



VANUATU

**NATIONAL POLICY ON THE RIGHT TO
INFORMATION**

VISION 2013-2018

AUGUST 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRP	Comprehensive Reform Programme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
MAV	Media Association of Vanuatu
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OGCIO	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
PMO	Office of the Prime Minister
PAA	Priority Action Agenda
PCPI	Pacific Centre for Public Integrity
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
RIO	Right to Information Officers
RTI	Right to Information
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of NGOs
VCC	Vanuatu Christian Council
VIPAM	Vanuatu Institute of Public Administration and Management

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Many people from across government, civil society and the media in Vanuatu have generously given their time and input to develop this policy, and the contributions of all who have participated is gratefully acknowledged. In particular, the following organisations provided additional resources to assist with this policy development: the Media Association of Vanuatu (MAV), which provided the secretariat to the Media Policy and Right to Information steering committee, Transparency Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Association of Non Government Organisations (VANGO).

¹ *Information Disclosure Policy: A Toolkit for Pacific Governments, 2006*, Charmaine Rodrigues, Right to Information Programme, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, <http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org>

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this Right to Information (RTI) Policy to the people of Vanuatu. This policy has been developed as part of the Government's commitment to open and transparent government, and to ensuring that we develop together in partnership as a nation.

Lack of information and poor coordination of information can hamper the work of government, and can also exclude the very people that government is meant to serve. So the approach we have taken in developing this policy is to work together across all stakeholders in government, civil society and the media to develop this RTI policy that all have a part in creating, and all have a stake in its success.

As we embrace new technologies to improve government operations and to provide better access to many services, we must make sure that we honour our commitments made at a national, regional and international level to do so in a way that is inclusive, participatory and equitable.

This policy reflects this ambition.

As we, as a nation move to open up to the world through trade, investment and economic development, we must also ensure that every citizen of Vanuatu can benefit from this development. This should be done in a way that respects the rights of all that are guaranteed under our Mama Loa (Constitution) and are reflected in the international conventions to which we have acceded. The Right to Information policy will help us to achieve this.

Implementing this policy will not be easy, and will require significant resources in an environment where government has many competing priorities. However, we can act quickly through some existing work programs, such as our I-Government initiative and our Universal Access Policy, to start the process. And through a comprehensive implementation plan, we can make sure that this policy is implemented gradually over the medium to longer term.

The importance of this policy cannot be overstated: Through implementing this policy, we will put in place changes to government practice, and also changes to the way we work with civil society, that will have very positive benefits for all.

I wish to thank all who have contributed to the development of this policy, and dedicate it to the people of Vanuatu.

Honourable Moana Carcasses Kalosil (MP)
Prime Minister of Vanuatu and Minister for Information

Ministry of Prime Minister

August 2013

PREAMBLE

The Vanuatu Government recognises that information is a public resource entrusted to it by its citizens. An effective information disclosure regime has the potential to empower the poor and other vulnerable groups of society to access information concerning the government's pro-poor policies and ensure that their basic needs are met. A strong, open, democratic government and an effective information-sharing regime can also support national stability. Conversely, a lack of, or minimal, openness strengthens perceptions of exclusion from opportunity or unfair advantage of one group over another and closes direct channels of communication between citizens and the government.

Several significant governance reforms have been introduced over the past 10 years by the government. Nevertheless, there is still more that can be done to improve governance in Vanuatu, including the development of a comprehensive Right to Information (RTI) Policy and accompanying RTI legislation.²

The National RTI Policy 2013 therefore signals the Government of Vanuatu's continuing commitment to the recognition of access to information as a human right, and as a cornerstone of fundamental democratic principles of good governance. Nationally, the Policy represents part of a broader strategy of improved governance under the Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP), the National Priority Action Agenda and the Leadership Code. Internationally, it honours, to a large extent, a number of conventions to which Vanuatu is a signatory, including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which Vanuatu ratified in mid-2011. Regionally, the Policy is in line with Vanuatu's commitments under the 2005 Regional Pacific Plan. The development of this policy is also timely in other respects, coming at a time when there is considerable interest in right to information on the part of civil society and the media, and with global development partners increasingly requiring greater transparency and accountability from aid recipients.

The Policy has been drafted to take into account internationally acceptable standards and best practices, as far as they are useful to the Vanuatu context. It also takes into account the guiding principles of social justice, human rights, good governance, transparency and accountability, and public participation. As such, five (5) primary indicators for an effective information disclosure policy have been included and addressed in a manner that is expected to make them workable in Vanuatu. These are:

- **Maximum Disclosure** - the principle of maximum disclosure on the part of the government, both in response to requests and by voluntarily publishing vital information;
- **Maximum Accessibility** – the development of timely, user friendly and affordable mechanisms that facilitate accessibility for all persons and more particularly, marginalized and rural Ni-Vanuatu;
- **Affordability** - the establishment of a simple and affordable means of accessing information and addressing complaints and appeals where access is being improperly denied or withheld;
- **Effective Implementation** – the detailing of activities such as monitoring, evaluation, the training of officials and a strong public education and awareness campaign;

² Status of the Right to Information in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth, A Report, CHRI, p.69

- **Media & Government Relations** – ensuring the creation of an environment where the role of the media in responsibly advancing free expression, good governance and human development is recognised and facilitated through the right to information.

Upon the approval of this Policy and to facilitate its implementation, a comprehensive National RTI Implementation Plan establishing activities, responsible entities, deadlines and budgets will be developed in collaboration with RTI stakeholders. As a guide, a basic outline of preliminary implementation activities is attached at Annex 1.

The development of the RTI Policy was spearheaded by the National Media Policy and RTI Committee established by the PMO and chaired by the Department of Strategic Policy Planning, Aid Coordination within the Office of the Prime Minister. Committee members include representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Ombudsman, Parliament, the media and civil society, and the Committee secretariat has been provided by the Media Association of Vanuatu (MAV). The Committee has been supported in its work by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which engaged a consultant to work with the Committee in the drafting of this Policy, accompanying RTI legislation and a national Implementation Plan.

Consultations began in March 2012 with representatives from within and outside government to discuss challenges and, in keeping with a desired “home-grown” outcome, to determine the best strategies to employ to make an information disclosure regime work for the people of Vanuatu.

VISION

To provide open, accountable and participatory government for all the people of Vanuatu.

MISSION

It is our mission to promote the recognition of the right to information as a universal right in Vanuatu, guide public officials, the media, civil society and the public by providing a clear framework for accessing and disseminating information and provide an opportunity for a structured, comprehensive approach to the development of an improved and sustainable information management system across the public sector.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Right to Information & Its Benefits

The “Right to Information” means that persons and organisations have a legally recognised right to request and obtain access to information, subject to limited exceptions, from public, and in some instances, private bodies performing public functions. Individuals also have a right to access and correct all personal information held by public and private bodies about themselves.

A right to access information held by public bodies has been linked to pragmatic political and social objectives, such as controlling corruption, the protection of the environment, the support and protection of human rights, the empowerment of ordinary people to make more informed electoral decisions, the participation of the public in governance and policy formulation. An added benefit of an RTI regime is the encouragement of investors to make long-term investments based on increased confidence in transparent and accountable national institutions and systems. This can have the effect of boosting economic growth and development.

2.2 National Developments in RTI

- In 1998, Vanuatu began a Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) based on three categories of reform: public sector, economic and those promoting equity and social development. The category of public sector reform aims to improve the institutions of governance by increasing transparency and accountability in public sector management and reductions in the size of the public sector.
- In 2005, the Vanuatu Government released its Priorities and Action Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015. The PAA recognises the importance of providing for a free flow of information on government programs and services to Members of Parliament, citizens, civil society and development partners. The free flow of information about government and its operations serves to increase accountability of leaders and government institutions, helps to improve efficient allocation and use of resources and service delivery. This means the Government and the people of Vanuatu can more readily work together to develop and grow Vanuatu, and achieve progress against the Millennium Development Goals.
- In 2005 also, Vanuatu and other Pacific Island Forum Countries (the Pacific Leaders Forum) endorsed the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration. The Plan committed the region to four key areas of work, good governance, sustainable development, economic growth and security. The Good Governance objective speaks to improved transparency, accountability, equity and efficiency in the management and use of resources in the Pacific, including work on ‘right to information’.
- Vanuatu acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2008, thereby undertaking a legal obligation, in accordance with Article 19, to respect the right of people to “seek, receive and impart information”. In that same year, at the request of the Vanuatu Government, a Discussion Paper on RTI was prepared collaboratively by the Media Association of Vanuatu (MAV), the Pacific Centre for Public Integrity (PCPI) and the Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO). The Paper embraced the notion of an RTI law in Vanuatu and raised issues and concerns that would be relevant to the socio-political context in Vanuatu. The MAV sought donor funding to engage a Ni-Vanuatu legal expert to draft a RTI bill that would address these issues. Funding was not forthcoming.

- At the Melanesia Sub-Regional Consultation on the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) held in March 2009, the Vanuatu delegation reiterated their commitment to RTI and specifically identified the development of RTI legislation as a key priority for immediate action.
- In 2011, the Vanuatu Government ratified the UNCAC. The UNCAC recognises the central role that transparency and the right to information can play in ensuring government accountability by enabling the public to participate in the exposure of corruption. Article 13 requires states to ensure that: “the public has effective access to information” and to undertake: “public information activities that contribute to non-tolerance of corruption, as well as public education programmes”.
- In 2011, also, the National Media Policy and RTI Committee (“the Committee”) was established to spearhead the development of a national media and freedom of information policy, and a right to information law. The Committee has now begun to act on its terms of reference.

2.3. Millennium Development Goals & RTI in Vanuatu

Vanuatu signed the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and, since that time, has made remarkable strides towards reaching the MDG targets, most of which were not new but represented goals and benchmarks to which leaders and decision makers were already committed.³ Measures have been implemented to increase government accountability and transparency, many in close association with development partners. This RTI policy and legislation represents the next phase in providing greater public access to and awareness of Vanuatu’s development initiatives.

2.4 International Donor Agencies and Accountability

Since Independence in 1980, the government of Vanuatu has entered into meaningful global partnerships for aid and development. The majority of this development assistance is dedicated to the partnership priority outcomes of improved education, health, infrastructure and economic governance.⁴

These global partnerships are however based on mutual responsibilities. Developing countries such as Vanuatu are increasingly being required to commit to and make progress in the areas of good governance, development, and poverty reduction. Developed countries, in turn, respond with increased aid and trade support.

For instance, the MCC forms partnerships with countries that are committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens. It recently announced that for year 2012 going forward, the “right to information” will become one of its indicators for determining aid eligibility and in so doing, will consider the level of press freedom, whether right to information laws have been or are in the process of being promulgated, and the extent to which a country is filtering internet content or tools. An information disclosure regime will improve Vanuatu’s overall eligibility scores with the MCC for future assistance.

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade monitors the quality of the global partnerships within its mandate,⁵ it is recognised that more needs to be done to position Vanuatu in the best way possible to be attractive to aid donors. This RTI policy and accompanying legislation will go some way to addressing this desire.

³ Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, Foreword, page 4

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ “Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, page 78

CURRENT INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN VANUATU

There is currently no national information disclosure regime in Vanuatu. While there are registrars, records officers and other officers in charge of archives across government, information disclosure is largely centralised through the PMO, the ministry responsible for media and information. The PMO is primarily responsible for ensuring that information is regularly shared with the media, civil society and the public via press releases, briefings and conferences and the full release of key documents as appropriate. Within that office, a Public Relations Officer/Press Secretary is in charge of liaising with these stakeholders and the media, in particular.

At the Ministry level, in practice, requests for access to official information must be made to the Director-General or to the responsible Minister for the Ministry or government department in question. Generally, there are no government information officers, and junior level officers have no authority to release information.⁶

This current structure of disclosure of information means that decisions are usually made at the highest levels and also that government communications rely on the commitment, capacity and interest of individual departments and officers to communicate with stakeholders. A whole-of-government communication and information policy that establishes dissemination protocols will assist the government to communicate information in a more efficient, timely and public-focused manner.

3.1 Geographical Challenges – *“The tyranny of distance”*

Vanuatu’s geographical structure of over eighty (80) islands has presented significant obstacles to effective governance. Over the years, some attempt has been made towards decentralisation and more community driven solutions. In the six (6) Provincial Governments of Shefa, Tafea, Malampa, Penama, Sanma and Torba, it is a requirement that notice boards are available in front of head offices where public notices are displayed and information of a general nature is disseminated. Radio is the most popular means of spreading information and knowledge throughout the islands and Radio Vanuatu, with its far reach in the outlying areas, plays a large role in informing citizens of developments in the capital. Nonetheless, there are ongoing issues regarding consistent and accessible radio, television, internet and mobile phone coverage, particularly in remote areas. Civil society organisations, such as VANGO, MAV and TIV also play their part in informing Ni-Vanuatu on matters of governance. The church, through the VCC, has a tremendous, structured outreach which is used to great benefit and impact.

3.2 Proactive Disclosure by Parliament

Even where final laws and rules are published, lack of publishing facilities in Parliament means that both MPs and the public experience some difficulty in accessing draft legislation and rules that can enable them to provide comments and meaningful input into the law-making process. Information, legislation, the official budget as well as court decisions are accessible at a cost. Where parliamentary committees are functional, it is often difficult to access their terms of reference, determine when they sit, obtain copies of submissions from the public and access draft and final committee reports.

Hansard, the official printed transcripts of Parliamentary debates, has not been published for some time and the reports that are available are generally difficult to access. The public has access to a

⁶ Status of the Right to Information in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth, A Report, CHRI 2009, page 72

parliamentary telephone number if copies are desired. Gazettes, the official notification of new laws and regulations passed by Parliament, are deposited with the Parliamentary library and are also made available to the State Law Office which is responsible for wider publication. The Parliamentary website⁷ requires further support to enable consistent updating and maintenance.

3.3 Proactive Disclosure by the Executive

There is a Government of Vanuatu website⁸ that carries information about governance-related issues such as ICT, currency, economic situation, tax incentives and customs duties. Websites for government ministries are either non-existent or lacking in updated or sufficient content. There is no website for the Office of the Prime Minister, and the equally critical Ministries of Finance and Health and the Ombudsman's Office.

Information about the assets of political leaders may be obtained from the Clerk of Parliament only if its disclosure is authorised by an appropriate Court. The area of transparency in public expenditure is a key issue of concern for many citizens and stakeholders alike and reporting by public bodies is generally viewed as protracted due primarily to the fact that record-keeping and management is hampered by a lack of resources.⁹

3.4 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Universal Access in telephony (fixed & mobile) in Vanuatu is estimated at 90%. Universal Access in Internet (Dial-up & Broadband) Fixed or Wireless is however very low and internet services are currently available in a few areas only (primarily Efate, Santo, Tanna and Malekula). However, significant developments in ICT are already under way and access to both telephony and broadband internet services is expanding rapidly.

A national ICT policy, and accompanying Cyber Security and Universal Access policies are now being finalised by the Office of the Chief Government Information Officer (OGCIO) through an extensive consultation process. The policies seek to establish a more cohesive approach to getting and supporting ICT services in Vanuatu, and ensuring equal, secure and affordable ICT access for all.

3.5 Records and Information Management

The National Archives facilitates good record-keeping practices across the Ministries and government agencies by stimulating awareness of the importance of acceptable record keeping and records and information management best practices.¹⁰ The Archives has recently retrieved and organised the archival material in the PMO, the Supreme Court, the Public Solicitor's office, and the Labour Department. Similar activities in other ministries and departments have been delayed due to the extent of their archival material and a shortage of staff at the Archives.

Currently, the Archives is being inundated with documents for archiving from the various Ministries. This has proven to be overwhelming as the office is in effect being run by two persons only: the Chief Archivist and an Assistant Archivist.

There is no official Government policy or extensive guidelines on e-records. Government information produced through emails and the like are most times subsumed into personal emails, saved on personal

⁷ <http://www.parliament.gov.vu/>

⁸ <http://www.gov.vu/>

⁹ Status of the Right to Information in the Pacific Islands of the Commonwealth, A Report, CHRI 2009

¹⁰ *Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit* published by the Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives (PARBICA)/ A National Guideline on Records Management.

flash drives for the most part and deleted at will. Unlicensed software is sometimes used largely through expediency.

A new archives building was completed in 2013. Funding for this project also included the supply of equipment to allow the Archives to better execute its functions.

3.6 Media Relations

In 2011, a National Media Policy and RTI Committee was established by the Office of the Prime Minister following a workshop on Access to Information. The Committee has been tasked, among other things, with spearheading the development of a national framework to improve information management and dissemination, including development of this Right to Information policy as well as a national media policy covering media law and regulation, infrastructure, education and other aspects of media development.

This framework aims to articulate a clear strategic vision and plan for the development and growth of information access in Vanuatu and support development of an environment where professional, timely and accurate reporting on government activities is fostered.

VISION 2013-2018

POLICY STATEMENT

COMMITMENT TO OPEN GOVERNMENT

The Government recognises the importance of information disclosure to good governance, an indicator of which is increased transparency. A high level of transparency directly facilitates and supports public participation, government accountability, equitable economic growth and foreign investment, public trust and inclusion in government and reduces feelings of exclusion which often contribute to conflict.

COMMITMENT TO MAXIMUM DISCLOSURE

A key underlying principle governing the right to information is the principle of maximum disclosure. All information held by public bodies should be subject to disclosure unless there is an overriding risk of harm to a legitimate public or private interest. This Policy commits the Government to the principle of maximum disclosure so that public officials will approach information creation, management and disclosure with the presumption that disclosure will be allowed, unless the release of information would be genuinely likely to cause harm and there is no overriding public interest in favour of disclosure.

COVERAGE

The policy covers a five (5) year period from 2013 – 2018, is applicable to all public bodies, including State Owned Corporations (SOCs), and private bodies that perform a public function and/or are funded in whole or in part by public funds (including NGOs) and adopts a phased approach to its implementation in the first 24 months.

Phased implementation means that the entities to which the policy is applicable will commence its implementation in stages. This will facilitate the process of reform at a pace that the bureaucracy can reasonably handle and by so doing, increasing the chances of success. Within the first year of the adoption of the policy, implementation focus will be on those public bodies which are most central to the daily functioning of the country and which are of importance, on average, to Ni-Vanuatu. These will include the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministries of Finance, Education, Health, Lands and the Statistics Office. At the end of the first year, other public bodies that are in a satisfactory state of readiness, as well as certain private bodies will commence implementation.

NON-APPLICATION OF POLICY

This Policy will not be applicable to:

- *Kastom* system of traditions, traditional knowledge and practices
- any record, or part of a record, that is held by any publicly owned media bodies and which discloses the confidential source of any information obtained by any of them in the course of their work, and
- records created earlier than 1980, which as historic records are available to access without exemptions, in keeping with the policy of the National Archives under the Archives Act.

PRIVACY ISSUES

It is essential that proper policies are in place to ensure that personal information is appropriately protected from disclosure. The Attorney-General's Office and the State Law Office will be tasked with examining privacy issues and providing recommendations on appropriate protections that should be adopted either through the development of a separate policy or specific legislation.

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE

The Leadership Code Act places disclosure duties on leaders in Vanuatu and the Government remains committed to its obligations thereunder. This Policy commits the Government to more regular voluntary publication and dissemination of information, or proactive disclosure. Public bodies will be required to immediately commence the voluntary publication of information about their structures, personnel, activities, rules, guidance, decisions, procurement, and other information of public interest on a regular basis on their own, or the government's, website, and other forms of publication to ensure easy and widespread access.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Government is committed to ensuring the establishment of a legal and regulatory framework which protects and promotes the right to information, based on international best practice standards, while at the same time respecting Vanuatu's *kastom* and tradition. A key part of this policy therefore will be:

- enactment of RTI and related legislation
- a review of legislation and policies proscribing the release of information and revised where appropriate to align with this Policy.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Proper records management systems underlie all information disclosure regimes. Information must be properly created, stored and maintained and easily located. Without proper systems, records can be manipulated, deleted or destroyed and in the end, their integrity may be questioned. Officials will require training and refresher courses on proper records management practices including records retention and destruction. The Government is committed to ensuring that records management systems, which will provide the underpinnings of this Policy, are strengthened. Where resources are available, specific records management programmes will be implemented. However, even where this is not possible, all organisations covered by the Policy are expected to review and streamline their systems and to develop basic guidance for staff on how to create, save, file, store, archive and dispose of records and information.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Effective implementation is essential to the success of any information disclosure regime. To enable implementation, the following structures and activities will be prioritised:

- Establishment of an RTI Unit within the Office of the Chief Government Information Officer (OGCIO). This Unit will be the lead body charged with general oversight of the implementation of this Policy and will adopt a whole-of-government approach. The Unit will undertake activities such as training and sensitization for public officers, including heads of public bodies and designated RTI Officers (RIOs), development of training modules to support a "training of trainers" approach, develop a Users' manual for the support and guidance of public officers and the general public, develop and execute a public awareness campaign, collect statistics and develop reporting relationships.
- Establishment of an RTI Steering Committee (RTISC) which will provide monitoring and evaluation functions regarding RTI, including oversight of the RTI Unit. The RTISC will be

supported by an adequately resourced secretariat from the RTI Unit. Membership will be drawn from government bodies and civil society.

- Appointment of RIOs in public bodies to serve as central actors and contact points on proactive disclosure duties, RTI information requests, the promotion of best practices within the organisation in relation to information management, monitoring of implementation and reporting responsibilities.
- Establishment of an affordable, accessible and effective enforcement mechanism through appointment of an independent Information Commissioner.
- Development of reporting relationships between RIOs, the RTI Unit, the RTISC, the Information Commissioner and ultimately to the PMO, and Council of Ministers and Parliament.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of professional capacity for government stakeholders in RTI is essential to ensuring that an information disclosure regime can operate effectively. Access to appropriate training and other professional opportunities will be provided for RTI practitioners in their careers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure capacity is essential to an information disclosure regime. Citizens, civil society, NGOs, companies, civil servants, and politicians are all employing ICTs, particularly the internet, to enhance communication, improve access to important information, and increase their efficiency. The Government recognises that ICT can be very effective information dissemination tools and therefore commits to ensuring that the National *"ICT for All"* policy, and the e-government initiative currently underway are aligned with this Policy so that the specific ICT needs of an information disclosure regime are prioritised.

RESOURCES

Most importantly, the Government recognises that without adequate resources, the activities required under this policy will be constrained. The Government therefore commits to ensuring the appropriation of the resources necessary for implementation activities and calls upon the active cooperation and assistance of its local and international development partners in enabling the success of this Policy by providing extra-budgetary support where needed, and incorporating information disclosure and records management as a priority in existing and future development assistance programmes, projects and activities.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

The conditions necessary to take full advantage of the democratic potential of an RTI regime span a range of inter-related areas. A comprehensive and integrated approach is required to ensure that Vanuatu has an enabling environment in which the right to information can be exercised without fear or favour, flourishes, and public participation in government is maximised. This policy therefore encompasses objectives, activities and indicators that are developed within a framework of inter-connecting, complementary strategies. The eight (8) key strategic areas are:

1. Proactive (Voluntary) Disclosure
2. Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework
3. Records and Information Management
4. Implementation
5. Monitoring and Reporting
6. Professional and Capacity Development
7. Infrastructure
8. Resources

PRELIMINARY RTI ACTIVITIES

This Policy sets out a range of actions that will enable successful RTI implementation. There will be a phased implementation. Some activities will be commenced immediately which will provide a sound foundation for later developments. The National RTI Implementation Plan will be instrumental in establishing timelines for short, medium and long term implementation. The following activities will be immediately commenced, facilitated or prioritised by the agencies specified:

PMO DIRECTORATE

- Review of any administrative orders that conflict with this Policy and issue of administrative order/circular reinforcing the applicability of this Policy
- Establishment of the RTI Unit, the RTISC and the identification of resourcing for the latter's Secretariat.

STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING, AID COORDINATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

- The identification of extra-budgetary sources of funding for the establishment of the RTI Unit and the RTISC, and the additional resourcing of the National Archives to enable it to carry out the activities below
- The review of existing information disclosure policies to ensure convergence and alignment with this Policy and to ensure the inclusion of RTI principles in new ones.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

- Inclusion of RTI principles in policies relating to information management and the implementation of I-Government
- Prioritised support for the technological needs of public bodies in carrying out their proactive disclosure activities.

RTI UNIT

- The development of a national RTI Implementation Plan
- Development of Readiness Assessment tools and RTI Action Plan templates and issue to Public Bodies that are expected to commence RTI Policy implementation for use by them in determining their RTI budgetary requirements for the next budget period
- The development of training modules and commencement of training and sensitisations on basic RTI/Open Government principles beginning with Directors-General, and other heads of agencies.

PUBLIC BODIES

- Development of start-up RTI budgets in anticipation of next budget period
- Commence or improve proactive disclosure activities
- Commence or improve records surveys, and records and information management activities and techniques in accordance with established records management protocols.

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

- VIPAM to commence the inclusion of RTI principles in relevant modules and roll-out at the earliest opportunity.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

- Commence or continue roll-out of PARBICA *Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit* and general records and information management best practices for Records Officers or designates in Public Bodies
- Assist and lead as many bodies as possible in the conduct of records surveys
- Commence or continue the development of an e-records management policy at the earliest opportunity.

OBJECTIVES AND PLANS OF ACTION

4. Proactive (Voluntary) Disclosure

Objective

- To ensure that targeted, relevant, timely and comprehensible information about public bodies is actively and increasingly made available in the public domain, in accessible formats for the use and information of the general public
- To create an information-rich society and minimize the need for requests for information.

Activities

- a. Publication and dissemination by public bodies of a statement outlining:
 - their mandate, key areas of work, services provided, a directory of all officers, pay scales applicable to each level
 - a description of the powers and duties of senior officers and the procedure followed in making decisions
 - a list of the types, categories of information, and records held and published by them and the procedure to be followed in obtaining information
 - their annual budgets
 - speeches made by the responsible Minister, press releases, policy documents, including drafts for public comment where appropriate
 - quarterly and annual reports, where produced
 - the schemes run, programmes managed and/or projects being implemented, copies of all finalized contracts, the name of the contractor, scope of contractual services, the value of the contract, payment schedules and criteria for payment, completion date and penalties due from either party if the contract is not adhered to
 - copies of all guidelines, rules and forms and policies
 - mechanisms for citizen participation, including information regarding public consultations, open meetings of committees and councils and any other opportunities for the public to participate in policy-making
 - available complaints mechanisms or procedures.
- b. Update of Statement every 12 months or as frequently as required

- c. Publication on the government website of electoral information such as all laws, rules or guidelines applicable to elections and the availability of electoral rolls for public inspection
- d. Work with national ICT Sector Policy and the OGCIO to align i-government/e-government initiatives with proactive disclosure activities
- e. Collaboration with existing community networks to ensure the better dissemination of government information across the country
- f. Ensure the broadcast of sessions of Parliament across Vanuatu
- g. Provision of timely access to transcripts of parliamentary proceedings, draft bills and regulations tabled in Parliament
- h. Availability of at least one copy of all Bills, draft Rules, final legislation and final regulations in the office of the Clerk of Parliament or the parliamentary library for inspection by parliamentarians and members of the public
- i. Ensure that all Bills, draft Rules, final legislation and final regulations are published on the government's website and made available through traditional means of communication where appropriate
- j. Publication and availability of terms of reference, submissions and final reports of Parliamentary committees in the parliamentary library, parliamentary clerk and on the government website
- k. Provincial Governments to act as information collection and disclosure facilitators for their constituents and, as far as possible, to make draft Bills and Rules, committee reports, policy papers, government and bureaucratic guidelines, press releases etc available for inspection or copying at local parliamentary offices
- l. Provision of resources for the upgrade of the Parliamentary library
- m. Access to Court decisions made available on government website
- n. Regular printing of Gazettes and publication on the government website notifying the promulgation of legislation and repository of copies in the Parliamentary library
- o. The re-commencement of the printing and availability of Hansard
- p. Provision of adequate access to computers with internet email facilities and printers for the Clerk of Parliament, the Parliamentary library and the State Law Office
- q. Provision of at least one (1) dedicated computer with internet and email facilities and a printer for the use of parliamentarians while attending Parliament
- r. Urgent improvement of existing Government websites and Parliamentary website;
- s. Information dissemination at the ministry level is decentralised and delegated as appropriate.

Indicators

- a. Public bodies release official information proactively and in a consistent, understandable, timely and accessible manner;
- b. The public has timely and affordable access to a range of official government information;
- c. Access to information requests are reduced;

- d. Members of parliament, committees, and officials have ready access to copies of agendas, official texts of proposed legislation, verbatim accounts of debates, copies of committee documents and other related parliamentary documentation;
- e. Draft Bills and regulations are published and circulated so that all stakeholders can make comments before they are enacted;
- f. The Parliamentary website is authoritative, provides timely, accurate and comprehensive information, is well managed and supported, is easy to understand and use, and is accessible to all;
- g. Government websites are either created or updated and properly managed and maintained by end 2014;
- h. The Parliamentary library is properly resourced and holds up-to-date documentation by end 2014;
- i. Effective dissemination strategies are developed using a range of communication options, such as notice boards, newspapers, television, radio, village announcements, posters, the internet where available, inspection at local government offices and other innovative means;
- j. Heads and Deputy Heads of Ministries, Departments and Agencies issue regular public statements to the media in keeping with appropriate protocols and authority to do so is also delegated as appropriate.

4.1 LEGAL, REGULATORY & POLICY FRAMEWORK

Objectives

To ensure the protection, promotion and enforcement of the right to information for the people of Vanuatu by enacting a legally enforceable right to information, establishing a regime where maximum disclosure of information as a principle is observed, enabling the provision of timely and accurate information to all, and establishing a cohesive legislative and policy framework that facilitates the right to information.

Activities

a. Develop and enact a Right to Information (RTI) legislation which, among other provisions:

- Guarantees the right to information;
- Establishes the application of the law to all Public Bodies and /Private Bodies that perform a public function whether on behalf of the government or on behalf of an international donor or organisation, or are funded in whole or in part by public funds;
- Establishes the phased implementation of the law;
- Mandates the proactive or voluntary disclosure of information on the part of public and private bodies to which the Law applies;
- Outlines the procedures to be followed in managing and processing requests from the public including the right to be informed whether the information requested exists and the right to receive the information subject to any exempting provisions;
- Limits restrictions to access on grounds such as the protection of personal information, legal privilege, commercial or confidential information, health and safety, law enforcement, defence and security, public economic interests, the policy making and operations of public bodies, and information relating to the protection of heritage sites and the environment;
- Establishes a “harm test” so that the official who wishes to withhold the information must identify the harm that would occur for each case of withholding and evaluate the public interest in disclosure;
- Requires that in instances of non-disclosure, public officials are required to have first discussed every case with a senior officer before a request is denied, partially granted or deferred;
- Establishes the role of an enforcement mechanism in the form of an independent RTI Commissioner (with the option of utilising the office of the Ombudsman in this regard) and provides for his or her appointment and removal on appropriate grounds by the Judicial Services Commission;
- Establishes an RTI Unit and the role of RTI Information Officers (RIOs) within each body to facilitate requests for information;

- Provides for adequate and efficient records and data management processes and practices to ensure appropriate collection and storage of information for ready retrieval;
 - Establishes the circumstances where fees are not payable (applications for information, search/collation/compilation), where fees are chargeable (reproduction and transmission to requester), waivers, and a maximum fee limit;
 - Provides protection from prosecution, administrative or employment-related sanctions for public officers who mistakenly, but in good faith, release information, and those who release information on wrongdoing, or information concerning a serious threat to health, safety or the environment, as long as they acted in good faith and in the reasonable belief that the information was substantially true.
- b. Draft RTI law is disseminated for public comment;
- c. Government agencies observe the principle of 'maximum disclosure' and make use of existing and new initiatives, including e-government, to disseminate information to the public;
- d. The Attorney-General's Office and the State Law Office to examine and review the existing legal framework and recommend appropriate amendments where necessary to amend or strengthen relevant legislative provisions to better accommodate an information disclosure regime. Some of these laws include:
- Official Secrets Act
 - Archives Act
 - Ombudsman Act
 - Public Services Act
 - Deposit of Books Act
- e. Ensure that the State Law Office makes recommendations for specific legislation addressing the protection of whistle blowers and the privacy of individuals;
- f. Ensure that the Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination Department of the PMO reviews Information Disclosure policies that currently govern practices in individual government departments to ensure convergence with this Policy.

Indicators

- a. There is public participation in the enactment of an RTI Law;
- b. RTI Law is enacted by end 2013;
- c. The right to information is guaranteed in law and respected in practice;
- d. Public use of the law is facilitated and increased;
- e. Public bodies release information both pro-actively and on demand by end 2nd Quarter 2014;
- f. Legislative framework is revised and amended as necessary by end of 2015;

- g. Policy framework is cohesive and complementary with RTI principles;
- h. The Official Secrets Act (OSA) is reviewed and amended by end 2014 and is only used in the most extreme cases to prosecute only the most serious breaches of secrecy which would cause substantial harm to national security.

4.2 RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Objectives

- To ensure the creation of an effective and improved system for the creation, management, storage, archiving and disposal of records held in any form by public bodies;
- To ensure the continued training of public officials and records officers in proper records management principles and techniques

Activities

- a. Designation of Records Officers in public entities;
- b. Conduct records management training;
- c. Records of entities digitised;
- d. Develop e-records management policy and guidelines;
- e. Identify deficiencies in records management systems and seek solutions.

Indicators

- a. Effective records management system in place by end 2014;
- b. Records digitised by end 2015;
- c. Paper and e-records management policy developed by end 2014

4.3 IMPLEMENTATION

Objectives

To provide a structure that facilitates the application of this policy, provide for an effective public education campaign that raises the awareness of the Vanuatu public, and engage the collaboration of RTI stakeholders in implementation strategies and the raising of public awareness.

Activities

- a. Establishment of an RTI Unit under the OCGIO to serve as a central resource for public bodies and officials;
- b. Appointment of Information Commissioner by Judicial Services Commission;
- c. Determination of appropriate seniority and remuneration levels for RIOs by Public Services Commission;
- d. Designation of Central and Provincial RIOs by Public Bodies;

- e. Development of a national RTI Implementation Plan outlining the respective roles and activities to be undertaken by public bodies and other stakeholders and highlighting key strategies, timelines and reporting requirements;
- f. Develop tools to assess the readiness of public bodies to commence the administration of the Policy and law;
- g. Develop and gauge the progress of individual Implementation Action Plans by public bodies;
- h. Engage civil society;
- i. Identify and execute innovative methods of communication with outlying provinces;
- j. Develop educational materials for both public officials and the general public;
- k. Develop and execute public education activities using a wide range of communication means and networks and which are suited to the Vanuatu geographical and socio-economic contexts;
- l. Establish a committee of government, civil society and media representatives to monitor progress and advise government on the implementation of the RTI Policy and Law

Indicators

- a. RTI Unit established by end 2013;
- b. Information Commissioner appointed by 3rd Quarter 2014;
- c. RIOs appointed by 2nd Quarter 2014;
- d. Public is aware of and exercises right to access official information

4.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Objectives

- To review and evaluate the overall progress of implementation activities under this Policy and a National Implementation Plan;
- To review and evaluate the performance of public bodies in the discharge of their RTI obligations;
- To distil best practices and promote their replication;
- To identify areas for improvement;
- To make recommendations for review and reform.

Activities

- a. Establish a Right to Information Steering Committee (RTISC) and its Secretariat under the PMO. The RTISC will have overarching oversight of the RTI Unit's policy implementation activities, with a multi-agency membership of representatives comprising Directors General of Ministries/Departments, the PMO, Public Service Commission, Attorney-General's Office, Law Reform Commission, State Law Office, National Archives, IT Regulator's office, Utilities Regulator's Office, Office of the Chief Information Officer, RTI Unit head, and representative(s) from the Provinces, VANGO, VIPAM, the Church, private Bodies or Chamber of Commerce, and at least one government company. The RTISC reports to the PMO and will:
 - Assist with the establishment of the RTI Unit;
 - identify and evaluate or create suitable software for monitoring and tracking requests, review and make proposals for the upgrading of government websites to enable public bodies to proactively provide information in electronic formats to the public;
 - develop RTI regulations, review all laws inconsistent with the RTI Law and recommend necessary reform, repeal or retention of the status quo and formulate, where required, voluntary prescribed request forms;
 - track and monitor the progress of implementation, and ensure the achievement of milestones under the National RTI Implementation Plan;
 - develop a broad training strategy for RTI in the public service and monitor the progress of sound record management practices in public bodies.
 - develop a communication strategy to sensitise civil servants of the value of the Law, and increase public awareness and understanding of the RTI Law and their rights under it.
- b. Establish reporting systems between RTI Unit, RTISC, Office of the Information Commissioner and public/private bodies;
- c. All bodies covered by the Policy establish monitoring systems, whether paper or computer based to collect information about the processing of applications;

- d. Information collected on the processing of applications is published as frequently as necessary on all relevant government website;
- e. The RTI Unit receives monthly status reports from government ministries and agencies, and other stakeholders and reports to the RTISC and submits quarterly reports to the Information Commissioner;
- f. The Information Commissioner will produce an annual report which will include matters such as an analysis of each public body's implementation of the Policy, how well they are implementing their proactive disclosure obligations, the progress of parliament's proactive disclosure obligations, statistical information on the types of information being requested, the responses being provided by officials, their timeliness, the costs associated with information disclosure, and specific recommendations for reform and improvement.
- g. Monitor websites of public bodies and government website to ensure compliance with proactive publication obligations.

Indicators

- a. RTISC established by end 2013;
- b. Public Bodies develop monitoring systems and collect data on the management of information requests by end 2014;
- c. Reporting relationships between the RTI Unit, RTISC, Information Commissioner and PMO established by end 2014

4.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives

To ensure that public sector officers are appropriately trained and provided with professional development opportunities in the value and application of RTI Law and proper Records Management procedures proper incentives are in place.

Activities

- a. Development of an RTI Training manual;
- b. Ensure that RTI training is provided by VIPAM;
- c. Develop a “Training of the Trainers” activity to enable RFIOs to conduct training in their own organisations as required;
- d. Completion of RTI training established as a performance indicator for public officers;
- e. Duties of RIOs are reflected in their employment contracts;
- f. National Archives and other regional/international bodies provide training and refresher courses on Records and Information Management.

Indicators

- a. Heads of Public Bodies, RTI Officers and Records Officers can access training appropriate to their needs;
- b. Training equips officers to understand the correlation between RTI and the country’s development;
- c. RIOs are equipped to promote RTI in their organisations and to train other staff;
- d. Effectiveness of RIOs evaluated in Performance Evaluation exercises;
- e. Records and information managers and officers trained and demonstrate adequate knowledge in performing records management duties;

4.6 INFRASTRUCTURE

Objectives

To ensure that the national ICT policy and the ICT infrastructure facilitate and support:

- the proactive disclosure of information by Public Bodies through the application and management of appropriate technologies;
- the ability of Public Bodies to manage information requests through speedy intra-government communication;
- the dissemination of information through electronic formats;
- the digitising of records; and
- the information needs of the people of Vanuatu.

Activities

- a. The National *“ICT for All”* Policy, and the implementation activities to be carried out under it prioritise the specific ICT needs of an information disclosure regime;
- b. Implementation of the ICT policy, including provision of access to training and human resource development, ensures access by marginalised groups including women and people living in remote areas;
- c. ICT policy and its implementation reviewed periodically to ensure that RTI stakeholders have adequate access to ICT facilities.

Indicators

- a. The public, RTI practitioners and the government have access to modern technical facilities for easy access to information;
- b. Marginalised groups have access to forms of communication that are easy to use and accessible;
- c. The country has a coherent ICT policy which meets the information needs of the general public and in particular, marginalised communities.

4.7 RESOURCES

Objectives

To enable the success of the RTI regime by ensuring that implementation activities are adequately resourced and adequate financial and human resources are provided by the government and to seek the support of development partners where extra-budgetary assistance, in these respects, is required.

Activities

- a. The funding and resourcing of the RTI Unit;
- b. The funding and resourcing of the RTISC and its Secretariat;
- c. The provision of financial support for training activities for RIOs and other relevant public officers;
- d. Ensure the provision of financial support for the development of public educational materials and activities;
- e. Ensure adequate resources for the Office of the Information Commissioner;
- f. The improvement of the capacity of the Parliamentary library and website;
- g. The completion of budgets for RTI allocations in time for upcoming budget periods.

Indicators

- a. The RTI Unit is fully equipped to carry out daily routine activities by 1st Quarter, 2014 ;
- b. The RTISC Secretariat is sufficiently funded and staffed by 1st Quarter, 2014;
- c. Training activities are supported by sufficient levels of financing to enable frequent, sustained and quality roll-out;
- d. Public Education activities are sufficiently funded to enable the use of a range of formats such as the media, public educational materials, and the holding of public forums to raise public awareness;
- e. The Office of the Information Commissioner has sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its role satisfactorily;
- f. Additional human and financial resources provided for the improved capacity of the Parliamentary library and the upgrade and maintenance of website;
- g. State approves budgetary allocations for RTI requirements.

ANNEX I – RTI IMPLEMENTATION OUTLINE

STRATEGIES	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	ACTIVITIES	SHORT TERM 2013-2014	MEDIUM TERM 2013-2018
AA DEVELOPMENT OF RTI POLICY	Lead - Office of the Prime Minister	Prepare Draft RTI Policy Circulate for Public Consultation, Comments, etc Revise Draft Submit Final Draft for Council of Ministers approval	3 rd -4 th Quarter 2013	
ENACTMENT OF RTI LEGISLATION	Lead – Office of the Prime Minister Secondary- State Law Office	Prepare Draft RTI Legislation Circulate for Public Consultation, Comments, etc Revise Draft Submit Final Draft for Council of Ministers approval	3 rd -4 th Quarter 2013	
APPOINTMENT OF RTI STEERING COMMITTEE	Lead – PMO	Membership made up of government and civil society	3 rd -4 th Quarter 2013	
ESTABLISHMENT OF RTI UNIT	Lead – RTISC/Public Service Commission	Budget Identify and assign financial resources for personnel, infrastructure, and activities Enlist aid and support of donor agencies Staff Determine start-up staff complement and consider use of staff from other Ministries/Programmes (eg. current information /records managers)volunteers from overseas programmes	4 th Quarter 2013	1 st Quarter 2014

<p>TRAINING OF GOVERNMENT OFFICERS. DEPARTMENT HEADS, MPS, CIVIL SOCIETY</p> <p>Development of Training Manual</p>	<p>Lead - RTI Unit</p> <p>Secondary – RIOs or other identified in-house trainers</p> <p>Lead-RTI Unit</p>	<p>Identify Trainers/Presenters (use Government Lawyers who have an interest and possibly those from Attorney General’s Chambers). Schedule and conduct formal and informal training and sensitization sessions with general staff, heads and middle to upper managers of public bodies.</p> <p>Develop Training content. This should include, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Interpretation of the Provisions of RTI Act - Records Management basics; - Change Management; - Case Studies on Interpretation - Global Case Studies on RTI in action 	<p>3rd -4th Quarter</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end of 3rd Quarter</p>
<p>PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN</p>	<p>Lead-RTI Unit</p> <p>Secondary -RTISC</p>	<p>Use of broadcast/print media/websites to educate public on RTI</p> <p>Seek assistance from sister Government agencies and NGOs with established information dissemination networks and extensive community reach. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Local Government Bodies -Libraries - Post offices -VANGO/VCC <p>Collaborate with the Media to advance awareness to RTI regime/legislation and promotion of RTI rights (media can be encouraged to write about RTI, its objectiveness and use in every day matters and to also indicate when stories are the result of having gained access under RTI whenever this is the case).</p> <p>Include names, telephone, fax numbers and email addresses of RIOs in the National Telephone Directory</p> <p>Publish Users’ Guide on the websites of the Unit and Government Entities,</p>	<p>4th Quarter</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>1st Quarter</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

		<p>community notice boards etc.</p> <p>Disseminate Pamphlets/Posters at all forums /training sessions etc</p> <p>Hold RTI Open Days and RTI exhibitions/displays at critical Ministries and some Agencies (Here, an entire day is devoted to RTI requests and the day's events are highlighted in the media).</p> <p>Convene RTI Public Forums at Churches, and other popular meeting venues.</p> <p>Hold Annual RTI retreats for Directors General, Judges, Government Lawyers and other relevant Government officers.</p> <p>Observe International Right to Know Day each year (September 28) involving activities with Civil Society. Ensure Parliamentary Recognition of the day.</p> <p>Establish annual RTI lunchtime lecture series with University</p>		
<p>INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS</p>		<p>Develop Guidelines for the Discharge of Functions by Public Officers. This provides details on recommended procedures and practices for Public Officers regarding:</p> <p>Receipt of Applications Clarification of Applications Computation of Time lines for responding to requests (eg, counting of time to meet 30 day period, acknowledgement and transfer of applications)</p> <p>Application of Exemption provisions (the do's and don'ts) Names, location, contact numbers (tel. & fax) and email addresses for all Responsible Officers</p> <p>Develop Road Map for use by the Public and government as well. This will Include: A Master List of all Government Entities, their functions and portfolio responsibilities, Principal Officers,</p>	<p>4th quarter</p>	<p>ongoing</p>

		<p>Responsible Officers, location and contact information</p> <p>General considerations regarding the Public Interest Test and how to apply it</p> <p>Develop Response Form Letters providing templates for responses in various scenarios.</p> <p>Develop User's Guide</p> <p>Develop Newsletters, Pamphlets (FAQs) and Posters</p>		
INITIATION AND PROMOTION OF CRITICAL PARTNERSHIPS	Lead-RTI Unit	<p>General Engagement of Public and Private sector</p> <p>Media Association of Vanuatu</p> <p>Private Sector Organisation</p> <p>the Opposition</p> <p>the Cabinet Secretary,</p> <p>the Attorney General</p> <p>International organisations</p> <p>Consular Corps</p> <p>Human Rights Groups</p> <p>Vanuatu Bar Association</p> <p>The Civil Service Association</p> <p>Agencies of Government with island - wide social impact eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Libraries & Universities - Lobby groups (Human Rights, Environmental) - Religious & Educational Bodies <p>Formation of an RTI Association of Administrators (RTIAA)</p> <p>Determine members of Association. (This body will comprise all RIOs);</p> <p>Establish Terms of Reference (Its purpose is to meet and share experiences related to information disclosure under RTI</p> <p>This body will also meet with the Advisory Committee of Stakeholders (see below) to discuss their own experiences and take on board its recommendations and critique of the management of the RTI Programme in each entity)</p>	4 th Quarter	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end of 1st Quarter</p>

		<p>Establish meeting schedules(recommended each month) and convene meeting to select head of the Association</p> <p>Formation of an RTI Advisory Group of Stakeholders Identify Committee members (these may include representatives from the Private Sector, Women’s Groups, Youth Associations, Rural Community Groups, the Media, Lobby groups, Representatives from the Bar Association etc)</p> <p>Establish Terms of Reference (these will include the monitoring of the RTI Programme, the provision of recommendations to the government on best practices and assistance with such aspects of the programme as its individual members may be able to render)</p> <p>Establish meeting schedules</p> <p>Collaboration with Government Legal Officers Involvement of Government Legal Officers through combined and separate training and the establishment of a Legal Officers. Task Force to provide recommendations to the Parliamentary Committee formed to review Act</p> <p>Volunteer Attorneys Group Establish body of attorneys in private practice who are willing to volunteer their services pro bono for training activities and to requesters wishing to appeal to Information Commissioner/the Court</p> <p>International Partnerships and Network Develop regular involvement of experts (CHRI/NDI/Carter Centre/UNDP Pacific) in appropriate forums such as RTI Days (Global), Annual Retreats and some training exercises.</p>		<p>By end of 2nd Quarter</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end of 2nd Quarter</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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Monitoring & Evaluation	Lead-RTI Unit	<p>Establish deadlines for the submission of monthly reports by public bodies to the Unit.</p> <p>Receive reports from RTI Advisory Committee of Stakeholders, RTIAA, and other stakeholder groups on the progress of RTI from their perspective</p> <p>Prepare Unit monthly and quarterly reports for submission to RTISC and Information Commissioner respectively and disseminate through websites etc.</p> <p>Monitor websites of public bodies to ensure compliance with proactive publication obligations.</p>	4 th Quarter	<p>1st Quarter</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>RTI PORTAL</p> <p>RTI IN SCHOOLS</p> <p>RTI CLINICS IN THE UNIVERSITY</p> <p>RTI IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</p>	<p>Lead – RTI Unit/CSO</p> <p>Lead-PMO</p> <p>Lead-RTI Unit</p> <p>Lead- RTI Unit/VIPAM</p>	<p>Development of RTI Portal to facilitate requests from the public, make it easier to access information, provide information regarding types of requests already made, responses received and generally promote awareness of use of RTI and Portal</p> <p>Include RTI modules on Curricula of High Schools and University</p> <p>Arrange for the introduction of RTI at the University</p> <p>Arrange for the introduction of RTI as a module in Public administration courses conducted by VIPAM</p>	4 th Quarter	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end of 2nd Quarter</p>

ANNEX II – SOURCES

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