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Sri Lanka Jumps to Third Place Globally on the RTI Rating

On 3 February 2017, just on the deadline for this, the government of Sri Lanka published a set of Regulations and Rules under the Right to Information Act in the *Official Gazette*. The combined effect of the Regulations (adopted by the Minister of Parliament Reforms and Mass Media) and the Rules (adopted by the oversight body, the Right to Information Commission) was to add a full ten points to Sri Lanka's already strong score of 121 points out of a possible total of 150 on the RTI Rating. With its new score of 131 points, Sri Lanka boasts the third strongest legal framework for RTI in the world and the strongest in South Asia.

"Countries often go up a few points on the RTI Rating when they adopt rules and regulations", said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD. *"But this is a impressive jump up for a country which already had a very strong score so both the Minister and the Commission deserve to be congratulated for their good work."*

Some of the key improvements, from the RTI Rating perspective, introduced by the Regulations and Rules are as follows:

- Public authorities are required to transfer requests to other authorities where they do not hold requested information.
- The rules on fees have been clarified and are, for the most part, progressive.
- Clear rules on open reuse of information have been introduced.
- The power of the Commission to order public authorities to take structural measures to improve their general responses to requests has been clarified.
- Public authorities are obliged to provide training to their information officers.

Sri Lanka now faces the challenging task of implementing its strong legal framework for the right to information. CLD calls on the Ministry, public authorities and the Commission to ensure that this happens, and notes that it remains willing to provide support for this process.

The country scores on the RTI Rating are available at: <http://www.rti-rating.org/country-data/>.

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