



Endline KAP Study

# Access to Information in Balochistan

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Acknowledgments.....	4
Acronyms.....	5
List of Tables.....	6
Executive Summary.....	7
Introduction.....	9
Research Methodology.....	10
Findings.....	13
Knowledge.....	13
Attitude.....	14
Practices.....	16
Conclusions.....	18
Recommendations.....	19
Annex: Respondents' Profile.....	20

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## ACRONYMS

ATI	Access to Information
CVP	Citizens' Voice Project
DRS	Development Resource Solutions
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GOB	Government of Balochistan
IR	Information Request
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
POB	Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan
RTI	Right to Information
TAF	The Asia Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Distribution of the Respondents' of KIIs
Table 2	How would you rank your knowledge of Balochistan's 'FOI Act 2005'?
Table 3	To what extent do you think, Balochistan's FOI Act 2005, protects people's right to public information?
Table 4	A new RTI law should be promulgated by the provincial government of Balochistan:
Table 5	What should the provincial government do to improve implementation of the 'FOI Act'?
Table 6	How important is 'Access to Public Information' in your view?
Table 7	To what extent do you agree that improved access to public information has an important role in the following;
Table 8	People should have access to public information, including?
Table 9	Who must have the right of Access to public information?
Table 10	Have you ever submitted an information request to the Govt department to seek official information?
Table 11	If Yes, did you get the required information?
Table 12	If no, what was the reason?
Table 13	Have you ever received any information request?
Table 14	What do you think is the most important barrier in provision of information?
Table 15	What do you suggest to improve implementation of the FOI Act in public institutions?
Table 16	How effective were the following interventions of the project to contribute positively to your work with regard to FOI Act?

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development Resource Solutions is implementing a project 'Voice for Transparency Reforms' in Balochistan in collaboration with USAID's 'Citizens Voice Project'. The project is dedicated to advocate for 'Right to Information' legislation in Balochistan and improve access to public information through engagement with government departments, legislators, civil society and media. This endline study is part of the project and is aimed to assess the changes occurred as a result of the project interventions in the knowledge, attitude and practices of the demand and supply side stakeholders with regard to 'Freedom of Information'. The Study covers purposively selected public service delivery departments in Quetta district including health, education, Metropolitan Corporation and Water and Sanitation Authority. Provincial Ombudsman Office and information department were also assessed as major stakeholder departments regarding 'freedom of information' in the study. On the demand side, the respondents were selected among the journalists, lawyers, business persons and members of the local civil society organizations.

The study finds out that knowledge of the Government officials' on FOIA is comparatively better than the members of civil society and media. A larger majority of the members of civil society and media (almost 80%) is not confident about the level of their knowledge on FOIA. Overall 90% of the Govt officials and 94% of the members of civil society and media agree that there is a need for promulgation of a new RTI law in the province to replace the existing FOIA 2005. A vast majority of both sides of the demand and supply side stakeholders understands the need for raising mass awareness, establishing provincial information commission, appointing public information officers and capacitating public officials to effectively implement FOIA 2005. Majority of all the stakeholders interviewed, think that improved access to public information has an important role in strengthening of democracy, reducing corruption, improving public service delivery, empowering people and enhancing public participation. Interestingly, almost half of the members of civil society and media (47%) think that the people may not have access to public information regarding the privileges received by public officials. Utilization of the FOIA for public information is very low even by the most relevant section of the society i.e. members of the civil society and media. This indicates a grave lack of confidence on the existing system of information provision.

Overall, project interventions were ranked to be effective by majority of all the stakeholders including Govt officials, media persons and members of the civil society. Project components of print and electronic media campaign for mass awareness-raising was ranked as the least effective among three of the project components by the stakeholders.

The study recommends that the existing FOIA needs to be replaced with a RTI Act through consultation with all stakeholders. Stakeholders' understanding of the minimum standards for an effective 'RTI' Act and international best practices needs to be enhanced through capacity building interventions. An independent 'Information Commission' needs to be established to monitor implementation of the Act and redress public complaints. Record keeping and indexing mechanism needs to be improved especially by adopting ICT based methods. The provincial government should take necessary steps to appoint and capacitate public information officers at all levels in order to improve implementation of the Act. Effective print and electronic media campaigns for mass awareness-raising on FOIA need to

be conducted by civil society organizations in consultation and networking with other stakeholders. An institutional capacity development mechanism for the Govt officials needs to be devised to improve implementation of the FOIA. Capacity building interventions should be organized for members of civil society and media to enhance their knowledge and use of FOIA. Lobbying and advocacy interventions should be organized with the provincial legislators to highlight the need of replacing the existing FOIA 2005 with an effective RTI Act, in compliance with the international standards. Attitudinal change interventions should be conducted for all stakeholders especially for Govt officials to enable them recognize the importance of access to public information in improving public service delivery.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Balochistan' Freedom of Information Act 2005 (FOIA 2005) is based on the federal FOI Ordinance 2002. The law, besides a number of other shortcomings, restricts access to a large number of public documents and provides no protection to whistleblowers. It does not require the government to establish information commission to monitor implementation of the Act. Though the law has been in place for 10 years now but practical steps to establish mechanisms and processes for its effective implementation are not in place. Furthermore, citizens' awareness of the FOI framework and stakeholders' capacity to enforce the law in Balochistan is minimal.

In April 2010, under the 18th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan, Article 19-A was added which provided constitutional guarantee to the 'Right to Information' for the first time to the citizens of Pakistan. Article 19-A states that; 'Every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law.' During the past Six years, after amendment in the constitution, a number of legislative developments have been occurred in other provinces of the country (especially Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) but the provincial assembly of Balochistan has not yet promulgated new RTI law in accordance with the requirement of the constitution.

Development Resource Solutions is implementing a project 'Voice for Transparency Reforms' in Balochistan in collaboration with USAID's 'Citizens Voice Project'. The project is dedicated to advocate for 'Right to Information' legislation in Balochistan and improve access to public information through engagement with government departments, legislators, civil society and media.

Objectives of the project are as follows:

- To facilitate citizens' oversight of government departments through access to information;
- To lobby with policymakers for the enactment of a Right to Information law in Balochistan;
- To create public awareness of the need for a Right to Information law in Balochistan.

This endline study is part of the project and is aimed to assess the changes occurred as a result of the project interventions in the knowledge, attitude and practices of the demand and supply side stakeholders with regard to 'Freedom of Information'. The Study covers purposively selected public service delivery departments in Quetta district including health, education, Metropolitan Corporation and Water and Sanitation Authority. Provincial Ombudsman Office and information department were also assessed as major stakeholder departments regarding 'freedom of information' in the study. On the demand side, the respondents were selected among the journalists, lawyers, business persons and members of the local civil society organizations.

### **3. STUDY METHODOLOGY**

Overall aim of the study is to assess the changes occurred as a result of the project interventions in the knowledge, attitude and practices of the demand and supply side stakeholders, with regard to 'Access to Information'.

Specific objectives of the study are as follows;

- To assess the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of government officials on access to information;
- To assess the practice and experience of civil society stakeholders within the existing FOI framework;
- To gauge the change resulting from the project.

#### **3.1. Scope of the Study:**

The Study covers purposively selected public service delivery departments in Quetta district including health, education, Metropolitan Corporation and Water and Sanitation Authority. Provincial Ombudsman Office and information department were also assessed as major stakeholder departments regarding 'freedom of information' in the study. On the demand side, the respondents were selected among the journalists, lawyers, business persons and members of the local civil society organizations.

#### **3.2. Study Design:**

A two-fold qualitative and quantitative approach was adopted for the study including a desk review and primary data collection from selected line departments and demand side stakeholders regarding their experiences of accessing public information. The desk review included the review of project reports, the initial and amended Performance Monitoring Plan (PMPs), the baseline survey and other relevant program documents. The qualitative data gathered from these sources were triangulated, cross checked and mapped against the research questions. Individual 'Key Informant Interviews' were conducted to collect quantitative data on knowledge, attitude and practices of the selected stakeholders on both of the supply and demand sides, through structured questionnaires. Based on the overall analysis of the data, findings were summarized and a set of practical recommendations were drawn and presented.

#### **3.3. Key Research Questions:**

This study will seek to answer the following questions:

- What is the knowledge, attitude and practices of government officials, members of the civil society and media persons towards 'Access to Information'?
- What changes have been occurred in KAP of the stakeholders towards 'ATI' as result of the project interventions?
- What are the lessons learnt from the project interventions?
- What are the major recommendations for future interventions?

#### **3.4. Data Collection Tools:**

Two separate tools were applied for informed, in-depth, closed-ended interviews with individuals from two broad categories from the demand and supply side stakeholders;

- Government officials from selected departments
- Representatives from civil society including lawyers, NGO officials, Trade Unions and journalists from print and electronic media

Questions were kept as short, simple and minimum as possible so that the respondents are enabled to respond with clarity and ease. The questions for the interviews were derived from the basic research questions of this endline KAP study.

### 3.5. Sampling Methodology and Sample Size:

A combination of purposive and convenient sampling methods was adopted for data collection. Attendance sheets of the project activities were considered as the overall sampling frame for the study. District offices of Health, Education, WASA and Metropolitan Corporation are selected as sample service delivery departments whereas Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan and Press Information Departments are the key stakeholder departments with respect to their major responsibilities to implement and oversee the 'freedom of information' framework in the province.

60 KIIs were conducted to collect data including 30 officials of the selected service delivery departments and 30 respondents from the demand side stakeholders including lawyers, journalists, business persons and members of the local NGO. The data collection team was trained before being sent to the field for the interviews. Prior consent of the department was ensured. A statistical analysis method was used to analyze the data and draw conclusions. Once the collected data is analyzed, the draft report was consolidated.

A distribution of the respondents for KIIs is given below;

<b>Distribution of the Respondents' of KIIs</b>	
Departments	No. of Respondents
District Education Department	5
District Health Department	5
WASA	5
Metropolitan Corporation	5
Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan	5
Press Information Department	5
Local NGOs	10
Media Persons	10
Bar Council	5
Trade Unions	5
Total	60

### 3.6. Data Entry, Analysis and Report Writing:

The collected data was analyzed through statistical analysis method to draw conclusions. Based on the discussions and findings of the survey, major recommendations were finalized

for presentation to the relevant stakeholders. Initial report was shared with CVP for review and comments and was finalized in view of the feedback received from unit.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Knowledge:

#### How would you rank your knowledge of Balochistan's 'FOI Act 2005'?

	Excellent	Partial	Low
Govt Officials	43%	56%	0%
Civil Society and Media	20%	76%	3%

43% of the Govt officials ranked their knowledge of FOIA to be excellent whereas percentage of members of civil society and media with excellent knowledge on FOIA was 20% only. A clear majority of 76% of members of civil society and media ranked their knowledge of the FOIA to be 'partial' as compared to 56% of the Govt officials with similar level of knowledge.

#### To what extent do you think, Balochistan's FOI Act 2005, protects people's right to public information?

	Completely	Moderately	Not at All
Govt Officials	47%	50%	3%
Civil Society and Media	30%	67%	3%

Almost half (47%) of the Govt officials think that the existing FOIA 'completely' protects peoples' right to public information whereas only 30% of the members of civil society and media thinks so. 50% of the Govt officials against a clear majority of the members of civil society and media (67%)0 thinks that the existing Act only 'moderately' protects peoples' right to public information. Only 3% of both the demand and supply side stakeholders think that the FOIA does not protect peoples' right to public information at all.

#### A new RTI law should be promulgated by the provincial government of Balochistan.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree	Don't know
Govt Officials	17%	73%	7%	3%
Civil Society and Media	33%	61%	3%	3%

Only a small minority of 13% of Govt officials showed their 'strong agreement' on the need for promulgation of a new RTI law in the province against 33% of the members of civil society and media. A clear majority of 73% of the Govt officials and 61% of the members of civil society and media showed their 'agreement' on the need for promulgation of a new RTI law in the province. A clear minority of 7% of the Govt officials and 3% of the members of civil society and media did not agree with the need for promulgation of a new RTI law in the province.

**What should the provincial government do to improve implementation of the 'FOI Act'?**

	Raise awareness among the people	Establish Provincial Information Commission	Appoint Public Information Officers	Provide trainings to the relevant government officials
Govt Officials	100%	83%	77%	87%
Civil Society and Media	97%	90%	87%	80%

All of the Govt officials interviewed (100%) recognized the need of public awareness raising interventions on the FOIA, against 97% of the members of civil society and media who also think so. A clear majority of (83%) of the Govt officials thinks that a provincial information commission needs to be established to improve implementation of the FOIA, against 90% of the members of civil society and media. 77% of the Govt officials against 87% of the members of civil society and media recommended that the provincial government should appoint 'Public Information Officers' PIOs at all levels of the Government to improve implementation of the FOIA. A clear majority of Govt officials (87%) and members of civil society and media (80%) understands the need of enhanced capacity of the Government officials for improved implementation of the FOIA.

**4.2. Attitudes:**

**How important is 'Access to Public Information' in your view?**

	Extremely Important	Moderately important	Not important	Don't Know
Govt Officials	77%	23%	0%	0%
Civil Society and Media	70%	23%	7%	0%

77% of Govt officials against 70% of the members of Civil Society and Media think that 'Access to public information' is extremely important. 23% of both the stakeholders i.e. Govt officials and members of Civil Society and Media think that 'Access to public information' is moderately important. Amazingly, 7% of the members of Civil Society and Media think that 'Access to Public Information' is not important.

**To what extent do you agree that improved access to public information has an important role in the following:**

	Govt Officials				Civil Society and Media			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Agree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Agree	Don't Know
Strengthening of democracy	40%	60%	0%	0%	47%	53%	0%	0%
Reducing corruption	57%	37%	7%	0%	37%	60%	3%	0%
Improving public service delivery	37%	53%	7%	3%	30%	57%	7%	7%
Empowering people	43%	50%	7%	0%	27%	63%	7%	3%
Enhancing Public participation	40%	57%	3%	0%	20%	63%	3%	13%

All the stakeholders (100%) agree (an average of 83% strongly agree) that improved access to public information has an important role in strengthening of democracy. 93% of all the stakeholders agree that improved access to public information has an important role in reducing corruption. 90% of Govt officials and 86% of the members of civil society and media are in agreement with the statement that improved access to public information has an important role in improving public service delivery. 93% of Govt officials and 90% of the members of civil society and media agree that improved access to public information has an important role in empowering people. 97% of Govt officials and 84% of the members of civil society and media recognize the role of improved access to public information in enhancing public participation. Interestingly, 7% of both the stakeholders do not agree that improved access to public information has any role in Improving public service delivery and public empowerment.

#### People should have access to public information, including?

	Government policies	Governments' Development plans	Development budgets	Development Expenditures	Privileges of the officials	Don't Know
Govt Officials	97%	80%	70%	73%	57%	3%
Civil Society and Media	83%	73%	63%	73%	53%	10%

97% of the Govt officials and 83% of the members of civil society and media think that people should have access to information regarding government policies. 80% of the Govt officials and 73% of the members of civil society and media think that people should have access to information regarding governments' development plans. 70% of the Govt officials and 63% of the members of civil society and media think that people should have access to information regarding development budgets. 73% of both the Govt officials and the members of civil society and media think that people should have access to information regarding development expenditures. Almost half of both the stakeholders (57% of the Govt officials and 53% of the members of civil society and media) think that people should have access to the information regarding privileges received by the Govt officials.

#### Who must have the right of Access to public information?

	General public	Media persons only	Government officials only	All of the above	Don't Know
Govt Officials	50%	37%	17%	47%	0%
Civil Society and Media	27%	7%	3%	73%	0%

Half of the Govt officials, against 27% of the members of civil society and media, think that general public must have the right of access to public information. 37% of the Govt officials, against 7% of the members of civil society and media think that media persons must have the right of access to public information. 17% of the Govt officials, against 3% of the members of civil society and media, think that Govt officials only must have the right of access to public information. 47% of the Govt officials, against 73% of the members of civil society and media, think that everyone must have the right of access to public information.

### 4.3. Practices:

**Have you ever submitted an information request to the Govt department to seek official information?**

	Yes	No
Civil Society and Media	13	87

Only 13% of the members of civil society and media have submitted an information request to the Govt department to seek official information and 87% have not submitted any such request.

**If Yes, did you get the required information?**

	Yes	No
Civil Society and Media	50%	50%

Half of those who have submitted information requests have received the requested information and the remaining half were not provided with the requested information.

**If no, what was the reason? Tick one**

	Had no information about FOI Act	Did not believe that the information will be provided	Fear of action against me	Could not afford fee for the required information	Don't Know
Civil Society and Media	73%	23%	0%	0%	4%

73% of those who have not requested any public information did so due to lack of knowledge about the FOIA whereas 23% did so because they believed that the requested information would not be provided.

**Have you ever received any information request?**

	Yes	No
Govt Officials	10%	90%

Only 10% of the Govt officials interviewed said that they have been requested for official information and 90% said they have not been requested ever.

**What do you think is the most important barrier in provision of information?**

	Work load	Bad indexing / record keeping	Low capacity	Any other (Please mention):
Govt Officials	27%	7%	66%	3% Non willingness / bad intentions

Low capacity on part of the Govt officials was termed to be the most prominent barrier in provision of information (66%) by the Govt officials, followed by work load (27%) and bad indexing (7%). A minor percentage of the respondents (3%) said that non willingness and bad intention is the most prominent barrier in provision of information.

**What do you suggest to improve implementation of the FOI Act in public institutions?**

	Improve RTI legislation	Provide resources to Depts.	Enhance public awareness	Improve oversight by POB
Govt Officials	93%	60%	90%	57%

The need to improve RTI legislation was recognized by 93% of the Govt officials for improvement of the FOIA followed by ‘enhance public awareness’ (90%), ‘provide resources to the departments’ (60%) and ‘improve oversight by POB’ (57%).

**How effective were the following interventions of the project to contribute positively to your work with regard to FOI Act?**

	Government Officials				Civil Society and Media			
	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Not Effective	Don't Know	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Not Effective	Don't Know
Capacity Building	67%	33%	0%	0%	77%	23%	0%	0%
Printed Material	47%	53%	0%	0%	47%	47%	3%	3%
Media Campaign	30%	53%	0%	17%	20%	40%	10%	30%

While commenting on effectiveness of project interventions, 67% of the Govt officials ranked capacity building interventions of the project to be very effective and 33% termed it ‘moderately effective’. Information, education and communication material on the FOIA printed under the project was termed to be ‘moderately effective’ by majority of the Govt officials (53%) and ‘very effective’ by 47%. Print and electronic media campaign for mass awareness-raising was termed to be ‘moderately effective’ by majority of the Govt officials (53%) and ‘very effective’ by 30%. 77% of the members of civil society and media ranked capacity building interventions of the project to be ‘very effective’, whereas 23% termed it ‘moderately effective’. An equal number of 47% of the members of civil society and media ranked IEC material printed under the project to be ‘very effective’ and ‘moderately effective’. Print and electronic media campaign for mass awareness-raising was termed to be ‘moderately effective’ by majority of the members of civil society and media (40%) and ‘very effective’ by 20%.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Government officials' knowledge of the FOIA is comparatively better than the members of civil society and media.
- 5.2. A larger majority of the members of civil society and media (almost 80%) is not confident about the level of their knowledge on FOIA.
- 5.3. Overall 90% of the Govt officials and 94% of the members of civil society and media agree that there is a need for promulgation of a new RTI law in the province to replace the existing FOIA 2005.
- 5.4. A vast majority of both sides of the demand and supply side stakeholders understands the need for raising mass awareness, establishing provincial information commission, appointing public information officers and capacitating public officials to effectively implement FOIA 2005.
- 5.5. Majority of all the stakeholders interviewed, think that improved access to public information has an important role in strengthening of democracy, reducing corruption, improving public service delivery, empowering people and enhancing public participation.
- 5.6. Interestingly, almost half of the members of civil society and media (47%) think that the people may not have access to public information regarding the privileges received by public officials.
- 5.7. Utilization of the FOIA for public information is very low even by the most relevant section of the society i.e. members of the civil society and media. This indicates a grave lack of confidence on the existing system of information provision.
- 5.8. Overall, project interventions were ranked to be effective by majority of all the stakeholders including Govt officials, media persons and members of the civil society.
- 5.9. Project components of print and electronic media campaign for mass awareness-raising was ranked as the least effective among three of the project components by the stakeholders.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1. The existing FOIA needs to be replaced with a RTI Act through consultation with all stakeholders.
- 6.2. Stakeholders' understanding of the minimum standards for an effective 'RTI' Act and international best practices needs to be enhanced through capacity building interventions.
- 6.3. An independent 'Information Commission' needs to be established to monitor implementation of the Act and redress public complaints.
- 6.4. Record keeping and indexing mechanism needs to be improved especially by adopting ICT based methods.
- 6.5. The provincial government should take necessary steps to appoint and capacitate public information officers at all levels in order to improve implementation of the Act.
- 6.6. Effective print and electronic media campaigns for mass awareness-raising on FOIA need to be conducted by civil society organizations in consultation and networking with other stakeholders.
- 6.7. An institutional capacity development mechanism for the Govt officials needs to be devised to improve implementation of the FOIA.
- 6.8. Capacity building interventions should be organized for members of civil society and media to enhance their knowledge and use of FOIA.
- 6.9. Lobbying and advocacy interventions should be organized with the provincial legislators to highlight the need of replacing the existing FOIA 2005 with an effective RTI Act, in compliance with the international standards.
- 6.10. Attitudinal change interventions should be conducted for all stakeholders especially for Govt officials to enable them recognize the importance of access to public information in improving public service delivery.

## Annex I: Respondents' Profile

Respondents' Profile										
	Gender		Education		Age				Religion	
	Male	Female	Masters	Graduate and Under Graduate	<20	21-30	31-40	>40	Islam	Other
Govt Officials	24	6	21	9	0	2	12	16	29	1
Civil Society and Media	28	2	18	12	0	11	9	10	30	0



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