



Records and Information Management Policy

Right to Information Unit

Records are critical to the delivery of the RTI Unit's programs and services. They enable RTI Unit to hold itself accountable to its own policies, as well as to commitments made to the Government and the people of Vanuatu. Records also support management oversight in the conduct of audits, reviews, and reporting. This policy sets out RTI Unit's requirements for managing its records and defines staff responsibilities.

This Policy document is approved by Mr. Gregoire Nimbtik, Director,
Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, Prime
Minister's Office, Government of Vanuatu



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1. Purpose

The purpose of the Records and Information Management Policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities and decisions of the Right to Information Unit Records are created, managed and retained or disposed of appropriately, and in accordance with relevant legislation. This policy is to state the Right to Information Unit's commitment to good recordkeeping in support of good governance, and to assign responsibilities for good recordkeeping within the Unit. This is to make sure that the principals set out in this policy statement can be maintained.

2. Authorisation

This policy was approved by Mr. Gregoire Nimbtik, Director, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, Prime Minister's Office

Signature:

Date: 30th January 2017

3. More Information

For further information on this policy, contact the Rights to Information Unit:
Email: righttoinformation@vanuatu.gov.vu

4. Scope

This policy is applicable to all RTI Unit employees, including contractors, consultants and volunteers.

This policy applies to all files, emails, memoranda, minutes, audio-visual materials and any other documents that are created or received by the RTI Unit's officers in the course of their duties. It also applies to all confidential and classified records.

A record is an evidence of an official transaction or decision. If any RTI Unit officer carries out any RTI business, whether in writing or by email—including from a private email account—the documents that arise from the RTI business are RTI Unit's records, and must be managed according to this policy.

5. Policy statement

The RTI Unit is committed to achieving best practice in its recordkeeping, in support of good governance.

Records of the RTI Unit's actions and decisions are knowledge assets, and are a vital part of the RTI Unit's corporate memory. Managing these assets in an efficient way can help to save time and money by ensuring that vital information can be located when it is needed. Easy retrieval of the valuable information that is held in RTI Unit is good business practice. Protecting this information, so that it is not lost or destroyed while it is still needed, is essential to accountability. It is also essential to protect the RTI Unit and the community's interests, and the rights and entitlements of citizens. The RTI Unit also has a responsibility to maintain the security, confidentiality and privacy of the information resources it holds.

RTI Unit's records provide important memory of the Unit and should be managed to ensure that they can be retained for the benefit of future generations.

6. Elements of the Records Management

Creation and capture

Staff should ensure they create official records of all decisions and actions made in the course of their official business. For example, if business is transacted by telephone, file notes of the key points in the conversation should be documented. Official meetings should include the taking of minutes.

The RTI Unit has developed *Records and Information Management Procedures and Guidelines* to assist in promoting the responsible creation of records, the capture of essential information and the management of records over time.

To ensure that the RTI Unit gains maximum benefit from its information resources, this policy requires the RTI Unit to ensure that:

- Full and accurate records of all of their activities are made;
- These records are managed efficiently to ensure they can be retrieved when needed and not released inappropriately; and
- No records are destroyed without permission of the Director, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination

Further information is available in the *Records and Information Management Procedures*.

Storage

Current hardcopy records should be stored in areas outlined in the *Records and Information Management Procedures*. All official electronic documents and records must be saved onto the Right to Information Unit's electronic records management system Saperion.

Maintenance and monitoring

The location of each record needs to be recorded and updated at every moment of the record. This ensures that records, as assets, can be accounted for. RTI Unit staff should update the files and keep record of the movement of the files.

Disposal

The RTI Unit has an authorized *Records plan* but does not cover functional retention and disposal authority covering records to its core functions and activities. Vanuatu currently does not have a national ‘disposal authority’ or standards on retention and disposal of records. A ‘disposal schedule’ for the Unit will be developed when the standards become available.

At this stage no records shall be disposed of until a disposal schedule is being written and endorsed.

Transfer

Records that are over fifteen years old according to the *Archives Act* become archives and will be transferred to archival custody of the National Archives of Vanuatu.

Access

Records must be available to all authorized staff that requires access to them for business purposes. Reasons for restriction access are outlined in the *Records and Information Management Procedures*.

All access to the RTI Unit records by members of the public, including requests under the Right to Information legislation, will be in accordance with the *Records and Information Management Procedures*.

7. Laws and regulations

The Right to Information Unit is established in the *Vanuatu National Policy on the Right to Information* and the Right to Information legislation and it is required to observe the provisions of this Policy and legislation including other legislation in the capturing and retention of records.

There are a number of Acts that relate to the management of records and information with requirements that may apply to the RTI Unit. Press ctrl and click to access the legislations below or access them via Paclii’s website on www.paclii.org . These legislations include:

- [Archives Act](#)
- [Deposit of Books Act](#)
- [Electronic Transactions Act](#)
- [Expenditure Review and Audit Act](#)

- [Official Secrets Act](#)
- [Ombudsman Act](#)
- [Public Finance and Economic Management Act](#)
- [Public Service Act](#)
- [Trade Disputes Act](#)

8. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the RTI Unit

All RTI Unit officers must play a part in ensuring that full and accurate records are created and managed by government, and that these records are kept for as long as they are needed for administrative, accountability and historical purposes.

Responsibilities of the Director (Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination)

The Director has the responsibility for ensuring that this policy is endorsed for use in the RTI Unit. The Director ensures that all staffs of the RTI Unit know about and understand this policy. The Director will promote compliance by all RTI Unit staff with this policy and contribute to any review of this policy.

Responsibilities of the RTI Unit Manager

The RTI Unit Manager must:

- assign responsibility for the management of the RTI Unit's records to a records management officer;
- ensure that the RTI-Unit staffs are aware of and understand the policy;
- ensure that their staffs comply with this policy and with procedures issued by the Director;
- ensure that there is adequately resourced records management program within the RTI Unit;
- make staff available for recordkeeping training when required, and
- contribute to any review of this policy.

Responsibilities of the Records Management Officer

The officer assigned to take responsibility for records management within the organization must:

- develop and implement strategies and procedures to manage the RTI Unit's records;
- ensure that those strategies and procedures take account of all laws, regulations

- and standards that apply to the RTI-Unit and records management;
- support the RTI Unit Manager in ensuring compliance with this policy;
- ensure that staffs have adequate training and advice on recordkeeping;
- consider including the requirement to create and properly manage organizational records as a standard feature in all position descriptions; and
- contribute to any review of this policy.

Responsibilities of the Information and Communication Technology staff

Computer systems are used to carry out the RTI Unit's business, which means that they may create evidence of the RTI Unit's actions and decisions that should be preserved as records. This is especially true for email systems. Information and communication technology staff must ensure that:

- They consult with records management staff before they buy, design or decommission information technology systems;
- Any information technology systems that store the RTI Unit's information, documents or records have back-ups; and
- Policies, procedures and systems are in place to protect government information from inappropriate access or destruction.

Responsibilities of all RTI Unit staffs

While the other groups mentioned above have special responsibilities in relation to records management, they also have the same responsibilities as all other staff within the RTI- Unit. All RTI Unit staffs must:

- Comply with this policy and with any recordkeeping procedures issued by the RTI Unit;
- Ensure that they make and file records of all of the actions and decisions they take as RTI Unit officers including:
 - o Write and file notes of telephone conversations;
 - o Save all electronic records (including emails regarding official emails from official accounts and private email accounts) on the Right to Information shared folder under the correct functions; and
 - o Take and file minutes of meetings.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed in consultation with the senior manager to ensure that it remains relevant to the RTI Unit

This policy will be formally reviewed within three years of the date of issue. Later reviews make take place after longer period, once the efficient and effective operation of the policy has been confirmed.

10. Definitions

Access	The opportunity to, and means of, finding and using information.
Accountability	The principle that individual, organizations and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others
Archives	Records of an organization or individual that has been selected for indefinite retention because of their continuing value for legal, administrative, financial or historical research purposes. An organization whose main function is to select, manage, preserve and make archival records available for use
Business activity	A term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organization and its employees
Governance	The systems, structures, processes and rules that an organization uses to make decisions, take action, manage resources and monitor progress
Record	Information created, received and maintained as evidence by an organization in the course of carrying out its business activities
Recordkeeping	The process of creating and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information