



Right to Access Information Commission - Sierra Leone

RAIC ANNUAL REPORT 2024



MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION



Chairman / Information Commissioner:
Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw



Ahmed G Kallon
Commissioner, East



Abu Bakar Kargbo,
Commissioner North



Bai Yormah Idriss
Commissioner, South



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Commissioner, Western Area



Hon Mustapha Braima
Executive Secretary: Secretary to the Commission

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND INFORMATION COMMISSIONER



I present to you the sixth annual report of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC). The report reflects critical contributions made on access to information (ATI) by the Commission and stakeholders in the access to information process covering January to December 2024.

The year 2024 was one of profound significance for the Commission, marked by historic milestones that have further cemented our role as the custodian of the right to access information in Sierra Leone.

In 2024, RAIC celebrated a decade of existence since its establishment in July 2014. Over these ten years, we have steadily grown into an institution of national and international repute, championing transparency, accountability, and good governance. Our journey has not been without challenges, particularly the persistent financial constraints we continue to face. Yet, with determination and prudent management of our limited resources, we have continued to deliver impact far beyond what our budgetary envelope suggests.

One of the Commission's most remarkable achievements in 2024 was our landmark launch an alternative digitalized access to information infrastructure. This unprecedented infrastructure is a real-time technology that expedites access to information never seen before in the country's access to information drive. It has all the four forms: Form A (Request Form), Form B (Acknowledgement Form), Form C (Response Form) and Form D (Compliant Form). With the said technology, any of the forms can be completed and submitted online in a simple and very speedy manner. Email addresses of public authorities are already embedded in it to make things much easier. This novelty does not only accelerate access to information but it also positively projects the image of Sierra Leone on right to information and open governance.

Our proactive disclosure campaign and monitoring initiatives continued to grow, strengthening accountability across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). The Commission also recorded significant progress in compliance, with more public bodies embracing the culture of openness by submitting their Publication Schemes. These advances reflect the growing acceptance of access to information as a cornerstone of democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

Due to the effective and efficient interventions of the RAIC, there has been an increase in access to information requests. In 2024, there were over 15,000 information requests made and processed nationwide. Though this figure is less than that of the 19,391 information requests recorded in 2023, the gains have been significant locally and internationally. The 2024 data indicates that public authorities need to be swifter in responding to information requests. However, this represents steady growth from both the demand and supply sides of information in the country. I took over the leadership at the RAIC fully in 2019. From very few information requests annually to 112 requests in 2019, the first year after my assumption of the leadership of the Commission, to 144 requests in 2020 to 369 requests in 2021 to an unprecedented 13,016 in 2022 to a whopping 19,391 information requests in 2023 and over 15,000 requests in 2024. Progressively, over 90% of the information requests made, in all the years mentioned, were received, acknowledged, processed and provided. This is a huge gain in the country's efforts to enhance good governance and sustainable development.

Internationally, 2024 marked an exciting turning point for RAIC. Building on our growing recognition within global networks of information commissions, my Commission won the bid for Sierra Leone to host the 2026 International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) making our country to become the second African country to host this global conference. This is not only a victory for the Commission but for our nation, signaling Sierra Leone's leadership and rising profile in the global access to information movement. Also on the international front, I was reelected to serve on the Executive Committee of the African Network of Information Commissioners and my Commission was recognized by this regional body to lead a UNESCO

funded project to develop a Model Training Manual For Records Management for Africa. I also had the honour to speak at a side event on digital access to information jointly organized by my Commission, UNESCO, and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development on the margins of the July 2024 High Level Political Forum meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the global convening monitoring body for Goal 16, Target 10, Indicator 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16.10.2) which relates to public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms. The UNESCO has a mechanism [survey] to monitor efforts of countries worldwide in promoting access to information. 2024 marked the sixth year since Sierra Leone started participating in this UNESCO survey through my Commission consistently scoring highly in both the adoption and implementation of the ATI law in the country. Moreover, the year 2024 marked the second time that my Commission contributed a report to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the 2024 High Level Political Forum meeting at the UN in New York. Little wonder that since 2019, Sierra Leone has scored very high marks in the Millenium Challenge Corporation MCC ranking on Freedom of Information; 85% in 2020; 85% again in 2021; 90% in 2022; 98% in 2023; and 91% in 2024.

As we look back on ten years of growth and achievement, and forward to new horizons, our mission remains clear: to protect and promote the right of every Sierra Leonean to seek, receive, and impart information. The Commission's resilience and progress are a testament to the dedication of our staff, the support of government and partners, and the trust of the people we serve. More needs to be done but it is refreshing to note that the Commission is on the right path of growth and impact. It is set to do even more with the imminent passage of the new Right to Access Information and Data Protection law which would make it have an expanded dual mandate of access to information and data protection.

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the President and Vice President of Sierra Leone, the Minister of Information and Civic Education, my fellow Commissioners, staff of the RAIC, our national stakeholders, and our regional and international partners for their continued support to get us where we are today. Together, we will continue to build a more open, transparent, and accountable Sierra Leone

Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw.



Chairman and Information Commissioner

SYNOPSIS

The Report is divided into four broad parts:

Part One gives a synopsis of the historical background of the Commission. It expands on the Commission's statutory mandate and composition, roles and responsibilities, its Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Objective.

Part Two covers in general, the activities of the Commission and its achievements: its institutional and infrastructural developments; programmes and projects that covers popularization; commemorations; compliance; national and international partnerships.

Part three involves the accounts and financial statement, and the audit on the accounts which the Commission provided the necessary details as required by the Auditor Service Sierra Leone.

Part four highlights the areas the lessons learnt and key priorities of the Commission should concentrate on in the implementation of the RAIC Act.

PART I. THE COMMISSION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Access to information is a fundamental human right and is essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and public participation in governance and recognized by international human rights instruments, especially Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides for the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, through various channels regardless of borders. Its operations are also consistent with Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Right to access to information held by public authorities is a fundamental human right consistent with Target 16.10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which calls for ensuring public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international regimes including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

The RAI Act 2013 makes provision for the establishment of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) which came into existence and commenced full operations in October, 2014 with the appointment of its first Commission headed by a Chairman who doubled as Information Commissioner, and four Regional Commissioners. The Commission has a national Secretariat based in Freetown and four regional offices in Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Freetown. Following the reconstitution of the Commission in October 2018, it has made significant strides towards developing enforcement and intervention procedures to enable a flexible and proactive approach to tackle systemic compliance issues in public authorities; strengthening the foundation for a comprehensive open data initiative; adopting Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI), Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests and Annual Compliance Report (ACR) Schemes as key components to access to information; establishing the RAI Regulations to give effect to the RAI Act; the Records Management Code of Practice to provide guidance to public authorities in the keeping and management of public records; data resource centres in the four regional offices to create an enabling environment for public access to information in the regions.

The objectives in mind for the establishment of the RAI Act 2013 included widening opportunities to claim access to crucial information, mainstreaming transparency and accountability in public institutions, informing citizens about policy decisions and government actions, protecting fundamental freedoms, providing democratic space for monitoring government affairs, and aligning with global information rights standards.

The principal focus of the reconstituted Commission on commencement of operations includes:

- reviewing the existing management and organizational structure, administrative processes and procedures in collaboration with behavioural change institutions such as Audit and PSRU;
- ensuring transparency, openness and accountability;
- broadening the investigation and compliance mechanisms;
- strengthening the legal and regulatory environment;
- improving coordination and strengthen collaboration with MDAs and development partners
- strengthening the administrative wing of the Commission to ensure that it effectively complements the Secretariat in the day-to-day administration and management;
- creating a dynamic and congenial working environment, strong bond and teamwork among staff; and
- fostering a cohesive and productive human capital network to ensure that the strategic drive of the Commission matches with the employees' aspirations.

1.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

◆ MISSION

To ensure an open space in information accessibility through effective collaboration for sustainable development

◆ VISION

To be a part of the Global Information Rights Society

◆ OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the Commission is to promote the demand and supply of information among the general public, public authorities, and the private sector in accordance with the Act enacted by the Sierra Leone Parliament on 29th October, 2013.

VALUES ·

- ◆ Openness (information accessibility) ·
- ◆ Fairness (Justice) ·
- ◆ Swiftiness (Quick response) ·
- ◆ Transparency (openness) ·
- ◆ Accountability (Answerable to the people) ·
- ◆ Integrity (honest and reliable)

RAIC NATIONAL & REGIONAL OFFICE LOCATIONS:

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REGIONAL OFFICES

Eastern Region:

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Northern Region:

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Southern Region:

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Bo City, Bo District
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Western Area:

58 Kroo Town Road, Freetown
Western Area Urban
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PART II – ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

1. INSTITUTIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the year under review, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) made notable strides in strengthening its institutional framework as part of its broader mandate to promote transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery across public and related institutions in Sierra Leone. This process of institutional development was guided by the overarching principles enshrined in the Right to Access Information Act, 2013, which mandates the Commission to serve as an independent oversight body ensuring the public's right to timely and accurate information from public authorities.

The Commission continued to refine its organizational structure to align with best practices in governance and information management. In the year under review, RAIC received the final report of the Management and Functional Review (MFR) conducted by Public Sector Reform Unit following their invitation by the Commission in January, 2024 to conduct same five years after their last MFR. The final MFR presented a comprehensive structure, staffing needs, functional gap, and workflow processes. It contained key recommendations to enhance institutional efficiency, improve service delivery, and strengthen internal coordination. It was based on the recommendations that the Commission promoted some staff and recruited some technical staff to fill key vacant positions.

In the year under review (2024), the Commission launched the access to information digital platforms and trained the first set of 50 pilot MDAs and some CSOs nationwide to bring them to speed in how to use them in accordance with the RAI Act 2013 and RAI Regulations 2022.

Legal and Policy Framework Strengthening: The Commission initiated reviews of existing staff manual, Records Management Practice manual and the amendment of the RAI Act, 2013 laws on policies guidelines to ensure compliance with the 2013 Act and international norms on information access. Through these institutional development efforts, the Commission not only solidified its role as the national custodian of the right to access public information but also contributed meaningfully to broader democratic governance, public trust, and citizen empowerment. As the Commission moves forward, it remains committed to strengthening its institutional capacity to meet the evolving demands of information access in a digital age.

1.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Administrative and Human Resources Department provide administrative and management support to the Commission's management functions and activities of the Secretariat. The department remains the central pillar in ensuring the smooth functioning and sustainability of the Commission's operations. In the year under review (2024), staff team was seen operating under different directorates such as the Corporate Affairs comprising of the Admin and Human Resources and Public Information and Communications; the Records and Open Data; the Compliance Monitoring Policy Planning and the Data Protection awaiting its implementation once the law is approved.

1.3 OPERATIONAL MATTERS

The Commission's operational matters in the year under review focused on strengthening internal systems, collaboration with MDAs, Partnership with CSOs and the Diplomats to enhance service delivery, and ensuring compliance with the RAI law by Public Authorities. This section outlines key operational reforms, and service performance in 2024.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE UPDATES: The Presentation of the second Management and Functional Review Report to the Chairman and Information RAIC- by the Director of the Public Sector Reforms Unit (PSRU) highlighting the new Organogram and recommendations that will boost the morale of staff to aid the delivery of RAIC's mandate effectively and efficiently. Also, the Commission held workshops and consultative meeting with MDAs in Freetown and in the Regions to popularize the RAIC Act 2013 and Regulations, Records Code of Practice Manual, the Proactive Disclosure schemes and the Annual Compliance

Report (ACR) Forms.

THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: For recruitment and promotion the Commission promoted 2 staff and recruited 2 new staff to support programmatic and administrative functions, the promotion was based on performance appraisals and vacancy assessments.

1.4 INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In line with the strategic objectives of the Commission and in support of its mandate to deliver quality services to the public, the Commission implemented a range of infrastructure development during the year under review. These developments were aimed at improving working conditions and enhancing operational efficiency. The following infrastructure milestone were achieved during the reporting period: -

- o Upgrading existing office facilities to improve service delivery in the National Secretariat and the regional offices.
- o Supporting digital transformation through necessary physical infrastructures in Freetown and the regional offices.
- o Ensuring workplace safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability

1.5 STAFF DATA BASE

The Commission's human resource management function continues to play a vital role in supporting institutional efficiency, staff well-being and capacity development. As part of RAIC's commitment to transparency and effective governance, the Commission has maintained an up-date staff database that reflects current personnel distribution for the year under review.

The current staff total composition - 25; The gender breakdown - Male 19
- Female 6

NO.	POSITION	SEX	GRADE
1.	Chairman and Information Commissioner	M	12
2.	Commissioner Eastern Region	M	11
3.	Commissioner Northern Region	M	11
4.	Commissioner Southern Region	M	11
5.	Commissioner Western Area	M	11
6.	Executive Secretary	M	10
7.	Manager, Compliance, Policy and Planning, M&E	M	9
8.	Manager, Records Management and Open Data	F	9
9.	Manager, Public Information and Communications	M	9
10.	Senior Compliance Officer	F	8
11.	Public Information and Communications Officer, Head Quarter	M	7
12.	Public Information and Communications Officer, East Region	M	7
13.	Public Information and Communications Officer, North Region	M	7
14.	Public Information and Communications Officer, South Region	F	7
15.	Public Information and Communications Officer, Western Area	M	7
16.	Assistant Accountant	F	7
17.	Open Data Officer	F	7
18.	Admin Assistant Western Area	M	6
19.	Receptionist and IT	F	6
20.	Drivers (4)	M	5
21.	Office Assistant (2)	M	4

1.6 STAFF PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

As part of the Commission's effort to strengthen and enhance the capabilities of the workforce, the Commission is pleased to report on the promotion of two exemplary staff members and the recruitment of two new employees

for the year under review. Mr. David Patrick Kamara the former Public Information Officer at the National Secretariat was promoted to Manager, Public Information and Communications and Mrs. Mattu Josephine Bendu former Administrative Assistant at the National Secretariat was promoted to Open Data Officer. Their promotions came as a result of the recommendations from MFR report by the Public Sector Review Unit. Also, to bolster our team's capabilities and support the growth strategies, the Commission successfully recruited two staff members, Mr. Amara Thoronka- Public and Information Officer replacing David and Ms. Hellen Penina Collier as IT and Receptionist RAIC replacing Mattu. The promotion of the two staff members reflects the Commission's commitment to recognizing and nurturing talents within the workforce. Additionally, the recruitment of the two staff introduces fresh perspectives and expertise that will enhance the team's overall effectiveness. Together these changes position the workforce well for continued success and growth in the years ahead.

1.7 NATIONAL YOUTH CORP

National Youth Service Commission assigned one youth corp to the RAIC. The Sierra Leone National Youth Corps serves as a vital platform for mobilizing young graduates towards a constructive and impactful engagement in the national development initiatives by focusing on skills development, social responsibilities and active citizenship. The youth corps was attached to the Admin department supporting on handling clerical task to the Commission, assist the team in planning events, assist with dispatch of document to MDAs, also provided support in the Archives Unit with filing task and from time to time assisted the Account Unit with filing and organizing financial documents.

2. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Programmes activities are the various tasks and actions undertaken as part of a program to achieve its overall goals. These activities are designed to align with the programme 's objectives, manage interdependencies, and ensure the program delivers value in every institution. In the bid for the Commission to execute its mandate, engaged in the formulation and designing programmes and projects, developed an agenda on programmes and policy actions and brought forth a well-defined Annual Work Plan (AWP) that clearly identified performance targets and ensured alignment of its priorities with the strategic plan.

The core programmes of access to information are records management, open data and proactive disclosure of information, Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests and Annual Compliance Report (ACR) Schemes. Transparency, accountability and good governance can only be given a clean bill of health when data is seen to be open, easily understandable, freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by government policies and practices; when the citizens at large are seen to have confidence in the process. Data, when shared in an open and standardized format, can foster collaboration and enable greater and timely access to vital information.

In recent years, the RAIC has focused on enhancing its regulatory framework, developing the Records Management Codes of Practice Training Manual, establishment of the Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) Schemes and Annual Compliance Report (ACR) templates are seeking opportunities to expand its transparency and accountability programs. As such, establishing the RAI Regulations 2022 to give effect to the RAI Act; the Records Management Codes of Practice to provide guidance to public authorities in the keeping and management of public records; data resource centres in the four regional offices to create an enabling environment for public access to information in the regions. The tremendous contribution the Commission has made towards proactive disclosure of public information and indisputable access to information has instilled the chain of commitment among democratic institutions in ensuring an open, transparent and accountable society has brought Sierra Leone to what it is today. The other core programmes of the Commission are Popularisation of the RAI law and capacity building of the suppliers and requesters of information which is part of the carrot or baby-sitting approach embarked upon by the Commission to create the enabling environment for access to information. The success of access to Information is highly dependent the above core elements which are further discussed as follows. We will first present below the three core programmes of Proactive Disclosure of Information, Open Data, and Records Management, and then look at Popularisation and Capacity Building which create the enabling environment for access to information.

2.2 CORE PROGRAMMES OF THE COMMISSION

2.2.1 PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION (PDI)

Proactive disclosure is not a privilege. Rather, it is an obligation of all institutions to which the right of access to information applies. It is an imperative for transparency. It has the potential to provide information to the community faster and at a lower cost. It reduces time and resources in processing individual information requests and demonstrates commitment to openness, accountability and transparency, accountability which in turn will increase people's confidence in government. The willingness on the part of public institutions in all arms and tiers of government to embrace the culture of proactive disclosure of information, both as a key obligation and an essential requirement of access to information rights is weak. Voluntary disclosure of information serves the interest of the citizens and accentuates the performance of the public sector. Though the RAI Act says that six months after its passage the relevant MDAs should have submitted their Proactive Disclosure Schemes to the RAIC for examination and approval, five years down the line very few government entities have been able to do so. Thus, the RAIC at the beginning of each year, a memo in the form of the Proactive Disclosure Information templates are forwarded to the MDAs for their submission at later date to strengthen the proactive disclosure of information efforts

2.2.2 OPEN DATA

Open data initiatives are efforts to make public data accessible to everyone, with the goal of increasing transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in government and other sectors. These initiatives involve making data openly available in a usable format, allowing for its reuse and redistribution by anyone for any purpose. Following the establishment of the Open Data Centres at regional levels to facilitates public access to information. Data, when shared in an open and standardized format, can foster collaboration and enable greater and timely access to vital information.

2.2.3 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records are the indispensable foundation of the accountability process. Without reliable and authentic documentary evidence underpinning all essential accountability processes, government, civil society and the private sector cannot ensure transparency, guarantee accountability or allow for the exercising of good governance. In a bid to promote openness, one of the mandates of the Commission is to ensure effective and efficient Records Management in public authorities which is highlighted in Part IV of RAI Act, Section 27:1-2 makes provision that "Every public authority shall record and maintain records of its activities in a manner that facilitates the right to information and in accordance with the Code of Practice for record keeping, maintenance, as well as transfer of records to Public Archives". Hence, it is necessary to provide high priority to records management to avoid organizational problems that may arise owing to poor handling of office records.

The Archives Unit been the nerve centre of information plays an important role in the Commission. The primary responsibility of the Archives Unit is to ensure timely access and retrieval of information within and outside the Commission within shortest possible time at every given moment. The Archives Unit being upgraded and now headed by the Manager, Records and Open Data who maintains a hybrid system of filing of all documentation (a folder system and electronic format) to preserve and secure all documents for long-term access. The Commission uses the Records Management Codes of Practice Training Manual as an instrument to facilitates capacity building trainings organized by the Commission. Having presented the three core programmes of the Commission above, we will now present the two main access to information enabling programmes as follows.

2.2.4. POPULARISATION: PUBLIC SENSITIZATION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

2.2.4.1 RAIC AND THE MEDIA in 2024

The year 2024 marked a period of steady and meaningful growth in the public engagement efforts of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), driven by the revitalized strategy of its Information and Communications Department. Under the leadership, the Commission expanded its footprint across broadcast, print, electronic, and social media platforms, deepening public awareness and understanding of the right to

access information in Sierra Leone.

Building on the foundational work of previous years, the department pursued a more targeted and proactive media engagement approach. This resulted in increased visibility of the Commission's work, including activities such as capacity-building workshops, monitoring missions, public compliance announcements, and international representation—most notably, the announcement of Sierra Leone winning the bid to host the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) in 2026.

2.2.4.2 THE ELECTRONICS/BROADCAST MEDIA

One of the key milestones in the Commission's media strategy was the launch of "RAIC Hour"—a dedicated television segment that began airing fortnightly on SLBC TV towards the end of 2024 to date. This program has become a consistent platform for informing the public about the Commission's work, legal obligations of public authorities, and citizen rights under the RAI Act of 2013.

Beyond "RAIC Hour," the Commission leveraged multiple national and regional broadcast platforms, including AYV Radio and TV, Afri Radio, Redeemer Radio, and Slik TV, among others. These appearances ranged from interviews and panel discussions to coverage of official events, allowing the Commission to directly engage with a wide audience across the country.

As the RAIC marked its 10-year anniversary, the media played a catalytic role in amplifying its achievements. Through extensive coverage of workshops, symposia, press conferences, and community outreach programs, the Commission's visibility soared especially as RAIC marks its 10year Anniversary in 2024, where symposia, press conferences and talk shows were held nationwide to showcase the strides the Commission has made to make open governance a possibility in Sierra Leone. Senior officials from both the National Secretariat and regional offices were frequently featured in media engagements, expertly facilitated by the Communications Manager and a team of committed Public Information and Communications Officers (PICOs). Their collaborative efforts ensured that 2024 was one of the most media-visible years for the Commission to date.

2.2.4.3 PRINT MEDIA

Print media, especial newspaper and magazine, continue to play a crucial role in information dissemination in Sierra Leone. The RAIC recognizes this reality and has significantly improved its information sharing drive via print media. Throughout 2024, several local newspapers and magazines published news and feature articles on RAIC's programs and activities. To enhance professional and accurate reporting on RAIC, pressmen were consistently invited to our activities and programs to have first-hand experience and ask for clarifications and details where necessary. Such method caused diversified but impressive reportage on local tabloids hence contributing to the visibility drive of the Commission. Another viable institutional approach was to write press releases, press statements, news stories on our programs and activities then share with all print media outfits on our mailing list. The positive outcome was that the said print media were committed and willing to publish our media write-ups with some giving them prominence as banner headlines.

2.2.4.4 SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

Social media is the new order in the communication ecosystem. Prominent social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are powerful and instrumental in reaching millions or even billions of people globally. In fact, as an organization or institution, not having social media presence these days can make people question your seriousness or readiness to do business or execute your mandate.

The Right to Access Information Commission acknowledges the essentially powerful role of social media in contemporary media and audience engagement. The RAIC therefore has an impressive social media presence. We have different WhatsApp groups strategically created and managed to realize and sustain vital networking for the proper functionality of the Commission. We have a national staff what's app group, with all secretariat and regional staff, where virtual exchanges happen with an overarching concentration on staff effectiveness and efficiency in the discharge of assigned and innovative tasks. There is a group for senior management, constituting the Chairman and Information Commissioner, Regional Commissioners and the Executive Secretary of the Commission where topmost deliberations are made and decisions taken. The other

WhatsApp group comprises RAIC staff and public information and records/data professionals of various public authorities – ministries, departments and agencies - to create and enhance the synergy between RAIC and public authorities and other key stakeholders in the access to information architecture of Sierra Leone. All these WhatsApp groups complement fruitful offline engagements and operations of the Commission. Also on social media, the RAIC has an official up-to-date Facebook page which updates the public timely and regularly on the Commission's projects, programs and activities. The Facebook page is also one of several official networks through which we are contacted for updates, insights and clarifications. The Commission is also on X (formerly Twitter) as an additional social media outfit of the RAIC.

2.2.4.5 WEBSITE

Having and operating a website is a paramount expectation in this new media dispensation. The website avails an institution with various opportunities such as text, photo, video or content publication in general. A website also provides the platform to publish materials in sections with bigger file size.

The RAIC has a user-friendly functional website www.raic.gov.sl. It is a one-stop shop for better insight into the mandate and activities of RAIC. The website has unique columns that contain crucial information. There is information on the addresses and contacts of RAIC's offices – the national secretariat and regional offices. There are detailed news and feature articles and press releases on RAIC's programs and activities. The website also has the full downloadable RAI Act of 2013 and RAI Regulations of 2022. All annual reports of the Commission can be accessed and downloaded from the RAIC website. RAIC's Staff Manual and soft copies of all forms in the access to information process are also available on the RAIC web site as FOI Forms. There are also video clips on the site that can enhance one's understanding on the work of the Commission. The website also has many other features.

2.2.4.6 EASTERN REGION MEDIA ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Commission, through its Eastern Region Office, actively engaged the media as a central strategy to raise awareness, educate citizens, and encourage institutional compliance. A total of seventeen (17) radio discussion programs were conducted across several districts—Kenema, Kono, and Kailahun—featuring both Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon and Public Information and Communications Officer (PICO).

Radio Engagement Breakdown – Eastern Region (2024)

Month	Representative(s)	SLBC	VOTE FM	Starline Radio	Top Radio	Nyapui Radio	Eastern Radio
February	Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon	1 (Kenema)	–	–	1	–	–
March	PIO James Fortune	1 (Kenema)	1	–	–	–	–
April	PIO James Fortune	1 (Kono)	–	–	–	1 (Kenema)	–
June	PIO Fortune & Jonathan Palmer	–	–	1	–	–	–
July	PIO James Fortune	–	1	–	–	1	–
September	Commissioner Kallon	2 (Kailahun & Kono)	–	–	1 (Kenema)	1 (Kenema)	1 (Kono)
December	Commissioner Kallon & PIO Fortune	1	–	–	1	1	–
Total		7	2	1	3	4	1

2.2.4.7 NORTHERN REGION MEDIA ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Northern Region, under the leadership of Commissioner Kargbo, consistently utilized radio platforms to promote awareness and understanding of the Right to Access Information (RAI) Act, 2013 among citizens in both the North-East and North-West regions of Sierra Leone.

Throughout the year, the Commissioner and his team appeared on various radio stations almost every month, leveraging their airtime to educate citizens about their rights to access information and to hold duty bearers accountable as demonstrated in the table below

Month	Representative	Shalom Radio Falaba (93.3)	SLBC Makeni	AMZAS Radio (96.6)	Voice of Wusum (88.5)	SLBC Ma		
gburaka	Hope Radio Makeni	Voice of Gbonkolenken						
Various Dates	Commissioner Kargbo	—	3	2	2	1	1	—
Various Dates	PIO John Kalokoh	3	1	5	2	3	—	4
	TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS	3	4	7	4	4	1	4
	Grand Total: 27 Engagements							

2.2.4.8 Southern Region Media Engagement Report

Under the leadership of Commissioner South significant public outreach carried out through targeted media engagements in 2024. The focus remained on creating widespread awareness about the Right to Access Information (RAI) Act of 2013, particularly among grassroots communities.

Below is a summary table showing monthly engagements conducted in the Southern Regional across different radio stations:

Month	Representative	Classic Radio	New Song Radio	SLBC Bo	Moonlight Radio	Kiss 104 FM	All Out Radio
January	PICO Millicent Brima	1		1			
March	PICO Millicent Brima		1		2		
April	PICO Millicent Brima	1				1	
June	PICO Millicent Brima		2		1		
August	PICO Millicent Brima			1		1	
October	PICO Millicent Brima	1					1
November	PICO Millicent Brima			1			1

THE WAY FORWARD

With Sierra Leone preparing to host the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) in 2026, the Information and Communications Department has already begun positioning the RAIC as a global voice in access to information. Plans are underway to scale up communication efforts, strengthen strategic partnerships, and further professionalize the department's output. The success of 2024 demonstrates that effective communication is not just about visibility—it is about building trust, driving compliance, and

empowering citizens. The RAIC remains committed to deepening its public engagement through innovative, inclusive, and consistent communication.

COMMEMORATIONS

2.2.4.9 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION (IDUAI) RAIC NATIONAL SECRETARIAT COMMEMORATES IDUAI

The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) has commemorated this year's International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) on Friday, 27th September, 2024, at the conference hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation, Tower Hill, Freetown, on the theme “Mainstreaming Access to Information and Public Participation Practices Across Government Sectors in Sierra Leone”, which is copied from the global theme: “Mainstreaming Access to Information and Public Participation in the Public Sector”. IDUAI was proclaimed on 15th October 2019 at the 74th United Nations General Assembly to be commemorated on 28th September each year.



Cross section of RAIC staff and panelists at the commemoration of IDUAI

Every year, the day is observed globally on 28th September, but because the said date falls on Saturday, the leadership of RAIC decided to observe it on Friday – a working day and the eve of the day itself – to give it more relevance and prominence. The Chairman and Information Commissioner, emphasized on the need for collaboration in access to information which he said cannot happen in a vacuum; so there is a need for collaboration with other public authorities. The IDUAI is a day to reflect on gains and challenges in efforts to realize easy and unhindered access to information as guaranteed by law. The commemoration attracted several participants and panellists were representatives from the Ministry of Information and Civic Education, UNESCO, Audit Service Sierra Leone, NAMEA, NatCA, SLBC and CSOs like Forward Sierra Leone and DADA-SL to commemorates the IDUAI.

2.2.4.10 RAIC EASTERN REGION COMMEMORATES IDUAI

Following the radio discussion program held on Friday, September 27th, 2024, at Top Radio 103.7 FM, the RAIC Eastern Region joins UNESCO and the world at large on Saturday, September 28th, 2024, to commemorate the IDUAI at a round table engagement at the regional office in Kenema. Public Information and Communication Officer, James Fortune, gave a speech on behalf of the Regional Commissioner on the relevance of Access to Information with reference to this year's global theme of “Mainstreaming Access to Information and Participation in the Public sector.” He added that, this event holds profound significance in our world, a world ever more defined by the flow of information, data, and knowledge, and reminded everyone

that access to information is not a privilege but a fundamental right that empowers individuals, and strengthens communities, and fuels democratic participation. Amongst the participants were representatives from CSOs, Youth Advocacy Network and the Media who made meaningful contributions.



2.2.4.11 RAIC NORTHERN REGION COMMEMORATES IDUAI



The RAIC North joined UNESCO and the world to commemorate September 28th 2024, the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) in a radio discussion on the theme: Mainstreaming Access to Information and Participation in Public Sector at the SLBC in Magburaka town. The Northern Region Commissioner, Abu Bakarr Kargbo, in his statement, he explained the importance of the IDUAI raised the awareness of every individual's right of access to government-held information, and the public sector's responsibility to release information if it is in the public interest to do so. He added that, Democracy are strengthened when the citizens can regularly provide input into government decision-making in an impactful way. Transparency in government improves service delivery, and decisions supported by input and participation. The PICO John Kalokoh said, it was timely reminder for public sector agencies to reviewed how they proactively released information to the public. This helps to create a public sector culture of mainstreaming access to information and build greater trust between the people and government, and encouraged public participation. The discussion was ended with questions and answers towards the theme of this year's commemoration.

2.2.4.12 RAIC SOUTHERN REGION COMMEMORATES IDUAI



The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) South on 28th September 2024 joins UNESCO, and other countries to commemorate the International Day for Universal Access to Information. The Public Information and Communications Officer RAIC South Millicent Brima was hosted at New Song Radio Bo on their popular radio show Live-hit on the theme “Mainstreaming Access to information and public participation”. In her discussion, the PICO gave a brief background of how the day was proclaimed on the 15th October 2019 at the 74th United Nation General Assembly and has been celebrated every year since then. She continued that citizens are given the right to be informed about policies, decisions and actions of government and other institutions that the online space is suitable for a speedy dissemination of information. Moreover, improved access to information is a powerful tool for monitoring and accountability that supports citizens to monitor development projects and ensure that implementers meet their desired goals.

10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEME: “ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN SIERRA LEONE, 10 YEARS ON”

2.2.4.13 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM – NATIONAL SECRETARIAT



Information Minister C Bah and his deputy B Bawoh (centre) flanked by RAIC CIC Dr Shaw on the right and SLBC DG J Kamara on the left at the high table at the event

The RAIC National Secretariat commenced the commemoration of its 10th anniversary with a symposium on Tuesday, 15th October, 2024, at the Foreign Service Academy drawing participants from government, the media, civil society and the international community. In welcoming the participants, the Chairman and Information Commissioner highlighted gains, challenges and opportunities experienced by the Commission over the years. However, regardless of the several challenges, the CIC reported that there has been significant progress in the right to access information architecture in Sierra Leone. CIC Dr Shaw said under his leadership freedom of information requests have increased from 112 recorded in 2019, a year after taking over, to 19,496 recorded in 2023 nationwide. In his keynote address, the Minister of Information and Civic Education, Hon Chernor Bah commended the leadership of RAIC for what he described as “exemplary work in promoting access to information” in the country, adding that for Dr. Shaw to invite his predecessor to the ceremony speaks volume of his exceptional leadership and humility. He applauded the RAIC for its role in making the country pass certain eligibility indicators of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and added that we must create a culture of proactive disclosure of information.



Cross Section of Staff at the RAIC National Secretariat

Following the successes and challenges highlighted by Dr Shaw, he also commended all staff members and public authorities in making the progress ever recorded in the history of access to information in Sierra Leone. The symposium was climaxed by high-level three panel sessions on the evolution of access to information in Sierra Leone; the role of access to information in the promotion of human rights, transparency and good governance; and the role of CSOs in promoting access to information in Sierra Leone in the online and offline contexts.

2.2.4.14 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM – EASTERN REGION



RAIC Eastern Region Team

The RAIC Eastern Region Team joined the RAIC 10th Anniversary celebration at the Kenema Office and engaged the Top Radio and the Voice of the East (VOTE) FM in Kenema town. During their media appearances, Commissioner Kallon echoed the message of the Commission's Chairman and Information Commissioner, emphasizing the importance of access to information in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance. The Commissioner further reminded the public that "access to information is not a privilege but a fundamental right that empowers individuals, strengthened communities and fuelled democratic participation. Public Information and Communication Officer, James Fortune, reinforced the point that "Access to Information is a tool that empowers every citizen, regardless of status or class, to actively participate in democratic processes." Listeners who participated in the phone-in programs urged the government to address the Commission's critical challenges, noting that its mandate is crucial in the fight against corruption and the advancement of good governance.

2.2.4.15 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM – NORTHERN REGION



RAIC Northern Region

The Northern Region office was equally in a celebratory mood marking the Commission's 10th anniversary by engaging with the media and key individuals and institutions involved in advancing access to information. The Commissioner North A B Kargbo underscored that public authorities are obligated to provide information upon request, except in cases where the information is exempt under the RAI Law. Addressing stakeholders, the Commissioner highlighted that the RAI Law was a recommendation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report to promote transparency, accountability and good governance in Sierra Leone. Other representatives from Bombali Shebora Chiefdom, Aiah Sorie the Public Education Officer for the Anti-Corruption Commission in the North, Emmanuel Fanday Bayoh, Station Manager of the Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) all in Makeni commended the Commission for holding public authorities to account and for the progress made over the years. The Commissioner concluded by noting that fines imposed on defaulting institutions should encourage the public to submit more requests, while also urging institutions to process requests promptly.

2.2.4.16 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM – SOUTHERN REGION



RAIC Southern Region

The Southern Region office joined the Commission's 10th anniversary by bringing together the media, CSOs and MDAs operating in the region. The Commissioner South gave a background on the Access to Information Act, recognizing the role of various advocacy groups in getting the law passed and the Commission established in 2014. Alusine Bangura, the IEC Officer from Bo District Council, praised the work of the RAIC and assured that the council would continue to support the Commission whenever needed. He emphasized the need for greater collaboration with the RAIC's southern region office to promote the Commission's mandate, especially in rural areas where media access is limited. Representatives from civil society activists, Joseph Blackie and Mustapha Kpaka recommended to the Commission to produce jingles in various Sierra Leonean languages to broaden outreach and pledged that civil society in the south would serve as ambassador in promoting the RAI law. The Commissioner South, I Beah reiterated that access to information is not a privilege but a right and urged public authorities to ensure compliance with information requests.

2.2.4.17 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND AWARDS NIGHT



Chairman and Information Commissioner (CIC) at the CIC, Regional Commissioners & the ES cutting the 10th Year Anniversary Dinner & Awards Night 10th Year Anniversary cake

The RAIC Wrapped up its 10th Anniversary with Dinner and Awards Night. The RAIC awarded persons and institutions who have been consistently using and complying with the Right to Access Information (RAI) law to access information from public authorities. The dinner and awards ceremony took place at the Family Kingdom Resort Royal Hall, Aberdeen, Freetown on Friday, 22nd November, 2024. It was spiced with entertainment by a live band and dance performances.

Welcoming dignitaries, Dr. Shaw explained the different categories of the awards. In total, sixty-one persons and institutions were awarded in the four categories. “The first category of MDAs we are honouring tonight are those who have been proactively disclosing information captured in their Publication Schemes approved by the Commission since 2019. The second category are those MDAs that have been doing very well with their Annual Compliance Reports (ACRs) since 2019. However, we still have some MDAs that have not been cooperating on compliance and encouraged other MDAs to do so and position themselves to win awards in the future. The third category of awardees are those individuals and institutions that have been consistently requesting for information since 2019 because information flow is not just the supplier, there is also the demand side. The fourth category of awardees recognized those MDAs that have been consistently responding to information requests as they normally don't wait until the statutory fifteen working days elapsed,” Dr Shaw concluded.



RAIC's Chairman and Info Commissioner Dr Shaw flanked by a cross-section of staff standing near the 10th Anniversary cake in celebration of a fruitful dinner & awards night

The RAIC CIC Dr Shaw thanked his team of Commissioners, the Executive Secretary and the entire staff of the Right to Access Information Commission for all the gains achieved over the years and conveyed the Commission's special thanks to the Minister of Information and Civic Education, Mr. Chernor Bah, who he said has been very supportive of the Commission.

Hon Chernor Bah, the Minister of Information and Civic Education in his keynote address, congratulated the RAIC for hosting the event and for all that the Commission has been doing in promoting access to information. The Minister explained the nexus between access to information and democracy and how such is relevant in promoting development and good governance. He continued that, the Right to access information is the bedrock of our democracy. Without access to information there is no democracy. Sierra Leone has one of the best right to access information laws and institutions in the world, therefore, all of us are part of that success. There were several dignitaries in attendance who made meaningful contributions. Amongst the speakers were representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED) in the person of the Minister Kenyeh Ballay, Dr. Walton Ekundaya Gilpin, the Managing Director of Rokel Commercial Bank, Mr. Asmieu Bah, Deputy Director General of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation and two awardees which includes: Mr. Abdul Fatorma of CHARDI and Dr. Samuel Bayon, the chairman of the Local Government Service Commission.

2.2.5 CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

2.2.5.1 RAIC NATIONAL SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

DIGITAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION PLATFORMS



Members of high table at the Launching of DATI



Participants at the Pilot Workshop of the DATI

The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) launched the Digital Access to Information platforms at a workshop held at the Family Kingdom Resort, Aberdeen, Freetown on Tuesday 26th March, 2024. In essence, this process was to provide an alternative to using paper-based information request system in enabling information request digitally regardless of geographical frontiers. The forms labelled A representing FOI Request, form B representing FOI Acknowledgement, form C representing FOI Response and form D representing FOI Complaints, respectively. The launching served as the curtain raiser to a series of activities marking the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the Right to Access Information Commission.

Similarly, the Commission held the first set of training of trainers' workshop with 50 pilot Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on the use of the Digital Platforms on 31st October, 2024, at the Family Kingdom Resort, Aberdeen, Freetown. The idea was to bring them to speed in understanding the new unprecedented digital access to information infrastructure to expedite information requests and processes in accordance with the RAI Act 2013 and RAI Regulations 2022. Gracing both events, there were several speakers from the RAIC and the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE) who delivered the opening and keynote addresses, respectively, and others from National Telecommunications Agency (NaTCA), Statistics Sierra Leone, Society for Democratic Initiative (SDI) and Universal Access Development Fund, all commended the Commission for the innovative idea.

2.2.5.2 RAIC COLLABORATED WITH IMDEV ON MONITORING AND REPORTING OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAW IN SIERRA LEONE

The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) in collaboration with the Initiative for Media Development (IMDEV) held a meeting with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officers and the media in Sierra Leone on the 6th March 2024. The Meeting brought together key stakeholders in the implementation of the Right to Access Information Act of 2013 and SDG officers on the proposed implementation of the UNESCO project, increased Media Capacity to monitor and report on the provisions of the Right to Access information in Sierra Leone.



RAIC CIC Dr Seaga Shaw and IMDEV ED Yeama Thompson seated centre flanked by staff and other stakeholders

Concurrently, on Friday 14th June 2024, the Initiatives for Media Development (IMdev), with the generous support of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), as part of the funding from IPDC 2023 on the "Increased Media Capacity to monitor and report on the provisions of the Right to Access Information Law in Sierra Leone", hosted an online discussion titled "From Law to Impact: Leveraging the Right to Access Information Law 2013 to Advance Transparency and the Sustainable Development Goals." This event brought together key stakeholders, including journalists, civil society leaders, and government officials, to explore the critical intersection of transparency, governance, and sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

2.2.5.3 RAIC EASTERN REGION ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENTS

The RAIC Eastern Region, received a cross-section of the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) Staff on Wednesday 6th March 2024. The purpose of the visit was to receive first-hand information and data on the policies, processes, and procedures of MDAs underscoring their essence in achievement, shortcomings in challenges and tailor recommendations that would capacitate public authorities to improve public services. The Regional Commissioner for the East, provided the Commission's background, including roles, powers and the value of information in human society. He noted that information is the foundation of knowledge-based actions and activities that open new realms of possible and practical realities. The Commissioner referenced Sierra Leone's performance in the 2022 Millennium Challenge Corporation MCC Report scored 98%. As such, he named "The Kenema City Council among other law-abiding MDAs as the reason our country to make such a history. In conclusion, Mr. Conteh from the PSRU commended Commissioner Kallon for being remarkable in his new office.

2.2.5.4 RAIC NORTHERN REGION ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENTS

The Northern Region Office is charged with the responsibility to implement the mandate of the RAI Law by enforcing the disclosure of information from public authorities. Popularization of the RAI Act was the key activity which the Commission carried out to accomplish a greater part of its strategic plans. Among the many strategies were suggested to help facilitate the process through engagement with stakeholders and press conferences with MDAs and School Authorities. In all of the engagements, the Commissioner North will provide the background on the mandate of the Commission. He added that citizens have the right to seek for information from public authorities or persons to provide the services for them as enshrined in section 2(4) of the RAI Act of 2013. Moreover, the Act clearly states in Part Two that everyone has the right to access information from any public authority is mandated to disclose information as long as it does not fall under the category of exempt as listed from section 12 to 26 of the RAI Act. He drew the attention of the MDAs and schools to section 48(2) of the Act which talked about the penalty and other offences, to deny information to applicant. In all of the engagements end with questions and commendations from listeners. Below are the Institutions engaged during the period under review:



RAIC NORTH in engagement with NACSA



RAIC NORTH in engagement with Bombali District Office



RAIC NORTH in engagement with AMAP School-Makeni



RAIC NORTH in engagement with GSSG-Mathora

In addition to the above, the Northern Region also engaged the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Makeni City Council Mayor | 5. MBSSE Makeni office |
| 2. NASSIT | 6. Government Hospital Mgburaka |
| 3. Tonkolili District Council | 7. Environmental Protection Agency |
| 4. Teaching Service Commission (TSC) | 8. Electricity Makeni office |

2.2.5.5 RAIC SOUTHERN REGION ACTIVITIES ENGAGEMENTS

The Southern region undertook a host of activities in the year under review such as Consultative meetings with Ministries, Departments and Agencies, stakeholder meetings and engagement on the RAI Law. The RAIC South engaged 13 MDAs in the region to intensify popularization of the RAI Law. These MDAs were engaged in consultative meetings to discuss the right of the citizens and the obligation of MDAs to proactively disclose information according to section 2 of the RAI act. Offences and penalties were also highlighted in these engagements for failure to abide by the law. In all the engagements, the Public Information Officer South, Millicent Braima will provide the background of how the Commission came into existence following the passing of the RAI law in 2013 and the primary mandate of the RAIC to promote access to information held by public authorities. She emphasized on the provisions of the act that in section two that everyone has the right to request for information from any public authority and the public authority is obliged to disclose information as long as it does not fall under the category of exempt listed from section 12 to 26 of the RAI act.

In addition to the above, the Northern Region also engaged the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Makeni City Council Mayor | 5. MBSSE Makeni office |
| 2. NASSIT | 6. Government Hospital Mgburaka |
| 3. Tonkolili District Council | 7. Environmental Protection Agency |
| 4. Teaching Service Commission (TSC) | 8. Electricity Makeni office |

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RAIC SOUTH in engagement with NRA



RAIC SOUTH in engagement with SALWACO

In addition to the above, the Southern Region also engaged the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. National Youth Commission, Bo | 7. District Medical Office |
| 2. Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning | 8. Bo Government Hospital |
| 3. Electricity Distribution Supply authority | 9. Ministry of Social Welfare |
| 4. Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs | 10. Bo City Council |
| 5. Ministry of Agriculture | 11. Ministry of Basic and Senior Education |
| 6. National Commission for Democracy | |

2.3 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Access to Information (ATI) laws (sometimes called Freedom of Information laws) are designed to ensure that citizens can obtain information held by public bodies. However, having laws on paper is not enough and the of such law's effectiveness depends heavily on compliance and enforcement.

Compliance refers to the willingness and capacity of public institutions to follow the provisions of access to information legislation. When government agencies comply, they provide timely, accurate, and complete information to the public. This fosters transparency, builds trust between citizens and the state, and ensures that the right to information is not merely theoretical but practical. Without compliance, information requests may be ignored, delayed, or denied, undermining democratic accountability. We reported in the previous section how the Commission used the carrot approach of creating an enabling environment for access to information by way of popularization of the RAI Law and the building of the capacity of the suppliers and requesters of information. Equally important is enforcement through the use of the stick when necessary. Enforcement ensures that when institutions or officials fail to comply, there are mechanisms to hold them accountable. Independent oversight bodies, appeal systems, and sanctions against non-compliance create deterrence and provide remedies for citizens whose rights have been violated. Strong enforcement demonstrates that access to information is a legal right backed by the rule of law, rather than a privilege granted at the discretion of authorities.

In the absence of compliance and enforcement, access to information frameworks risk becoming symbolic, offering little real benefit to citizens. Conversely, when both are in place, they transform transparency laws into powerful tools for accountability, citizen empowerment, and good governance

Compliance ensures government bodies respect the rules, while enforcement ensures there are consequences for breaking them. Together, they are what make the right of access to information meaningful in practice, not just theory.

The Right to Access Information Commission was in the year 2024 copied in a total of 103 requests of which 93 were successful and 8 complaints/applications for reviews were made to the Commission of which 7 were successful and 1 pending

Freedom of Information Requests with the Intervention of the Commission by regions are as follows:

WESTERN AREA

Total FOI Requests Received - 13
 Successful FOI Requests without RAIC intervention- 5
 Complaints/Applications for Review - 8
 Successful Complaints/Applications for review - 7
 Pending Complaint - 1
 Transfer Cases - 1

NORTHERN REGION

Total FOI Requests Received - 34
 Successful FOI Requests -32

SOUTHERN REGION

Total FOI Requests Received 31
 Successful FOI Requests 31
 Complaints-0

EASTERN REGION

Total FOI Requests Received - 25
 Successful FOI Requests -25

HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/COMPLAINTS RECORDED BY THE WESTERN AREA OFFICE

Some cases of Freedom of Information Requests/Complaints with the intervention of the Commission recorded in the Western Area are as follows:

1. The Orphan Empowerment Society (TOES) Freedom of Information Request

TOES requested the following information from the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) on the 9th of February, 2024.

- a. The total budget allocation for education in Sierra Leone for the fiscal year 2024.
- b. A breakdown of the budget allocation by specific categories or sectors within the education system.
- c. Any relevant documents, reports, or policies related to the budget allocation for education in Sierra Leone for the fiscal year 2024.

Action Taken By RAIC: Pursuant to Section 5(1) of the Information Act of 2013 which states ‘Where a public authority does not hold information which is responsive to a request or part of a request or any relevant part of it may, not later than three days from the date of its receipt be transferred to another public authority if the information requested is held by that other public authority.

Consequently, on the 25th of February, 2024; the said information request was transferred to the Financial Secretary of the Ministry of Finance.

Response From Ministry of Finance: According to a letter dated 13th March 2024, the Ministry of Finance acknowledged receipt of the transferred letter dated 25th February sent by RAIC. The Ministry was pleased to inform the requester that the Education Budget has been categorized into Basic, Technical and Higher Education since 2018 and that the requested budget information is available at the Ministry of Finance’s Website, www.mof.gov.sl, under the budget section.

Complaint: The 20th of March, 2024, the requester (TOES) filed a formal complaint against the Ministry of Finance regarding an access to information request of the same that was not responded to.

Case Status: The freedom of Information request was provided by the Ministry of Finance.

2. Information Request by Premier Media Group Ltd to Sierra Leone Police

According to a freedom of information letter dated the 20th June of 2024, Premier Media requested for the total number of reported/known offences relating to women and girls that have been reported to the Family Support Units (FSU) in the following police stations: New England Police Division, Congo Cross, Lumley Police Station, Central Police Station, Aberdeen Police Division, Eastend Police Station, and Kissy Police Division for the year 2023 and from January 2024 to present. Sierra Leone Police were asked to indicate how many victims were children under the age of 5 and/ or between the age of 5-17 for each of 2023 and 2024, and how many are adults.

Response by the Sierra Leone Police: Sierra Leone Police responded on the 24th of June, 2025, informing Premier Media that they are fully aware of their obligations in the RAI Act of 2013 and has been contributing greatly to its implementation. Sierra Leone Police being the primary law enforcement agency responsible for amongst other things the investigation of all crimes including Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases, they collate crime data of various type, analyze and disaggregate them into a crime statistic produced at the end of every year and published for public consumption. The crime data presently in the various police stations across the country are unprocessed raw data and the crime statistics for 2024 will be available early 2025. This is because the statistics is annual and requires the records for the whole of 2024.

Case Status: The Sierra Leone Police informed the requester that, the 2023 Crime Statistics report is available at the SLP Website, www.police.gov.sl and the requester did not come back to make a complaint that the information was not available.

3 Eleanor Thompson Information Request to Corporate Affairs Commission

On the 18th of June, 2024, Eleanor Thompson a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone sent a letter to the Commission (RAIC) regarding a notice of failure to hold an Annual General Meeting of the Sierra Leone Bar Association for the 2023/2024 Corporate Year.

She informed the Right to Access Information Commission that, her request for information was done on the 28th of May 2024 individually and then Corporate Affairs Commission responded on the 11th June 2024 but failed to provide the requested information and the said Eleanor Thompson made an application for review to the Commission (RAIC) pursuant to section 43(b) of the RAI Act 2013.

Action Taken By RAIC: The 22nd of July 2024, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) wrote to Corporate Affairs Commission in connection to a request/application for review filed by the requester – Eleanor Thompson on the 18th June and 10th July, 2024. Sections in the RAI Act of 2013 were cited such as Section 2(4), 2(5), 2(6), 3(1 & 2), 4(1), 4(4), Sections 44, 45, 48(1), reminding the above institution of its obligations to provide, confirm or deny a Freedom of Information Request (FOI) as stipulated in the RAI Act 2013. Seven (7) days' notice were given to Corporate Affairs Commission to reply to the application for review; and failure to respond to the Commission within the stipulated time, the RAIC would make its decision on the documents already at its disposal.

Case Status: The Commission made an Order dated 20th September 2024 against the Corporate Affairs Commission to wit;

1. That the Corporate Affairs Commission (Respondent/Public Authority) provides the requested information to the applicant and copies the Right to Access Information Commission within 7 days of this Order.
2. That the Corporate Affairs Commission (Respondent/Public Authority) is fined the sum of Le 80,000 (Eighty Thousand New Leones).

We have been further informed that the requester has now filed for enforcement of the Order in the High Court of Sierra Leone as prescribed by the Right to Access Information Act 2013.

4. Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) Regarding the Full Tribunal Report on the Auditor General

In addition, institutions such as Fifty-Fifty Group Sierra Leone, Eminent Women Peace Mediators Sierra Leone, Citizens' Barray, Budget Advocacy Network, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists and Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice requested information from the Secretary to President, Attorney General and Minister of Justice for full report of the tribunal regarding the alleged misconduct and suspension of Auditor General, Mrs. Lara Taylor-Pearce and former Deputy Auditor General Mr. Tamba Momoh.

These organizations went further to request for an application to review the failure of the Secretary to the President, Attorney General and Minister of Justice for not complying with Section 2 of the Right to Access Information Act of 2013. The application for review was later withdrawn following the release of the requested information by the Minister of Information and Civic Education.

Case Status: Following the investigation conducted by the Senior Compliance Officer regarding the aforementioned requests; it was made known to the requesting organization's that it has been laid in parliament and is also available at the Government Bookshop situated at Wallace Johnson, Freetown. In light of this the matter was concluded

5. Bobor Dan Kamara made an Information Request to FG. Mining Company

Mr. Bobor Dan Kamara – a journalist made a request to FG. Gold Mining Company for information pertaining staff welfare and documents on the compliance of Community Development Fund a copy was sent to RAIC on Wednesday 21 August 2024.

Mr. Kamara wrote to the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) on September 21st, 2024; to review

the decision of FG. Gold Mining for failing to acknowledge or respond to his information request as stated above. The Commission perused the request for information dated 21st August 2024 addressed to FG Gold Mining Company and concluded that, FG. Gold Mining does not fall under the definition of Public Bodies as stated in Part 1 of the RAI act 2013. Therefore, the contents of the request do not fall within the information contemplated in section 2(2) of the Act. On the basis of the foregoing, the application was rejected. The Commission concluded that as FG. Gold Mining is a private institution; The National Mineral Agency is more suited to deal with the issues alleged in the request.

Upon receipt of the letter received from the Commission (RAIC), the requester – Mr. Bobor Dan Kamara on the 18th October 2024, requested the National Mineral Agency to furnish him information concerning the Community Development Agreement between FG. Gold Mining and the people of Boamahum and the receipts of payment made since inception. Also, a copy of the Agreement Document between the said company and the Government of Sierra Leone. A copy of the annual or periodic report of FG. Gold Company submitted to the National Mineral Agency.

Action Taken by RAIC and NMA: The RAIC and NMA organised a meeting for the requester to discuss and clarify with NMA as to which information is needed as the public Authority were not in possession of all the information requested. Notwithstanding in a letter dated 10th February 2025, the information requested was sent to the RAIC. “The Community Development Agreement was copied and made available to the Requester”.

6. Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHRD) Information Request to Master and Registrar – Judiciary of Sierra Leone

According to an application for information access dated 28th October 2024 sent to the Judiciary of Sierra Leone by Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHRD) regarding the documents listed below:

1. List of cases before magistrates and judges for both criminal and civil cases between the month of January to October 2024.
2. List of assigned cases to judges for all High Court criminal call-over sessions between the month of January to October 2024.
3. Also, that the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone be proactive disclose on the official website.

Complaint: Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHRD) on the 19th November, 2024 formally addressed severe concerns about Sierra Leone’s judiciary’s failure to adhere to Sections 13 and 14 of the RAI Act of 2013. The Chief Executive – Mr. Abdul M. Fatoma of CHRD expressed his dissatisfaction of non-compliance from the judiciary of Sierra Leone.

Action Taken By RAIC: A letter dated 6th December 2024 was sent by the RAIC to the Judiciary reminding them of their obligation to comply with Information Requests. The Judiciary responded that they were in transition as a new Chief Justice was being sworn in and that they would need some time to handle the request as it was quite large and this was accepted and communicated by the RAIC to the requester.

Case Status: The requested data/documents were provided by the Judiciary in a letter dated 18th March 2024

NORTHERN REGION

Summary of Five (5) out of the 34 Freedom of Information Requests from the Northern Region Office.

1. Ahmed S. Turay Freedom of Information Request to the Chairman of Court No.2 Makeni

On the 3rd of June 2024, Ahmed S. Turay requested for records of the proceedings in a matter between himself and James P. Kamara of the same city, Makeni.

Action Taken by RAIC North: The Northern Regional Commissioner made a follow up call to the chairman of Court No.2 on the 3rd June 2024 informing him of the time limit for compliance under Section 4 of the RAI Act 2013.

Case Status: According to a letter dated 13th of June 2024, the information was provided.

2. Samuel S. Fullah request to the Head Teacher of SDA Primary School – Matotoka Tonkolili District

Samuel on 7th February, 2024 asked for information on how the school fee subsidies were used and the sum total received.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commission on the 12th February 2024 placed a call to the head teacher and asked that the requested information be released.

Case Status: On the 28th of February 2024, the information was successfully provided.

3. Request from Kadiatu Turay to Mr. Ibrahim – a surveyor at Ministry of Land - Makeni

On the 29th of March 2024, Kadiatu asked Mr. Ibrahim to provide her land plan document.

Action Taken by RAIC: On April 1st, 2024; the Commissioner of the northern region reached out to the surveyor regarding the requested information.

Case Status: The surveyor provided the information on the 9th of April 2024.

4. Women’s Network Forum (WNF) requested information from C-well Contractor Bombali District

According to a letter dated the 8th of July 2024, WNF asked for information on the funds received for the water well project by C-well contractor of Rosaint Village.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commission called the contractor on the 12th July 2024 for not fulfilling his obligations under the RAI Act of 2013.

Case Status: The Information was released on the 26th of September 2024 with the intervention of the Commission.

5. Abibatu Kallon Information Request to the Chief Administrator of Makeni City Council

Abibatu Kallon on the 17th January, 2024 asked for information regarding the EU Water Well Project at Samuel Street Makeni

Action Taken by RAIC:

The Commission called the C.A for the facilitation of the information requested on the 17th January, 2024

Case Status: The requested information was successfully provided on January 19th 2024.

EASTERN REGION

Summary of Five (5) out of the 25 Freedom of Information Requests from the Eastern Region Office.

1. Emmanuel Koroma- a CSO request information from Kono District Council

Emmanuel Koroma made a request on the 17th July, 2024 to kono district council regarding the revenue from mining companies to the councils.

Cases Status: With the intervention of the Commission, the information request was responded to on the 18th July, 2024.

2. Information Request by Idrissa Conteh – a student to Kona District Council

By a letter dated 10th May 2024, Idrissa Conteh requested for the council’s financial statement for the past year.

Action Taken by RAIC: The RAIC was duly informed about the information request to keep abreast with the process.

Case Status: The IEC officer provided the information within the stipulated 15 working days deadline.

3. Foday Sheriff Freedom of Information Request to Kailahun City Council

The information request was done by Foday Sheriff on the 12th July 2024 to the Kailahun City Council asking for the council procurement procedure.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commission liaison officer made a follow-up call to prompt the council to

release the document promptly.

Case Status: The requested information was provided the following day.

4. **Request for Information by Binta Jalloh to Kailahun City Council**

The applicant – Binta Jalloh asked the council to provide information on approved loan schemes for traders by a letter dated 4th April 2024.

Action Taken by RAIC: RAIC Liaison in Kailahun proactively acted on the request and followed up until the council could find the record and release it to the requester.

Case Status: The information sought was given to the requester on the 11th of April 2024.

5. **Jihard Mansor- an entrepreneur Information Request to Kono City Council**

On the 5th of September 2024, Jihard Mansor requested for the reasons for the increase in rates. The commission was contacted with this information request to follow up on the information transaction.

Case Status: The information sought was accessed on 12th of September 2024.

SOUTHERN REGION

Summary of Five (5) out of the 31 Freedom of Information Requests from the Southern Region Office.

1. **Ibrahim Borjiwa Freedom of Information Request to Pujehun District Council**

A request for information was on the 18th July, 2024 made by Ibrahim Borjiwa to Pujehun District Council regarding the allocation of funds in 2023 from central government to Pujehun district council and how it was used.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commission intervened by calling the council.

Case Status: On the 20th July 2024 the information was released.

2. **Martha Kamara Information Request to Bo Government Hospital**

By a letter dated 18th May 2024, Martha Kamara requested Bo government hospital to provide information on the number of drugs supplied to Gbotima Community Clinic Bo No.2.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commissioner for the southern region called the council on the 30th of May 2024.

Case Status: The information was provided on the 2nd of June 2024.

3. **Information Request by National Assets Commission to NCRA**

According to a letter received on the 10th March 2024, National Assets Commission requested for a list of assets at NCRA Office Bo.

Action Taken by RAIC: The Commission called NCRA to confirm if a request was made.

Case Status: The information was granted on the same day it was received.

4. **Musu Koroma Freedom of Information Request to Social Welfare Ministry**

Mr. Koroma requested information on the consequences of child abuse on the 20th February, 2024

Action Taken by RAIC: On the 21st of February a follow - up was made to Social Welfare by the Commission.

Case Status: The requested information was successful provided on the 23rd February 2024.

5. **Alpha Amara Information Request to World Vision Sierra Leone**

World Vision SL was asked by Alpha Amara on the 9th of November 2024 to provide information on the contractor class 1 requirement.

Case Status: The information was provided on the same day the information request was made.

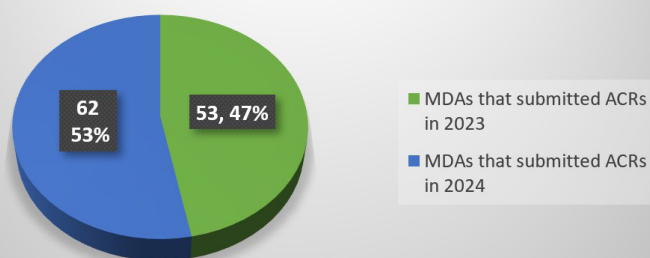
ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT

Annual Compliance reporting plays a critical role in promoting transparency, accountability and good governance in the context of Access to information. Annual Compliance Reports provide a clear account of how public institutions are handling access to information requests. This helps ensure that governments and public bodies remain open about their operations, decisions and use of public resources. Compliance reporting

allows the Right to Access Information Commission monitor how well institutions are adhering to access to information laws. It highlights failures or delays in providing information, pushing institutions to meet their obligations. By tracking statistics such as the number of requests received, processed, denied and the reasons for denial: this data is vital for identifying trends bottlenecks and areas needing improvement. This also helps strengthen public trust and this trust is essential for democratic engagement and civic participation. The process of Compiling reports encourages internal reviews, reflection and improvements in information management practices.

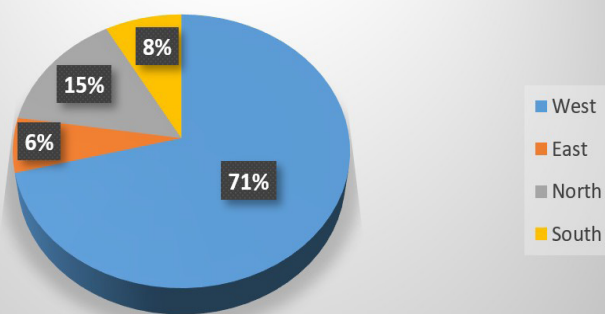
In furtherance of the provisions of Section 41 of the Right to Access Information Act 2013, the RAI Commission reports on all the Information Requests wherein the Commission was copied in or a complaint or an application for review was made to the Commission and annually collates reports from public authorities on their individual compliance activities for the year in review. The findings and figures are represented hereunder:

MDAs that submitted ACR in 2023 and 2024



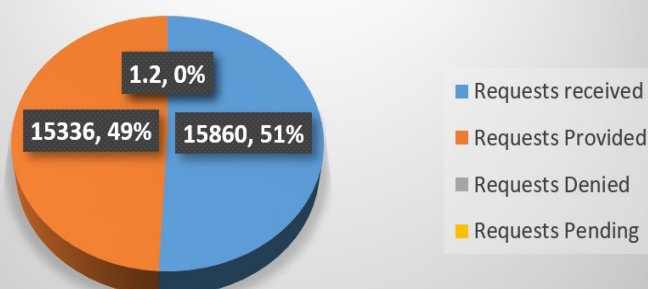
As shown above, 62 public authorities submitted their Annual Compliance Reports to the RAIC as of this report's compilation, compared with 53 in 2023. This represents nine additional submissions (6%), indicating a positive upward trajectory in MDAs' compliance rate.

ACR SUBMISSION BY REGION



The chart breaks down ACR submissions by region: The Western Area leads with 43 reports, followed by the North (9), the South (5), and the East (4). This stark disparity underscores a significant compliance gap between MDAs based in the capital versus those at regional headquarters, suggesting that targeted capacity-building and streamlined reporting support are needed outside Freetown.

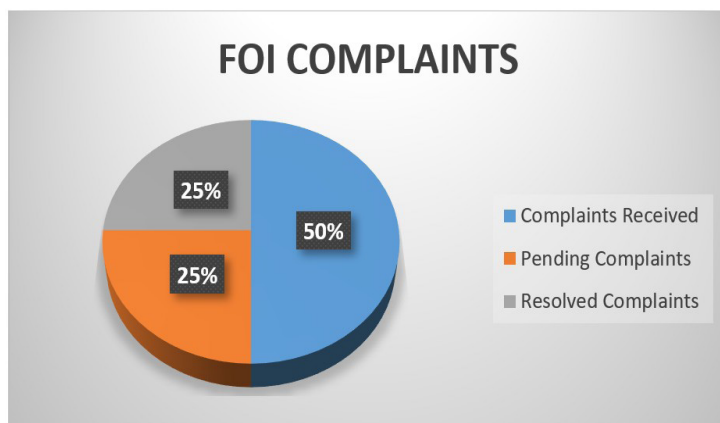
FOI REQUESTS



of the 62 MDAs that submitted ACRs in 2024, a total of 15,860 FOI requests were received nationwide, of which 15,336 (97%) were granted. Ten requests were denied—six under the exemptions set out in Sections 12–26 of the RAI Act, 2013—and four were transferred to the bodies holding the relevant information.

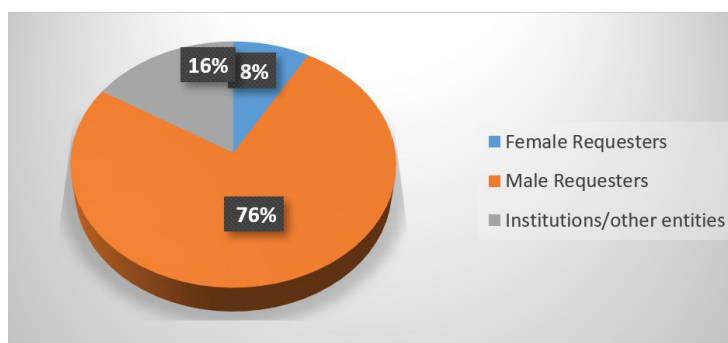
Compared with 19,391 requests in 2023, this represents a decline of 3,531 requests year-on-year.

FOI COMPLAINTS



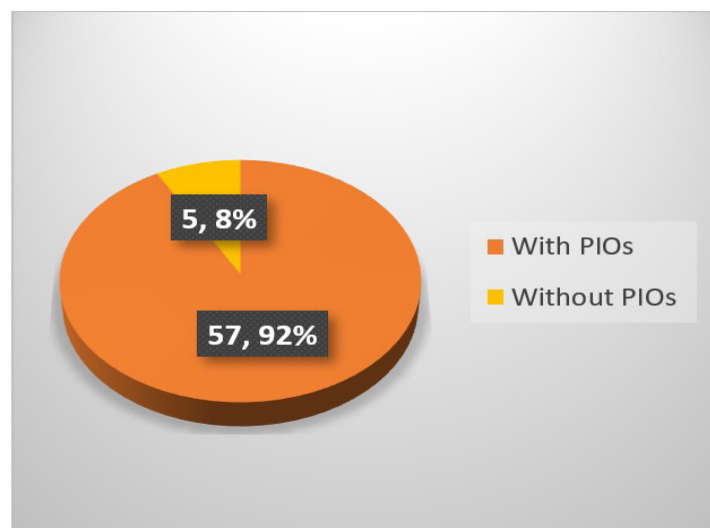
The chart shows Freedom of Information (FOI) complaint data for 2024. Of the 15,860 FOI requests submitted to public authorities, the RAIC received ten formal complaints. Five of these complaints were resolved during the year, while the remaining five are still pending.

GENDER OF REQUESTER

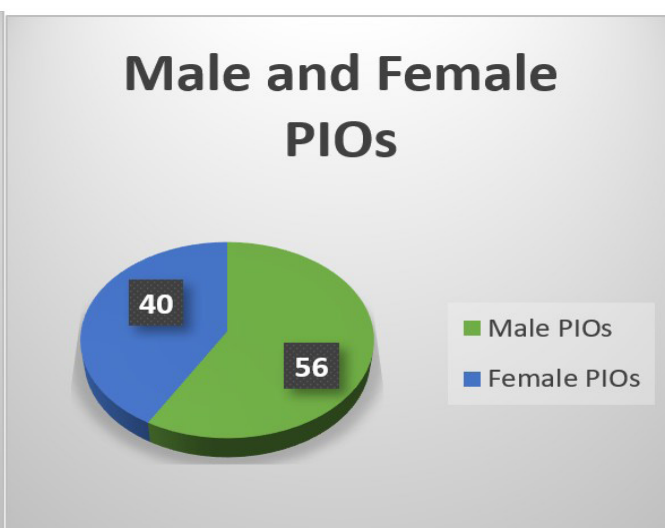


The chart shows that of all FOI requests, 14,012 (78%) were made by males, 1,548 (9%) by females, and 3,000 (17%) by institutions or other entities. This stark gender gap among individual requesters—women accounting for under 10%—underscores the need for targeted outreach to boost female engagement in the FOI process.

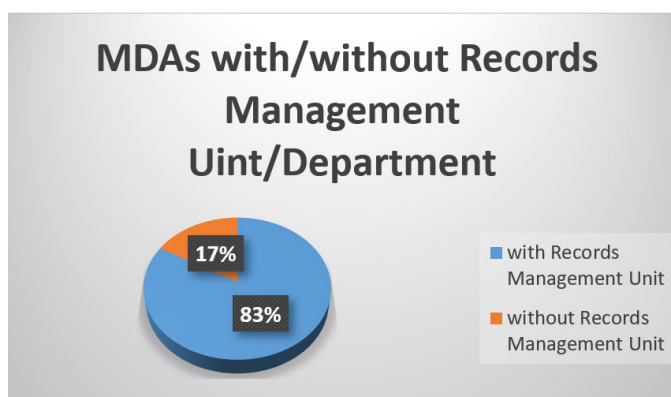
INSTITUTIONS WITH PIO



GENGDER OF PIOs



MDAs with/without Records Management Unit/Department

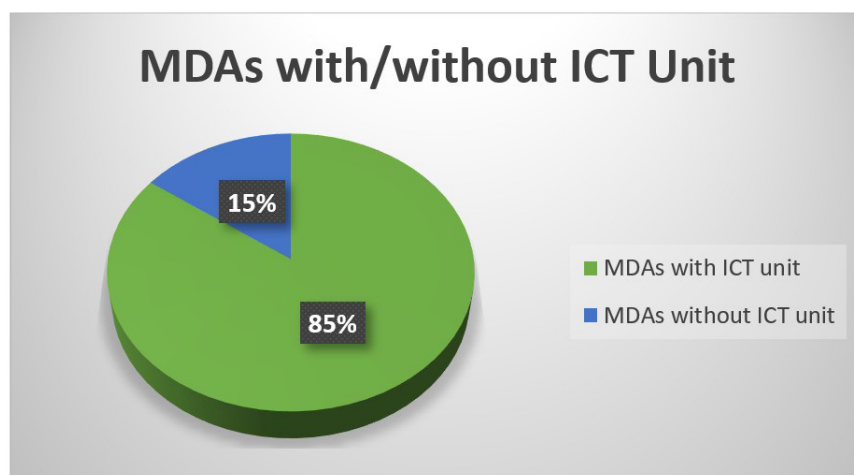


of the 62 MDAs that submitted Annual Compliance Reports in 2024, 57 have formally designated Public Information Officers (PIOs), while 5 do not. This widespread adoption of PIO roles highlights the commitment of most public authorities to proactively manage information access, although a small number still need to institutionalize this function.

Across those 57 MDAs, there are 56 male and 40 female PIOs. Because an MDA can appoint multiple officers, the total exceeds 62. While the gender breakdown shows encouraging female representation, continued efforts

will help move closer to true parity among information-management personnel.

According to the chart, 50 of the 62MDAs (83%) have established dedicated records-management units or departments, while 12 MDAs (17%) do not—highlighting strong overall adoption but leaving room to strengthen record-keeping capacity across the remaining agencies



Of the 62 MDAs, 52 (85 %) have dedicated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) units, while 10 (15 %) lack such a structure—highlighting an unexpected gap in digital capacity among a minority of agencies.

Metric	Category	Count	Percentage
ACR Submissions by Region	Western Area	43	69.4%
	North	9	14.5%
	South	5	8.1%
	East	4	6.5%
Public Information Officers (PIOs)	Present	57	92%
FOI Complaints	National	10	
	Absent	5	8%
PIO Gender	Male PIOs	56	—
	Female PIOs	40	—

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Ensuring Public Authorities comply with the Proactive Disclosure Information (PDI) Component of the Right to Access Information Act 2013 has been an important part of the Right to Access Information Commissions focus.

For the year in review, the Commission received 31 Proactive Disclosure Information (PDI) schemes of which two (2) were new Public Authorities and another 4 were institutions that had previously had their Proactive Disclosure Information (PDI) schemes rejected the rest where updates to the information previously provided.

The Proactive Disclosure of Information requirement is that Public Authorities that have had their Proactive Disclosure of Information Schemes approved should periodically update their PDI's as and when changes occur and it is pleasing to see that so many of the Public Authorities have complied with updating this.

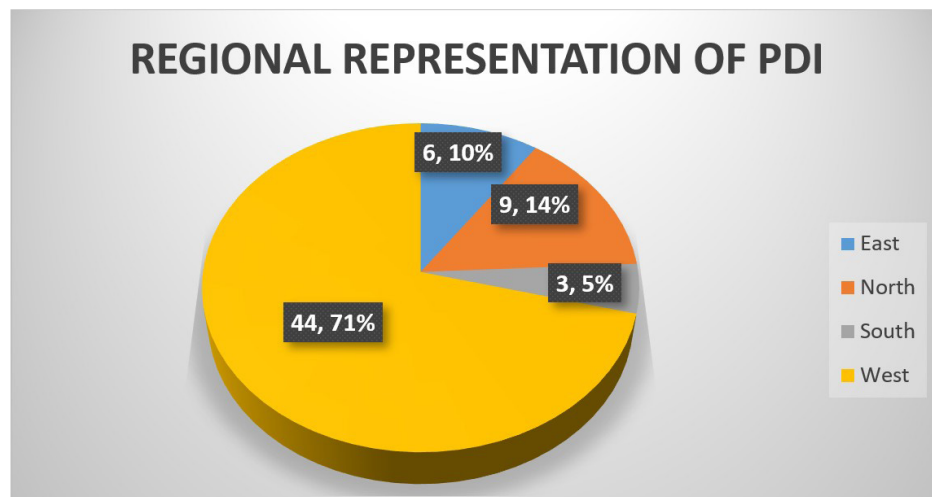
The RAIC also meet with and sent out letters to Public Authorities who were yet to proactively disclose information and it is expected

To date a total of 62 number of Public Authorities have submitted proactive disclosure of information schemes and are listed as follows:

1. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
2. Nation Authorizing Office

3. Human Resource Management Office
4. Ministry of Youth Affairs
5. Civil Service Training College
6. Cabinet Secretariat
7. Local Government Service Commission
8. Public Service Commission
9. National Commission for Democracy
10. Electricity Distribution and Supply Agency
11. Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
12. Office of the Administrator and Registrar – General
13. Public Sector Reform Unit
14. Sierra Leone Water Company
15. National Tourist Board
16. Makeni City Council
17. University of Makeni
18. Port Loko City Council
19. Kambia District Council
20. Bo District Council
21. Bo City Council
22. Kenema District Council
23. Kenema City Council
24. Kenema Government Hospital
25. Ministry of Social Welfare
26. Ministry of Lands and Country Planning
27. Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
28. Ministry of Employment and Social Security
29. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
30. National Revenue Authority
31. Nation Youth Commission
32. Kailahun District Council
33. Teaching Service Commission
34. Sierra Leone Water Company
35. National Civil Registration Authority
36. National Social Security Insurance Trust
37. North East Provincial Office
38. Kenema District Council
39. Tonkolili District Council
40. Falaba District Council
41. Koinadugu District Council
42. Ernest Bai Koroma University
43. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
44. Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency
45. National Mining Agency
46. Environment Protection Agency
47. Electricity Distribution and Supply Agency
48. Pujehun District Council
49. Kono District Council
50. Office of the Provincial Secretary
51. SALWACO
52. Independence Media Commission
53. Maritime Administration
54. Pharmacy Board Sierra Leone
55. Political Parties Registration Commission

56. Office of the Administrator and Registrar General
57. Anti-Corruption Commission
58. National Fire Force
59. Local Content Agency
60. National Commission for Democracy
61. Sierra Leone Commercial Bank
62. Parliament Sierra Leone



The PDI is done in every region but there are many Public Authorities that have regional offices and as a result the head office report covers these regional offices. The Regional representations is shown below;

2.4 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Freedom of Information Law in Sierra Leone will always remain imperfect if the role of national and international partners are not mentioned. Sierra Leone as a country practicing democracy has had the courage to pass progressive Law like the Right to Access to Information Act 2013 during the turn of the century, aimed at promoting accountability and transparency in the Public Service, good governance and citizens' participation in governance. The passage of this Law indicated high hopes and beliefs amongst citizens that systemic corruption in Public Institutions and the oath of secrecy within the Civil and Public Services to divulge information to the public/citizens, will certainly be reduced to minimum and consequently stimulate effective Service Delivery and promote citizens trust. In a bid to strengthening international partnerships, the Access to Information Law in Sierra Leone operates on a platform of fundamental human rights recognized by international human rights instruments, especially Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides for the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, through various channels regardless of borders.

2.4.1 NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Consistent with the establishment of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) and the Commission since its reconstitution in October 2018 has made significant strides towards developing enforcement and intervention procedures to enable a flexible and proactive approach to tackle systemic compliance issues. Access to Information empowers citizens to participate in decision-making processes, hold institutions accountable, and advocate for their rights. In the bid to improve on the implementation of the RAI Law, the Commission continues to collaborate with national partners in the form of public authorities which were largely engaged are: MoPED, Public Sector Reform Unit (RSRU), IMDEV etc.

2.4.1.1 Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED)

The RAIC collaborated with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED) and UNESCO in contribution to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report on the status of SDGs 16.10.2 and organized a side event on Digital Access to Information at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York on 16th July 2024 in which the Chairman and Information Commissioner (CIC) participated as a panel speaker. The idea of the discussion pointed to inform the presentations at the side event on SDG 16.10 which served

as a cornerstone for achieving the broader agenda of sustainable developments and by prioritizing access to information, we paved the way for a more equitable and prosperous world for all.

2.4.1.2 Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU)

The Commission since its reconstitution in October 2018 has made effort towards developing enforcement on internal controls and procedures. The Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) for the second time was engaged for another review and did a formal presentation on the Management Functional Review (MFR) report on 2nd August 2024. The primary aim of the MFR was to evaluate the current standing and identify opportunities for enhancement and growth in alignment with the Commission's mandate, its five-year strategic plan, the new national development plan, and government's big five game changers. As such, its subsequent recommendations on promotion and expansion of the Commission was taken into consideration. The MFR process climaxed with a validation of the TORs in a retreat in Makeni.

2.4.2 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The RAIC prioritizes international partnership to pursue access to information reforms and implementation. The signatory of Sierra Leone to international instruments such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights since the RAI Act was enacted has strengthened its international partnership. It has further reinforced its participation in the UNESCO convention on Access to Information (ATI) this UN agency is mandated to monitor progress on the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 16.10.2 which calls for ensuring public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. Given its steady integration into ATI, Sierra Leone, through RAIC is making remarkable contributions to the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC). Additionally, The RAIC is also a member of the Africa Network of Information Commissioners (ANIC) which is a platform that brings together members of access to information oversight bodies from African countries. The RAIC organised a joint side event with UNESCO and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development on the 16th July, 2024 on the margins of the UN High Level Political Forum meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York where CIC Dr Seaga Shaw shared the Sierra Leone experience on the digital access to information.

2.4.2.1 African Network of Information Commissioners (ANIC)

The African Network of Information Commissioners (ANIC), as the name implies, is a network of Information Commissioners responsible for protecting, promoting and ensuring the respect of the right of access to information in Africa. It stands as a beacon of transparency and accountability in the African continent. In a region where access to information (ATI) is paramount for fostering democratic governance and sustainable development, ANIC plays a pivotal role in championing the right to information and ensuring its effective implementation. The RAIC being a member of ANIC, participated in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 24-25 May 2024 in South Africa, where the Chairman and Information Commissioner (CIC) was re-elected as an executive member. It is worth noting that, during this AGM, it was agreed that, the RAIC was mandated to take lead in developing a capacity-building strategy and Records Management Code of Practice using Sierra Leone model for ANIC. The rationale behind developing these two assignments stemmed from the recognition of the critical role that information commissioners play in advancing transparency, accountability, and good governance across the African continent.

2.4.2.2 International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC)

The ICIC as an international membership body established to foster the protection and the promotion of access to public information as a fundamental pillar to social, economic and democratic governance. It also provides a platform for diverse voices to address current issues that impact on access to information, including transparency and accountability, competing interests, the rights of vulnerable societies and the diverse roles on technology. It offers an opportunity to local, regional and international Information Commissioners, Non-Governmental Organizations and promoters of access to information to share experiences and insights on how to strengthen public access to information through international cooperation. The XV International Conference of Information Commissioners was held in Tirana (Albania) from 3-5 June 2024. The Chairman and Information Commissioner, Program Manager and Senior Investigation represented the RAIC.



RAIC Team represented at the XV ICIC 2024

However, the RAIC continues to create more impact in the international arena. As a result, the RAIC won the bid for Sierra Leone to host the 17th ed. of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) 2026 on the 5th June 2024 in Albania.



Speaking at this year's ICIC Conference following the announcement, the Chairman and Information Commissioner of RAIC expressed appreciation to the global information commissioners' network for choosing Sierra Leone to host the 2026 edition of the Conference, while assuring colleague information commissioners of a successful engagement in Sierra Leone.

"I bring you greetings from Sierra Leone from the Right to Access Information Commission. On behalf of the commission [the RAIC] and my country Sierra Leone, I want to extend my appreciation to the Executive Committee and the ICIC 2026. Host Evaluation Committee for approving Sierra Leone as the next venue to host the 17th edition of ICIC Conference in 2026," he said. On the proposed topic for ICIC 2026, Dr. Shaw cited that they have identified ***"The Digital Space and Access to Information as an Enabler of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals,"*** as a suitable topic, while calling for suggestions from other members of the Conference.

2.4.2.3. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The RAIC being a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continues to collaborates on the implementations of ATI activities at all times. As a UN organization, it advocates the recognition of the vital role that freedom of expression and access to information and knowledge play in sustainable societies. The adherence of the RAIC to the UNESCO Convention on ATI increased for the UN Special Agency's renewed interesting fostering transparency and accountability in Sierra Leone.

The RAIC also joined UNESCO, together with other countries around the world to commemorate the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI). The year under review was commemorated on 27th September, 2024 on the theme ***“Mainstreaming Access to Information and Public Participation Practices Across Government Sectors in Sierra Leone”***, which is copied from the global them: ***“Mainstreaming Access to Information and Public Participation in the Public Sector”***. Every year, the day is observed globally on 28th September, but because the said date falls on Saturday, the leadership of RAIC decided to observe it on Friday – a working day and the eve of the day itself – to give it more relevance and prominence. The Global celebration of the IDUAI 2024 was observed in Ghana on 28th September, 2024 on the same theme as above.

PART 3

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION COMMISSION

Audited Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

*David Bertin Associate
Chartered Accountant*

*Right to Access Information Commission
Audited Financial Statements
For the period ending 31st December 2024*

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: 58 Krootown Road
Freetown
Sierra Leone.

Members of the Commission:

Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw- Chairman & Information Commissioner

Abu Bakarr Kargbo - Commissioner North

Ahmed G Kallon - Commissioner East

Baih Y. Idriss - Commissioner South

Mohamed Sesay - Commissioner West

Bankers: Bank of Sierra Leone,
Siaka Stevens Street,
Freetown.

Auditors: David Bertin Associate
49 Siaka Stevens Street
Coffee Nicol House
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Commission Responsibility Statement

The Vote Controller confirms that the Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Public Financial Management Act of 2016 and in compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards: Financial Reporting, Section 86 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016, requires that within three months after the accounts of the financial year are closed, the Vote Controller of every entity of sub-vented agency, and every other entity in the central government shall submit to the Auditor General annual financial statements of the entity for the financial year.

The Vote Controller is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the public sector entity's financial statements, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the entity for and as at the end of each financial year. This responsibility is stipulated in Sections 13 and 15 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016, includes:

- I. maintaining efficient and effective systems of financial management and internal controls;
- II. safeguard and manage assets and public money of the entity in the best interest of the entity with the due care and diligence;
- III. keep full and proper records of the financial affairs of the entity; and
- IV. Submit in a timely manner financial reports, accounts and statements of the entity.

The Vote Controller is of the opinion that the public sector entity's financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the public sector entity's transactions during the financial year-end. The vote controller confirms that the public sector entity has complied fully with applicable Government Regulations, and that the funds received during the year under review were used for the eligible purposes for which they were intended and were properly accounted for. The vote controller also confirms the adequacy of the system of internal controls. Further, the vote controller confirms that in preparing the Financial Statements, the most appropriate accounting policies have been consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgment and estimates. The vote controller further confirms to the best of his/her knowledge and belief the completeness of the accounting records maintained and that the Financial Statements agree with the books of accounts, which have been properly kept.

The Vote Controller accepts responsibility for the integrity of the financial statements, the financial information they contain and their compliance with the provisions of Section 15 (4) of the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act of 2016.

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the Commission is to provide for the disclosure of information held by Public Authorities or by persons providing services for them and provides for other related matters.

Reporting Entity

The Commission was established under the Sierra Leone Government Right to Access Information Commission Act 2013 with the key aim to provide for the disclosure of information held by Public Authorities or by persons providing services for them and provides for other related matters. The address of the Commission's registered office is 58 Krootown Road, Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Financial Statement of the Commission as at the end of the year ended 31st December 2024 comprise those of the Commission alone.

Results

The annexed Financial Statements disclose the financial activity of the Commission for the period ended 31st December, 2024.

Standardized Statement of Accounting Policies

The Standardised Accounting Policies given below have been developed using the cash basis of accounting that prescribed how financial transactions are treated and reported in the general purpose financial statements. These are developed based on the fundamental principles underlying the preparation of financial statements, including going-concern assumption, consistency of presentation and classification, cash basis of accounting, and aggregation and materiality. They prescribed consistency in the definition, recognition, measurement and treatment of similar accounting items or financial transactions.

The Accounting Policies section of the notes to the financial statements should describe each specific accounting policy that is necessary for a proper understanding of the financial statements.

The Accounting Policies will be subject to periodic review and update when it is deemed necessary by the government.

The standardised accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the general-purpose financial statements are set out below:

a. Statement of compliance and basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2019 and comply with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard - Financial Reporting under the Cash Basis of Accounting (Cash Basis IPSAS). The measurement basis applied is the historical cost basis, except where otherwise stated in the accounting policies below.

The financial statements have been prepared on the cash basis using the Government's standard chart of accounts.

The accounting policies adopted have been consistently applied to all the years presented

b. Reporting Currency

The financial statements are presented in Leones, which is the functional and reporting currency of the Government of Sierra Leone.

c. Reporting Period

The reporting period for these financial statements is a period of twelve months starting on the 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024, as specified in Section 1 of the PFM Act, 2019?

(Note - The general-purpose financial statements should be presented at least annually. When, in exceptional circumstances, an entity's reporting date changes and the annual financial statements are presented for a period longer or shorter than one year, an entity should disclose in addition to the period covered by the financial statements:

- (a) The reason(s) for a period other than one year being used; and
 b) The fact that comparative amounts may not be comparable.)

d. Receipts

Receipts are cash inflows within the Financial Year, comprising of receipts from Statutory/Authorised Allocations, Taxes, External Assistance (Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies), Other Aid and Grants, other borrowings, Capital receipts (Sale of Assets etc.), Receipts from Trading activities, fines, levies, and other receipts

These items shall be disclosed in summary on the face of the Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments for the year in accordance with the standardised GPFS. Notes shall be provided with detailed Statement of Revenues collected during the year by source of revenue and by line item accounts code. Also, a Statement of Arrears of Revenues as at end of the financial year shall be provided by source of revenue and by line item accounts code. Disposal proceeds from the sale of assets are recognized as receipts at the time of disposal.

e. Interest Received

Interest actually received during the financial year shall be treated as a receipt under item 'other receipts'.

f. Government Business activities

Cash receipts from trading activities shall be recorded net in the GPFS (after deducting direct expenses) unless otherwise provided for by law or policy in force. Total net receipts from all trading activities shall be disclosed in the Statement of cash receipts and payments under 'trading activities' item

Wherein gross revenue is recorded, corresponding payments shall be charged under a corresponding payment item head 'Government Business activities' in the Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments

g. Payments

Payments are recurrent and capital cash outflows made during the financial year and shall be categorised either by major economic categories/programme (activities) and/or by function in the statement of cash receipts and payment.

Payments for purchase of items of capital nature shall be expensed in the year in which the item has been purchased. It shall be disclosed under capital payments. Investments shall also be treated in the same way as capital purchases. At the end of the financial year, a schedule of fixed (physical) assets purchased shall be provided as part of the Additional Disclosures to the GPFS.

Prepaid expenses are amounts paid in advance of receipt of goods/services or work done (under contractual arrangements) and are charged directly to the respective expenditure item in the period of payment

h. Interest on Loans

Actual Interest on loans and other bank commissions charged on Bank Accounts during the year shall

be treated as payments and disclosed under interest payment in the Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments.

i. In-kind contributions/third party payments

In-kind contributions are donations that are made to the *entity* in the form of actual goods and/or services rather than in money or cash terms. These donations may include vehicles, equipment or personnel services. Where the financial value received for in-kind contributions can be reliably determined, the *entity* includes such value in the statement of receipts and payments (in a separate column) both as revenue and as an expense in equal and opposite amounts; otherwise, the contribution is not recorded.

j. Foreign Currency Translation

Cash flows arising from foreign currency transactions are translated into Leones using the spot exchange rates prevailing at the date of payment/receipt.

Foreign currency balances, as at the year end, shall be translated at the exchange rates prevailing on that date (closing spot rate or year-end exchange rate).

Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of foreign transactions and from the translation at year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in the Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments accordingly either as receipts/payments.

k. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, short-term deposits on call and highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value. These comprise mainly Bank account balances; include amounts held at the Bank of Sierra Leone, cash Imprest and other short term highly liquid investments held at the end of the financial year.

l. Imprest and Advances

The Government policy specifically states that all Imprest and advances shall be retired before the end of the financial year. However, should circumstances occur (including an Emergency) where either an Imprest/advance is given out close to the financial year end or an Imprest/advance already given could not be accounted for, such an Imprest/advance (or balance outstanding) shall be treated as cash equivalent since there shall be no proof that such funds have been utilised.

m. Budget

The budget is developed on the same accounting basis (cash basis), the same accounts classification basis, and for the same period as the financial statements.

The Budget Figures are the amounts approved by the Legislature in accordance with the Appropriation Act (annual budget and supplementary budget) and as detailed in the Government of Sierra Leone Budget Printed Estimates.

An assessment of the actual budgetary performance, at the level of legislative approval against the comparable budget for the financial year under review has been included as Statement B of these Financial Statements.

n. Contingencies

Contingent liabilities (including Guarantees) are recorded in the Statement of Contingent Liabilities (on memorandum basis) when the contingency becomes evident and under the cash accounting method they are recognized only when the contingent event occurs and payment is made. Contingent assets are not recognized and where not probable neither disclosed.

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David Bertin Associate
Chartered Accountants Taxation and
Business Consultants

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS – DAVID BERTIN ASSOCIATE CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS TO MEMBERS OF RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION COMMISSION

We have audited the financial statements of Right to Access Information Commission

Which comprise the statement of Receipts and Payments as at 31st December 2024, the statement of Cash balances for the year then ended and notes supporting the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information as set out on pages 12 to 18.

Opinion

In our opinion, the statement of Receipts and Payments give a true and fair view of the financial position and the Statements of Cash Balances of the Right to Access Information Commission as at 31st December 2024 in accordance with the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2019 and comply with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard - Financial Reporting under the Cash Basis of Accounting (Cash Basis IPSAS). and Right to Access Information Commission Act, 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements Section of our report. We are independent of the agency in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Sierra Leone and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code. We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

The commissioners and management of the commission are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the directors and management's responsibility statements. Other information does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our audit of the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and in so doing, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If based on the work we have performed on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Key Audit Matters

Key audit matters are those matters that in our professional judgement were of most significance in our audit of these financial statements. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Members of the Commission and those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

The commissioners and management are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2019 and comply with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard - Financial Reporting under the Cash Basis of Accounting (Cash Basis IPSAS) and Right to Access Information commission Act, 2013 and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Right to Access Information Commission ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the agency or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing commission financial reporting processes.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue an auditor's report that include our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA's) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA's), we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures respective to those risks and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control of Right to Access Information Commission.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the commissioners.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the director's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the agency's to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of

our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause Right to Access Information Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding information of the financial activities of the agency to express an opinion on the financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of this audit; we remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.
- We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.
- We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be brought to bear on our independence and where applicable, related safeguards.

David Bertin Associate Chartered Accountant

Signed

Date:

Statement of Cash Receipt and Payments
for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024			Notes	2023		
		Receipts/Payments by the Ministry of Finance/RAIC LE'000	Receipt/Payments by third party LE'000	Total LE'000		Receipts/Payments by the Ministry of Finance/RAIC LE'000	Receipt/Payments by third party LE'000	Total LE'000
Receipts								
Authorised Allocation/MOF Transfers	1.a	3,960		3,960	1.a	2,125		2,125
Trading activities								
other Receipts	1.b		136	136	1.b		25	25
Total Receipts		3,960	136	4,096		2,125	25	2,150
	Notes	2024			Notes	2023		
		Receipts/Payments by the Ministry of Finance/RAIC LE'000	Receipt/Payments by third party LE'000	Total LE'000		Receipts/Payments by the Ministry of Finance/RAIC LE'000	Receipt/Payments by third party LE'000	Total LE'000
Payments								
Compensation of employees	2.a	124		124	2.a	49		49
Use of goods and services	2.b	3,865		3,865	2.b	1,959		1,959
Capital/development expenditure	2.c	88		88	2.c	92		92
Social Benefits	2.d	-		-	2.d	15		15
Other Payments	2.e				2.e			
Financing cost - bank charges	2.f				2.f			
Total payments		4,077	-	4,077		2,115	-	2,115
Surplus/Deficit		(117)		19		10		35
Cash at beginning of the year	3.d	43		43	3.d	8		8
Cash at close of the year	3.a	(74)	136	62	3.a	18	25	43

The Financial Statements were approved on -----2025.

-----Chairman and Information Commissioner

NOTES TO THE RECEIPT AND PAYMENT - JANUARY to DECEMBER 2024**2.a Compensation of employees**

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
NASSIT		
STIPEND	124	49
Salaries& Other Allowances		
NRA PAYE		
Staff Capacity Building		-
	124	49

2.b Use of goods and services**Maintenance/running costs**

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
Repairs & Maintenance IRO :		
Motor vehicle, building,machinery &	83	104
Total	83	104

Utilities

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
Electricity Bill		
Internet/Web hosting&ICT Support	9	13
Water Expenses	266	155
DSTV		
Total	275	168

Office running cost

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
IMPREST	376	214
AUDIT FEES	47	38
LOCAL/INTERNATIONALTRAVELLIN	474	128
OFFICE&GENERAL	506	5
Stationery&Catridges	51	55
Security	61	38
FUEL	995	688
MEETINGS/WKSHOPS & ENTERTA	586	362
PRINTING&DESIGN	329	123
PUBLICATION	46	
Tax - NRA (6.5% withholding and PA	36	36

Bank charges

TRAVELLING O/SEAS

TRAVELLING LOCAL

RENT

Total	3,507	1,687
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Total Use of goods and services**3,865** **1,959**

2.c Capital/development expenditure

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
Computer equipment	59	63
FURNITURE & FITTINGS	29	29
	88	92

2.d Social Benefits

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
	59	63
PROVISION		15
	-	15

2.e OTHER PAYMENT

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
Director allownace	-	-
Sitting Fee	-	-

2.f Financing cost - bank charges

	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
bank charges		

Cash and cash equivalents for the purpose of cash flow comprises
NOTES TO THE RECEIPT AND PAYMENT - JANUARY to DECEMBER 2024

3.a	Cash at the close of the year	2024	2023
		LE'000	LE'000
	Bank balances	53	39
	Petty cash & cash in hand	9	4
		62	43
3.b	Bank Balance at the close of the year		
	BSL	53	39
		53	39
3.c	Petty cash & cash in hand at the close of the year		
	Petty cash & cash in hand	9	4
		9	4
3.d	Cash at the beginning of the year		
	Bank balances	39	4
	Petty cash & cash in hand	4	4
		43	8
3.e	Bank Balance at the start of the year		
	BSL	39	4
		39	4
3.f	Petty cash & cash in hand at the start of the year		
	Petty cash & cash in hand	4	4
		4	4

Additional Disclosure

Statement of Unpaid Commitments Outstanding
as at 31 December 2024

Use of goods and services	2024	2023
	LE'000	LE'000
Trade Payables-Government		-
Printing	-	120
Afcom	-	15
Vehicle Maintenance	-	12
	-	147

STATEMENT OF DISPOAL OF FIXED (PHYSICAL) ASSETS DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

In thousand of Leones

Particulars	Account Code	Note	Sale Proceeds
Total			

STATEMENT OF FIXED (PHYSICAL) ASSETS PURCHASED DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Purchase Date	Quantity	Asset Type	Cost of Asset	Staff Assigned To
9/1/2024	1	Refrigerator	10,700.00	Chairman and Information Commissioner
9/1/2024	1	Laptop	37,000.00	Chairman and Information Commissioner
9/1/2024	1	Laptop	22,000.00	Executive Secretary
9/1/2024	1	Laptop Battery	4,000.00	Manager, Records and Open Data
			73,700.00	

PART 4

CHALLENGES, KEY PRIORITIES AND CONCLUSION

4.1 CHALLENGES

Notwithstanding the notable progress that the Commission had made in the year under review, the Commission continues to face significant challenges which includes:

- Inadequate funding and undue delays of quarterly allocations.
- Limited access to information awareness, education and advocacy due to limited funding;
- Inefficient compliance rate as the MDAs not providing the required support and cooperation to aid the work of the Commission.
- Inadequate staff to carry out its core functions
- Inadequate training opportunities
- Mobility is a serious challenge as the Commission only has one official vehicle which limits the movement of staff and Commissioners particularly the regional commissioners who oversee various towns and districts.
- Inadequate complaints mechanisms;

4.2 KEY PRIORITIES

The following strategic priorities for moving forward are as follows:

- Popularization and Capacity Building on the Digital ATI focussing on the RAI Regulations platforms.
- Continuous engagement with the Planning Steering Committee for the preparation to host the 17th ed. of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) 2026.
- Reactivating the Civil Society Organisations' Coalition on access to information in the country.
- Seeking donor funding for key projects and programmes of the Commission
- Forging partnership with the Judiciary of Sierra Leone in the enforcement of the RAI Act 2013
- Monitoring the Annual Compliance Report (ACR) and Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) templates to ensure that all MDAs mandated to present a report to the Commission of their annual compliance in keeping with Section 41 of the RAIC Act.
- Awaiting Parliamentary approval on the amendment of the RAI Act and enactment of the Data Protection Bill and the Archives and Records Management Bill.
- Amendment of the RAI Act to include the North-West Region and the appointment of its Commissioner to ensure fairer representation and efficiency in the commission's devolution programmes.
- Increasing popularisation of, and capacity building on, the Code of Practice for Records and Archive Management involving state and non-state actors involved in the supply and demand of information.
- Engaging in more serious and aggressive approach for the improvement of conditions of service of Commission staff;
- Setting up of Open Data Centres in the remaining 12 districts of Sierra Leone
- Exploring opportunities for support and resource mobilization to enhance implementation of the Commission's programmes under the RAI Act in national and international institutions.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The year under review was a decade celebration year since the establishment of the Commission in 2014 and with the notable progress made the RAIC has focused on enhancing its regulatory framework, developing the Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual, establishment of the Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) Schemes and Annual Compliance Report (ACR) templates are seeking opportunities to expand its transparency and accountability programs. The RAI Regulations 2022 was developed to give effect to the RAI Act and the Commission has upgraded its website for the promotion of the digital Access to Information (ATI) using the Freedom of information (FOI) Request forms A, B, C & D. (Form A – FOI Request Form, Form B – FOI Acknowledgement Form, Form C – FOI Response Form, and Form D – FOI Complaint Form). It is worth noting that, in the last few years, the Commission invested significant time and resources in transforming the way that it works to optimize the use of its resources which saw the accomplishment of a host of regulatory and operational activities. Despite facing funding challenges in recent years, the RAIC has managed to sustain its operations and implement programs through prudent financial management. It has successfully completed projects funded by the Government of Sierra Leone contributing to significant advancements in access to information in Sierra Leone. The Commission remains committed to ensuring access to information is an effortless process and a gateway to other rights that positively impact all, regardless of race, gender, social status, or political affiliation.