

Information Disclosure Policy

1. Introduction

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh (furtheron HELVETAS Bangladesh) promotes the right to access information held by public bodies as a basic human right for any citizen in Bangladesh. HELVETAS Bangladesh believes that public bodies have an obligation to disclose information and that every member of the public has a corresponding right to receive information. Transparency enhances democracy, accountability, and ultimately leads to better public policies and services.

The Government of Bangladesh introduced a Right to Information Act (RTI) in 2009. The Act obliges public bodies to disclose information to the citizens, but also obliges non-government organisations which receive either government or foreign funding, to disclose relevant information. In keeping with the spirit and beliefs of the organization and in compliance with the RTI Act 2009, HELVETAS Bangladesh has in place its own information disclosure policy. This policy ensures information disclosure in two main ways: First, HELVETAS Bangladesh discloses a range of information on its website (www.bangladesh.helvetas.org); Second, all information will be made available upon request, except where there are legitimate grounds for not disclosing (Chapter 4).

2. Routine Disclosure

The categories of information and documents listed in Annex I are available on the HELVETAS Bangladesh website and are, as relevant, routinely updated. Annex I itself is subject to annual review and updating. In rare cases, a document, or a part thereof, otherwise subject to routine publication may fall within the scope of the regime of exceptions, in which case it will not be made available.

3. Process for Requesting Information

a) Applying for Information

Anyone may request information from HELVETAS Bangladesh by e-mail or by conventional mail. HELVETAS Bangladesh designated Information Officers whose positions in the organization are disclosed in Annex II. In Annex II, the names of the persons including contact details are provided. Any request shall be directed to these persons. In case a request is not clear, HELVETAS Bangladesh will ask for further clarification and, when necessary, provide assistance to a requester in formulating his or her request.

b) Time Limits

HELVETAS Bangladesh will respond to general information requests within 20 working days from the date of the receipt. However, if more than one unit is connected to collect any information then in such cases response might take 30 working days from the date of receipt.

c) Form of Communicating Information

HELVETAS Bangladesh will provide the information in any form in which the organization holds it (normally electronic or print) or can generate it through an automated process (e.g. printing an electronic document).

d) Charges

No charges are applied for requests which can be satisfied electronically (i.e. by e-mail) and for the first 50 pages of printed or photocopied material. Reasonable charges, based on actual costs for copying and dissemination, may be applied in case of requests which involve larger amounts of information. In case of requests for documents which are offer for sale, the regular price of the document is charged.

4. Regime of Exceptions

Information pertaining exclusively to activities of third parties with whom HELVETAS Bangladesh cooperates or interacts in any other manner, remains property of those third parties and is not in the jurisdiction of this policy. Further on, in accordance with the RTI Act 2009, we recognize the following legitimate grounds for refusing access to information:

a) Personal Information

HELVETAS Bangladesh will not disclose personal information about a natural third party which would breach his or her privacy or a legitimate privacy interest unless that person has consented or the information was provided on the clear understanding that it might be made public.

b) Legal Privilege

HELVETAS Bangladesh will not disclose information which is privileged from production in legal proceedings unless the person who is entitled to the privilege waives it. HELVETAS Bangladesh will waive its own legal privilege unless to do so would put it at a disadvantage in legal proceedings or breach one of the other exemptions in this policy.

c) Confidentiality

HELVETAS Bangladesh will not disclose information where to do so would constitute an actionable breach of confidence or a related legal obligation. HELVETAS Bangladesh will also not disclose information where it was provided to us in confidence and to disclose it would seriously prejudice our relations with the body that provided it, to the detriment of HELVETAS interests.

d) Severability

Where only part of a document falls within the scope of an exception, the rest of the document, to the extent it may be reasonably severed from the exempt information, will still be disclosed.

Public Interest Override: Information will still be disclosed even if it falls within the scope of an exception where this is in the overall public interest.

5. Appeals

Anyone who believes that the concerned Information Officer of HELVETAS Bangladesh failed to properly apply this policy may appeal to the Country Director of HELVETAS Bangladesh (see Annex II for current person holding this position) (tel: +880 2 8815688 (ext. 402)). Any such appeal shall be decided within 15 calendar days after submission.

Entry into Force

This Information Disclosure Policy comes into force on 01 June 2015.

*Kaspar Grossenbacher,
Country Director
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh*

ANNEX I

Information Available on a Proactive Basis

The following categories of information and documents are available on our website and, as relevant, are regularly updated.

- About HELVETAS Bangladesh
- List of partners
- List of projects
- Working areas in Bangladesh
- HELVETAS operation worldwide
- Global annual report
- International Board of Directors
- Publications
- Contact details

Annex II: Current Persons Holding the Position of Information Officers and Appeal Authority

Information Officers

Dhaka Office:

Md. Humayun Kabir, Programme Officer M&E
Tel: +880 2 8829208, 8815688 Email: Humayun.Kabir@helvetas.org, Fax +880 2 881 9986,
Address: House No. 13/A NE (K), Road No. 83, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

Rajshahi Office:

A.F.M Amiruddin, Regional Coordinator, Sharique Project
Tel: +880 0721-761149, Email: amir.uddin@helvetas.org, Fax: +880 0721-761149 Address:
House no - 112, Sector no - 2, Rajshahi Housing Estate, Upashahar, Rajshahi

Khulna Office:

Bilkis Begum, Regional Coordinator, Sharique Project
Tel: +88 041-725406, Email: bilkis.begum@helvetas.org,
Address: House Name: Tanisha, House # 399, Road # 02, Sonadanga R/A, Phase -2,
Khulna-9100

Chapai Nawabganj Office:

Aung Chow Hla, Regional Coordinator, Sharique Project
Tel: +880 0781-51394, E-mail: aung.hla@helvetas.org,
Address: House # 249 (Holding Number), Shahibag, Chapai Nawabganj

Sunamganj Office:

Sharifa Khatun, Regional Coordinator, Sharique Project (Date of Joining 20th May 2015)
Tel: +880 871- 61554, Email: shorifa.khatun@helvetas.org, Address: House # 33, Ajabithi,
Jamtala, Sunamganj-3000

Appeal Authority

Kaspar Grossenbacher, Country Director

Tel: +880 2 8829208, 8815688 Email: kaspar.grossenbacher@helvetas.org, Fax +880 2 881 9986, Address: House No. 13/A NE (K), Road No. 83, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh