

BUDGET PROMISES: BEYOND PARLIAMENT

2017 MID YEAR ASSESSMENT

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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 tracks new expenditure proposals or ‘promises’ in the Budget Speech (listed in Annex 2 of the 2017 Budget 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 ¹	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

¹ 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.²






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:

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

² 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.

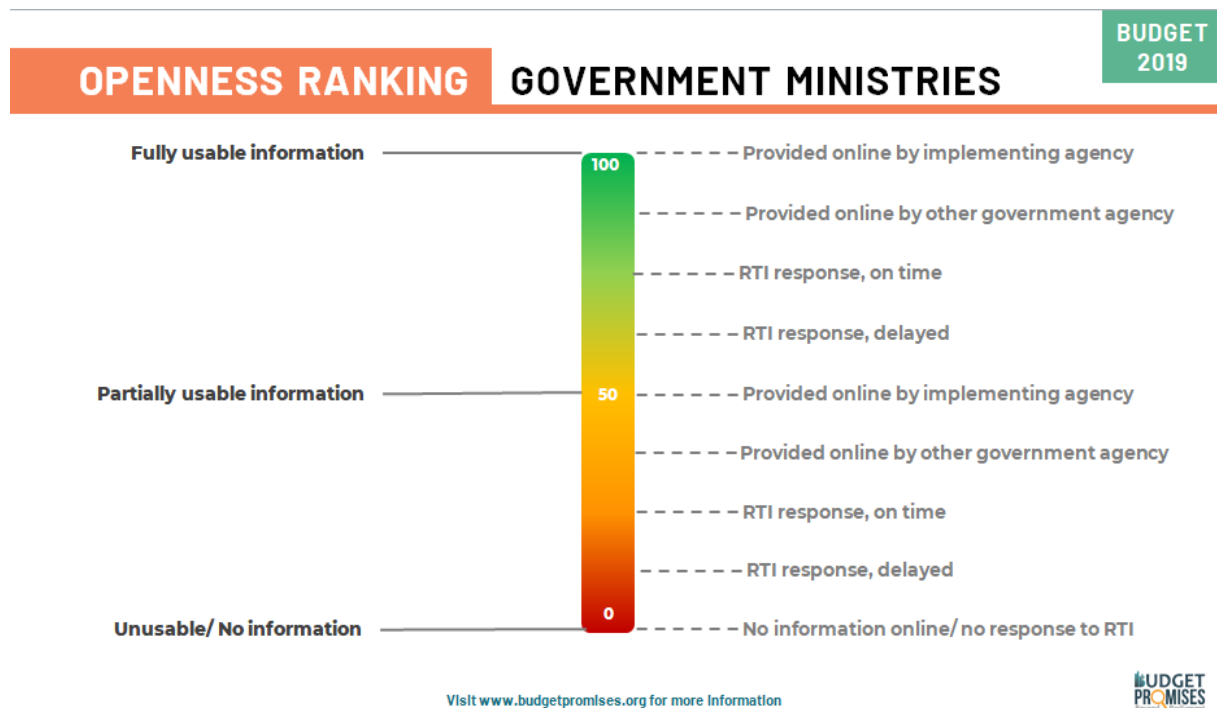
1.2. OPENNESS RANKINGS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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:

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

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

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

³ A promise is considered to be progressing if progress achieved as of 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.

	Undisclosed	No information is available to determine the status of the proposal or available information is insufficient/unusable.
	Not implemented	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.
	Partially Implemented	The required legislative enactment or regulatory notification (gazette) has been published for some but not all parts of the proposal.
	Implemented	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	LAGGING
	Action plan and programme details were available on Ministry's website. Promise progress was disclosed on time upon RTI request.	As per the progress report, 5 activities are progressing, and 20 activities are lagging.
Yan Oya Project	RESPONSIVE	LAGGING
	RTI: Sufficient information was provided. OTC: Certain information about the project was available over the counter, but this information was not detailed. Web: No information available online.	As per the progress report, 1 activity is progressing, and 2 activities are behind schedule.
Infrastructure development including provision of laboratory equipment and furniture	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	No information available and unresponsive to request	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
Basic facilities such as electricity, water and sanitation facilities to all schools	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	No information available and unresponsive to request	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Free tabs to AL teachers and students	Information insufficient to determine progress regardless of access. A document regarding the procurement of tabs is available online.	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
Provision to rent a maximum of 50 computers per school	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	No information available and unresponsive to request	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
Rs.200,000 health insurance for students	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED
	Information insufficient to determine progress regardless of access. Ministry of Education website provides details regarding the insurance scheme, but this information is insufficient to determine progress.	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
Paediatric Care Complexes in Karapitiya, Ampara and Jaffna hospitals	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED
	Information insufficient to determine progress regardless of access	Sufficient information has not been provided to determine level of progress. Karapitiya - CECB has been contracted to carry out the construction work without a tender process. Ampara - discussions are still in place to decide on the construction process. Jaffna - land has been identified for the construction process.
	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Establish EXIM Bank of Sri Lanka	<p>RTI: No response to RTI request filed, thus filed appeal. Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs has transferred RTI request to Ministry of Finance and Mass Media. Have not received any information. OTC: Refused to provide any information apart from draft action plan. Web: No information available on ministry's website. Promised has been mentioned in Mid-year Report of Ministry of Finance and Public Investment Programme Report 2017-2020 by Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs.</p>	Insufficient information to determine status of promise
Global Marketing Campaign to boost the exports and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	<p>RTI: No response to RTI request filed, thus filed appeal. . Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs has transferred RTI request to Ministry of Finance and Mass Media. Have not received any information. OTC: Refused to provide any information. Web: No information available on ministry's website.</p>	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Private free trade zones along expressway corridors	Information provided upon RTI request is insufficient and incoherent.	According to the implementation plan, by the end of June, suitable expressway corridors should have been identified. In addition, identification, assessment and evaluation of trade zones and land acquisition should have seen partial progress. However, insufficient information limits the capacity to determine progress.
MICE Convention Centre	UNCOOPERATIVE	BROKEN
	Response letter from RTI request discloses level of progress of implementation.	The funding has been withdrawn by Ministry of Finance and Mass Media. Funds have been redirected for drought relief.
Double tracking of railway lines	OPEN	LAGGING
	Sufficient information was provided upon RTI request. OTC AND WEB	Detailed studies (including survey plans) are ongoing. Work plans, progress plans, etc. to be prepared after completing detailed studies.
Payments to Golden Key depositors	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	No information available and unresponsive to request	Insufficient or no information to determine status of promise
	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
<p>Establish Financial Asset Management Agency (FAMA) to revitalize the failed non-bank finance companies</p>	<p>Information insufficient to determine progress regardless of access</p>	<p>Separate Unit established within the Ministry of Finance to carry out the setting up of necessary legal framework and preparatory work. Mid-Year Fiscal report states additional allocations are made for the establishment of FAMA. Information is insufficient to determine progress.</p>
<p>Infusion of capital for the Housing Bank</p>	<p>RESPONSIVE</p>	<p>BROKEN</p>
	<p>Response letter from RTI request discloses level of progress of implementation.</p>	<p>The funding has been withdrawn by Ministry of Finance and Mass Media. Funds have been redirected to facilitate and fund the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities of damaged properties due to adverse weather, as per a cabinet decision on 11 July 2017.</p>
	<p>RESPONSIVE</p>	<p>LAGGING</p>

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Housing project in the North and East	Insufficient information from Ministry of Housing and Construction and no information from other implementing ministries (Ministry of Reform, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious affairs and Ministry of Hill Country, New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development) limits capacity to determine level of progress of implementation.	The Ministry of Housing and Construction received Rs. 1,767 Mn of Rs. 5,000 Mn allocated and had utilised Rs. 624 Mn as of 30 June 2017. Limited capacity to determine exact level of progress due to insufficient information by Ministry of Housing and Construction and no information from Ministry of Reform, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious affairs and Ministry of Hill Country, New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development.
Interest subsidy for housing	RESPONSIVE	LAGGING
	Insufficient and incoherent information to RTI request. OTC and WEB	The loan scheme is in place. The promise is to issue 100,000 loans by the end of the year. As of 30 June 2017, 44 loans have been issued. Limited capacity to determine exact level of progress due to insufficient information.
Grant pensions to differently abled soldiers	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	-	-
Contributory Pension Fund	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	-	-

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Vocational training	RESTRICTED	UNDISCLOSED
	<p>RTI filed with Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs: RTI request transferred to National Youth Corp and National Youth Services Council. No response to RTI request filed, thus filed appeal. Ministry takes no responsibility after transferring request. Insufficient and incoherent information from National Youth Corp limits capacity to determine level of progress of implementation. No information from National Youth Services Council. OTC with National Youth Corp: Refused to disclose any information. OTC with National Youth Services Council: Reluctant to disclose information, asked to file RTI. Web: No information available on website of National Policies and Economic Affairs, National Youth Corp and National Youth Services Council.</p>	<p>Budget promise states allocated funding is for training, however the Youth Corp disclosed the allocation is for the overall organisation expenditure. Limited capacity to determine exact level of progress due to insufficient and incoherent information from National Youth Corp and no information from National Youth Services Council. Action plan and physical progress reports provided not containing the same list of activities.</p>
	RESTRICTED	BROKEN

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Interest free loan scheme to finance small business ventures	Insufficient information on RTI request.	Rural Infrastructure Development Programme is ongoing in place of the given proposal. No further information was disclosed. Note: In Annexure 02 of Budget Speech 2017 (the summary of expenditure proposals), the proposal is states that each MP will be provided Rs. 1Mn per Grama Niladhari Division. The allocation to each MP is not mentioned in the budget speech. - money has been transferred to a different programme of similar nature.
Establish 1,000 "Sewa Piyasa" units	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	-	-
Digitalising the Economy: National Digital Identity	OPEN	LAGGING
	Significant information provided upon RTI request. OTC and WEB	As of July 2017, ICTA has achieved 38% completion, having anticipated reaching a target of 55% of project completion. Rs. 500 million has been expended on the activities (behind the fiscal expenditure projections). Also, received letter stating that the project has been halted.
	OPEN	LAGGING

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Digitalising the Economy: National Payment Platform and National Data Centre	Significant information provided upon RTI request. OTC and WEB	ICTA has classified this promise as two projects: 1) National Data Centre and 2) National Payment Platform. National Data Centre is at conceptualisation stage where one out of three activities have commenced. National Payment Platform is ongoing however exact progress cannot be determined due to limited information.
Digitalising the Economy: Toll Charging System	RESPONSIVE	LAGGING
	Letter states level of progress of implementation. OTC + WEB	Promise to be implemented by third quarter of 2017. Project at discussion stage.
Digitalising the Economy: Cryptography key for Cyber Security	RESPONSIVE	LAGGING
	Lack of information on financial and physical progress. Letter states level of progress.	Action and financial plans for the project is given. No progress on the financial plan. Physical progress plan is incomplete. The project is said to be in discussion stage.
	OPEN	LAGGING

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
<p>Digitalising the Economy: Video Conferencing Facility for Government Agencies and Cross Government Digital Documentation</p>	<p>Significant information provided upon RTI request. OTC and WEB</p>	<p>ICTA has classified this promise as two projects: 1)Video conferencing and 2) Cross Government Digital Documentation Management System. As of 30th June, Video conferencing project was on track. Cross Government Digital Documentation Management System project continues however exact progress cannot be determined due to limited information.</p>
<p>Providing Police Department with modern equipment for better enforcement</p>	<p>CLOSED</p>	<p>UNDISCLOSED</p>
<p>Credit scheme to encourage domestic solar electricity generation</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>RTI: Significant information provided upon RTI request. OTC with Ministry of Renewable Energy: Reluctant to disclose action plan and progress reports. Refused to disclose meeting minutes, requests to treasury and any document that requires Secretary's approval. OTC with Department of Development Finance: Refused to disclose information. WEB: Action plan write up was available on Ministry of Finance and Mass Media website.</p>	<p>LAGGING</p> <p>The promise is to issue 1,000,000 loans by 2020. As of 25 August 2017, a total of 122 loans have been issued.</p>

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Road improvement in rural areas	UNCOOPERATIVE	PROGRESSING
	Significant information provided upon RTI appealed. OTC and WEB	Ministry was scheduled to complete 65% physical activities by the end of the third quarter of 2017. The project has seen 60% progress as of 31 August 2017.
Restoration, rehabilitation and de-silting of 1,500 small tanks	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	-	-
Development of comprehensive plan to upgrade cities	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	The Ministry has provided information on the progress of the project as of 30th June 2017.	
Southern Development	CLOSED	UNDISCLOSED
	-	-
	UNCOOPERATIVE	BROKEN

Promise	OPENNESS	PROGRESS
Building in the Northern Province	Sufficient information was provided upon RTI appealed.	The funding has been withdrawn by Ministry of Finance and Mass Media. Funds have been redirected to facilitate and fund the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities of damaged properties due to adverse weather, as per a cabinet decision on 11 July 2017.
Siri Sara Pivisuma	OPEN	LAGGING
	Information was provided upon RTI request.	As of 31st July, 20 irrigation works, and 2 road development proposals are currently ongoing. Two of the irrigation works are complete and 1 road development projects must be initiated. Limited capacity to determine exact level of progress due to insufficient information.
Expand Lak Sathosa Retail Network	RESPONSIVE	BROKEN
	Sufficient information was provided upon RTI request. OTC AND WEB	The Ministry has called for applications during the year, but the project is postponed to 2018.

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