



Penal Reform International (PRI) Open Information Policy

Statement

PRI is committed to being transparent in its work and accountable to its key stakeholders, in particular people affected by criminal justice and penal systems: including civil society organisations, governments, donors, international bodies and other stakeholders working on penal reform; and to our staff, volunteers, supporters, general public, partners and suppliers.

We believe that an open information policy is based on the assumption that all information should be disclosed unless there are good reasons for withholding it and these should be clearly stated.

The information that we publish and how we respond to requests for information are important aspects of accountability. The general principle is that we will publish information, or give reasons for any decision not to disclose (for example, to respect confidentiality or where there is a risk to our local partners). Our key criterion for the decision will be the impact on our mission and strategic objectives.

Our information policy is based on the strong arguments in favour of open information, including:

- It is in the interests of PRI, donors, governments, and other stakeholders to plan more effectively as a result of knowing what projects/programmes are being carried out in what countries and by whom to ensure best use of resources, meet priority needs and prevent duplication of activities.
- Publishing information about aid money and how it is spent is a key way to share information among NGOs, donors and governments about what is being done, by whom and where. It is an opportunity to learn from others and share learning – about programmes, experience, impact, actors.
- It is important to establish transparency and accountability for funds received, and to demonstrate value for money where public or donor money is concerned.

However, we also have to bear in mind factors of proportionality, resources and the cost/benefits involved in providing open information and maximum transparency. Practical considerations affect the amount of detail that we can afford to give. We are an international NGO with a small and specialist niche in the development aid world and a limited budget and resources.

We work in over 20 countries on a range of donor-funded programmes that are country or multi-regionally based. We produce information resources and training materials for country and international target audiences. Our international advocacy is focused on a small but key number of inter-governmental or international institutions and policy-makers.

We will provide information about PRI, including our governance, programmes and projects, resources and publications, where and who we work with, on our website, in our annual and other reports and information channels, as well as through the IATI process. The level and detail of this information will take into account proportionality, resources and cost/benefit; criteria for this is set out below under our 'Exclusion Policy'.

International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)

Information that PRI publishes on the [IATI](#) website will be fully compliant with our commitment under our PPA agreement with the UK Government (2011-2014). This means that we will publish on the IATI website the minimum level of disclosure required by the UK Government by 1st April 2013 and will provide additional levels of disclosure by 31st December 2013, and subsequently, taking into account factors of proportionality, resources and cost/benefit as set out in our exclusion policy. Information will be updated and published on IATI quarterly. This incremental approach towards transparency through the IATI system, will enable us to review the administrative work needed to input and update the data, monitor any consequences following disclosure, and assess how best to move towards full implementation.

Exclusion policy

It is sadly the case that our focus on human rights and penal/prisons reform is sometimes controversial. By publicising all activities and expenditure, we are open to scrutiny that may adversely affect what we and our partners and donors are trying to achieve and put our beneficiaries, partners and staff at risk.

The amount of information and level of detail that we are able to publish is also determined by our limited capacity and resources. For example, the process of publishing information on the IATI website requires extra time and work for staff and historical records were not produced with publication in mind.

We do not currently plan to disclose:

- Information that might have an adverse impact on relations between ourselves and the government or other local organisations where we work. This could arise in describing the human rights situation in project documents or on our website for programmes in particular countries and the need for reform.
- Information that would put staff or our partners at risk where we are working in politically sensitive issues or locations.
- Personal information such as staff or partners' names and addresses, which encroaches on their right to privacy.
- Commercially sensitive information, such as salaries, consultancy fees or breakdown of budgets.

These exclusions and PRI's open information policy will be regularly reviewed and may change over time in the light of changing circumstances.

Alison Hannah
PRI Executive Director

6 March 2013