

# **ROLE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS**

## **1 DESIGNATION OF PIOS & APIOS**

Section 5 (1) of the Act requires a Public Authority to designate “as many” officers as Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer, as the case may be, in all administrative units and offices under it as may be necessary to provide information to persons requesting for the same. They were to be designated within 100 days of the enactment of the Act. Similarly, Central or State Assistant Public Information Officers are to be designated at “each sub-divisional level or other sub-district level” to receive applications or appeals and forward them on to the concerned Public Information Officers, Designated Appellate officers and the Information Commission [Section 5(2)]. This is to ensure that the public can apply for information in their own local areas without the need for traveling long distances to the offices of the Public Information Officers.

## **2 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Act prescribes the obligations of a Public Information Officer (PIO), Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO) and other officers as follows:

### **Public Information Officer**

- to deal with requests from persons seeking information and render reasonable assistance to the persons seeking such information, taking the assistance of any other officer, if considered necessary by him or her for the proper discharge of duties [Section 5(3) & 5(4)];
- to render ‘all reasonable assistance’, where request for information cannot be made in writing, to the person making the request orally to reduce the same into writing [Section 6(1)];
- to dispose request for information under the Act, either providing the information requested on payment of prescribed fee or rejecting the request for reasons to be specified within the time period stipulated under the Act [Section 7(1)].

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### **Assistant Public Information Officer**

- to receive applications for information or appeals under the Act for forwarding the same forthwith to the Central Public Information Officer

or the State Public Information Officer or Appellate Officer or the Central Information Commission or the State Information Commission, as the case may be [Section 5 (2)].

#### **Officer whose Assistance is Sought**

- to render all assistance to the Public Information Officer who sought his or her assistance;
- to be treated as a Public Information Officer for the purposes of any contravention of the provisions of the Act. [Section 5 (5)]

### **3 PROCEDURES FOR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Section 6 of the Act stipulates that the request for information may be made to the Central Public Information Officer or State Public Information Officer, as the case may be, of the concerned public authority or given to the Central Assistant Public Information Officer or State Assistant Public Information Officer, as the case may be. The request for information can be made as follows:

- in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area in which the application is being made;
- oral request to be reduced to writing with assistance sought from Public Information Officer, where such request cannot be made in writing;
- to specify the particulars of the information being sought by the applicant;
- to be accompanied by fee as prescribed under the rules made under the Act;
- applicant not to be required to give reason for requesting the information or any other personal details except those that may be necessary for the purpose of contacting.

### **4 DISPOSAL OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Section 7 of the Act makes provisions regarding the disposal of request for information as follows:

- request for information shall be disposed by the Public Information Officer within 30 days of receipt in general cases and 48 hours of receipt in cases where the information sought for concerns the life or liberty of a person [section 7 (1)];
- a period of 5 days shall be added in computing the response time where an application for information is given to an Assistant Public Information Officer [Section 5(2)];

- request to be deemed to have been refused by the Public Information Officer, if decision on the request for information is not given within the period specified as above [Section 7(2)];
- where a decision is taken to provide the information on payment of any further fee representing the cost of providing the information, the Public Information Officer shall send an intimation to the person making the request, giving (a) the details of further fees representing the cost of providing the information as determined by him or her, together with the calculations made to arrive at the amount in accordance with fee prescribed, requesting him/her to deposit that fees, and the period intervening between the despatch of the said intimation and payment of fees shall

be excluded for the purpose of calculating the period of 30 days and (b) information concerning the right of the person making request with respect to review the decision as to the amount of fees charged or the form of access provided, including the particulars of the appellate authority, time limit, process and any other forms [Section 7(3)];

- where access to the record or a part thereof is required to be provided under the Act and the person to whom access is to be provided is sensorily disabled, the Public Information Officer shall provide assistance to enable access to the information, including providing such assistance as may be appropriate for the inspection [Section 7(4)];
- where access to information is to be provided in the printed or in any electronic format, the applicant shall pay the fee prescribed [Section 7(5)];
- before taking any decision to provide information, the Public Information Officer shall take into consideration the representation made by a third party [Section 11(1)];
- where a request has been rejected, the Public Information Officer shall communicate to the person making the request —
  - (i) the reasons for such rejection;
  - (ii) the period within which an appeal against such rejection may be preferred; and
  - (iii) the particulars of the appellate authority [Section 7(8)].

## **5 FEES & COSTS TO BE CHARGED**

The Act prescribes the following fees and costs to be charged from persons making request for information:

- (1) Cost: Section 4 (4) – Cost of medium: electronic or print or print cost price

(2) Fee: Section 6 (1) – Fee accompanying application of request for information

(3) Fee: Section 7 (1) – Fee as prescribed under rules for furnishing information

(4) Fee: Section 7(3) – Further fee representing the cost of providing the information requested as determined by PIO

(5) Fee: Section 7 (5) – Fee prescribed under rules for supply of information in printed or electronic format.

[Fees under Section 7 (3) and Section 7 (5) can be combined together.]

Other charges and costs, if any, need to be specified while disposing requests for information.

No fee shall be charged from the persons who are of below poverty line as may be determined by the appropriate Government [Section 7(5)];

Further, the person making request for information shall be provided the information free of charge where a public authority fails to comply with the stipulated time limits for disposal of request applications [Section 7(6)];

## **6. SCALE OF FEES**

The Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India has, under the Right to Information (Regulation of Fees and Cost) Rules, 2005, prescribed an application fee of rupees ten for a request for obtaining information under Section 6(1). This could be in cash against proper receipt or by demand draft or by banker's cheque or Indian Postal Order payable to the Accounts Officer of the public authority. The Government of India Right to Information (Regulation of Fees and Cost) Rules, 2005 provide that the public authority may also charge the following as fees for providing information under Section 7(1):

a) Rs 2/- for each page (in A4 or A3 size paper) created or copied.

b) actual charges or cost of a copy in larger size paper.

c) actual cost or price for samples or models.

d) for inspection of records, no fees for the first hour; and a fee of Rs 5 for each hour (or fraction thereof) thereafter.

The fee amounts could be paid in cash against proper receipt or by demand draft or by banker's cheque or Indian Postal Order payable to the Accounts Officer of the concerned public authority.

Further, for providing information under Section 7(5), the prescribed fee pattern is:

a) for information provided in diskette or floppy - Rs 50/- per diskette or floppy.

b) for information provided in printed form at the price fixed for such publication or Rs. 2/- per page of photocopy for extracts from the publication.

The above fee pattern could be a model for State Governments to determine the structure of fees to be applicable in the respective States.

## **7 FORM OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Section 7 (9) provides that information shall ordinarily be provided in the form in which it is sought unless it would “disproportionately divert the resources of the public authority or would be detrimental to the safety or preservation of the record in question”. The information provided to an applicant, to the extent possible, has to be in the form which is easily understandable to him or her. The information becomes more meaningful if the same is given in the local language. An aspect to be considered here is: whether any information supplied under this Act could be properly stamped as, for example, ‘supplied under RTI Act’ for easy identification of such material supplied.

## **8 TIME LIMITS FOR DISPOSAL OF REQUESTS**

Section 7 (1) requires that the information requested by an applicant to a PIO shall be furnished “as expeditiously as possible”. The time limits prescribed under the Act for disposal of requests for information are as follows:

30 days: On receipt of a request for information, the PIO has either to provide information on payment of such fees as prescribed or reject the request with reasons for the same.

48 hours: If the information sought concerns the life or liberty of a person, the same has to be provided immediately, in any case, within 48 hours.

35 days: 5 more days to be added to the above time limits if the application is submitted to the Assistant Public Information Officer.

40 days: Where third party is involved (If the PIO intends to disclose any information which relates to or has been supplied by a third party and has been treated as confidential by it, the PIO has to give a written notice to such third party within 5 days from the receipt of request inviting such third party to make a submission).

45 days: Information pertaining to allegations of human right violations from scheduled security and intelligence agencies.

Under Section 6 (3) of the Act, if a request application is made to a public authority on a subject that pertains to another public authority, the same shall be transferred to that other authority within 5 days from the date of receipt of the application. The other public authority will be subject to time limit for disposal from the date of receipt of the application. As per Section 7 (3) of the Act, the period intervening between the despatch of Intimation to the applicant and the deposit of further fees representing the cost of providing the information shall be excluded from the stipulated time limit of 30 days.

## **9 INFORMATION UP TO 20 YEARS**

Section 8(3) of the Act stipulates that subject to exemptions relating to information linked to sovereignty, integrity and security matters, breach of privilege of Parliament or the State Legislature and cabinet papers, any information relating to any occurrence, event or matter which has taken place, occurred or happened 20 years before the date on which any request is made, shall be provided to any person making a request under the Act. However, where any question arises as to the date from which the period of 20 years has to be computed, the decision of the Central Government shall be final, subject to the usual appeals provided for in the Act.

## **10 PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHT**

Section 9 of the Act provides that a Public Information Officer may reject a request for information where such a request for providing access would involve an infringement of copyright subsisting in a person other than the State.

## **11 ACCESSES TO PART OF RECORD**

Section 10 provides that where a request for access to information is rejected on the ground that it is in relation to information which is exempt from disclosure, access may be provided to that part of the record “which does not contain any information which is exempt from disclosure under the Act” and “which can reasonably be severed from any part that contains exempt information”. Where access is granted to a part of the record the Public Information Officer shall give a notice to the applicant under Section

10 (2), informing—

(a) that only part of the record requested, after severance of the record containing information which is exempt from disclosure, is being provided;

- (b) the reasons for the decision, including any findings on any material question of fact, referring to the material on which those findings were based;
- (c) the name and designation of the person giving the decision;
- (d) the details of the fees calculated by him or her and the amount of fee which the applicant is required to deposit; and
- (e) his or her rights with respect to review of the decision regarding non-disclosure of part of the information, the amount of fee charged or the form of access provided, including the particulars of the Appellate Officer or the Information Commission, time limit, process and any other form of access.

## **12 THIRD PARTY INFORMATION**

“Third Party” is defined under the Act to mean a person other than the citizen making a request for information and the public authority to which the request is made. It could be a private individual or a public authority [Section 2 (n)]. Section 11 of the Act requires that if the information sought by the citizen pertains to a record or part thereof relates to, or has been supplied by a third party and if it is not treated as confidential by that third party, the PIO is at liberty to provide the same to the applicant. If, however such above information is treated as ‘confidential’ by that third party, the following steps will have to be taken:

- The PIO gives a written notice to the third party, within 5 days of receipt of the application, and conveys his intention to disclose the information or record while requiring the third party to make a submission, within 10 days from the date of receipt of such notice, regarding whether the information should be disclosed or not.
- The third party should, within 10 days from the date of receipt of notice from the PIO, make a representation in writing or orally against the proposed disclosure and give written notice to the third party.
- The PIO can, within 40 days after the receipt of application for information, if the third party has been given an opportunity to make representation, make a decision on disclosure and give a written notice to the third party.
  
- The third party is entitled to prefer an appeal against the decision of the PIO. Except in the case of “trade or commercial secrets protected by law”, disclosures involving third party information may be allowed, if

the public interest in disclosure outweighs the importance of any possible harm or injury to the interests of such third party. If the third party is a private individual, the PIO has to be very cautious and properly weigh the consequences as privacy of an individual is important and protected under Section 8 (1) (j).

### **13 STEPS FOR DISPOSAL OF REQUESTS**

*The procedure to be followed by the PIO right from the stage of receipt of application for information till the disposal involves a number of steps as follows:*

- *receives application along with the application fee.*
- *scrutinizes the application received and the fees prescribed.*
- *If required, renders reasonable assistance to the applicant by reducing the oral request in writing.*
- *Record the application in the Inward Register.*
- *Issues acknowledgement/ receipt to the applicant.*
- *Transfers the application / part of it to another public authority, if required.*
- *Informs the applicant about such transfers.*
- *Makes necessary entries in the Register being maintained.*
- *Considers the representations of a 'third party', if any.*
- *In case of rejection, conveys reason for it, the period within which the appeal may be preferred and the details of the Appellate Authority to whom appeal can be preferred.*
- *Sends intimation to the applicant the further fee, representing the cost of providing the information, to be paid along with its calculations.*
- *Also intimates about the modalities of deposit of fee, the right of the applicant for review of the fees charged and appeal against the calculation or the form of access.*
- *Wherever required, provides assistance to citizens for inspection of works, documents, records and taking samples of material.*
- *Waives fees for citizens Below Poverty Line.*
- *Retains record on each application, disposal etc. so that materials as required may be furnished to appellate authorities in case first/second appeal is preferred.*

### **14 INSPECTION OF WORK/RECORD/TAKING SAMPLE(S)**

Right to Information includes, inter alia, inspection of work, documents, records, taking notes, extracts and certified samples of material. In consultation with the concerned sections/divisions/offices in



Government Departments, PIOs may fix a day or two of the week for applicants to take samples and for inspection of material. Such an arrangement may not disturb the work in the section/division/office and the citizen would also be aware of the days of visit to the PIO/Public Authority.

The General Clauses Act, 1897 defines:

‘document’: shall include any matter written, expressed or described upon any substance by means of letters figures or marks, or by more than one of those means which is intended to be used or which may be used, for the purpose of recording that matter.

Further, the Oxford Dictionary of English (2nd edition revised) defines some of the terms used in the RTI Act as follows: ‘inspect’: look at (something) closely, typically, to assess its condition or to discover its shortcomings...; ‘material’: the matter from which a thing is or can be made, things needed for an activity, the basic material from which a product is made; ‘sample’: a small part or quantity intended to show what the whole is like; ‘work’: activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a result, denoting things or parts made of a specified material or with specified tools... denoting a mechanism or structure of a specified kind...

## **15 GROUNDS FOR REJECTION OF REQUESTS**

**(a) Section 8 (1):** Exemptions from disclosure of information.

There is no obligation on the part of a PIO to give any citizen the following:

- a) Information where disclosure would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relation with the foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence;
- b) information expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court;
- c) information, the disclosure of which would cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or State Legislature;
- d) information including commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property where disclosure would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information;
- e) information available to a person in his fiduciary relationship, unless larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information;
- f) Information received in confidence from a foreign Government;

g) Information, the disclosure of which would endanger the life or physical safety of any person or identify the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes;  
 h) Information which would impede the process of investigation or apprehension or prosecution of offenders;

i) Cabinet papers including records of deliberations of the Council of Ministers, Secretaries and other officers;

j) Personal information, which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information.

(The information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or State Legislature shall not be denied to a person making request for the same). However, a PIO may allow access to information if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interest.

**(b) Section 9:** Infringement of the copyright subsisting in a person other than the State. This is the only absolute exemption. Here the PIO need not consider the public interest in disclosure.

**(c) Section 11:** Third party information treated as confidential by the concerned and involving the case of trade or commercial secrets protected by law and other third party information where the public interest in disclosure does not outweigh the importance of any possible harm or injury to the interests of such third party.

**(d) Section 24:** Information of exempted intelligence and security organizations except information pertaining to allegations of corruption and human rights violations.

## **16 PROCEDURE FOR REJECTION OF REQUESTS**

A PIO is required under the Act to either provide the information, on payment of the requisite fee or reject the request within the time limit prescribed. The Act stipulates that where a request for information is rejected by the PIO, the PIO will communicate the decision to the person making the request along with:

- i) the reasons for rejection.
- ii) the period within which an appeal against such rejection may be preferred (within 30 days of the date of the rejection)
- iii) the particulars of the Appellate Authority.

## **17 DELAYS & INCOMPLETE INFORMATION**

In the case of delay in providing the requisite information to the person seeking the same or if the information provided is incomplete, such an

eventuality could be a basis for appeal. Therefore, the PIO, in addition to maintaining registers for receipt of requests for information and disposal of such requests, will also have to develop checklists and keep a check on the pendency and/or completeness of the information provided. This is important because the burden of proving that the PIO acted reasonably and diligently would be solely on the PIO himself or herself and that would certainly require production of documentary evidence.

## **18 CHECK SLIP FOR PIOS**

To enable the PIOs to discharge their functions effectively, it will be useful for the PIOs to be ready with the following:

- Full details of the administrative unit/office/organisation.
- Full details of the department of which the public authority is a part.
- Information proactively published by the public authority.
- Information made available electronically.
- Annual report and other documents published by the public authority.
- Names, addresses and other details of the Appellate Authorities:  
Designated Appellate Officers and Information Commission
- The contact details of the other Public Authorities, PIOs and APIOs.
- Proforma for the receipt of application for request of information.
- Forms for receipt of fees and acknowledgement, communication of decision including rejection.
- Proper seating arrangements to facilitate easy accessibility of citizens to information handbooks, portals, websites etc.
- Register for receipt, acknowledgements - separately for inward and outward and roznama.
- Checklist for monitoring the disposal, pendency and disposal of the applications for information.
- Arrangements for inspection of records/taking samples by persons making requests and fix a particular day or two in the week for the above purposes and be ready with an appropriate contingency plan.

## **19 SOME IMPORTANT TIPS FOR PIOS**

The PIOs need to constantly keep the following in mind:

- Information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or the State Legislature shall not be denied to any citizen.
- Notwithstanding the exemptions permissible under Section 8 (1) of the Act, access to information is to be allowed, if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interest.

- The Right to Information Act, 2005 overrides the Official Secrets Act, 1923.
  - Any material relating to occurrence, event or matter, which has taken place, occurred or happened 20 years before the date of the application has to be given to the applicant.
  - Access to information should not involve an infringement of copyright subsisting in a person other than the State.
  - Information supplied by a third party can be provided by the PIO subject to legal safeguards under Section 11.
  - The burden is on the PIO to prove before the Information Commission in appeal that he acted reasonably and diligently. He has to support the same with documentary evidence.
- The PIO is personally liable to pay penalty if the same is imposed by the Information Commission while deciding on complaints and appeals.

## **20 DEALINGS WITH APIOS & OTHER DEPARTMENTS.**

The PIO has to keep in constant touch with the APIOs. The appointment of APIOs has been envisaged under the Act to enable citizens to make request for information from sub-district/district levels to the place of location of the PIOs. Where an application or an appeal is received by the APIO, a period of 5 days is to be added in computing the time limit for response.

The APIOs need to inform the PIO from time to time about the status of the applications received along with date of receipt, sent to PIOs, the fees paid, etc. Similarly the PIO needs to inform the concerned APIOs about the information provided, information denied, the grounds for denial, applications wherein the decision has extended beyond the prescribed time limit etc. PIO may transfer the request for information either in totality or partially to another public authority if the subject matter pertains to that other Public Authority. Similarly a PIO could get a request transferred to him from another Public Authority. In both the cases, a period of 5 days is to be added in computing the time limit for response.

The responsibility of the PIO does not cease when a request is transferred to another public authority. While transferring he/she has to concurrently inform the applicant about the same. He/she is also required to keep a record of transfer in his/her Outward Register for future reference and monitoring. Coordination between the two public authorities in such cases would also enable the PIOs concerned to present the correct picture before the Appellate Officer or Information

Commission, as the case may be, if and when the applicant prefers an appeal.

## **21 DEALING WITH CITIZENS**

With the Right to Information Act, 2005 firmly in place, disclosure is the rule and secrecy or exemption is an exception.

The Act confers a right to ‘information’ and not just ‘records’ or ‘documents’. “Information” is defined by the Act very broadly. Right to Information includes inspection covering taking of samples by a citizen. Keeping the importance attached to the citizens’ Right to Information, the Act bars the courts from entertaining any suit application or other proceeding in respect of any order made under this Act and no such order shall be called in question “otherwise than by way of an appeal under this Act”. Seeking information is the citizen’s right and an applicant making a request for information cannot be asked to give any reason for requesting the information or any other personal details except those that may be necessary for contacting that applicant. There is provision of compensation to the citizens.

An individual’s right to privacy, however, is protected under the Act. The exemption accorded to private information under the Act reflects the underlying public interest to protect personal privacy and prevent “unwarranted invasion” of the same.

The PIOs are required to render reasonable assistance to applicants for information.

The help from the PIO to citizens could be in any form as stated below:

- Where a citizen is unable to make a request in writing, the PIO shall render assistance to the person making the request orally to present the same in writing;

- Where the information sought concerns the life or liberty of a person the

PIO shall take all steps to provide the required information within 48 hours of receipt of such request.

- When the person to whom the access to record is to be provided is sensorily disabled, the PIO shall provide necessary assistance to enable access to the information, including such assistance appropriate for the inspection.

- When the right to information includes inspection of records, the PIO will reserve place and time for such inspection. Necessary arrangements have to be made to ensure that the citizen can carry out the inspection without any disturbance or distraction.

- The PIO would also make necessary arrangements for giving material samples, wherever required.

“Justice delayed is justice denied”. There should not be any undue delay in providing information sought by the public. The Act, therefore, stipulates time limits for supply of information. If the requisite information is not provided to the applicant within the stipulated period, the same will be construed as deemed refusal under the Act and the applicant can prefer an appeal against it.

## **22 DEALING WITH APPELLATE AUTHORITIES**

The PIOs should be well conversant with the powers and functions of the Appellate

Officer and the Information Commission as envisaged under the Act.

While conveying information or rejecting request for information or conveying the fee amount to be paid etc., the PIO is required to indicate the right to appeal and the details of the Appellate Authority to whom the applicant can appeal. This amounts to paving the way for appeal to be preferred, if considered necessary by the applicant, and getting ready for meeting the requirements of the Appellate Authority.

The State / Central Information Commission (as the case may be) is mandatorily required to impose a penalty on an erring PIO, if in its opinion the PIO has without any reasonable cause:

- i. Refused to receive the application for information.
- ii. Not furnished information within the specified time or
- iii. Malafidely denied the request for information or

iv. Destroyed the information which was the subject matter of the request or

v. Obstructed in any manner the furnishing of the requested information.

In the event of the above, the Information Commission shall impose a penalty of Rs. 250/- per day on the PIO till application is received or information is furnished subject to the total amount of such penalty not exceeding Rs.25000/-. The Information Commission shall recommend for disciplinary action against the PIO under the service rules applicable to him in certain cases. If he/she persistently violates the provisions of the Act, without any reasonable cause. The Information Commission is legally bound to give an opportunity to the PIO to be heard before deciding to impose a penalty. The PIO has, therefore, to prepare himself / herself to justify the action taken by him/her and prove that he/she acted reasonably and diligently. It is needless to say that the PIO keeps public interest paramount all the time. When it comes to making a

decision to determine public interest versus private interest, it is important that the PIO makes a decision after considering all possible aspects of the issues at hand – the pros and cons and the legal position.

### **23 GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORITIES & OFFICERS**

It will be proper for the appropriate Government/public authorities to prepare guides/ manuals for Public Authorities/Public Information Officers and Assistant Public Information Officers/Appellate Officers. A simplified “Dos and Don’ts” list in official language of the area could be prepared by every public authority for use as a check list by the APIOs, PIOs and Appellate Officers. As time proceeds, more and more information may be made available in the electronic form to citizens by the public authorities. All the APIOs, PIOs, and Appellate Officers may be provided access to computer facility and networks; and adequate training in the use of computers and information systems for retrieval of information may also be provided to them.

### **24 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES**

The Public Information Officer plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The compliance with various provisions of the Act requires a certain level of preparedness on part of the PIO. He/she should have complete knowledge of and experience in office procedures. He/she should have adequate knowledge of record management systems in the public authority, including retrieval of information from the internet. He/she needs to know the structure, functions and delegation of powers within the organization. He/she should be well-versed with the organization chart, the levels of disposal of cases, appeals etc. He/She should be fully conversant with all the provisions of the Act. The PIO should be good in negotiations with the public, colleagues, third parties and others so that he/she could have smooth interactions with all these stakeholders and effectively attend to his/her duties. The PIO should also have good drafting skills so as to be able to issue well-reasoned orders. The tasks required to be performed as PIO, for an official, will be in addition to the work he/she performs as an officer of the public authority. The PIO should be able to judiciously apportion time available with him/her to the various activities entrusted to him/her and RTI-related work. Availability of inadequate time cannot be a justification for delay in the disposal of requests for information or for supply of incomplete information. The PIOs need to be prepared, motivated and trained in right to information, office procedures, information management, good

governance, and change management etc. from time to time. Similarly, Appellate Officers and other officers should be trained regularly. Simultaneously, training and awareness programmes need to be launched to address the demand side issues like mobilization of people, civil society action, legal literacy etc.

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