RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION COMMISSION - SIERRA LEONE

Project Title:

To promote the integration of SDG 16.10.2 into the Voluntary National Review of the SDGs process and Records Management

TABLE OF CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following its reconstitution in November 2018, the Right to Access Information Commission wasted no time in going into action and has since then made tremendous effort in fulfilling its core mandate of facilitating access to information, promoting transparency, accountability and good governance across a broad spectrum of sectors in Sierra Leone. Thanks to funding from OSIWA and the World Bank which was very critical in this fulfilment, although it is clear that the Commission would have even done more had it not been seriously constrained by limited funding and staff capacity . It is clear from its mandate that the RAIC hugely complements the efforts of the Anti-Corruption Commission, especially in preventing corruption. The urgency of the RAIC mandate is further underscored by the renewed war against corruption championed by the government of President Julius Maada Bio which is making a tremendious impact and receiving wider international accolades.

However, while the Commission has made important strides in promoting access to information and proactive disclosure through its popularisation of the RAI law and the training of state and non-state actors on their rights and obligations provided in the law, very little progress has been made in the monitoring and reporting on compliance by public authoirities with their obligations under the Right to Access information Law 2013 and its integration into the National Voluntary Review of the SDGs in general and SDG 16.102. which relates to Public Access to Information in particular, and promoting awareness of the importance of records management and documentation in creating an enabling environment for easy information accessbility and proactive disclosure. It is in this context that the RAIC approached UNESCO and requested for funding to carry out a pilot project that sought to implement the following main objective:

MAIN OBJECTIVE: To promote the integration of SDG 16.10.2 into the Voluntary National Review of the SDGs process; promote records management and documentation, and boost compliance with provisions of the RAI Act 2013 among state and non-state actors with a view of promoting the supply and demand of information among them.

UNESCO approved $US 21.875 funding to support the two activities of the project in June 2021 as follows: Activity 1: $US9,858 Activity 2: $US11,650

Following is a brief breakdown of all the completed deliverables of the Activities 1 and 2 of the Project.

Activity 1-RAIC organized a technical discussion and review of reporting on SDG 16.10.2-Public Access to Information

Deliverables-
1. The Commission organised an intensive technical review of SDG 16-10-2 workshop with 80 participants from a diverse range of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
2. The Commission produced a Shadow Report covering the status of ATI compliance for 2019 and 2020 contributed to Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review Report to the UN
3. The Commission produced a six-minute documentary and images covering a snapshot of its activities in the recent past to accompany the RAIC Shadow Report 2021

Activity2: To promote records management and documentation as a way of creating an enabling environment for easy information accessibility

 Deliverables-

1. The Commission organised nation-wide consultation and capacity building workshops with archivists and other related records management professionals on the Records Management Code of Practice
2. The Commission hired a consultant to produce a Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual to be used in the above training of archivists and records management professionals
3. The Commission with the help of a service provider designed and printed 500 copies of the Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual produced by the RAIC consultant

Brief Financial Statement

The Total amount of fund provided by UNESCO was $ 21,508 which is equivalent to Le 215,080,000. However, the Commission received an amount of $ 17,443.66 (Le 174,436,648.00) as the first remittance as per the contract. The expenses in Activity 1 and Activity 2 are aligned strictly with the budgeted amount.

Moreover, as agreed, RAIC covered the cost of Hall hire, Internet service, PA system and Projector for the Technical Workshops of the first activity. It is also important to note that part of the second activity, including the designing and printing of the 500 copies of the Records Management Code of Practice was pre-financed by the commission since the final 30% of the approved UNESCO funding for these two activities would be remitted at the completion of the project as per the contact.

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the RAIC at the highest point of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in October 2014 is a clear indication of the Government's commitment to Access to Information and its related open data process. The enthusiasm of the people to demand information and the awareness being created in the public and private sectors to supply it, as well as their legal obligations to undertake measures to promote openness in their entities, are foundations upon which the RAIC, which was reconstituted in November 2018 with the appointment of the current Chairman and Information Commissioner and four regional commissioners, is working to build.

The reconstituted Commission has made tremendous efforts in fulfilling its core mandate of facilitating access to information, promoting transparency, accountability and good governance across a broad spectrum of sectors in Sierra Leone. Thanks to funding from OSIWA and the World Bank which was very critical in this fulfilment. It is clear from its mandate that the RAIC hugely complements the efforts of the Anti-Corruption Commission, especially in preventing corruption. The urgency of the RAIC mandate is further underscored by the renewed war against corruption championed by the government of President Julius Maada Bio which is making a tremendious impact and receiving wider international accolades.

PROBLEM/ISSUES/CHALLENGES DEFINITION

In October 2013, the RAI Law was enacted. Eleven months later, five (5) commissioners, including the Chairman and Information Commissioner, were appointed at the height of the Ebola crisis. The Commission faced huge challenges in both fiscal and human resources. The focus then was the fight against Ebola by both Government and international partners. Today, the Commission continues to face challenges because of the severe lack of funding from the government and development partners.

The Commission was able to minimize these challenges largely through the pilot projects funded by OSIWA and support from the World Bank mainly on open data. With these pilot projects, significant in-roads were made in the popularization of the Act and the operations of the Commission. For example, the Strategic Planning Retreat strengthened internal communication and collaboration, staff bonding and team work, and increased performance within the Commission. It also helped review the Commission's current organizational structure and strengthened the capacity of staff of the Commission to conceptualize, develop and implement policies. The production of the first ever Annual Report of the Commission and the development of the Commission's first ever strategic plan cannot be unconnected to skills derived from the strategic planning retreat.

The capacity building component of the OSIWA project complements support coming from other donor agencies, for e.g., the World Bank, which focuses mainly on open data; the sensitization activities on access to information and proactive disclosure of COVID-19 - related information which the Project Team adopted as a strategy to complement government effort to contain the pandemic and build public trust in service delivery related to the pandemic.

The Commission received nationwide appreciation for its work in promoting citizens' understanding of the content and quality of information to access during the pandemic and post- pandemic period; the training of journalists on the FOI law created a significant impact as it significantly improved the awareness of journalists of the relevant provisions of the Right to Access Information (RAI) Act and on how to make Freedom of Information (FOI) requests from public authorities in the conduct of their profession. The impact is now evident in the increased number of requests, especially among journalists, to public authorities and complaints to the Commission. The roundtable broadened the knowledge of professional interest groups in Sierra Leone on the Freedom of Information Law and the work of the Commission which has in turn created considerable impact on the demand and supply of information.

However, while the Commission has made important strides in promoting access to information and proactive disclosure through its popularisation of the RAI law and the training of state and non-state actors on their rights and obligations provided in the law, very little progress has been made in the monitoring and reporting on compliance by public authoirities with their obligations under the Right to Access information Law 2013 and its integration into the National Voluntary Review of the SDGs in general and SDG 16.102. which relates to Public Access to Information in particular, and promoting awareness of the importance of records management and documentation in creating an enabling environment for easy information accessbility and proactive disclosure. It is in this context that the RAIC approached UNESCO and requested for funding to carry out a pilot project that sought to implement the following main objective:

MAIN OBJECTIVE: To promote the integration of SDG 16.10.2 into the Voluntary National Review of the SDGs process; promote records management and documentation, and boost compliance with provisions of the RAI Act 2013 among state and non-state actors with a view of promoting the supply and demand of information among them.

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ACTIVITY 1:

Technical Discussion and review of reporting on SDG 16.10.2, RAIC Compliance Report for 2019-2020, and RAIC Documentary

The RAIC completed three deliverables in the context of this Activity. The three completed deliverables were as follows. The Commission organized a technical workshop to discuss and review of the Commission's reporting on SDG 16.10.2; produced a 2019-2020 compliance report as shadow report to accompany Sierra Leone's Voluntary National Review Report to the UN in July 2021 which included a contribution from the RAIC; and produced a documentary with the support of a consultant.

a. Technical discussion and review of reporting on SDG 16.10.2-Public Access to Information

The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, and with funding from UNESCO, on Friday 25th June 2021 organised technical discussions and Review of the 2020 Sustainable Development Goals {SDG} 16.10.2 Public Access to Information session at the Family kingdom in Freetown.

In his Keynote address during the opening ceremony, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED) Dr. Francis M Kai Kai spoke about the technical session and proceeded to explaining details about the SDGs. He said the SDG program is a 15- year plan (from 2015 to 2030 called Agenda 2030) and there are 17 global goals. According to him, Accelerator goals have been chosen by MoPED and they include SDG 16.10.2 on public access to information which he said was contributed to this year's Voluntary National Review Report to the UN and for which he profusely thanked the RAIC and all those public authorities that cooperated with them in the data collection processes. The minister ended by thanking the participants for their participation in this educative activity and kindly asked them to promote Access to Information while pledging to do the same.

In his Welcome and Opening address, Chairman and Information Commissioner (CIC) of RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw said that he felt pleased to inform the MDAs that this present Commission started the UNESCO survey on SDG 16.10.2 which relates to Public Access to Information in 2019, did one in 2020 and has recently completed it again this year. Dr. Shaw said the data collected and contributed to the UNESCO survey for 2019 and 2020 demonstrates that the Commission has made a steady progress in all the sub indicators of this SDG target such as Proactive Disclosure of Information, Freedom of Information Requests, records management, and the hiring of a public information officer. Dr Shaw noted that compliance with this SDG target by public authorities would help strengthen good governance and bolster economic development in Sierra Leone. He further observed that in addition to taking part in an annual UNESCO survey, section 41 of the RAI law also mandates the Commission to produce an annual report that should contain the status of compliance with the law by all public authorities.

Dr Shaw, RAIC CIC

In his vote of thanks to wrap up the opening session, RAIC Executive Secretary, Hon Mustapha Braima, thanked the MOPED minister and his Director for policy and Research for making it to the event despite their very busy schedules. He also thanked the participants for coming and called on them to get prepared for what is set to a be very educative and useful technical session.

Dr Sheka Bangura

During the technical session, Dr. Sheka Bangura, Director of Policy and Research at the MOPED presented the centrality of SDG 16.10.2 adding that Sierra Leone is now presenting its third VNR report on SDG implementation. Director Bangura also said that Sierra Leone is reporting the highest number on the SDGs. "MOPED has remained strategic in our approach to the SDGs," Dr Bangura said. He highlighted progress on the rest of the focus SDGs for the 2021 VNR} process: SDGs 1 2 3 5 8 10 12 13 & 17. Goal 16 stands for Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions ie to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to Justice for all and builds effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

RAIC CIC Dr Shaw provided a detailed technical review of his Commission's report on SDG 16.10.2 spanning 2019-2020 contributed to this year's Sierra Leone VNR report. This and the presentation by Dr Bangura stimulated a lot of interesting discussions with participants who provided feedbacks, comments and suggestions on how to improve the monitoring and reporting on the SDGs in general and SDG 16.10.2 in particular.

b. RAIC Shadow Report to the Voluntary National Review 2021

The Right to Access Information Commission for the first time since it was set up in 2014 and thanks to the efforts of the current leadership of the Commission following its reconstitution in 2018 contributed to Sierra Leone's Voluntary National Review Report in 2021 on the state of the country's compliance with the SDGs 2030 agenda. The contribution of the RAIC focused on the state of compliance by public authorities in Sierra Leone with their obligations in the RAI Act 2013. In that brief report which was expanded into a 45-page Shadow Report produced by the Commission reported that Sierra Leone has made steady progress in the promotion of public access to Information since the enactment of the Right To Access Information Law in 2013 and the setting up of the Right to Access Information Commission in 2014.

In an assessment conducted in 2019, the Commission noted that 112 successful Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests in the country were made between 2014 and 2019, about 50% of which were actually made in 2019 alone. In our assessment of 2020, we noted that 144 FOI requests were made in the whole country, out of which 132 were fully complied with. The Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) was launched on 6th December 2018 by the Vice President, and steady progress has been made on this front since then. In our assessment of PDI in 2019, the Commission noted that out of 10 public authorities that submitted Proactive Publication Schemes, one was fully approved, two were approved with observation, three given conditional approval, and three rejected. In our assessment of PDI in 2020, we noted that out of 20 public authorities that submitted their publication schemes, 10 were approved with observation, 8 given conditional approval, and 2 were rejected. In our assessment of 20 public authorities, we noted that 13 have Records Management departments/units, 15 have Public Information Officers, and 15 have ICT departments/units.

Sierra Leone has since 2019 participated in an annual UNESCO survey on Public Access to Information (SDG 16.10.2) and the country scored 5 out of 5 on adoption and 4 out of 4 on implementation of the FOI law with a total score of 9 in the 2020 UNESCO survey. Sierra Leone also scored 85% on FOI in the MCC compact assessment for 2020. Sierra Leone was among 6 countries that co-sponsored the UN Resolution that recognised September 28 as the International Day for the Universal Access to Information on 15th October 2019, a day which has been celebrated in Sierra Leone since 2019. Increased popularisation, public engagement, and capacity building activities involving state and non-state actors throughout the country over the past two years have contributed immensely to this steady progress the country has made on FOI. However, while the Commission recognises this steady progress, challenges such as limited resources and staffing have impacted the adoption and implementation of the FOI law in Sierra Leone.

Details of this brief report by the RAIC to Sierra Leone's VNR Report for 2021 can be found in RAIC 2019-2020 Compliance Assessment Report which accompanied this VNR report as RAIC's Shadow VNR Report.

c. **RAIC Documentary on its work and impact in promoting compliance of the RAI Law.**

With the support of a consultant, Daniel Moseray, the RAIC produced a six-minute video documentary where it featured highlights of the activities and achievements of the Commission in the areas of popularization of the RAI law, capacity building, and promoting, monitoring and reporting on the state of compliance by public authorities with their obligations under the Law. This documentary has since been posted on the RAIC web site and the Commission plans to engage some local TV channels to air it from time to time.

Activity2:

RAIC promoted records management and documentation as a way of creating an enabling environment for easy information accessibility

Thanks to this funding from UNESCO, RAIC has promoted records management and documentation, which has created an enabling environment for easy information accessibility. The Commission has completed three main deliverables in the context of this second activity. These deliverables are: organized a nation-wide consultation and capacity building workshops with archivists and other related records management professionals on the Records Management Code of Practice; produced a Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual with the help of consultant, Muniru Kawa; and finally designed and printed 500 copies of the COP Training Manual with the help of a service provider.

a. **Validation and Training on Records Management Code of Practice**

The re- validation of Records Management Codes of Practice was conducted on 10th August, 2021. The validation exercise was the process whereby records users and practitioners proved the authenticity and confirmed the validity of the Codes of Practice. As a supplement to the re-validation activity, the training on Records Management Code of Practice was also rolled out on 17th August 2021 at the Family Kingdom Resort. The beneficiaries were records officers and other users of records. The training drilled down on the relationships between paper records in active use and computerised information or data generated through Information Technology (IT) and the critical need for integration; so that IT can transform the creation, use and retrieval, and processing of information.

RAIC TRAINS MDAs ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE

The Right to Access Information Commission RAIC with support from UNESCO has held a one day training on the RAIC record Management Code of practice. The training at the Family Kingdom Resort brought together representatives from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) who handle records in their respective institutions. .

In his opening statement, Chairman and Information Commissioner, RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw described poor records management in MDAs as a major factor that hinders the smooth flow of information to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. It is for this reason, the RAIC Chairman added, that archivists and other records management professionals are assembled today to be empowered in a training of trainers since the commission cannot have everyone under one roof at the same time. The CIC encouraged them to make effort to use the Codes of Practice for Records Management and its training manual put together by the consultant facilitating the training to enhance their professional work and ensure easy accessibility to information held by their public authorities.

The Executive Secretary of the RAIC Hon. Mustapha Briama, who moderated the opening session said this is yet another opportunity for Archivists, Records Managers to boost their knowledge and skills in handling one of the most important assets in institutions: records

Participants at the training

The Acting Director of Information in the Ministry of Information and Communication Emmanuel Turay said there is need for a roadmap to follow and therefore believes the code of practice will provide guidance in the records keeping drive. This training, he added, will help the MDAs to not only meet their obligation as per the RAI Act, but also support the transparency and accountability drive the country is at. The acting director pledged the ministry of Information and Communication's relentless support to the work of RAIC to open the space of information access in Sierra Leone.

Records Management Consultant Mr. Muniru Kawa

Records Management consultant Muniru Kawa, said during his over 30 years experience in records management, he has come to realise that there are records in shelves and drawers in offices in neglect and fear of disposal which he noted is part of the areas the training will cover.

Participants expressed delight on the detailed successful deliberations hoping to replicate the training to bridge the gaps that have existed for the past decades.

The Training Manual on Records Management Codes of Practice was presented by the consultant in power point program and it focused on four thematic pillars, or themes, which are as follows: (a) Leadership, (b) Receiving and Responding to Requests for Information, (c) Proactive versus Reactive Disclosures, and (d) Records Management. After thorough interactive sessions, participants were placed into four groups with each group handling one of the indicators above, and assessing the specific indicator through underpinning activities: rules, procedures, resources, monitoring and wild card

Group One – Leadership

The group members brainstormed on leadership as a motivating factor, and using leadership as cross-cutting indicator to preposition records service. Members cited that records service is challenged by lack of clear career progression path, consequently records professionals are demotivated. Every public authority should involve records managers in strategic management meetings, reporting on and articulating records management issues.

Group Members
- Khalila J. Thomas – Senior Records Supervisor, Ministry of Local Government
- Idriss Din-Gabisi – Dir, Research and Monitoring, National Commission for Democracy
- Augustine Sahr Lahai – Assistant Secretary, Public Sector Reform Unit
- Hassan Raje Kamara – Records Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Emelia Haja Bangura – Records Officer, Ministry of Social Welfare

Functions

Rules.
- Repeal and ratify Records and Archives Bill into an Act of Parliament.
- Every public authority should have internal records management policy
- There should be sound implementation of internal control systems.

Procedures.
- The implementation of a hybrid records management system
- Periodic training of administrative officials in records management

Resources.
- Adequate space and equipment for the storage of records
- Provision of modern tools and skills for records users
- Increase funds allocation to the records service

Monitoring.

- Quarterly tracking of records services and determining status of records management system.
- Quarterly records management reporting system to the leadership of the MDAs

Wildcard (Special Card).

- Institutionalised framework of centralised records management system for every public authority.
- Influence top management by demonstrating that records management system is effective and efficient
- Induction trainings and changing the mind set of staff about the records service in the public authority.

Group Two – Receiving and Responding to Requests

The group deliberated on receiving and responding to requests including public authorities implementing guidelines for receiving and responding to requests. They also discussed parameters within which the authorities should work for receiving requests for instance (a) determining what constitutes a request, providing an acknowledgement of receipt, and (b) assisting the requester.

Group Members

- Joanes A. Caulker – Sierra Leone Public Archives Office
- Andrew M. Aruna – (Rapporteur) Public Service Commission
- Alhaji M. Jaward – Ministry of Information and Communication
- Rugiatu Bangura – Ministry of Public and Political Affairs
- Musa Kargbo – Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

Functions

Rules

Control measures for incoming and outgoing correspondences are inadequate in public authorities.

Recommendations are made to top management to put in place internal records management control systems: (a) incoming correspondence register, (b) outgoing correspondence register, (c) file indexing, (d) file diary, (e) file transiting, (f) file census; weak staff inputs in performing records services; recruit trained and qualified records professionals; develop internal records management policy.

Procedures

See also records internal controls (control measures), for instance developing finding aid which will facilitate quick access and response to information requested. There should be procedures in transferring requests to other agencies.

Recommend to top management the need for MOU with other agencies who might have information available. In strict adherence to access to information regulations, there should be procedures for issuing and serving responses.

Resources

There are inadequate staff to undertake records management tasks. The group recommends the recruitment of trained and qualified records professionals to carry out routine records management duties.

Lack of funds to undertake records management activities. The group recommends to top management the need to have funds allocated to records management tasks.

Inadequate space for the storage of records and also personnel handling records. The group also suggests the provision of storage facilities for both records and staff in order to perform effective and efficient records services.

Inadequate supplies and equipment, for instance, filing cabinets and shelves, file covers, desktop computers, printers and scanners etc. The group brings to the attention of management to the above-mentioned anomalies.

Monitoring

In terms of monitoring, there should be regular checks on the control measures to ascertain the application is carried out. Records appraisal and retention reviews should be done regularly to identify active from inactive records with the aim to transferring inactive records to the National Records Centre.

Records managers in public authorities should develop quarterly reports on the total number of "requests", responses and transfers of records, and information giving out or shared.

Records users should be mindful of the proper handling of the records so as to enhance the longevity of the records.

Wildcard (Special card)

The benefits derived from sound records management practices will lead to the following:

- Fast retrieval of information
- Space management
- Prompt response to requests
- Cost effective benefit
- Facilitate effective decision making

Group Three – Proactive Disclosure versus Reactive Disclosure

Proactive disclosure is the act of releasing information before it is requested, for example the national broadcasting service publishing datasets of individuals or groups that appeared and used the services, on its website or the information is published through newspapers. The purpose of proactive disclosure is to inform citizens of information they can use to hold the government or agencies accountable. Proactive disclosure differs from reactive disclosure, as reactive disclosure occurs when a request is made, while proactive disclosure occurs without the filing of the request.

Group Members

- Yankuba Bangura – Sierra Leone Library Board
- AmaduTejan Shaw – Cabinet Secretariat
- Hannah Jimmy – National Council for Civic Education and Development
- Abu Bakarr A. Koroma – Sierra Leone Roads Safety Authority
- Felix Conteh – Ministry of Foreign and International Cooperation

Functions

Rules

- The group deliberated and recommended the following:
- Records inventory.
- Classification of materials
- Availability of resources
- Retention schedule
- Management engagement
- Records management policies and manual
- File movement and control
- Outreach programmes
- Disposal of records
- Digitilisation

Procedures

- Creation of documents
- Completeness, authenticity and reliability
- Maintenance of records
- Storage of records
- Retention schedule
- Disposal of records
- Accessibility of records
- Indexing
- Digitisation

Resources

- Proficient and skilled human resources (staff)
- Training of staff, attending workshops, etc
- Management support
- Availability of storage space
- Equipment
- ICT connectivity
- Awareness raising through outreach programmes
- Budget allocation
- Participate in manpower planning

Monitoring
- Movement and tracking of records
- Staff performance measurement and management
- Utilisation of resources
- Security – protection from fire, flooding
- Building and strengthening relationships between management and staff
- Compliance

Wild card (special card)
- Maintain oath of secrecy
- Maintain and uphold the civil service codes and rules

Group Four – Records Management

Functions

Rules
- Retention schedules for financial and non-financial records
- Decongest records stores and structures of inactive records
- Records should be managed by records officers and managers
- Records stores should not be accessed by unauthorised persons

Procedures
- Requests for access to documents be made through the head of the institution
- Record the description of the document requested
- Recipient of document should sign to receive the document

Resources
- Records service in public authorities should have budget line
- Train records officers to be abreast with modern trends in information
- Trained & qualified records staff should be hired to work in the records unit in public authorities
- Free and conducive storage system to store records

Monitoring
- Provide quarterly reports on challenges and successes
- Conduct file census monthly and follow strictly on procedures and non-compliance
- Wild card (special card)
- Ensuring that efforts are coordinated and implemented for effective service delivery in the public entity

TESTIMONIES FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE TRAINING

Massa Kargbo – Records Supervisor – Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)

The records management codes of practice training held on the 17th August 2021 was beneficial to me as a professional through the following:

It helped us to follow the records management concept in relation to creation, management, disposing and dissemination of any record in all technical and physical formats.

The code sets out standards for professional behaviour for records creators, users, and researchers in their quests for relevant and critical information.

The training is beneficial to my MDA as it provides guidance to all "public authorities" for practicing records management.

By improving the skills and processes for managing records and information (paper and electronics) and making the records accessible by the public.

Emelia Haja Bangura – Records Officer – Ministry of Social Welfare

The Records Management Codes of Practice training was very useful and beneficial to me and my MDA in the following ways:

1. It has helped to improve my skills as Records Officer to manage records and information both (paper base and electronic)and make it accessible to users in my MDA.
2. As Records Professional it help me set the standard for records creators , users and researchers in their quests for relevant and critical information demand for public interest. Also the codes of practice was a great help in a way of disposing of records that are of limited use, or no use.

Because of the code of practice training our MDA was able to arrange our records in electronic format and develop a site so that information about the ministry is available to the public to access and also a backup system in-case of brakeage or unavailable incident.

Hassan Raje Kamara – Records Officer – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security (MAFFS)

Looking back at the ages of man's development, Records management has been at the trending of human knowledge.

However, been part of the training on RM code of practice has made me aware of how records are been managed in an institution, be it public or private sector.
It is also a guideline which a records officer use to carry out his/her work. It also broadens the scope of understanding in handling information in a particular institution.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture has been managing records in various offices and the registry thanks to the training that I the records officer took part in. And it has created awareness on every secretary at any unit/division at the Ministry to know how to handle various information.

In this regard, the Ministry is planning to organize training for secretaries at the Ministry on RM code of practice and how to handle the Ministry' Records.

Abubakarr Kamara – Archives Manager – Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA)

After going through the Records Management Code of Practice Training, I acquired additional knowledge and skills which were transferred to the junior colleagues through in-house training. This led to an effective and efficient staff performance with quality and timely service delivery.

In addition, the concept being "proactive" is now our watch word, as we no longer wait to receive information request and then act upon it. Rather, we ensure that records of SLRSA are professionally kept so that we can respond to public requests within the shortest possible time.

Moreover, it was an awareness raising programme, as we need to be well informed of our dos and don'ts as records management professionals as stipulated in the RAI Act, 2013.

I personally believe that based on the benefits gained during the course of implementing the Codes of Practice at SLRSA, this has increased the level of Compliance with access to information by the public. We are now ensuring that RAI requests are not only acknowledged and respected but also made records available at the right time, from the right place and in the right format as required.

b. The preparation of a Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual by a consultant

Consultant Muniru Kawa, a records management expert, was hired by the Commission to prepare a records management code of practice training manual to be used as a course guide in the training of record managers and officers. The training manual is a simplified version of the records management Code of Practice that was validated in 2019 and re-validated on the10th August 2021 by the consultant and stakeholders representing various MDAs. The consultant captured most of the feedbacks from these two validation exercises into the training manual.

Moreover, the discussions and recommendations that came out of the training of record managers and officers held on 17th August were also captured in this training manual. The RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner wrote the foreword to the manual.

c. The designing and printing of 500 copies of Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual

The RAIC hired Julcoms Ltd, a firm that specializes in ICT, design and printing, to design and print 500 copies of the final draft of the Records Management Code of Practice. Copies of this manual are now ready to besent to all MDAs, including those that participated in the validation exercises and training of records managers and officers. Other stakeholders, including non-state actors will also receive copies of this manual. The Commission hopes to use this manual in future training of record managers and officers.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Total amount of fund provided by UNESCO was $ 21,508 which is equivalent to Le 215,080,000. However, the Commission received an amount of $US 17,206.22 (Le 174,436,647.84) as the first remittance as per the contract. The expenses in Activity 1 and Activity 2 as indicated in the budget breakdown below are aligned strictly with the budgeted amount.

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Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period June - September 2021

	OPERATING FUND			LE	$
	Balance as of 30 June 2021			2,600,579.06	256.52
Add:	Remittance from UNESCO in July 2021			174,436,647.84	17,206.22
	Government Allocation (2nd Quarter 2021)			261,900,000.00	25,833.50
	Total Income			438,937,226.90	43,296.23
		Activity 1	**Activity 2**		
Less:	Stationery	2,580,000.00	2,580,000.00	5,160,000.00	508.98
	Rent (Hall)	11,000,000.00	5,500,000.00	16,500,000.00	1,627.54
	Food & Drinks	53,298,000.00	23,341,500.00	76,639,500.00	7,559.63
	DSA/Transportation	23,000,000.00	21,200,000.00	44,200,000.00	4,359.83
	Communication/Internet	3,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	4,000,000.00	394.56
	PA System	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	197.28
	VNR Documentary	15,120,000.00	0.00	15,120,000.00	1,491.42
	Withholding Tax	3,102,000.00	3,750,000.00	6,852,000.00	675.87
	GST	6,238,000.00	3,705,000.00	9,943,000.00	980.77
	Design/Printing of Manual	-	21,250,000.00	21,250,000.00	2,096.07
	Consultancy & Training	-	39,810,426.00	39,810,426.00	3,926.85
	Total Expenses	118,338,000.00	123,136,926.00	241,474,926.00	23,818.79
	Balance as of September 2021			197,462,300.90	19,477.44
					$1=10,138

See Appendix 1 below for brief narrative of the deliverables of activities 1 and 2
aligned with the above expenditure breakdown

APPENDIX 1

Deliverables-

4. The Commission organised an intensive technical and review of SDG 16-10-2 workshop with 80 participants from a diverse range of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
5. The Commission produced a Shadow Report covering the status of ATI compliance for 2019 and 2020 contributed to Sierra Leone's 2021 Voluntary National Review Report to the UN
6. The Commission produced a six-minute documentary and images covering a snapshot of its activities in the recent past to accompany the RAIC Shadow Report 2021

Activity 2- To promote records management and documentation as a way of creating an enabling environment for   easy information accessibility

Deliverables-

4. The Commission organised nation-wide consultation and capacity building workshops with archivists and other related records management professionals on the Records Management Code of Practice
5. The Commission hired a consultant to produce a Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual to be used in the above training of archivists and records management professionals
6. The Commission with the help of a service provider designed and printed 500 copies of the Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual produced by the RAIC consultant

NB: Enclosed with this report are copies of the RAIC Shadow VNR Report (Electronic Copy), RM COP Training Manual (Electronic and hard copies), and RAIC Video Documentary

APPENDIX 2   LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE COP TRAINING ON AUGUST 17 2021

NAME OF PARTICIPANT	INSTITUTION	DESIGNATION
Andrew M Aruna	Public Service Ccommission	Records Officer
Jalloh Albert Sam	Teching Service Commission	Manager Basic & senior Sec
Emelia Haja Bangura	Ministry of Social Welfare	Records Officer
Massa Kargbo	MBSSE	Records Officer
Amadu T Shaw	Cabinet Secretriat	Records Officer
Hassan Raje Kamara	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Records Officer
Albert Moore	SL Public Archives	Director
Muniru Kawa	Consultant	Consultant
Khalila J Thomas	Ministry of Local Government	Snr. Records officer
Joanes A Caulker	SL Public Archives	Archivist
Abubakarr A. Kamara	SL Road Safety Authority	Achives Manager
Esie C. Gobisi	ASSL	Officer Manager
Idris Din. Gabisi	NCD	Dir.Research & Monitoring
Felix Conteh	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Records Supervisor
Karifatu Conteh	Radio Democracy	Reporter
Davida Campbell	RAIC	Snr. Investigator
Yankuba Bangura	SLLB	Librarian
Alhassan Sesay	RAIC	Admin Assistant
Saidu Bangura	HRMO	Records Supervisor
Rugiatu Bangura	NPPA	Admin Officer
Hon. Mustapha briama	RAIC	Executive Secretary
Biah Idriss	RAIC	Commissioner
Sunnia Farma	MoPED	SAS
Julun Koroma	SLBC	Reporter
Mohamed Sesay	RAIC	Driver
Osman Samura	RAIC	Driver
Hannah H. Jimmy	NaCCED	OGP Cordinator
Margarette B. Bendu	RAIC	AHRM
David P. Kamara	RAIC	POI
Pastor M Sesay	RAIC	Commissioner
Alhaji Mohamed Jaward	MIC	Records Officer
Augustine Lahai	PSRU	Records Officer
Mohame S Koroma	AGD	Snr. Account
Mary W. Karimu	RAIC	Commissioner
Alan Benjamin	RAIC	Legal Adviser
Mohamed I Bangura	RAIC	Driver
Julius Kamanda	RAIC	Office Assistant
Fanta Morgan	RAIC	Archivist
Rebecca S. Kallon	RAIC	Amin Assistant
Abdulrahman Timbo	RAIC	Office Assistant