promise. No information on physical or financial progress has been given.	Insufficient information to track progress.
Rs.200,000 health insurance for students	RESPONSIVE	FULFILLED
	The Ministry website contained information about the insurance scheme. More information was provided following an Appeal to the RTI Commission.	The insurance scheme is in place. However, the number of beneficiaries of the insurance scheme and the financial progress of the project is unknown.

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Paediatric Care Complexes in Karapitiya, Ampara and Jaffna hospitals	RESTRICTED	POOR
	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. There was no response to the RTIs to the implementing Ministry, even after Appeal to the Designated Officer.	According to the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report, the project has seen 2 percent progress.
Establish EXIM Bank of Sri Lanka	UNCOOPERATIVE	BROKEN
	Information received from RTIs showed that the project was cancelled. The reason for the cancellation was also provided.	The proposal was not implemented in 2017 due to funds being reallocated for weather related emergencies.
Global Marketing Campaign to boost the exports and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	RESTRICTED	POOR
	The Ministry of Finance has provided some information on the financial progress of the project till September 2017.	Rs. 97.8 Mn of the Rs. 500 Mn allocation was provided to five stakeholder institutions to implement the project. However, the status of utilization of these funds has not been reported.
Private free trade zones along	OPEN	PARTIAL

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
expressway corridors	Information on physical and financial progress of Millaniya is available. Some information on Pelpola and Bingiriya and no information on Millewa, Horana has been provided.	Preliminary work to provide land, electricity and water for Millaniya, Pelpola and Bingiriya has been done.
MICE Convention Centre	OPEN	BROKEN
	Information received from RTIs showed that the project was cancelled. The reason for the cancellation was also provided.	The proposal was not implemented in 2017 due to the inability to find suitable land.
Double tracking of railway lines	RESTRICTED	POOR
	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. Some information was made available through RTI requests.	According to the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report, the project has seen 2 percent progress.
Payments to Golden Key depositors	RESPONSIVE	FULFILLED
	The Ministry of Finance provided some information to assess progress.	Information provided by the Ministry of Finance indicates that Rs. 2500 Mn of the allocated Rs. 3000 Mn has been spent.
Establish Financial Asset Management Agency (FAMA) to	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
revitalize the failed non-bank finance companies	The Ministry has not provided any information even after the Appeal to the Designated Officer.	Insufficient information to track progress.
Infusion of capital for the Housing Bank	UNCOOPERATIVE	BROKEN
	Information received from RTIs showed that the project was cancelled. The reason for the cancellation was also provided.	The proposal was not implemented in 2017 due to funds being reallocated for weather related emergencies.
Housing project in the North and East	RESTRICTED	PARTIAL
	Ministries have provided some information on the progress of the project. There is some information on housing projects available in the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. However, it is difficult to match the information available online with the promise.	None of three responsible institutions have provided information for the full year. Progress was measured as partial taking actual expenditures (all less than 1 year) against estimates.
Interest subsidy for housing	RESTRICTED	FULFILLED
	Ministry has provided an action plan for the project. Details of the loan scheme is available online.	The loan scheme has been implemented, but the number of beneficiaries is unknown.
	OPEN	POOR

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Grant pensions to differently abled soldiers	Ministry has provided information on the financial progress of the project. There is some information on pensions granted to differently-abled soldiers online, but it is difficult to match the online information to the promise.	According to information provided, 26% of the total allocation has been spent during the period.
Contributory Pension Fund	RESPONSIVE	BROKEN
	The Department of National Budget provided information on the progress of the scheme.	Steps are being taken to draft a new Public Pension Act in order to facilitate legal provisions to create the Contributory Pension Fund.
Vocational training	RESPONSIVE	FULFILLED
	The National Youth Services Council and the National Youth Corps provided extensive information on the progress of the activities of the institutions.	NYSC and NYC have reported progress over 80 percent.
Interest free loan scheme to finance small business ventures	OPEN	BROKEN
	The Ministry has provided some information on the reallocation as well as the financial progress of the reallocated funds.	The Ministry states the money allocated for this promise was reallocated to the Rural Infrastructure Development Programme (RIDP). RIDP financial reports indicate that the financial allocation has been utilized.
		UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Establish 1,000 "Sewa Piyasa" units	CLOSED	
	The Ministry has not provided any information to the RTI.	Insufficient information to track progress.
Digitalising the Economy: National Digital Identity	OPEN	SUBSTANTIAL
	The Ministry provided substantial information on progress.	Overall project completion is in 2019. However the institution has made substantial progress as per their target in 2017. Scope of the project has been reduced due to delays in the procurement process.
Digitalising the Economy: National Payment Platform and National Data Centre	OPEN	PARTIAL
	The Ministry provided substantial information on progress on the National Data Centre. There is details of the projects online on the Agency website, but no information regarding the National Payment Platform progress.	National Data Centre - project delayed due to difficulties in identifying land. Insufficient information to determine the status of progress of the National Payment Platform for the period.
Digitalising the Economy: Toll Charging System	RESPONSIVE	BROKEN
	The Ministry provided substantial information on progress.	The project proposal was withdraw from the 2017 implementation plan.
Digitalising the Economy :	RESTRICTED	FULFILLED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Cryptography key for Cyber Security	Progress information was obtained from the Department of Project Management and Monitoring quarter 3 report. There is some information on the project on the agency website.	ICTA is ahead of their 2017 target as per the action plan. However, project completion is scheduled for 2019.
Digitalising the Economy : Video Conferencing Facility for Government Agencies and Cross Government Digital Documentation	OPEN	PARTIAL
	The Agency provided substantial information on progress.	Progress for cross government digital documentation and video conferencing is at 54%.
Providing Police Department with modern equipment for better enforcement	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	The implementing agency did not provide sufficient information to track the progress of the project.	Insufficient information to determine progress.
Credit scheme to encourage domestic solar electricity generation	OPEN	FULFILLED
Road improvement in rural areas	UNCOOPERATIVE	PARTIAL

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
	The Ministry has provided some information on financial progress.	Financial progress indicates 65% of the revised expenditure allocation was utilised in 2017.
Restoration, rehabilitation and de-silting of 1,500 small tanks	OPEN	PARTIAL
	The Ministry has provided sufficient information to determine progress.	According to the progress report, 972 tanks of the 1,500 targeted in the budget promise have been completed.
Development of comprehensive plan to upgrade cities	RESTRICTED	PARTIAL
	The Ministry has provided information on the progress of the project as at 30th June 2017.	Rated as partial on the basis of physical progress given for 2017.
Southern Development	OPEN	POOR
	The Ministry provided progress information in response to the RTI.	The promise reports 12 percent progress by the end of the period.
Building in the Northern Province	UNCOOPERATIVE	BROKEN
	Information received from RTIs showed that the project was cancelled with a reason provided. The project will not be implemented in 2018.	The proposal was not implemented in 2017 due to funds being reallocated for weather related emergencies.
Siri Sara Pivisuma		PARTIAL

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
	OPEN	
	The Ministry has provided information on the physical progress of the project.	Rated as partial on the basis of financial progress given for 2017.
Expand Lak Sathosa Retail Network	RESPONSIVE	PARTIAL
	Progress information was provided by the National Budget Department.	According to information provided by the Department of National Budget, Rs. 842 Mn has been spent on expanding Lak Sathosa Outlets. However, it is not clear if the spending is for the promise, or for regular Lak Sathosa expansion activities.

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