



**The Annual Report on the implementation of the
Right to Information Act, No.12 of 2016 to be
submitted in terms of the provisions of section 10
of the said Act.**

2021

Office of the Cabinet of Ministers

Lloyd's Building, Sir Barron Jayathilaka Mawatha, Colombo 01.

www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk

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**Annual Report 2021 submitted to the Right to Information Commission
pertaining to the Implementation of the
Right to Information Act, No.12 of 2016**

1. Description of the Public Authority -

- 1.1 **Name** **Office of the Cabinet of Ministers**
- 1.2 **Address** **Office of the Cabinet of Ministers**
Lloyds Building,
Sir Barron Jayathilaka Mawatha,
Colombo 01.
- 1.3 **Web Address** www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk

2. Office of the Cabinet of Ministers and its Functions.

The Office of the Cabinet of Ministers has been established to provide necessary support services to the Cabinet of Ministers in the exercise of duties vested in the Cabinet of Ministers under the Constitution pertaining to the governance and control the Government of the Republic and the directions thereof. The responsibility of this office is to assist the Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers in discharging the functions and performing the duties entrusted to him by His Excellency the President or the Cabinet of Ministers, under the direction of His Excellency the President.

The Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers appointed by His Excellency the President in terms of Article 51(2) of the Constitution, functions as the Head of the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Among the key duties performed by the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers are organization of weekly Cabinet meetings and Cabinet Sub-Committee meetings; deeply study the legal and policy background of the memoranda received pertaining to the policy formulation and direction and control of the Government of the Republic and submission of facts to the Cabinet and Sub-Committees enabling to take clear and well comprehensive decisions; Preparation of Reports including the decisions taken at Cabinet and Sub-Committee meetings in all the three languages and submit the same to the Ministers, Secretaries to relevant ministries and other relevant authorities; preparation of the press release informing Cabinet decisions to the general public and dealing with the cases produced to the court by making the Cabinet respondents.

3. Information relating to the Officers appointed in the year 2021 in order to implement the provisions of the Right to Information Act, No.12 of 2016

Designated Officer

Mr. W.M.D.J Fernando,
Secretary to the Cabinet

T.P No. 0112329620

Fax No.+94112323730

Email: secretary@cabinetoffice.gov.lk

Information Officer

Mr. W.K . Weerawardana,
Assistant Secretary,

T.P No. +94112431011

Fax: +9411232370

Email: info@cabinetoffice.gov.lk

4. Review of conformity

Arrangements had been made by the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers to provide information pertaining to the Cabinet Memoranda, decisions and information related thereto requested by the public under the Right to Information Act efficiently in the year 2021 as well.

Cabinet decisions that are not based on any Cabinet Memorandum and taken under 'Any Other Businesses' as well as other information with no relation to any Cabinet decisions that are in the custody of the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers are released directly to the general public subject to the provisions of the Right to Information Act.

In terms of the Cabinet decision dated 2019-02-26 on item No. 19/misc (010) on "Providing Cabinet Decisions and Related Documents Under the Provisions of the Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016", with effect from 2019-03-07, the authority to issue cabinet decisions and related information pertaining to Cabinet Memoranda submitted by a Ministry/Office to the general public has been vested with the Secretaries to the Ministries of which those memoranda have been submitted by and other relevant authorities. Accordingly, requests for such information received at the Cabinet Office were immediately forwarded to the relevant ministries and authorities.

Also, at the instances where old Cabinet decisions and related documents requested by the public through requests for information from various Ministries and public institutions are not in the custody of such institutions, such information and particulars are released to the public institutions so that relevant information could be released to the public.

4.1 A separate file is maintained in the Cabinet Office to register requests for information received from the public, including and the date of receipt of the request for information, contact details of the applicant, the decision taken regarding each request for information, the date of release of information and the fees, if charged etc. Further separate files are maintained for each request for information.

4.2 An electronic copy of the document mentioned in 4.1 above will also be updated and maintained.

4.3 The names, designations and contact details of the staff officers of the Cabinet Office have been published on the official website of the office for public awareness. Furthermore, information about the tasks performed by the Cabinet Office has also been published on the website for the awareness of the public.

Under the provisions of the Right to Information Act, the public have been given the opportunity to submit a request for information to the Cabinet office by handing it over, by post or by e-mail. The opportunity has also been provided to download relevant applications from the website of the office. Requests for information received by e-mail will be responded to by e-mail.

5. Summary of Requests for Information received during the year

In the year 2021 the Cabinet Office had received 51 letters/ applications of requests for information and out of the total the Cabinet Office resorted to furnish information partially or completely to 17 requests seekers directly while facilitation was provided to obtain required information from each Ministry pertaining to 33 requests. One information request was rejected under Section 5 of the Act.

According to the provisions of the Act, in respect of every request for information, measures have been taken to notify the receipt of the information application or to provide the relevant information within three days. Further, all requests for information have been furnished within the stipulated time period other than and the time taken to return the old documents kept in the custody of the National Archives Department for preservation within the specified period of time.

The requests for information received in the year 2021, including those directed to a third party, were categorized as follows.

5.1	Number of requests for information received during the year	51
5.2	Number of requests for information fully completed	16
5.3	Number of requests for information partially completed	1
5.4	Number of requests for information directed for each Ministry for seeking information in terms of the Cabinet decision dated 2019-02-26	33
5.5	Number of requests for information rejected under section 5 of the Act.	1
5.6	Number of requests for information rejected which are not under the grounds of section 5 of the said Act	-
5.7	Duration generally taken to respond an request for information	3-4 days
5.8	Number of requests received by post	44
5.9	Number of requests received through e-mail	5
5.1	Number of requests received other than post or e-mail methods	2

6. Nature of requests for information - 2021

6.1	Type of requests for information received the highest and second highest volume of information	
	6.1.1 Highest Volume	Cabinet decisions on Establishment matters
	6.1.2 Second highest volume	Cabinet decisions related to political victimization

6.2	Category of requests for information	Number
6.2.1	Procurement matters	02
6.2.2	establishment matters	38
6.2.3	political victimization	04
6.2.4	finance	01
6.2.5	environmental conservation	01
6.2.6	different public policies	03
6.2.7	other	02

7. Particulars of the applicants -2021

		Number of requests for information	out of total	
7.1	Requests for information made by individuals	41	80.4%	
7.2	Requests for information made by Organizations or persons representing organizations	10	19.6%	
7.3	requests for information received according to the provinces			
	7.3.1	Central Province	3	5.9%
	7.3.2	Eastern Province	1	2.0%
	7.3.3	North Central Province	2	3.9%
	7.3.4	Northern Province	2	3.9%
	7.3.5	North Western Province	2	3.9%
	7.3.6	Sabaragamuwa Province	2	3.9%
	7.3.7	Southern Province	9	17.6%
	7.3.8	Uva Province	2	3.9%
	7.3.9	Western Province	27	53.0%
	7.3.10	Migrant Sri Lankans	1	2.0%

8. In the year 2021, no person has been subjected to punishment/ disciplinary action in connection with the provision of information in this office.

9. Appeals and the Commission's guidelines

Secretary to the Cabinet as the designated officer had received 03 appeals in the year 2021 pertaining to not furnishing the requested information and not following the stipulated time frames. Those 03 appeals had been submitted by the applicants who were not satisfied on the direction made by the Information Officer to obtain such information directly from the relevant Ministry itself by which the relevant Cabinet Memoranda were submitted, as per the Cabinet decision dated 2019-02-26.

The appellants had been satisfied on action taken and responses made by the Secretary to the Cabinet with regard to those 03 appeals.

Number of appeals submitted to the Designated Officer	No.
9.1 Number of appeals submitted to the Designated Officer * These 03 appeals had been submitted indicating the failure to issue information requested within stipulated time frames. Nevertheless, stipulated time frame has been exceeded pertaining to only one request out of the three and the rest of the requests were sent to Ministries by which the relevant Memoranda were submitted enabling the applicants to obtain the information therefrom as per the Cabinet decision dated 2019-02-26.	03
9.2 Number of occasions where information was provided as per the guidance of the Designated Officer or facilities made available to obtain information from the relevant Ministry.	03
Appeals made to the Right to Information Commission	
9.3 Total number of appeals submitted to the Commission since the Public Authority had received notices and due to not providing information	00
9.4 Number of occasions where the Commission had ordered /guided to provide information	00

10. Information management and maintaining reports

10.1 Particulars on information management and data storage system

A registry is maintained to enter the details of the requests for information/ letters received from applicants and all such requests for information have been filed using the normal filling method as well as in electronic mode through the computer.

Files relating to the Cabinet decisions and other documents from 2006 to the date are managed by the Cabinet Office. Files containing Cabinet decisions and Memoranda prior to the year 2006 have been handed over to the Department of National Archives for preservation, retaining the right to reference of the same.

Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held from 1947 to date are securely stored and maintained. Two software developed by the Office itself is used for the easy access of the Cabinet memoranda from the year 1992 to date.

10.2 Whether the relevant system was updated within the year? If so, particulars in that regard

Updated.

This information system is constantly updated upon notifying the receipt of the request for information, releasing the relevant information expeditiously and facilitating to obtain such information from the relevant Ministry.

10.3 Method of storing reports

Via Electronic data system and filling documents

10.4 Whether the reports have been indexed and stored with references so as to access to them easily?

yes

10.5 Developments and changes made to the above references and indexes, within the year.

Action is being taken to develop a computer software and store data.

10.6 Average time required to find and submit a document from the Record Room –

Approximately 05 minutes

10.7 With regard to the physical databases, whether the relevant reports have been stored within the office premise/ outside the office premise or in both manner?

Stored in both ways

In view of managing spaces, documents pertaining to the Cabinet decisions before 2006 have been sent to the Department of National Archives for preservation. Measures have been taken to obtain such information from the Department of National Archives and release as per the requests made by the various Government institutions and citizens. Further, actions have been taken to streamline the process of issuing documents pertaining to the old Cabinet decisions by digitalizing the same prior to handing over the originals to the Department of National Archives.

10.8 Whether the necessary facilities have been made available for the maintenance of existing reports for 10 years and new reports for 12 years?

yes

Cabinet decisions, Memoranda and documents related thereto before 2006 have been stored in the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers in a manner that can be quickly retrieved through physical and electronic filing and action has been taken to maintain new reports and documents as well over 12 years via physical and electronic methods.

10.9 Whether the budgetary provisions have been allocated for storage and management of information?

No special provisions have been made for this. Nevertheless, required provisions are managed within the budgetary provisions allocated to the to the Office.

10.10 If records are not digitally maintained, please indicate what steps have been taken during the year or proposed to be taken to convert records to a digital format?

Measures are taken to retain scanned copies of Cabinet Memoranda and decisions from the year 2019.

The relevant activities have been initiated to further develop the information system of this office and accordingly, it is expected to retain a copy of the old Cabinet decisions prior to sending them the Department of Archives and action is being taken to scan Cabinet decisions and relevant documents from 2005 to 2018 and retain a digital copy of the same thereby anticipating efficient delivery of those old documents.

10.11 If information is stored digitally, is it done by the Public Authority or an external entity?

It is being carried out by the office staff.

10.12 Are digitally stored data/records accessible via the internet?

Only certain data and reports available in the digital format can be obtained by logging into www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk, the office web site.

10.13 If so, is the Network security updated at least once a month? Yes

11. Suggestions for maintaining reports and improving management and avoiding impediments related to that.

The use of simple software will make it easier to search information and reports as per the practices of this office pertaining to the maintenance and management of reports and retaining scanned digital copies of the documents as far as possible enables to manage space of the Office and to issue information expeditiously.

12.0 What facilities are available for citizens to obtain information?

Facilities have been made available for citizens who are seeking information to hand over their requests for information by visiting the office in person or to send applications by post, a fax message via fax number 011-2323730 or through e mail to info@cabinetoffice.gov.lk and by contacting our Information Officer via 011-2431011 for obtaining information.

Officers in the front desk of this office have been trained to accept the Request for Information (RTI 01) handed over by persons visiting the Cabinet office seeking information and providing guidance to obtain information.

Our official web site www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk carries all the information in all three languages pertaining to steps to be followed in obtaining information, applications be used for the same, all the details relating to the implementation of the Right to Information Act including Extraordinary Gazette Notifications issued in that regard.

Further, arrangements have been made as far as possible to provide information requested, through email or the relevant Ministry by scanning the relevant documents.

In addition, action is taken to upload the name list and coordinating details of all Ministers including State Ministers and coordinating details of all Ministries, State Ministries and of Ministry Secretaries, on www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk, the official web site.

Further, summaries on important decisions made by the Cabinet on implementation of development projects, Government procurements, new legislations/amendments to the existing laws, providing services to public have been published on our official website for the information of the general public.

13.0 Fees levied during the year 2021 for the release of information

In 2021, no fees were charged since the information provided by this office under the Act contained only four pages or less or provided scanned copies through emails. In the instances where facilities were made available to provide information through the relevant Ministries, the Ministries have been informed to charge the applicable fees.

14.0 Suggestions to enhance the functions and transparency of the Right to Information Act -

I suggest that it would be appropriate to publish an updated summary of the Orders made so far by the Right to Information Commission and judicial interpretations on the provisions of Act on the official website of the Commission.

Further, the fees levied for the providing information would be appropriate to review taking into consideration the increase of paper cost, thereby incentivizing to obtain information as scanned documents free of charge.

Signed/:

Name : **W.M.D.J. Fernando**

Designation : **Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers/ Designated Officer**

Date : **2022-12-29**