



Right to Access Information Commission - Sierra Leone



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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



Mohammed Sesay
Commissioner, Western Area



Hon Mustapha Braima
Executive Secretary: Secretary to the Commission

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN & INFORMATION COMMISSIONER



As the Chairman and Information Commissioner of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), I am honoured to present our fifth Annual Report covering our activities during the year 2023. This year has been marked by significant achievements and challenges as we remain committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance via access to information in Sierra Leone.

Since our establishment in July 2014, RAIC has been dedicated to upholding the right to seek, receive, and impart information, in line with international human rights standards. In 2023, despite financial constraints, we effectively utilized government allocations to continue our essential work. This year has demonstrated the resilience and dedication of our team, highlighting the importance of robust planning to achieve our goals. We made notable progress in enhancing enforcement and intervention procedures to address compliance issues within public authorities. Our efforts included strengthening the foundation for a comprehensive open data initiative and emphasizing proactive disclosure of information. This approach has been vital in promoting transparency and reducing the need for reactive information requests. Support from the Government of Sierra Leone allowed us to host a workshop on access to information for monitoring the June 2023 General Elections. Additionally, we organised workshops on the 2022 RAI regulations and records management across various regions. These initiatives have been instrumental in improving records management standards and ensuring the availability of accurate and timely information across the country.

For the first time the Key Policy Actions (KPAs) of the RAIC, including its national targets and indicators were included in Cluster Four (4) of the Sierra Leone Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019 – 2023. For the second year in row, since the enactment of the RAI Act in 2013 and the establishment of the RAIC in 2014 we experienced Freedom of Information (FOI) requests across MDAs nationally we could not imagine. In all, 19,496 FOI requests were recorded nationally in the year 2023, out of which over 90% were successful; this represents a giant leap from the 13,117 recorded nationally in the 2022 financial year. By far the most stand-out FOI case we handled in the year under review was the Sengbe Marrah vs ECSL one which won us a lot of credibility as a truly independent ATI oversight body. Significant progress was also recorded in the Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) Compliance with 32 MDAs submitting their PDI Publication Schemes for 2023 with 30 approved and 2 rejected in addition to the 47 which submitted by 2022; this means a total of 79 MDAs have now submitted their PDI Publication Schemes to the Commission since the scheme was launched in December 2019. We also initiated a proactive disclosure campaign, urging MDAs to publish required information online, and facilitated direct communication with designated contact persons within each agency.

Sierra Leone achieved an impressive 89% in the MCC Freedom of Information rankings for 2023, surpassing several neighbouring countries, although this represented a slight decline from the impressive 98% it scored in 2022. This accomplishment reflects our dedication to implementing access to information laws effectively. We recently launched our new digital access to information platforms on our website, allowing FOI requesters and complainants to also submit their requests, or complaints, online, and hosted a workshop to train MDAs on how to use them. This development is a significant step towards streamlining our operations and enhancing public accessibility.

Internationally, RAIC received recognition from the African Network of Information Commissions (ANIC), which selected us to lead the development of a capacity-building strategy and a standard records management code of practice for Africa. This recognition underscores our commitment to maintaining high standards

of information management and transparency. We also participated in the International Conference of Commissioners in Albania, where our delegation successfully won the bid to host the 2026 conference in Sierra Leone. This achievement highlights our nation's growing reputation in the field of information rights and transparency. Sierra Leone became an accredited member of the ICIC in 2019 and was also among the founding members of ANIC. I have the honour to serve as current member of the Executive Committees of both the ICIC and ANIC.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the President and vice President of Sierra Leone, the Minister of Information and Civiv Education, the government, my regional commissioners, staff, and all our partners for their unwavering support. Together, we will continue striving towards our vision of an open and transparent information environment in Sierra Leone.

Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ibrahim Seaga Shaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chairman and Information Commissioner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RAI Act 2013 as provided for in Section 41(1) states that the Commission shall, within three (3) months after the conclusion of the fiscal year, shall submit to the Minister of Information and Civic Education on the Commission's activities and programmes, including the accounts, financial statement and the audit report in the year under review. Consistent with the provisions of the RAI Law, this is the fifth edition of the RAIC 2023. Annual Report. Amidst the implementation of the RAI Law enacted to promote transparency and accountability, and good governance, and that access to information is the centrepiece to open governance, the realization of the right to participatory democracy, freedom of expression and the assertion of other basic human rights, the Commission in the year under review brought on-board a host of ideas to be presented in the main body of this Report. The RAIC from the operational and regulatory standpoints is largely to have a guided pathway in the right of access to information journey. The year under review was an electioneering year which brought together under one roof, Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to ensure access to timely and credible information is crucial to the peaceful outcome of the elections, hence the Commission commenced its programme activities with it. In its effort to continue with the successful implementation of the RAI Law, the Chairman and Information Commissioner and his regional Commissioners in the South and the North gained reappointment in their respective positions. Following the year under review, the Commission made tremendous progress in ensuring irrefutable access to information, open data and effective records management systems.

The Report is divided into Six 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

Part Three consist of programmes and projects that covers popularization, capacity building and commemoration.

Part Four comprises of compliance and enforcement.

Part Five deals with national and international partnerships.

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

Part Seven suggests the areas the Commission should concentrate on in the implementation of the RAIC Act, and the direction it should take to achieve its Mission and Vision, as well as recommendations for the future.

PART I.

THE COMMISSION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The RAIC was founded on the principles of promoting transparency, accountability and good governance. The Commission operates on a platform of fundamental human right 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 RAIC commenced full operations in July, 2014 with the appointment of its first Commission headed by a Chairman who doubles 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. The second and current Chairman/Information Commissioner of the Commission was appointed in October 2018 and obtained parliamentary approval in November 2018. The Eastern, Northern and Southern Regional Commissioners were also appointed in November and approved in December 2018. The Western and Eastern Regional Commissioners left and were later replaced in October 2020 and 2022 respectively. Consistently, the Chairman and Information Commissioner was reappointed in November 2023 while Southern and Northern Regional Commissioners were reappointed in December of the same year for another five-year term.

The RAI Act 2013 was crafted from section 25 of the Sierra Leone Constitution which guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press. It serves as an institutional check to every aspect of government. It was developed for the purpose with several objectives in mind, including widening opportunities to claim access to crucial public 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;
- 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.

1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION

- The Commission is headed by the Chairman and Information Commissioner and supported by four (4) Regional Commissioners representing each of the Eastern, Northern and Southern provinces and Western Area.
- The Executive Secretary is the head of administration and principal adviser to the chairman and information commissioner.
- There are three (3) managers heading the three core departments of the Commission: Programmes and Research, Administrative and Human Resources, and Legal and Compliance.
- A Senior Investigator, an Archivist, four (4) Public Information Officers, two (2) Administrative Assistants, two (2) office assistants and five (5) Drivers

RAIC National & Regional Offices and Data Centres Locations:

National Secretariat:

58 Kroo Town Road, Freetown,

Tel: +23279131744 / 079101314 / 030359669

Email: accessinfo@raic.gov.sl

REGIONAL OFFICES

Eastern Region:

22 Turay Street,

Kenema City, Kenema District

Tel: 076607070

Email: ahmedgkallon@gmail.com

Northern Region:

31 Mabanta Road,

Makeni City, Bombali District

Tel: +232-77204558

Email: akargbo548@gmail.com

Southern Region:

188 New Gerihun Road,

Bo City, Bo District

Tel: +023280109750

Email: idrissbiah@gmail.com

Western Area:

58 Kroo Town Road, Freetown

Western Area Urban

Tel: +23277580436

Email: pmsesay01@gmail.com

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

VALUES

Openness, Transparency, Accountability, Fairness, Swiftiness, and Integrity

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)**

PART II – ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

2. INSTITUTIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Following the year under review, there has been stable growth and improvement in the Commission towards developing enforcement and intervention procedures to enable a flexible, 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), 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 Training Manual 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.

Notwithstanding the progress been made on the realization that the Commission can perform better and deliver the expected results more effectively and efficiently through a more streamlined and focused planning process. the year 2023 is on record, as the year in which the Commission operated without funding from development partners. This puts the Commission in a very constrained position to effectively implement its programs and activities in 2023. The Commission was however able to judiciously manage the allocations received from the Government to carry out its operations and programs.

It is worth noting that prior to 2023, the succession of landmark achievements made by the Commission came from funding from the World Bank through the Public Financial Management Improvement Consolidation Project (PFMICP) and UNESCO. In the last four years, the Commission invested significant time and resources in transforming the way that it works to optimize the use of its resources. The two funding windows from the World Bank and UNESCO ended in the third quarter of 2021. Another project funded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) now Open Society Foundation (OSF) Africa was successfully concluded in the first quarter of 2021. This is to say that, the solid foundation laid in the previous years necessitated considerable growth in access to information (ATI) in Sierra Leone. This laid the roadmap to the steady implementation of the work of the Commission and the realization of its Vision.

As an entity established by an Act of Parliament with perpetual succession, the continuity of the implementation of its programs is very crucial. Concurrently, the RAIC with support from the Government of Sierra Leone held a workshop on Access to Information among State and Non-State Actors Monitoring Electoral Practices and Processes in Sierra Leone as part of the preparations for the June 24, 2023 General Elections. In addition, in the last quarter of 2023, the RAIC conducted capacity-building workshops on the RAI Regulations and the Records Management Code of Practice Training Manual in the western area and at the regional level.

2.1 ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Administration and Human Resource department contributes to the success of the Commission by coordinating and supervising daily admin and human resource functions by streamlining management systems for the smooth operations of daily and operationalization of the Commission. This department responsibility is also not limited to develop, maintain, implement, and ensure compliance with administrative management, provisions of the Commission' rules, policies, and procedures, but forms part of the strategic leadership of the Commission. It provides direction for the development and implementation of administrative & human resource systems that will aid the efficient operations of the Commission. During the year under review, there were some revisions carried out on the Staff Manual specially in the area of staff bereavement with direct relations, death of a staff and critical illness of a staff which all were adopted by the Commission. Moreover, there was an agreement on the decision by the Commission to leave the welfare fund in the hands of the staff to handle.

2.2 OPERATIONAL MATTERS

By way of enhancing effective and inclusive management approach the Administration and Human Resource department in collaboration with staff and consultations with senior management, had a review of the staff manual which has almost been finalized. It is however, worth noting that the operations of the Commission encompassed an overview of key considerations such as:

- Annual reports are produced on a yearly basis showing detailed activities undertaken by the Commission.
- Institutional auditing from both internal and external auditors for financial, management and Human resource audit.
- As a result of hard work and commitment, the Chairman and Information Commissioner and the Southern and Northern Regional Commissioners were all reappointed for another five-year mandate while the Western and Eastern regions Commissioners still have one and two years remaining in the first five-year mandate.
- The Commission focuses significantly on building the capacity of employees through targeted training programs, self-empowerment and leadership development initiatives.
- Innovation initiatives, technology-driven innovation strategies has been prioritized to adopt digital transformation that drives efficiency in the operation of the commission.
- The Administration and Human Resource department supported the program activities and the compliance unit in processing and delivery of letters to MDAs.
- Laptops and printers were provided to staff to support their work.
- Damaged/ faulty equipment disposed of as recommended by the internal auditors in the 2022 audit report.

2.3 INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

This report provides an overview of the infrastructural development that have been completed in the year under review. The aim is to enhance staff efficiency and wellbeing in the work environment.

- Renovation of the national secretariat and the regional offices.
- Over all maintenance of electrical connections at the National secretariat
- A face lift of the national conference room with an air conditioner installed.
- Chairs bought for the conference room
- Offices at the national secretariat were equipped with air conditioners.
- The office provides a safe and user-friendly work space for staff.

2.4 STAFF DATA BASE

The Administration and Human Resource department had put together a comprehensive data base of all staff of the Commission both national and regional for ease of reference on straightforward information regarding every staff.

2.5 STAFF RECRUITMENT

One (1) recruitment recorded for the year under review, there was a replacement for one staff Mohamed Sesay (deceased) he was the driver attached to the Executive Secretary, upon his passing on, he was replaced by Mohamed Bangura, a volunteer Driver of the Commission.

To boost staff capacity, RAIC approached Ministry of Finance to support the commission with technical staff, hence the Ministry of Finance in 2023 assigned two staff to the commission. One Procurement officer and one budget officer, respectively.

2.6 NATIONAL YOUTH CORP

National Youth Service Commission assigned one youth corp to RAIC. This youth corp scheme is a way of supporting young graduates to join institutions for on-the job training or job experience so as to help them practice their chosen career paths. The youth corp was attached to the compliance unit supporting on information request processing, was also supporting the Archivist with filing tasks and from time to time supports the

Administrative Assistant with reception duties. One (1) intern was assigned to RAIC being a communication entity. The intern was from the ICT and Communications Department of the Central University, Mile 91. She spent two months at RAIC working with the Public Information Officers and the Compliance department.

3. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

The programme of activities is the basic means through which the objectives and deliverables are accomplished in every organization. The Commission in its efforts 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 foundational components of access to information are proactive disclosure of information, open data and records management since they form the core programmes of the Commission. Sierra Leone has made significant strides towards establishing the structural and legal foundations for an Open Data and Proactive Disclosure of Information. The Right to Access Information Act provides an important basis for open data and proactive publication obligations for every public authority and the approval of publication schemes. Access to information cannot be substantiated without a formidable records management systems to ensure an efficient records-keeping culture in the country, especially at MDA levels. However, for the above foundational components of access to information to happen, there is a compelling need to popularise the RAI Law by bringing it directly to the suppliers and requesters of information through media engagements, seminars, symposia and consultative engagements, and above all building their capacity on how to apply and benefit from the law itself through trainings and workshops. This section of this report therefore focuses on how the Commission rolled out the above activities. Thus this section is subdivided into popularisation of, and capacity building on, the RAI Law discussed below.

3.1 POPULARIZATION OF THE RAI LAW

In its effort to ensure an effective implementation of the RAI Act, the Commission considered the existing projects supporting these programmes, reviewed and expanded on them through collaboration and coordination. The implementation of these programmes constitutes another big challenge of the Commission since limited funding has been an impediment to the programme implementation process, hence the need for collaboration. Thus as we can see in the following sub sections that the Commission embarked on popularization of the RAI Law through consultative engagements, media engagements, commemorations and launching of the annual reports as part of its robust activities.

3.1.1 CONSULTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

CONSULTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In its effort to increase public knowledge in access to information the Commission embarked on consultative meetings with MDAs as part of its robust engagements. The Commission conducted consultative meetings with MDAs to enhance understanding and support for the RAI Law, aiming to foster effective working relationships and ensure compliance. These engagements covered key aspects of the law, including timely responses to Freedom of Information Requests (FOI), Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI), and the handling of exempt information. Chairman and Information Commissioner (CIC), Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw provided insights into some critical aspects of the RAI Law and highlighted the importance of these sessions in addressing concerns raised by public information officers and the need for political engagement in information requests. He said political, administrative and professional heads of MDAs should embrace the culture of openness, transparency, and accountability by ensuring access to information in their possession as long as such access is not legally limited by the exempt provisions of the RAI Act 2013 (Part 3 sections 12-26). The CIC emphasized the RAI Law's role in socio-economic development and ensuring public confidence and trust in service delivery; he noted improvements in compliance as reflected in UNESCO's annual survey on public access to information.

DEADLINES

The Legal Counsel and Compliance Manager, Mr Alan Benjamin Esq was always at hand to interpret some critical sections of the RAI Law and complement the CIC in responding to some critical questions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Law. Throughout these engagements, he kept throwing light on time limits of fifteen working days (15) period for a request to be responded to, and the forty-eight hours' deadline (48hrs) where it involves life and liberty of an individual.

TRANSFER OF REQUEST

The Legal Counsel informed Public Authorities of their obligation on requests that are sent to the wrong institution to be transferred to the right MDA that holds the information and to inform the requesters about the transfer of their requests to other MDAs. The Legal Counsel takes officials through the offences and Penalties, underscoring the powers of the Commission especially the powers of the High Court when adjudicating on matters. The Commission has the powers of the High Court when adjudicating on matters and can fine individuals an amount not exceeding Ten Thousand New Leones (NLe10,000) and One Hundred Thousand New Leone (NLe100,000) for a body Corporate making references to two MDAs that have recently been fined for failing to give out information to requesters as stipulated in the Right to Access Information Act 2013.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

CIC Dr Shaw and The Legal Counsel Mr Benjamin always emphasized that Part 3 sections 12 – 26 speak to exempt information that is, data that is not sharable citing information bordering around National Security, customary and traditional rights, law enforcement and investigation about rights overriding other rights, personal data or privacy to name a few are considered crucial to the work of access to information. The Legal Counsel added that, wilful destruction of information and asking for too much for the cost of the information requested can be deemed a request denial.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT (RM) AND PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS (PIO)

During the sessions, the Legal Counsel and Chairman emphasized the importance of Section 27 of the RAI Act, which mandates proper records management for effective access to information. They highlighted the role of Public Information Officers (PIOs) as crucial for processing information requests and integrating Records Management and ICT officers to facilitate access. RAIC pledged ongoing support through capacity-building training on records management. Executive Secretary stressed the significance of the RAI Act in democratic development, noting challenges due to a culture of secrecy in Sierra Leone. He emphasized that access to information benefits both requesters and suppliers. The Commission is committed to enforcing compliance and addressing specific issues faced by MDAs. Below are photos of the consultative engagements with the following MDAs:

RAIC Held a Consultative Meeting with the Office of National Security (ONS) on Tuesday 15th August, 2023



(RAIC and ONS officials just after the meeting—ONS Boss Caulker and RAIC Boss Shaw centre)

RAIC Holds Consultative Meeting with Ministry of Finance on Monday 21st August, 2023.



(RAIC and MOF officials just after the meeting—Minister Fantamadi Bangura and RAIC Boss Dr Seaga Shaw centre)

RAIC Held a Consultative Meeting with Freetown City Council on Wednesday 23rd August, 2023



(RAIC and FCC officials just after the meeting)

RAIC Held Consultative Meeting with Ministry of Public Administration & Political Affairs on Tuesday 14th November, 2023.



(RAIC and PAPA officials just after the meeting—RAIC Boss and PAPA PS Rugiatsu Kamara centre)

RAIC Held Consultative Meeting with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs on Tuesday 14th November, 2023.



(RAIC and LGCA officials just after the meeting)

RAIC Held Consultative Meeting with the Ministry of Defense on Thursday 16th November, 2023.



(RAIC and MOD officials just after the meeting)

CONSULTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS IN THE EASTERN REGION

In Kenema, massive popularization of the RAI Act remained an integral task to be carried out by the commission to accomplish a greater part of its strategic plan. Among the many strategies that were suggested to help facilitate the process: MDA engagements, radio talk shows, stakeholder engagement, school visitations, and press conferences came out very prominently.

Under the supervision of the commissioner, the staff carried out the following activities:

THE REGIONAL POLICE COMMISSIONER PLEDGED CONTINUED POLICE COMPLIANCE WITH RAI LAWS



On January 5, 2023, the Right to Access Information Commission-Eastern region office engaged the Sierra

Leone Police (SLP) Kenema in a public lecture about the 2013 Freedom of Information Law. SLP's Eastern Regional Police Commissioner, Mr. Andrew Mustapha Kamara, highlighted the police force's compliance, including the establishment of Public Information offices and weekly press briefings. Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability, urging the police to embrace proactive information disclosure. Inspector B.J. Kamara appreciated the commission's initiative, while Commissioner Kallon promised support and utilized his journalistic expertise to enhance police operations.

MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS MEET WITH JOURNALISTS AND RAIC STAFF IN KENEMA



Minister of Information and Communication, Hon. Mohamed Rahman Swarray, held a press briefing with journalists and RAIC staff in Kenema on January 16, 2023. Expressing gratitude for their safety after a colleague's loss, the Minister focused on listening to concerns rather than speaking. He praised the RAIC's work and assured support, while RAIC's regional commissioner, Ahmed G. Kallon, requested additional funding and staff to enhance operations. Kallon also urged the Minister to lay RAIC regulations before Parliament and utilize funding opportunities for essential needs.

RSLAF- EAST COMMITS TO GENERAL COMPLIANCE WITH RAI LAW



The Right to Access Information Commission Eastern region held a meeting at the Brigade Headquarters and RTI Military Barracks in Kenema on 17th January, 2023 to promote the Access to Information Law and foster a partnership with the military. Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon emphasized the importance of proactive information disclosure for transparency and good governance. He noted that while some information, particularly related to security and medical confidentiality, may be restricted, critical public interest information can be disclosed by law. The 2 Infantry Brigade praised the RAIC's efforts, recognizing its role in enhancing good governance and reducing negative impacts of misinformation. The RAIC presented a booklet to the Chief of Staff, with Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon expressing appreciation and commitment to further cooperation.

THE EASTERN REGION ENGAGES EDSA IN KENEMA TO POPULARIZE THE RAI LA



The RAIC-Eastern Region met with EDSA on 23rd January 2023 to promote the RAI Act of 2013. Chief Engineer Samura praised the RAIC's efforts and committed EDSA to comply with the law. Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon outlined the RAIC's roles and encouraged EDSA staff to cooperate. He addressed questions about the Commission's engagement with INGOs, emphasizing nationwide awareness campaigns. Kallon provided RAI Act copies and conducted a training session for clarity.

ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The commissioner urged staff members to make follow-up visits to 11 schools including the following top secondary schools in Kenema:

| NO | Name of School |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | EASTERN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY |
| 2 | HOLY TRINITY SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 53 | HOLY ROSARY SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 4 | GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 5 | ISLAMIC SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 6 | AHMADIYYA SECNDARY SCHOOL |
| 7 | LUKE'S COMMERCIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 8 | DORWAILA SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 9 | THE DOOR SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 10 | METHODIST SECONDARY SCHOOL |
| 11 | ANSARUL ISLAMIC SECONDARY SCHOOL |

The ultimate goal of the massive school tour was primarily to educate staff and pupils about their rights as citizens to access public records from public authorities and use this information to make informed decisions. The other most important reason for reaching out to schools is to have the pupils of those schools serve as RAI ambassadors who would after receiving this knowledge spread the news around.

The school tour activity gave rise to the idea of establishing school clubs in secondary schools so that the schools would serve as a hub for breeding young vibrant and intelligent future upholders of the Right to Access Information Commission.

RAIC EAST IN AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH THE HOLY TRINITY SECONDARY SCHOOL KENEMA



RAIC EAST ENGAGED THE NASIR AHMADIYYA MUSLIM SECONDARY SCHOOL KENEMA



RAIC EAST ENGAGED EASTERN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN A SYMPOSIUM



On February 15, 2023, the RAIC held a session at The Eastern Technical University to promote the Right to Access Information Law. The event, led by Mr. Joe Diawo, included prayers and introductions by Mr. James Fortune and Mr. Alpha Sei. Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon provided a detailed overview of the RAIC, its background, and the RAI Law. He explained the importance of public officers disclosing information and the consequences of non-compliance, including fines and jail sentences. The commissioner also invited the university community to use the RAIC's resource center for free internet access and computer knowledge. He thanked the college for hosting and handed out copies of the RAI Act to key staff.

CONSULTATIVE ENGAGEMENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION

With the mandate of commission popularization of the RAI Act was the key activity which the commission to be carried out to accomplish a greater part of its strategic plans. Among the many **strategies** that were suggested to help facilitate the process: engagement with stakeholders, radio talk shows, conference of principles

engagement, and press conferences came out very successfully. Under the supervision of the commissioner, the staff carried out the following activities:

RAIC NORTH ENGAGED WITH BRIDGE OF HOPE MANAGEMENT TEAM IN MAKAMBO MAKENI



On January 13, 2023, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) Northern Region engaged with the Bridge of Hope management team at Makambo Village, Makeni to promote the RAI Law of 2013. Commissioner Abu Bakarr Kargbo highlighted that the RAIC's mandate is to ensure transparency, accountability, and good governance by facilitating access to information from public authorities. He emphasized the importance of proactive information disclosure and outlined penalties for non-compliance as per sections 47 and 48 of the Act. The Commissioner provided an overview of the RAIC's functions. Community headman Pa Abdulai Kamara and Bridge of Hope's Country Director Mr. Abass T. Koroma expressed support for the RAIC's efforts and commitment to information disclosure. U.S. representatives Jeri Jeffery and Lani Eylander praised the RAIC's work and pledged further support, highlighting the RAIC's role in promoting citizen rights and good governance.

RAIC NORTH IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MBSSE MEDIATED PEACE TALKS WITH THE PRINCIPAL, STAFF, BOARDS OF GOVERNORS AND MISSION AUTHORITIES OF THE SLMB MISSION MATOTOKA TOWN, TONKOLILI DISTRICT, NORTH-EAST REGION OF SIERRA LEONE 23/9/2023.



The RAIC North in collaboration with the MBSSE mediated peace talks and resolved a decade conflict between the deputy directors of SLMB secondary school in matotoka. All stakeholders present in a meeting expressed gratitude to the Commissioner for his timely intervention and for bringing peace in to the mission. The Commissioner also used this opportunity to inform them about the mandate of the Commission and they all pledged to work in cooperating with the work of the Commission.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH COMMUNITIES

The RAIC Northern staff engaged with different communities in the northern region. The focus of the engagement was to educate the heads of communities and members in the communities on the legal mandate of the Commission, which is to promote access to information held by or is under the control of Public Authorities. Secondly, to ensure they request relevant information from those public authorities in their

communities. During the process, people were not previously educated on the mode of request for information from people held with or under the control of the information.



ENGAGEMENT WITH MINNERS IN THE PAMPANA RIVER AT ROGBREKA VILLAGE.

The engagement was geared to popularize the RAI ACT 2013 to the community as well as the Miners to know the right and responsibility.



SCHOOL VISITATION IN THE NORTHERN REGION

The Commissioner and his team made inroads visits to various schools in the Region, schools like crown primary and secondary schools, Bridge of hope makeni, Benevolent Makeni, Government secondary school for Boys (GSSB) Magburaka, SLMB Mamasumbirie and Government secondary for GIRLS(GSSG) Mathora to popularize the work of the commission as well as urge them to update their PDI Schemes.

CROWN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL MASANKONG BRIDGE OF HOPE SCHOOL MAKENI



SLMB SECONDARY SCHOOL MAMASUMBIRIE



ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUTHERN REGION

In the year under review, the Southern Region embarked on series of activities including Consultative meetings with Ministries, Departments and Agencies, stake holders' meetings and engagement on the RAI law, PDI and ACR, training on RAI regulations and Records management, Media sensitization to increase the awareness of the mandate of the Commission, and the importance of the RAI law in open governance to enhance transparency and accountability. Below are the engagements made during the year under review,

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SANITATION IN BO



Commissioner Idriss and the DMO, Dr. Masuba



Commissioner Biah, PIO Millicent and DMO Officials

The RAIC South conducted consultative meetings in Bo to promote the RAI Law. The Southern Region Commissioner discussed citizens' rights to access information, the procedures for requesting it, and the law's penalties for non-compliance. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Commissioner condemned delays or denials of information and urged full compliance with the RAI Law. Participants always commended the work of the commission and expressed gratitude for helping them realize their obligations under the RAI law. However, the office engaged 14 MDAs in popularization of the RAI Law and to ensure the Public is familiar with their obligations which includes proactive disclosure of the 22 classes of information provided in section 8 - 11 of the RAI Act. The Commission encouraged all MDAs to have web sites for their proactive publications.

The MDAs that were engaged are as follows:

- National Civil Registration Authority
- National Youth Commission, Bo
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
- Electricity Distribution Supply authority

- National Commission for Social Action
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Bo City Council
- National Commission for Democracy
- Bo District Council
- District Medical Office
- Bo Government Hospital
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Ministry of Gender and Children's Affair
- Ministry of Basic and Senior Education

VISITATION OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

The RAIC South continued its popularization of RAI Law through engagement with number of institutions in consultative meetings to popularize the RAI Law. Amongst which were: SLOIC Bo, Lina Vocational, St. Mary's Vocational etc.

The Public Information Officer South, Millicent Brima gave a background of how the Commission started in 2014 after the passing of the RAI law in 2013. She further told the institutions that the legal mandate of the RAIC is to promote access to information held by public authorities and emphasized that the Commission will leave no stone unturned in executing that. The PIO gave a detailed explanation of the obligations of public authorities in proactive disclosure of information in section eight (8) of the RAI act. She took the institutions through the processes of requesting information in sections 2-7 of the act as well as exempt information in sections 12-26. She always told them that meeting with them is not only for them to comply with information request but also to make request where necessary. The institutions applauded the efforts of RAIC staff for making them understand the work of the commission.



PIO South and trainees of SLOIC

3.1.2 MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

When the Right to Access Information bill became law in October 2013, key campaigners like SLAJ and CSOs worried about its acceptance and understanding. Ten years later, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw of the RAIC notes significant progress and positive impact, though work remains. In 2023, the RAIC enhanced media strategies to address entrenched secrecy and improve engagement through various platforms, ensuring broader outreach and better information access.

THE ELECTRONICS/BROADCAST MEDIA

The BBC Media Action survey shows 77% of Sierra Leone's adults listen to the radio, a consistent trend. Radio remains a vital platform, with 47% of adults listening daily. In 2023, the RAIC expanded its media partnerships to include new radio and TV stations. Broadcast media continues to play a key role in the RAIC's initiatives, such as Proactive Disclosure of Information and the Annual Compliance Report, showcasing the Commission's achievements and efforts in engaging with public authorities

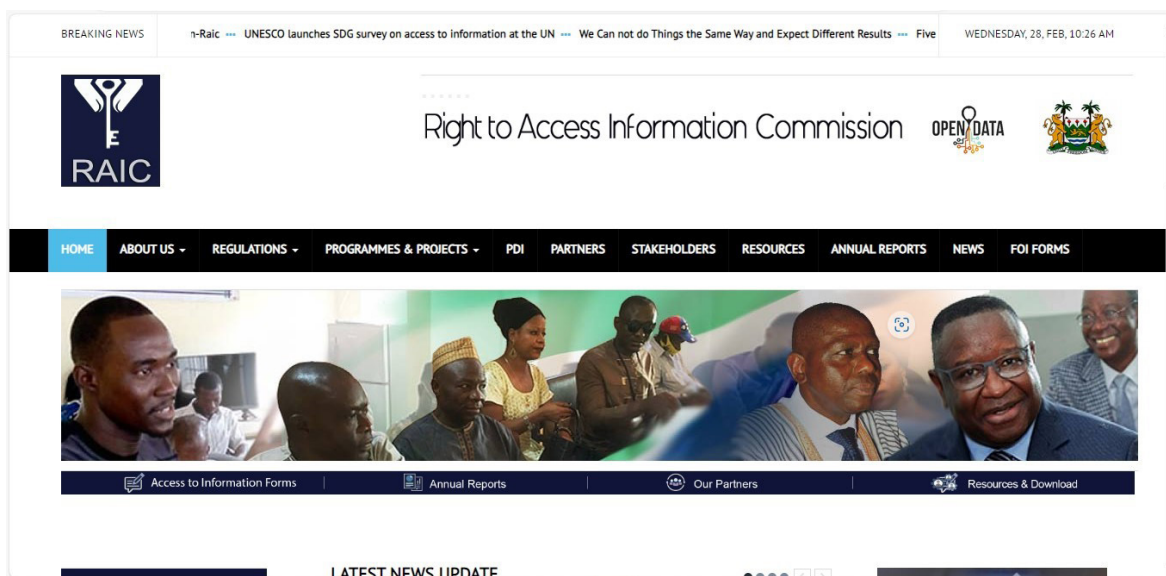


The RAIC's impact extends beyond Freetown to its regional offices in Kenema, Makeni, and Bo. In the South, Commissioner Biah Yormah Idriss used various radio stations, like Classic Radio and SLBC Kiss 104.2, to boost awareness of the RAI Law and improve compliance. The Eastern Region, under Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon, saw increased RAI Act promotion through radio programs in Kailahun and Kono, enhancing compliance. In the North, Commissioner Abu Bakarr Kargbo and his team engaged with local media, such as SLBC Makeni and Radio Gbafth, furthering outreach and compliance in local dialects.

PRINT MEDIA

The partnership between newspapers/magazines and RAIC has seen a drastic improvement over the course of time. The RAIC has enjoyed relative fair press coverage with no recourse to take the any reporter or publisher to the Independent Media Commission (IMC). The Print media practitioners through interviews, press releases, Public Notices, have carried banner headlines about RAIC's successes, challenges and prospects, thus giving the RAIC the opportunity to know how the public feels about the access to information course in Sierra Leone.

Articles and press releases issued out by the Commission are also normally carried in many newspapers especially the Expo Times, Global Times, Independent Observer and Comment Newspaper in Freetown, and many newspapers in the regions.



The Commission is also proud to state that as an advocate of openness and transparency, it runs a standard regularly upgraded and updated website (www.raic.gov.sl) where notices, press releases, RAI Act of 2013 and RAI Regulations 2022 can be found, and must recently, Information requests forms, allowing requester to make a request online from any part of the world. The Website has been referred to by many pundits as a model for MDAs disclosure of information.

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

New media platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp have revolutionized interaction, allowing users to engage with content and each other more dynamically. The RAIC leverages these platforms to reach Sierra Leoneans widely and effectively. It operates a WhatsApp group for Public Information Officers and Records Management Professionals to share updates, press releases, and compliance information. Additionally, the RAIC's Facebook page serves as a key source for public information, featuring updates on RAIC activities and notices, and has garnered significant followership in its four years.

THE WAY FORWARD

Despite significant progress in popularizing the RAI Act, the RAIC's Communications Unit aims for further improvement. The newly upgraded RAIC website, featuring online information requests, will enhance access to information in Sierra Leone. The RAIC plans to strengthen media partnerships, launch talk shows, and expand its social media presence to platforms like X, TikTok, and Instagram for broader outreach.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE EASTERN REGION

| MONTH | REPRESENTATIVE | SLBC | NONGOWA | STARLINE | TOP RADIO | NYAPUI RADIO | EASTERN RADIO |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Feb | Commissioner Kallon | 1(Kenema) | 1 | - | | | |
| March | PIO James Fortune | 1(Kenema) | 1 | - | | | |
| June | PIO James Fortune | 1(Kono) | - | - | | | |
| June | PIO James Fortune & Roland Barnett | - | - | 2 | | | |
| July | PIO James Fortune | 1 | - | - | | | |
| Nov | Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon | 2 (Ken. & Kono) | | | 2 | 2 | 1 (Kono) |
| Dec | Commissioner Kallon & PIO Fortune | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | |

MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE NORTHERN REGION

The RAIC North used the Media tremendously to disseminated the mandate of the commission to citizens in this part of the country. The Commissioner together with his staff are on massive engagement on popularization of the RAI ACT 2013 using the Media platform, since the media was one of the popular houses which the citizens of this country use to access information and especially in their local languages, we are almost every month on media to do radio talk show to educated the citizens and also talked to MDAs ,NGOs and CSOs for their proactive disclosure of information to the public ,for public consumption.

| MONTH | REPRESENTATIVE | KALABA RADIO STATION | SLBC | AMZAS RADIO | RADIO GB AFTH | VOICE OF WUSUM | VOICE OF GBONKOLENKEN |
|-------|----------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| | Commissioner Kargbo | Online interview 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| | PIO John Kalokoh | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2- |
| | Admin Ass Salamatu Bangura | | - | - | | 1 | |

MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

The Southern Region engaged media houses on thorough sensitization of the RAI act to increase awareness in the RAI law and promote transparency, accountability and good governance in the year under review as it is a common way of reaching out to the citizens. The Regional Commissioner and the Public Information Officer granted interviews, held talk shows and live broadcast in the following radios:

| MONTH | REPRESENTATIVE | KISS 104 | SLBC BO | MOON LIGHT RADIO | CLASSIC RADIO | ALLOUT RADIO | NEW SONG RADIO |
|----------|-----------------|----------|---------|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| January | Millicent Brima | | 1 | | 2 | | 1 |
| February | Millicent Brima | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| April | Commissioner Idriss and Millicent Brima | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| June | Millicent Brima | | 2 | | 2 | | 1 |
| August | Commissioner Idriss | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| September | Commissioner Idriss | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| November | Millicent Brima | | | | 2 | 1 | |
| December | Millicent | | 1 | 1 | | | |

3.1.3 COMMEMORATIONS

RAIC NATIONAL SECRETARIAT COMMEMORATES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION (IDUAI) 2023.



The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) celebrated the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) on September 28, 2023, aligning with global observances. The event, held at Family Kingdom Hotel in Freetown and across regional RAIC offices, focused on this year's theme: "The importance of the online space for Access to Information." Deputy Minister of Information, Mr. Keketoma Sandi, urged citizens to use online platforms responsibly and praised RAIC's collaboration with UNESCO. He noted Sierra Leone's progress with the Freedom of Information Law and called for vigilance against misinformation. RAIC Chairman Shaw, represented by the Commissioner West, Pst. Mohamed Sesay, emphasized the significance of online access and the need for improved open data practices, while reminding stakeholders of exempt information provisions. Executive Secretary Hon. Mustapha Braima underscored the IDUAI's importance as a fundamental human right. Other speakers included representatives from Cyber Security, Society for Democratic Initiatives, NMJD, MRCG, and academic institutions, all highlighting the importance of supporting the RAIC's mission.

Similarly, the commemoration of the IDUAI was observed in the other regions as illustrated below. However, the details of these commemoration could be viewed on the RAIC Website: www.raic.gov.sl

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION (IDUAI) 2023 IN THE EAST



THE NORTH COMMEMORATED INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION (IDUAI) 2023.



RAIC SOUTH OBSERVED THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION 28TH SEPTEMBER 2023



3.1.4 ANNUAL REPORT

Launching of the RAIC 2022 Annual Report and shows progress in ATI in SL



On December 12, 2023, the RAIC launched its 2022 Annual Report at the Ministry of Finance Conference Room in Freetown. Chairman Dr. Shaw highlighted the report's five parts, including the Commission's composition, achievements, compliance status, financials, and future priorities. Despite challenges from a past culture of secrecy, the RAIC has significantly increased compliance, with information requests rising from over 100 in 2019 to over 13,000 in 2022. The Commission tracks compliance annually and participates in a UNESCO survey on SDG 16.10.2. Executive Secretary Hon. Mustapha Braima praised the Commission's progress, while Justice Dr. Abu Bakarr Binneh Kamara commended the RAIC's service and urged widespread

dissemination of the report to ensure transparency and accountability. Deputy Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Hon. Phillip Tetema Tondoneh, praised the RAIC for its crucial role in governance and international development goals like the SDGs and the African Union's 7 Aspirations. He urged the RAIC to collaborate with donor organizations to review progress and secure further support. The launch of the RAIC's 4th Annual Report marks its continued efforts since its reconstitution in 2018 under the leadership of CIC Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and his team, who have been reappointed for another 5 years.

3.2 CAPACITY BUILDING

The Commission is mandated with the responsibility to promote proactive disclosure of information and enforce measures to promote openness by forging partnership with stakeholders, including government institutions, national and international partners; undertake training activities for public authorities on the right to access information and the effective implementation of the Act. The Year 2023 under review was considered as an electioneering year, thus the Commission commenced with the activity below:

3.2.1 The RAIC Holds Workshop for Elections Management Bodies (EMBs)



Madam Zainab Umu Moseray from ECSL



Cross section of Participants

The workshop brought together electoral bodies like the ECSL and Political Parties Registration Commission, alongside civil society organizations with support from the Government of Sierra Leone held a day's workshop on Promoting Access to Information among state and non-state actors monitoring the electoral processes and practices in Sierra Leone at the Family Kingdom Resort on Thursday 23rd March 2023. The Chairman and Information Commissioner Dr. Shaw emphasized the importance of new RAI Act regulations for clarity in information access.

The Western Region Commissioner of the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) Zainab Umu Moseray said that elections will come and go but our identity as Sierra Leoneans will always remain. According to her, ahead of the June 24, 2023 elections, she stressed the growing issue of sensational stories and new media abuse, highlighting the need for timely, credible information to ensure peaceful elections. She continued that the ECSL has stepped up media engagements, trained practitioners, and launched an app for verifying district results. Marian Samu and Abdul Fatorma highlighted the role of information access in democracy and election integrity. Sahr Kendema and Abdul Karim Samura urged citizens to utilize the RAI Act fully. Other contributors included representatives from the Office of National Security, Sierra Leone Police, and former British High Commissioner Peter Penfold. The technical session of the workshop was facilitated by the head of the RAIC Legal and Compliance Team, Alan Benjamin Esq with the support of the RAIC Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, and the RAIC Executive Secretary, Hon Mustapha Braima, who also moderated the opening session of the workshop.

3.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON THE RAI REGULATIONS

RAIC NATIONAL SECRETARIAT HOLDS WORKSHOP ON THE RAI REGULATIONS



Cross Section Of Members Of The High Table

On October 17, 2023, the RAIC hosted a workshop at Family Kingdom Resort for Public Information Officers, journalists, and non-state actors on the new Right to Access Information Regulations. Director of Information, Mr. Emmanuel Adonis Momoh Turay, highlighted the government's commitment to improving access to public information and encouraged proper implementation of the RAI Act. RAIC Chairman Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw emphasized the importance of the new regulations in providing detailed procedures for information requests and responses. He also mentioned updates to the RAIC website to enhance digital access. SLAJ President Mr. Ahmed Nasralla stressed the law's significance for journalists and urged its use for promoting transparency and accountability. Other speakers praised the commission's progress and efforts since 2018.

3.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT CODES OF PRACTICE

Records Management (RM) is vital for organizational success, but often overlooked. The RAI Act mandates that public authorities maintain records to facilitate the right to information. Effective RM eliminates unnecessary documents, reducing clutter and storage costs, and organizes essential records for quick access, boosting productivity. Digitizing records further enhances efficiency by freeing up space and allowing remote access. The Commission's Archives Unit, led by an Archivist, manages both physical and digital files, ensuring timely access to information. The Archivist also contributes to consultative meetings on RM. Funded by UNESCO, the Commission developed a Records Management Training Manual in 2021, used for training RM practitioners across MDAs to improve information accessibility. This training has been extended to regional levels, enhancing RM practices in public authorities

RAIC HOLDS WORKSHOP ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE IN THE WESTERN AREA



Cross section of members of the high table

On October 24, 2023, Minister of Information and Civic Education, Hon. Chernor Bah, pledged to advance the repeal of the Archives and Records Management Act 1965 and enact the updated Archives and Records Bill of 2017. Speaking at a workshop on Codes of Practice for Records Management, he highlighted the importance of transforming public records management from paper-based to digital to combat corruption. RAIC Chairman Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw emphasized the workshop's role in building capacity and ensuring compliance with the RAI Law, which mandates proper records management. Assistant Auditor General Mr. Morie Lansana stressed the need for funding records management to enhance transparency, while Professor John Abu Kargbo praised the efforts to improve records keeping. Other speakers included Public Service Commission Chairman Mr. K. O. Bah and records management experts Mr. Muniru Kawa and Mr. I. S. Kamara.

3.2.3 REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON THE RAI REGULATIONS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE



TRAINING SESSION AT EASTERN REGION



Training session at northern region



training session at southern region

Following the conclusion of the capacity building trainings on the RAI Regulations and the Records Management Code of Practice in the Western Area, the Commission replicated same in the regions on the 6th, 7th and 8th November 2023. The event, brought together, MDAs, Civil Society Organizations, Journalists, and Paramount Chiefs discussed issues related to information flow and Records Management. The Chairman informed participants about the mandate of the Commission which is to facilitate access to information held by public authorities and emphasized on the carrot and stick approaches to fulfil the demand and supply of information. Hon. Brima highlighted the crucial role of information in informed decision-making while Commissioner Ahmed G. Kallon highlighted the importance of transparency and accessibility for all, stressing the need for continuous engagement and adherence to the RAI law for national development. The rep of Eastern Resident Minister commended the effort of the Commission and emphasized the importance of accessible information and encouraged participant to use the knowledge gained of their respective institutions. The Northern Commissioner Abu Bakarr Kargbo underscored the significance of the training for PIOs. The

Commissioner South, Biah Y. Idriss mentioned that the crucial role of records management for accountability and praised the commission's efforts in implementing the RAI regulations.

The Legal Adviser Alan Benjamin provided a detailed overview of the RAI Regulations, explaining their purpose and application. Whilst the Archivist Madam Fanta Morgan highlighted the importance of reliable records for effective information access and poor records management often leads to auditing issues. At the end of each presentation, participants were tasked to outline and assess the Commission's successes, challenges and recommend effective solutions.

4. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

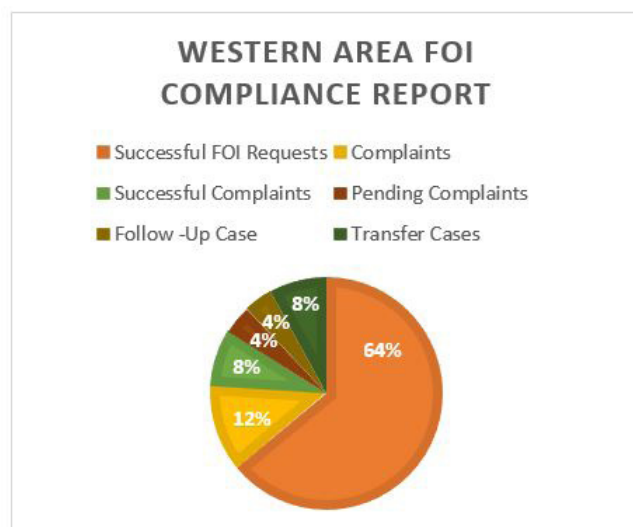
Following the enactment of the Right to Access Information Act in October 2013 in collaboration with Civil Society to make public-held information available and accessible, progress in terms of compliance was initially slow but the turning point came in 2018 with the appointment of Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw as Chairman and Information Commissioner and his team of regional commissioners. The Commission has been monitoring and evaluating compliance since 2019 by first collating information on the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests with the intervention of the Commission, on the number of FOI requests recorded by the public authorities that completed their Annual Compliance Report (ACR) templates, and finally on the number of Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI). The Commission's intention to improve on the compliance rate on FOI, PDI and ACR in the various regions in the country through submission and collation of statistics on same will inform the Commission on the necessary line of action needed to ensure the smooth implementation of its mandate.

The Annual Compliance Report (ACR) supports Institutions to develop comprehensive report on the details of requests received and processed within a specified period / financial year (FY). The Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI) Component of the Right to Access Information Act 2013 governs all public authorities. Specifically, In Part 2 section 8(1), the Act delineates a minimum of 22 classes of information that will form the core proactive publication scheme for every public authority in the country. This law aims to advance transparency and accountability among all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs)

By reason of the above premise, data is hereby collated on the number of FOI received and processed, PDI and ACR Completed by various MDAs in the regions, with key recommendations on actions to be taken into consideration. This commitment aims to upscale the work done to include more MDAs and Non-state actors with a gendered lens and notion of leaving no one behind. Following the year under review, the FOI Requests and Complaints are further categorised as cases in which the Commission intervened and cases without the intervention of the Commission.

Freedom of Information Requests with the intervention of the Commission Western Area

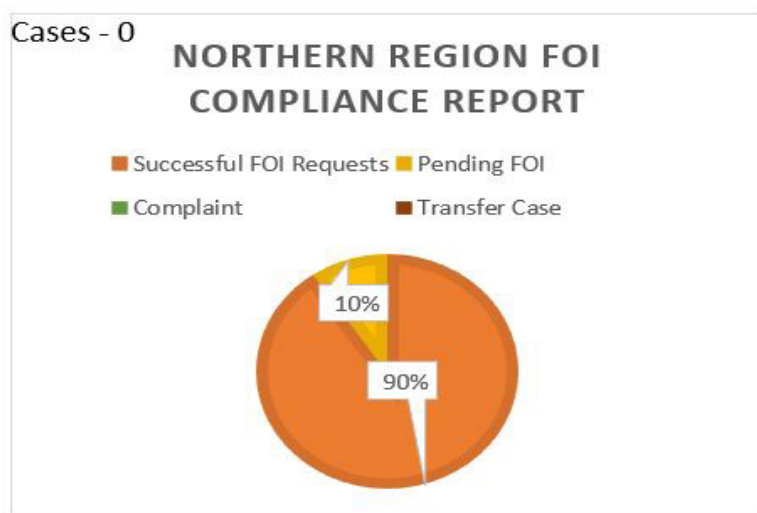
| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Total FOI Requests Received | 19 |
| Successful FOI Requests | 16 |
| Complaints | 3 |
| Successful Complaints | 2 |
| Follow-Up Case | 1 |
| Pending Complaint | 1 |
| Transfer Cases | 2 |



According to the above diagram, in 2023 the Western region received nineteen (19) freedom of information requests (FOI), out of which 16 were successful at the request stage representing 64% in the above pie chart. Complaints made directly to the commission for 2023 in the Western were three (3) with 12%). This shows that the commission actually took actions within their confines and legislation to address the complaints made by complainants. Out of the three (3) complaints that were made, the Commission had to make only one(1) follow-up call with 4% as a reminder to the institution holding the requested information of its obligations under the RAI Act of 2013.

The successful complaints for 2023 were two (2) bearing a percentage of seven (8%) percent, and there was one pending case (1) represented at 4%. Two (2) information requests with a percentage of seven (8%) were sent to the commission but as stipulated in section 5(1) of the RAI Act of 2013, which states that where a public authority does not hold information which is responsive to a request or part of a request, that request 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. According to the above mentioned, the Commission not later than the stipulated date for compliance transferred the applications to the public authority holding the information.

Northern Region FOI Requests - 42 Successful - 38 Pending - 4 Complaint - 0 Transfer

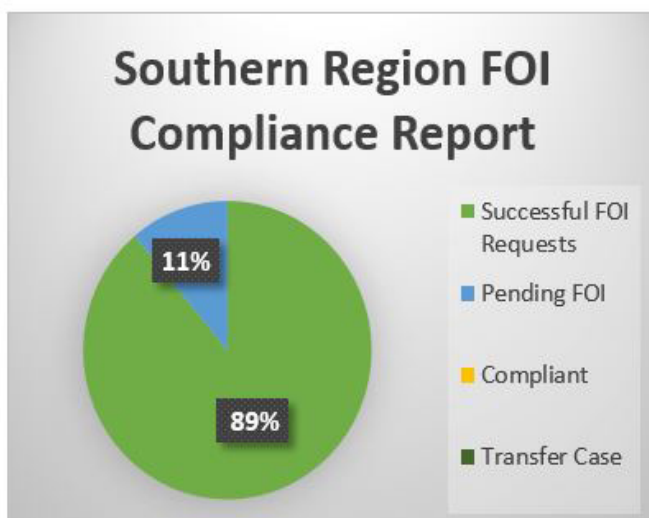


FOI Requests by District:

Port Loko District - 10
Bombali District - 12
Kambia District - 4
Koinadugu District - 3
Karene District - 4
Falaba District - 6
Tonkolili District - 3

SOUTHERN REGION

FOI Requests - 27
Successful - 24
Pending - 3
Complaint - 0
Transfer Cases - 0



FOI Requests by District

Bo District - 19

Pujehun District - 5

Bonthe District - 2

Moyamba District - 1

EASTERN REGION

FOI Requests - 25

Successful Cases - 25

Pending - 0

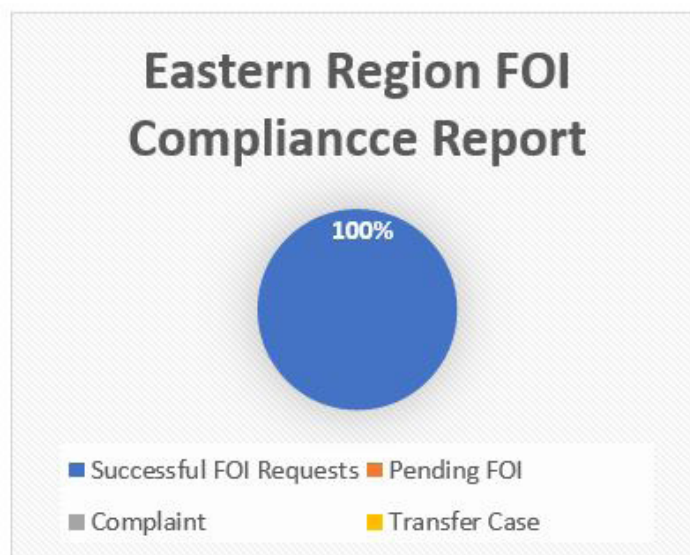
Complaint - 0

FOI Requests by District

Kenema District - 16

Kailahun District - 3

Kono District - 6



WESTERN AREA

Some cases of Freedom of Information Requests/Complaints with the intervention of the Commission recorded in the Western Area.

1. Freedom of Information Request from Mr. Mohamed B. Kamara

Mohamed Kamara, a former employee of the Local Government Service Commission – LGSC on 22nd February, 2023 requested for information request pertaining to his termination, certificate of service, severance package and unpaid salaries from his former employer. RAIC was approached by the requester to intervene which it did in a letter it wrote to LGSC. Case status: After the intervention of the RAIC, the LGSC invited Mr Kamara to a meeting and the RAIC was orally informed that the matter had been resolved .

2. Halloway and Partners Request for Information to National Civil Registration Authority(NCRA)

By a request for information dated 30th March, 2023, relating to the verification of the authenticity and details of civil registration national identification of Adama Daoh for a matter presently being heard in the High Court of Sierra Leone before the Hon. Justice Jamesina E.L. King (J.A). Case Status:The 25th of April, 2023, NCRA certified that the person above mentioned is registered with NCRA by providing a certificate of registration and citizenship to Halloway and Partners. The requested information was provided.

3. Marian Amaria Bangura (Journalist) and the University of Sierra Leone(USL)

A request for information was made by Ms. Bangura, a Journalist of the A.Y.V Media Empire on the 16th of August, 2022 to USL applying for the following information:1)The total number of female students enrolled into the University of Sierra Leone study science – related courses that fall under (STEM) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, from 2018 to 2022. 2)The total number of female STEM students that applied for the government grant-in-aid scholarship from 2018 to 2022.3)The total number of female STEM students that were awarded the grant-in-aid scholarship from 2018 to 2022.4)In relation to (2) above, she is requesting for analysis of the number of years each student chosen for the grant-in-aid is entitled to enjoy the scholarship.5) A list of the eligibility criteria for a female science student to be chosen for the grant-in-aid.

On the 12th of October, 2022, an application for internal review was made by Ms., Bangura to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone on the refusal of request for information by the registrar under the RAI Act of 2013.

Action Taken by the University of Sierra Leone:

By a letter dated 17th of October, 2022, the University of Sierra Leone acknowledged and also set the record straight, by informing the requester that the university had already provided the information that was within their purview. Consequently, the university was able to assist with the request on paragraphs 1 and 3 of the above-mentioned requests. The requester was informed that the information contained in paragraphs 2,4 and 5 cannot be provided by the University, and was referred to the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education since it falls within their domain. Case Status: An application for review was made by Ms. Bangura to the Right to Access Information Commission on the 15th of February, 2023. Action Taken by RAIC: The RAIC sent a letter to the university on 1st of March 2023. Case Status The university replied the RAIC stating that the information had been forwarded to the requester. This response was forwarded to the requester and since then she did not revert to the commission

4. Information Request by Edward Marah (Journalist) to the Executive Secretary – Independent Media Commission

A Freedom of information request was made on the 7th of August, 2023 regarding the true ownership of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM. The Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) was copied.

5. New Citizen Publications' FOI Request to the RAIC

The New Citizen Publications on the 24th of August, 2023 requested information from the Commission relating to the procurement process, contractor and cost of the Sierra Leone Police Rice.

Action Taken By RAIC:

Pursuant to Section 5(1) of the RAI Act 2013 which states ‘Where a public authority does not hold information which is responsive to a request or part of a request, that 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.

Therefore, on the 3rd of August, 2023; the information request was transferred to the Inspector General of Police - (SLP). Case Status: The freedom of information requested was provided

6. New Citizen Publications' FOI Request to RAIC

On August 24th, 2013, the New Citizen asked the RAIC to supply them with information on the procurement process, contractor and cost regarding the Sierra Leone Correctional Service Rice.

Action Taken By RAIC:

As stipulated in Section 5(1) of the RAI Act 2013 as cited in case no.5 above, the Commission transferred the freedom of information request to the Director General of the Sierra Leone Correctional Service and copied the requester, followed up with a phone call to inform him of the transfer.

Case Status: The requested information was provided.

7. Oluwafunmilayo Chambers FOI Request to the Following Institutions Dated 25th August, 2023:

Director of National Mineral Agency ;the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Commission;the Director of Financial Intelligence Unit;the Director of Criminal Investigations Department. The request for information was made on the 25th August, 2023, to the above-mentioned institutions seeking to decipher from their records whether the referred company, Vintage Global Mineral Sierra Leone Limited, was ever issued with and/ or bears a valid dealership license for the sale of Gold, export license or any other license for mining activities in Gold or Precious Mineral in Sierra Leone or movement of the abroad. The Financial Intelligence Unit on the 4th of September, 2023 responded by informing the Oluwafunmilayo Chambers that it is not in their mandate to disseminate financial intelligence or any connected or linked information to any unauthorised person or entity. Therefore, the Unit hereby respectfully declined their invitation to provide access to the

information requested. The RAIC was accordingly informed.

Complaint made to RAIC: From a letter dated 5th September, 2023, the Oluwafunmilayo Chambers reached out to the Commission to intervene and ensured that the Financial Intelligence Unit which is a public entity adheres with its statutory obligations under the RAI Act 2013. Action Taken By RAIC: There was a follow up meeting between the RAIC and Oluwafunmilayo Chambers and the Chambers conceded that the reply from the FIU was in place. Case Status: Concluded

8. Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah Esq. Request for Information to the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone - (ECSL)

The requested information was made on the 28th of July, 2023, to the Chief Electoral Commissioner of the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone. He requested a legible hard or electronic copy of the Certified and Verified Summary District Level Results of the Presidential, Local and General Elections Held on the 24th of June, 2023.

Complaint made to RAIC: Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah Esq. made an application to the Commission on the 22nd August, 2023, citing section 43 of the RAI Act to review the decision of the ECSL refusing to answer to his request for the said information. Action Taken by RAIC: The RAIC on receipt of the application for review wrote to the ECSL on the 24th August, 2023 citing section 45 of the RAI Act informing them of the Application for review by Mr Marrah and gave them 7 days' notice to reply to the allegation of the failure to respond in contravention of the Right to Access Information Act 2013 highlighting the penalties for failing to respond to a request for information. Reply from ECSL: On receipt of the letter from the RAIC, the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) by a letter dated 30th of August, 2023 acknowledging the said information request from Augustine S.S. Marrah Esq, stating that the Commission informing him that it complied with;

- a) Section 92(1) of the Public Elections Act (PEA) 2022 which requires the District Returning Officers to compile and certify SUMMARIES of all polling station results in the respective districts;
- b) Section 92(2) which requires district returning officers to give certified copies of the summary results to observers or counting agents.
- c) The Commission complies with the RAI Act 2013, by publishing certified copies of summaries of all results on the ECSL website.

Mr Marrah, on receipt of the above letter, wrote back to the ECSL on the 5th September, 2023 thanking them for the release of the summary results on their web site although he said these results were posted on their web site after he had made the request. Mr Marrah further requested for the detailed results of the elections in this letter. On receipt of this letter, the ECSL on the 18th September, 2023, wrote another letter to the requester assuring him of the ECSL's compliance with the RAI Act 2013 and with Section 51, 52(b) and 92(2) of the Public Election Act, 2022 by publishing the summary results on their web site. Case Status: The Requester subsequently wrote to the RAIC on 25th September, 2023 and thanked it for its intervention and further intimated that he would revert to the courts should he need any further intervention on the basis that the ECSL was referring to the Public Elections Act 2022 which he deemed the Court system in Sierra Leone was best suited for any further intervention on the matter. It would be recalled that this was by far the most celebrated FOI case handled by the RAIC given the widespread media attention it attracted with most of the newspapers consistently carrying banner headlines in the wake of the back and forth between the FOI requester and the ECSL with the RAIC mediating. All the correspondences of this case are available on the RAIC web site (resources section): www.raic.gov.sl

9. Premier Media Group Limited Information Request to Chief of Defence Staff – (CDS)

The 1st of September, 2023, Stephen V. Lansana, a Journalist of the Premier Media requested for information

to the CDS on the grounds that the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) provide responses to seven set questions it listed in its letter of request. Reply from the CDS: An acknowledgement letter from CDS dated 5th September, 2023, inviting Mr. Lansana to a meeting at the Ministry on Friday 8th of September 2023, at 11:00am. The Office of the Directorate of Legal – Ministry of Defence responded by a letter dated 14th September, 2023, informing the requester that the ministry is not averse to question A listed in the letter. However, the CDS also said he is mindful of the fact that the alleged issue is domestic in nature and therefore, the ministry cannot compel its personnel to talk to the press on such matters. Case Status: A comprehensive breakdown of the information requested was provided.

10. Martha Kargbo – a Journalist Information Request to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)

A journalist by the name of Martha Kargbo applied for information to the CAC on the 9th of October, 2023, of all documents relating to the registration status (including numbers) of the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism (SLAWU). The names of all directors who originally registered the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism as a company. The names of all current directors of the SLAWU?

The Memorandum of Association (M&A) for the SLAWU? Case Status: The Right to Access Information Commission was copied but no complaint was made

NORTHERN REGION:
Summaries of all 42 FOI Requests with the Intervention of the Commission

| NO | NAME OF REQUESTER | INSTITUTION FROM WHENCE REQUEST IS MADE | DATE OF REQUEST | INFORMATION REQUESTED | ACTION TAKEN | CONCLUSION |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Samuel Kamara made | Concern World Wide.Tonkolili District office | 9th January 2023 | Money received for the implementation of the project Tonkolili district. | RAIC wrote on the 9th January 2023 to the Education project officer demanding his compliance. | On 26 th January 2023, The education officer provided Mr Samuel Kamara with the requested information upon receiving a letter from RAIC reminding him of his obligation towards the RAI Act 2013. |
| 2 | MR Samuel kamara | Concern World Wide Tonkolili District office | 9/01/ 2023 | School water well pump status | Commission made a call to the Engineer for compliance on the same day | 1/01/ 2023 th the Engineer Complied to the information requested by Mr kamara |
| 3 | Mr Osman kargbo | Mansumana HOSPITAL. Tonkolili District | 27/3/2023 | quantity of drugs supplied by the ministry of health in Jan ,Feb and march | RAIC wrote to Nurse Fornah on the 28 th March demanding the said information | Mr. Kargbo successfully received the said information on 13 th April 2023 with RAIC in copy. |
| 4 | Madam Fatu Serry School chairlady | HEADTEACHER SDA PRIMARY SCHOOL PETIFU. Tonkolili District | 10/02/23 | How the school fee subsidies were used and the sum total the school received | 11 th Febr2023 RAIC ordered the Head Teacher to release the info requested | The commission was replied with a successful release of information to the requester on 26 th February 2023 |
| 5 | Mrs Isata Sawaneh (customer) | WATER RESOURCES TONKOLIL DISRTICT | 9/5/ 23 | made a request to the marketer to furnish him with full details of the procedure to claim supply. | On the 12 th may 2023,the commission received copy of the letter and ordered the information to be | 6/6/2023 The information was successfully release to the requester and the commission was being informed. |
| 6 | Abu Bakarr Fullah | DESK OFFICER NaCSA MASINGBI Tonkolili district | 2/05/23 | cash transfer project which started but was incomplete and why? | 2/05/2023, the office made a phone call to the Desk Officer to comply | The information was compiled and provided to Mr Abu Bakarr on 31/05/ 2023 with RAIC in copy. |
| 7 | Mr. MARAH Youth leader | UMC PRIMARY SCHOOL MONKO FALABA DTRICT. | 17/ 2/ 23 | school fee subsidy and PBF funds were used | On 17 /02/2023 RAIC ordered the head teacher to release the requested info | The requested information was released on 23/03/2023. |
| 8 | Community Health Worker (CHW) | SINKUNLA HOSPITAL FALABA DISTRICT | 8/9/ 23 | quantity of food for Malnourished children supplied by the Min of Health and list of the beneficiaries | RAIC wrote a letter to the Nurse in charge on the 12 th Sept 2023 | The information was released on the 5 th October 2023 |
| 9 | Madam Jelikatu Koroma | NaCSA MASINGBI TONKOLILI DISRICT | 3 th /8/23 | list of beneficiaries on the loan scheme project within Mayaso village. | RAIC made a call to the Desk Officer to release the requested info | The information was release on 30/08/2023 |

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|----|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | The head Teacher R C PRIMARY School | TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION KARENE DISTRICT | 23/3/ 23 | approved FORMS for Teachers | RAIC made a phone call to the deputy director TSC on the 25 th March 2023 and demanded the release of the requested info. | The information requested by the principal was successfully released on 13 th April 2023 and the commission was notified by Deputy Director TSC via a phone call. |
| 11 | a group of farmers | M & E OFFICER AGRICULTURE KOINADUGU DISTRICT | 04/06/23 | total fertilizers sent by the Ministry of Agriculture for farmers in Koinadugu district. | RAIC received the Complaint on 11/9/23 and made a call to the M & E Officer to comply | The M& E officer provided the requested information to the farmers on 26/9/23 |
| 12 | UNIMAK student | BOMBALI DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE | 20/09/23 | total number of govt and Govt Assisted school in Bombali district in the 2022-2023 academic year | RAIC wrote to the Deputy Director for the release of information | The information requested by the UNIMAK Student was successfully released on the 11 th October 2023 |
| 13 | Mohamed MUSA journalist | D.M.O. GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL MAKENI | 15 /02/23 | funds received for malaria campaign. | RAIC visited DMO and ordered the release of the requested info. | The information was successfully provided to the requester on 28/2/23 |
| 14 | Saidu Turay | Action-aid Makeni Bombali district | 19/4/23 | delay of the school project at manorko village. | RAIC sent a letter to the Director to release the info. | The information was successfully released 14 th March 2023. |
| 15 | Mr Amadu Jalloh | Director Community Organization for Democracy and literacy Tonkolili | 15/11/23 | Machine for the Car wash projects. | The Commission called the Director to release the information | The information was successfully released to the requester on the 4 /12/2023 |
| 16 | Women's Network Forum (WNF) | C-well Contrator Bombali District | 8/03/23 | funds received for the water well project yet to be completed in Rosaint village. | The Commission engaged the contractor to fulfil his FOI obligation. | The matter was successfully concluded and the information was release on the 26 th March 2023 |
| 17 | youths in BAIMOI LUMA | The youth leader Baimoi Luma Kambia District | 10/11/23 | missing youth TV27 INCHES by a letter | On receiving the letter on 10/11/23, RAIC sent a letter to the youth leader for release of the said information, | Through the intervention of the Commission, the youth leader provided with the appropriate information needed by the requesters on the 30 November ,2023 |
| 18 | chief Administrator Tonkolili district council | Manager Castleton Rhodes Communities(L.L.C.) Magburaka Tonkolili | 22/9/23 | detailed information about the rehabilitation of existing building at the Magburaka Boys | RAIC received the letter and ordered the Manager to release the said | The commission was informed of the successful release of information on 9 th /10/2023 to the requester |
| 19 | Mrs Bangura | head teacher primary school Kambo village Makeni | 30/03/23 | School feeding supply received. | The Commission wrote on 5/6/23 the head teacher demanding release of the information | Successful release of information to the requester on the 20 th June, 2023. |
| 20 | Madam Fatmata sesay | LOCAL COURT CHAIRMAN COURT #1 PAMLAP MAKENI | 21/2/23 | Land document | On receiving the letter, the Commission wrote to the court Chairman to release the info. | The information was provided on the 14/5/23. |
| 21 | Mohamed musa journalist | MAGBENTHI HOSPITAL MAKENI | 10/4/23 | Bed nets received for malaria campaign. | On receipt of the letter, the RAIC the Nurse to release the information | The information was successfully provided to the requester on 28 th April, 2023. |
| 22 | youth leader in mathene village | C. WELL CONTRATOR BOMBALI DISTRICT | 5/7/23 | Status of water well project yet to be completed in mathene village. | The Commission engaged the contractor and ordered the release of the info | The information was released on the 31 th July,2023 |

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|----|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 23 | Mr Koroma | CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR KARENE DISTRICT COUNCIL | 12/05/23 | About John Turay street road maintenance. | On receipt of the letter the RAIC engaged the C.A. and ordered release of the said information | the information was successfully provided to the requester on 1 st June, 2023, |
| 24 | Karimu Gbla | CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR MAKENI CITY COUNCIL | 17/01/23 | Pending water well EU project at Maneth street Makeni. | On receipt of the letter the RAIC engaged the C.A. and ordered release of the said information | The information was provided on the 2/02/2023. |
| 25 | Mr Amadu Jalloh | FINANCE OFFICER MAKENI CITY COUNCIL | 8/3/23 | The total money received for first quarter 2023 | The commission demanded the release of the information. | The information requested was successfully released on the 23/03/2023 |
| 26 | Mother's Club | THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR EDUCATION OFFICE KOINADUGU DISTRICT | 23/05/2 | Number of school learning materials received for 2022-2023 Academic year | RAIC called the deputy director on the 25/5/2023 and ordered the release of the said information | The information was successfully released on the 14 th June, 2023 |
| 27 | Mr. Ahmed Musa | Hope Radio | 27 th June 2023 | Quantity of medicine given to the primary health care | On the 11 th of July 2023, the document containing the information requested was released | A copy of the Information was sent to the RAIC Regional office |
| 28 | Mr. Mohamed Sesay | Makeni City Council | 10 th May, 2023 | The subsidies given to the Makeni City Council | The Commission called the Chief Administrator of Makeni City Council | The Information requested was released before the deadline |
| 29 | Fatmata A. Sesay | Makeni Government Hospital Nurse | 2 nd October 2023 | The payroll List for Nurses at the Makeni Government Hospital | The Commission intervened | The Information was released on the 18 th October |
| 30 | Haja Kamara-School Chairlady | Primary School Teacher Petitu, Tonkolili District | 10 th October, 2023 | How the school fee subsidies were used. | A follow-up call was made to the head teacher of the School by RAIC | A successful reply was sent that the information has been given |
| 31 | Mr. Abass Sawaneh | SALWACO | 9 th June 2023 | Details of the procurement process | The commission called the marketer for the release of information requested | The Information was Released |
| 32 | Alhaji A Bah | Project Coordinator | 11 October, 2023 | Cash transfer project which started but was incomplete and why? | A follow-up call was made to the Director | The information was compiled and made it available to Mr. Bah on 31/05/2023 and made it known to the commission upon receiving the information. |
| 33 | Mr. Moses | UMC Primary School, SINKUNIA | 17 th Feb 2023 | school fee subsidy and PBF funds were used | RAIC received a copy the Commission made a follow up letter to the head teacher for release of information. | The Information was successfully released |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 34 | Albert James | Senior Nurse Sinkumia village | 8 th Sept 2023 | quantity of food for Malnourished children supplied by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to the hospital and the list of the beneficiaries | Upon receipt of the letter, RAIC wrote a letter to the Nurse in charge on the 12 th September 2023 and ordered release of the info | Requested information released |
| 35 | Pa. Sorie Sesay | NaCSA MASINGBI TONKOLILI DISTRICT | 3 th August/23 | A follow-up letter was sent to the Institution. | RAIC ordered the release of the requested info | The information given to the requester and a copy sent to RAIC |
| 36 | Supervisor | TSC, Karene District | 23/3/ 23 | Teachers Approval Forms | RAIC made a phone call to the deputy director of TSC. | The Requested Information was Released |
| 37 | A group of farmers | Agriculture Officer | 4 th June, 2023 | Quantity of fertilizers sent by the Ministry of Agriculture | RAIC engaged the Agric Officer to release the requested info | The M& E officer compiled the document and made it available to the farmers. |
| 38 | UNIMAK student | District Education Office, Bombali | 20 th Nov. 2023 | Total number of govt and non-Govt Assisted schools in Bombali district in 2022-2023 academic year. | RAIC wrote to the Deputy Director for the release of the information | The information requested was successfully released on the 10 th Dec. 2023 |
| 39 | Ahmed Musa Journalist | Government Hospital, Makeni | 19 th November ,2023 | Funds received for malaria campaign. | On receipt of letter, RAIC ordered the release of the said information | After RAIC Visit, the information was successfully provided to the requester on 28 th February, 2023. |
| 40 | Shekunatu Turay | Action-aid, Makeni Bombali | 19/4/23 | Delay of the school project at manorko village. | RAIC sent a letter to the Director for the release of information | The information was successfully released on 14 th May 2023. |
| 41 | Mr Amadu Jalloh | Director Community Organization for Democracy and literacy Tonkolili | 10 th August, 2023 | Machine for the youth Car wash projects. | The commission received a copy letter from Mr Jalloh, the commissioner then engaged the Authority in charge | The information was successfully released to the requester |
| 42 | Women's Forum Network | Contractor Bombali District | 29 th Feb. 2023 | Water well project funding | The Commissioner paid a visit to the office and engaged them on their obligation to release information | The matter was successfully concluded and the information was release on the 16 th March 2023 |

**SOUTHERN REGION: SUMMARIES OF 27
REQUESTS WITH THE INTERVENTION OF THE COMMISSION**

| NO | NAME OF REQUESTER | INSTITUTION FROM WHENCE REQUEST IS MADE | DATE OF REQUEST | INFORMATION REQUESTED | ACTION TAKEN | CONCLUSION |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Students of Evangelical College of Theology | Bo city council | 16/1/2023 | How the cadre system operates in the council | The commission made a follow-up to ascertain compliance | The request was responded to on the 20 th January 2023 |
| 2 | Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC) Bo | Bo city council | 1/7/2023 | To know the status of the free quality buses ahead of the reopening of schools for the new academic year | The commission called on SLBC to know if the information was granted | The station manager confirmed compliance by the council on the 6 th of September 2023 |
| 3 | Psychology of Winning | Bo city council | 17/5/2023 | Requested to know how the council undertakes general monthly cleaning and how the political and administrative wings collaborate for development | Follow-ups were made by the Public Information Officer on the progress of the request | The information was released on the 22 nd May 2023. |
| 4 | Abubakarr Koroma | Bo city council | 11/12/2023 | Factors affecting staff work performance in local councils in Sierra Leone (research) | The commission made a follow-up to the council | The request was granted on the 14 th December 2023 |
| 5 | Home Times Newspaper | Bo city council | 15/4/2023 | Requested to know the ownership of Bomeh area in BO | Follow-up was made by the commission. | Request was granted on the 24/4/2023 |
| 6 | Group of students | Bo city council | 16/3/2023 | The communication strategies of the Bo city council (research) | The council responded to the students | The information was released on the 24/3/2023 |
| 7 | Combine media houses | Bo city council | 5/10/2023 | Status of the council in the first 100 days of the rule of Mayor Musa Kobba | The commission visited the council to make sure that the request was responded to. | The required information was provided on the 9/10/2023 |
| 8 | Joseph Nallo | Bo city council | 9/2/2023 | The role of democracy in the operation of Bo city council | The council was proactive in divulging the information. | The information was given out on the 13/2/2023 |
| 9 | Politico Newspaper | Bo city council | 15/8/2023 | Reasons for pushing traders back and breaking market tables along Bojon street. | The Public Information Officer visited the council to know the status of the request | The information was provided on the 29/8/2023 |
| 10 | Radio Kiss 104 | Bo city council | 14/9/2023 | Criteria set for hiring school bus drivers by the council | The commission made a call to ascertain compliance. | The request was provided on the 29/9/2023 |
| 11 | Abduliaman Jacob | Bo district council | 9/1/2023 | The processes involved in naming a street | The council complied | The requested information was provided on the 9/1/2023 |
| 12 | Raymond Bayo | Bo district council | 2/2/2023 | The procedures involved in a civil marriage | The council complied | The information was provided on the same day requested |

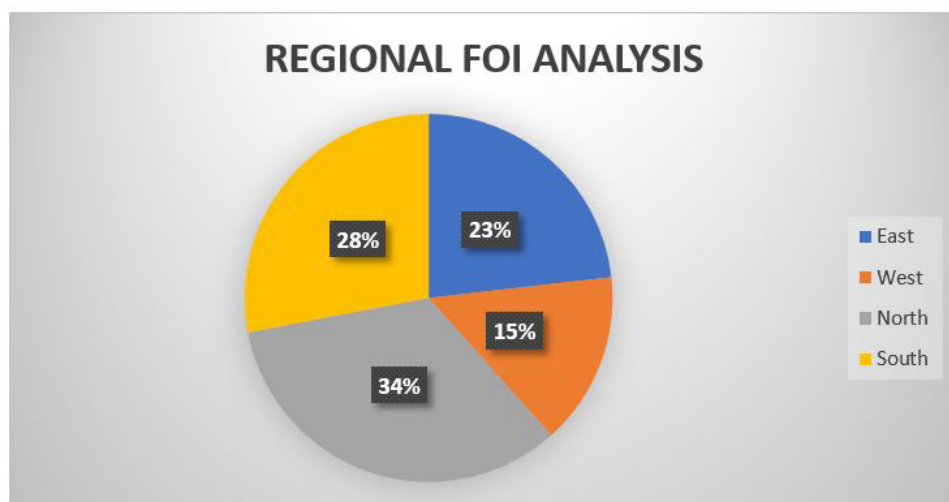
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|----|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 | Henry O. Williams | Bo district council | 7/7/23 | The district development plan | The IEC was cooperative | The requested information was provided the same day |
| 14 | Alie Kamara | Bo district council | 7/7/2023 | Data on Agric business (SMEs and ABCs) | The IEC told the requester that the information requested was not available at the time | The information was not provided and the requester did not make a follow-up |
| 15 | Regina Kombe | Bo district council | 2/3/2023 | To see the registration document of CBOs in the district | The IEC was cooperative and granted the request | The information was provided the same day |
| 16 | Paschal Tamba Fallah | Bo district council | 28/4/2023 | The registration for CBOs in the district | The information was provided | The request was granted the same day |
| 17 | Michael P. Formah | Bo district council | 2/2/2023 | List of committees formed in the council | The commission was informed and called the council | The council complied the same day |
| 18 | Joseph Bangura | Bo district council | 27/2/2023 | Information on the background of the council | The commission was noticed and intervened | The information was provided the same day |
| 19 | The Chair lady, Kpanga chiefdom desendants | Pujehun district | 31/5/2023 | the nature of loan/credit facility given to market women in the district | The council complied | The information was provided on the same day |
| 20 | Samuel Marcathy | Bonthe district | 15/11/2024 | bank statement from the head teacher od ICSS Torma Bum since they started receiving government subsidy in 2021 | The commission made follow-up with both applicant and the head teacher | The requested information was provided on the 23/11/2023 |
| 21 | Janet Nyallay | Kwamebai Krim clinic Pujehun district | 10/10/2023 | quantity of drugs allocated to the clinic in 2023 | The Commission intervened | The information was provided on the 30/10/23 |
| 22 | Musu Vandy | Ministry of Agric Pujehun District | 16/6/2023 | quantity of fertilizer allocated to farmers | The commission mediated | The ministry complied on the 26/10/2023 |
| 23 | Samuel Kamara | MBSSE, Pujehun | 23/3/2023 | list of approved teachers in the district | The commission followed up | The information was provided on the 28/3/23 |
| 24 | Septimus Bundu | Kpanda Kemoh health center, Bonthe district | 4/10/2023 | Number of bed nets allocated for the community and how they were distributed | The request was granted | The information was provided on the 10/10/2023 |
| 25 | Musa Steven | Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, Bo | 5/12/2023 | To go through the master plan of Batiama layout, Bo | The ministry complied | The request was granted on the 8/12/2023 |
| 26 | Mamusu Kamara | World Vision | 3/2/2023 | The status of the school building project that was in the pipeline for Mokase community | The information was provided | Compliance was done on the 7/2/2024 |
| 27 | James Musa | RC School, Kogbotuma. Moyamba | 10/4/2023 | The list of pupils prepare to take the NPSE examination | The commission was informed and made follow-up | The request was not granted as the requester never turned up and didn't leave an address for correspondence |

**EASTERN REGION: SUMMARIES OF 25 FOI
REQUESTS WITH THE INTERVENTION OF THE COMMISSION**

| NO | NAME OF REQUESTER | INSTITUTION FROM WHENCE REQUEST IS MADE | DATE OF REQUEST | INFORMATION REQUESTED | ACTION TAKEN | CONCLUSION |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Joel Makieu | | | | | |
| 1 | (Local Government Service Commission) | Kenema District Council | 20/02/23 | Local Council Staff profile | The commission made a follow-up call to the District Council's IEC Officer | The request was responded to within 24 hours |
| 2 | Lamin Sheriff (Two Tees Construction General Services) | Kenema District Council | 10/03/23 | Bid Document | The district council's IEC Officer processed the FOI request | The requester received just what he asked for |
| 3 | Fatmata Saw (GOAL – SL) | Ministry of Education | 13/03/23 | All schools data | The commission phoned the MBSSE communications unit | The information was provided within 24 hours |
| 4 | Ibrahim Sonneh (RMFA) | MOHS-Kenema | 19/05/23 | The quantity of food and supplements supplied to the Kenema Govt hospital | On the 19 th of May, the commission sent a correspondence to the MOHS to inform them of its knowledge of the matter | The MDA acted on this ASAP as the information was divulged on, May 21 2023 |
| 5 | Dr. Sesay (Consultant) | TSC-Kenema | 20/05/23 | Number of Pin coded teachers in Kenema | The commission made a follow-up visit on the 29 th of May, 2023 to ensure that TSC responded to the request to avoid any uncomfortable actions. | The MDA responded and released the information on the 30 th May 2023 within the stipulated deadline |
| 6 | Abu Sesay (Njala University) | Kenema District Council | 23/5/23 | Statistical data on recent EU-funded project | The commission was duly informed about the request and follow-up calls were made to ensure compliance | The council provided the data within 24 hours |
| 7 | Saffa M. Rogers (Student) | Kenema District Council | 19/09/23 | A comprehensive report on the 2020 NaCSA-funded School rehabilitation project at National Islamic Sec. Such at Burma Section | The request letter was copied to the commission and received on 19 th September 2023. A follow-up letter was sent to the school in question to expedite the response process | The information requested was divulged in hard copy on September 23, 2023 within the fifteen working days' deadline |
| 8 | Albert Keifala (Student – ETU) | Kenema District Council | 19/09/23 | Dissertation Questionnaire | The Council's IEC officer without delay responded to the requester | The MDA responded and released the information on the same date as the request |
| 9 | (Jamil Sesay) Audit Service SL | Kenema District Council | 08/11/23 | Sectoral Minute | The IEC Officer spontaneously responded to the audit firm | The information sought was divulged the same instant it was requested. |
| 10 | Ibrahim Turay (Youths in Action for Development) | National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) | 07/12/23 | Development Plan | A copy of the request letter was sent to the commission and the commission made a follow-up call to prompt the council to respond to the request. | The requester received the information requested the same day without delay |
| 11 | Alusine Kamara (Student) | Fire Force Kenema | 04/12/23 | Employees Profile | The commission was duly informed to maintain a follow-up and ensure compliance | The information was divulged on the very same day as the request |
| 12 | Foday Moriba (Student) | Kenema City Council | 04/10/23 | Inquiry into the local council devolved sector approved funds (Oral Request) from the Kenema City Council. | The request was responded to on the 4 th of October 2023 even before the commission could receive a copy of the letter | The MDA was very proactive in acknowledging the request regardless of its oral nature and ensured quick access to the information sought as the information was given the same day (04/10/23) |
| 13 | RU SLP | Kenema City Council | 12/1/23 | Request for Development Plan | The request for information was granted in about two hours | The information was divulged on the very same day as the request |

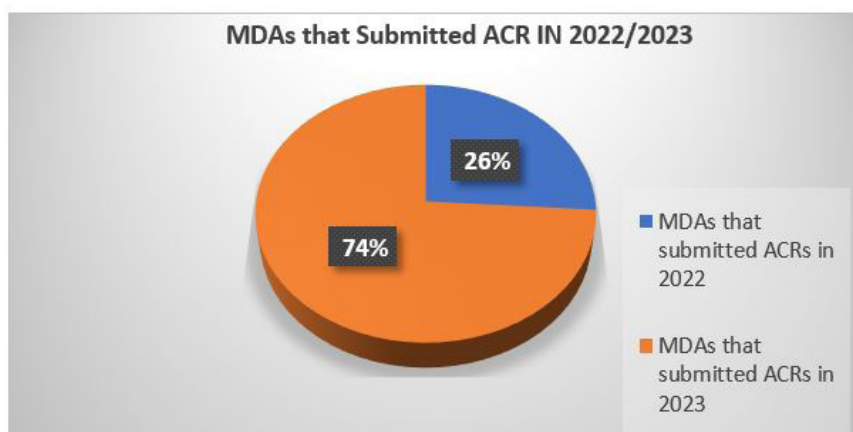
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|----|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 | Simbaru Construction Company | Kenema City Council | 14/4/23 | Bid Document | The council processed the information request and ensured that the requester gets the doc. | The information was given to the requester on the 17/4/23 |
| 15 | Sebatu Kendoh | Kenema City Council | 1/5/23 | Minutes Of Council Sitting | The IEC officer Martin Kaindaneh worked on the request as soon as possible to grant timely access | the information was provided on the 2/5/23 |
| 16 | Saffa Moriba (Journalist) | Kenema City Council | 25/7/23 | Recordings of Council Sitting | MR. Moriba's request was treated with utmost urgency, hence a timely response | The information was provided the same day |
| 17 | AMINATA KALLON (Trader) | Kailahun City Council | 10/4/23 | Information on approved loan schemes for traders | 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. | The information sought was given to the requester on the 11 th of April 2023 |
| 18 | JOHN LAMIN (Student) | Kailahun City Council | 17/05/23 | Information on the Kailahun-Koidu road project from the local council | The Liaison officer in Kailahun sent a correspondence to the Kailahun City Council on the 18 th of May to inform the council of the commission's knowledge of the request dated 17/05/23 | On the 19 th of May, the requested Information was given to the requester in hard copy. |
| 19 | Foday Sheriff | Marie Stopes | 12/07/23 | The number of drugs that were supplied to the health facility in Kailahun town | The RAIC liaison in Kailahun was notified of the request on the 13 th March 2023 and he ensured the information request was divulged ASAP. | On March 14 2023 the Information was divulged and access was granted to the requester. |
| 20 | Martin Fengai | Kono City Council | 14/4/23 | Information on cash aid that was given to local business owners | RAIC was notified on the 14 th of April 2023 and the Commission facilitated the request to ensure a timely response from the council | The information sought was accessed, on the 17 th of April 2023. |
| 21 | Idrissa Conteh | Kono District Council | 10/05/23 | The Council's Financial Statement for the past year | The RAIC was duly informed about the information request to keep abreast with the process | The IEC officer provided the information with the stipulated 15 working days deadline |
| 22 | Emmanuel Koroma (CSO) | Kono District Council | 17/7/23 | Revenue from mining companies to the councils | RAIC was notified about the request the same day (14/7/23) | The information request was responded to on 18/07/23. |
| 23 | Kevin Kodo (Entrepreneur) | Kono City Council | 21/08/23 | Number of devolved sectors within the council | RAIC was notified to keep abreast with the request. However, the council supplied the information on time. | The information sought was accessed on 22/08/23 |
| 24 | Jihard Mansor (Entrepreneur) | Kono City Council | 5/09/23 | The reasons for the increase in rates | The commission was contacted with this information request to follow up on the information transaction. | The information sought was accessed on 12/09/23 |
| 25 | Saffa Kaisamba (Masoner) | Kono City Council | 11/09/23 | The city delimitation | The commission received this information request and was kept in the know for updates | The information request was granted on 15/09/23 |

REGIONAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS ANALYSIS



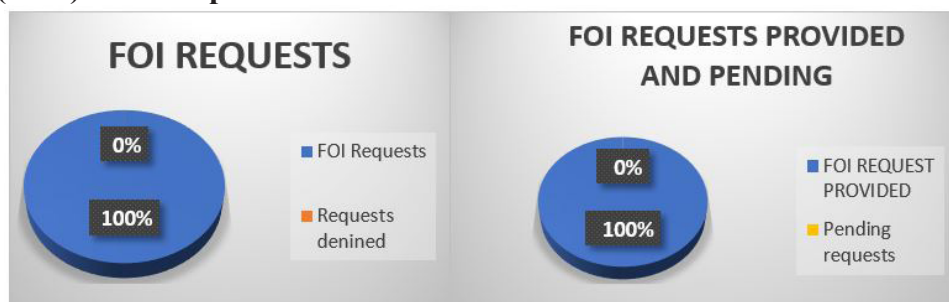
The pie chart above is a diagrammatic representation of the FOI Requests, with the intervention of the commission, received at the various Regional Offices of the Commission for the year under review. From the graph Chart, it is clear that the Northern Region Office of the Commission received the highest number of FOI Requests (42) which represents 34% followed by the South (35) representing 28% and the Eastern Region (29) representing 23%, respectively. The Western Area is the one with the lowest number of requests (19) which represents 15%. Comparatively, there is an increase in the number of FOI Requests received in the Regions mainly due to a sustained awareness raising campaign on the RAI Law.

ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT 2023 (FOI CASES WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THE COMMISSION)



As at the time of putting this report together, the RAIC had received a total of Fifty-three (53) Annual Compliance Reports (ACRs) from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) across One Hundred and five (105) MDAs nationally expected to complete and submit to the RAIC.

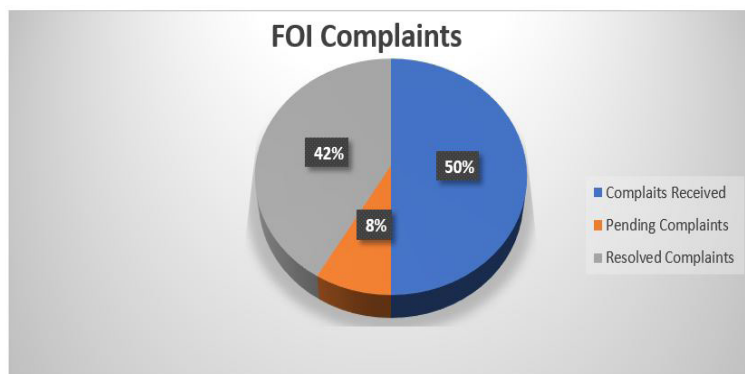
The 53 MDAs represent 74 %. This is a huge success when compared to the previous year where we had only 19 MDAs (26%) that complied.



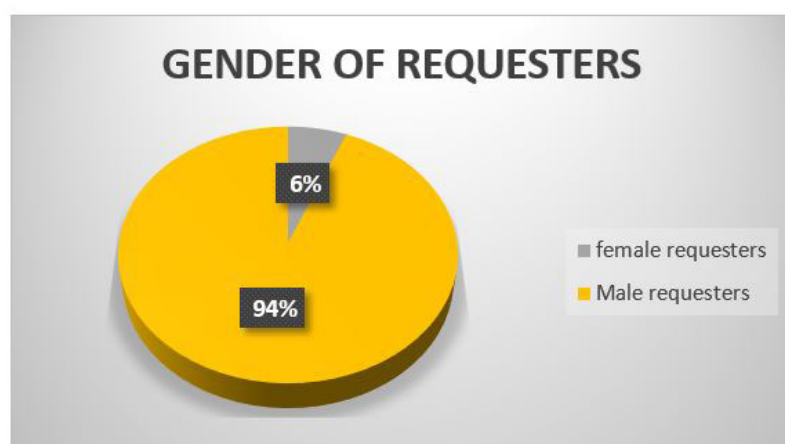
From the Fifty-three (53) that have submitted Annual Compliance Report, an unprecedented total of nineteen thousand, three hundred and ninety-one (19,391) Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were made across

Public Authorities, of which Nineteen thousand, three hundred and Sixty-Seven (19,367) were provided to the requesters representing 100% information access in Sierra Leone.

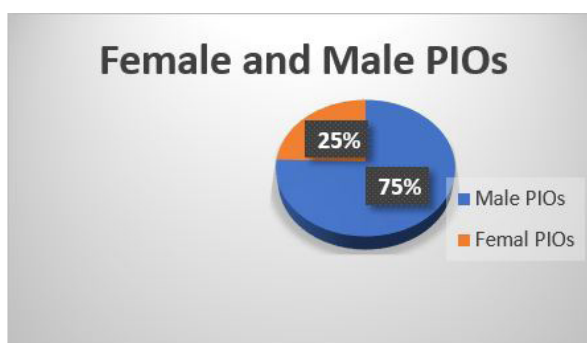
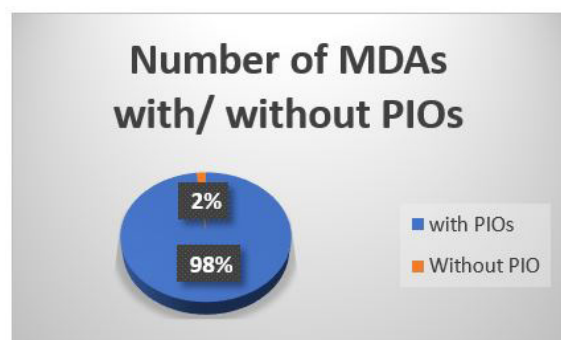
The RAIC took note of six (6) cases where the information was denied because the information requested falls under exempt information as stipulated in sections 12 to 26 of the RAI Act of 2013.



Out of the of Nineteen thousand, three hundred and ninety-one (19,391) Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by MDAs, a total of Six freedom of Information (FOI) Complaints were made to the RAIC. Five complaints are resolved whilst one case is pending. There were no unresolved complaints for 2023.

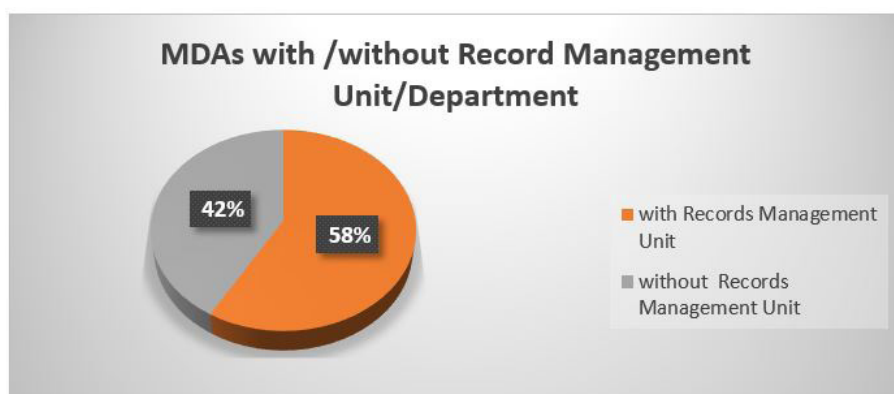


As one of the new features that was introduced in 2022, the ACR captures the gender of requesters and as displayed by the above chart, 16,335 (94%) of requesters are male while 1065(6%) of requesters are females.



The charts above show that 52 (98%) of the MDAs that submitted ACRs to the RAIC have Public Information Officers leaving only one (2%) public authority without a PIO.

Capturing the gender data of PIOs it clearly shows that there is still a male dominance in PIOs across MDAs as thirteen representing 25% are female whiles 40 representing 75% are male.



The setting up of a records Management units, or departments, is considered pivotal to access to information. But according to data received as displayed by the above chart, 31 of the 53 MDAs have records management units or department (58%) while 22 (42%) do not have.

MDAs with/without ICT unit



29 MDAs (55%) stated that they have Information Communications Technology (ICT) units and a surprising 24 (45%) do not have such in their establishments.

SUMMARY OF FOI REQUESTS AS REPORTED BY MDAs THROUGH ACR.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| MDAs that submitted ACR | 53 |
| Number of FOI requests | 19,391 |
| Number of Successful cases | 19,367 |
| Number of Pending cases | 12 |
| Number of denied cases | 6 |
| Number of Complaints | 6 |
| Complaint Resolved | 5 |
| Pending Complaint | 1 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Total FOI requests reported by the 53 MDAs | 19,391 |
| Total FOI requests with the intervention of the Commission | 105 |
| TOTAL FOI requests | 19,496 |

ANALYSIS

The Annual Compliance Report templates distributed to public authorities for the year 2023 have seen a significant increase in the number of MDAs complying with the obligation to report to the RAIC on the details of FOI requests received and how they were handled. It is also noteworthy that Sierra Leone is making steady progress on both the demand and supply sides of access to information. Data continues to show a substantial rise in the demand for information, and public authorities have largely met this demand by providing the requested information.

This demonstrates the considerable efforts of the RAIC to demystify information access in Sierra Leone, particularly through engaging not only Public Information Officers but also the heads of institutions to ensure a smooth flow of information.

The RAIC also welcomes the increase in the number of female requesters this year, recognizing it as a positive development. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may be additional successful FOI cases that the Commission is unaware of, as some requesters do not keep the RAIC informed, and some public authorities fail to comply with their annual reporting obligations. This is why the RAIC continues to engage with the heads of public authorities, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling their compliance responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As we celebrate the significant growth in the compliance of MDAs with the RAI Act of 2013, we must also recognize the vast room for improvement that lies ahead. The RAIC's Compliance Department, which has served as the crucial link between information requesters and public authorities, has observed that despite efforts to guide MDAs in completing their compliance reports, some public authorities continue to show deliberate defiance. This reluctance to fully comply must be addressed if the Commission is to achieve its broader goals.

Any action to enforce compliance, however, should only be taken after all avenues of sensitization, education, persuasion, and consultation have been exhausted. The Commission remains committed to fostering cooperation and understanding with public authorities, but it also recognizes the need for stronger measures in cases of persistent non-compliance.

In an effort to improve compliance for the coming year, the Compliance Team proposes the following recommendations:

1. **Engagement with State House:** The RAIC should work with the Office of the President to ensure that compliance with the RAI Act of 2013 is included as an indicator in the performance contracts of MDAs. This would institutionalize the requirement and reinforce its importance within the public sector.
2. **Earlier Dispatch of Compliance Memoranda:** The RAIC should send its annual memoranda to public authorities earlier in the year to provide sufficient time for MDAs to compile and submit their reports. This would reduce delays and allow MDAs to meet deadlines more effectively.
3. **Digital Submission of Annual Compliance Reports (ACRs):** The RAIC should leverage its Digital Access to Information Platform to allow MDAs to complete and submit their ACRs electronically. Moving away from hard copies would streamline the process and encourage timely submissions.
4. **Exploration of Enforcement Options:** While persuasion and education remain the primary tools for encouraging compliance, the RAIC must begin considering alternative options to enforce compliance for authorities that continue to defy the reporting obligations under the RAI Act.

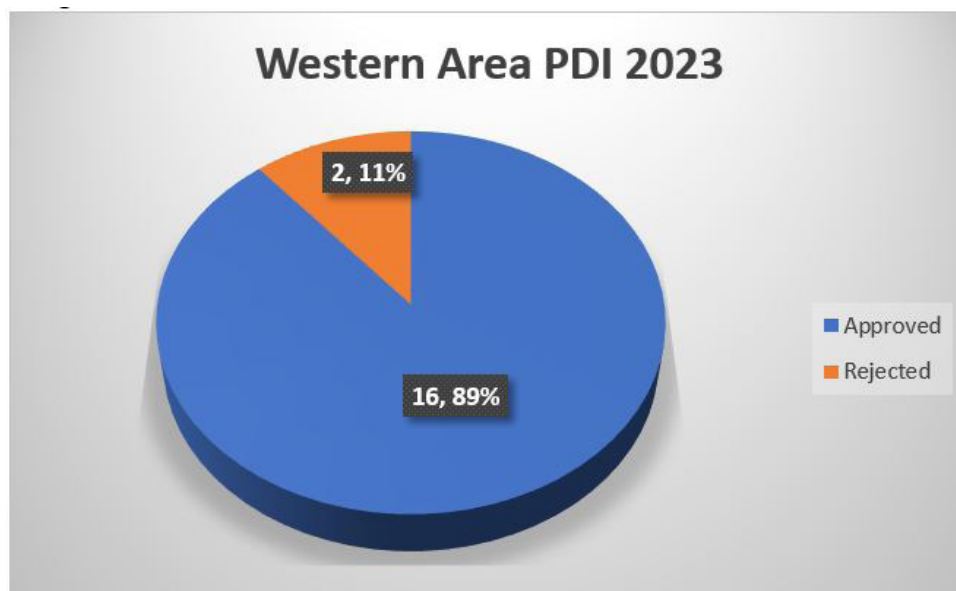
Conclusion:

The RAIC has observed that many Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) are not making sufficient efforts to complete and return their ACRs within the stipulated timeframes. As a result, the Commission often receives reports even after extended deadlines have passed. Nonetheless, we anticipate receiving additional ACRs and Public Disclosure Information (PDI) forms in the coming months.

Despite these challenges, the year 2023 stands as the most successful to date in terms of requests received, requests granted, and complaints submitted, and complaints resolved. With continued efforts to enhance compliance from MDAs, the RAIC is confident that the dream of a more open and transparent Sierra Leone will continue to grow stronger. Achieving this vision requires a collective commitment to ensuring that information flows freely and that public authorities uphold their responsibilities under the RAI Act.

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION (PDI)

In our assessment of PDI in 2023 for the Western Area, 18 public authorities submitted Proactive Publication Schemes, 16 were approved and 2 were rejected as they complied with less than 10 obligations.



| NUMBER OF PDIs COMPLETED IN THE WESTERN AREA | LIST OF PDIs APPROVED | LIST OF PDIs REJECTED |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 | Human Resource Management Office (HRMO), Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Youth AffairsNational Commission for Democracy, National Tourist Board Road Maintenance Fund Administration, SALWACO, SLIEPA | National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. Local Content Agency |
| | Cabinet Secretariat, Civil Service Training College, EDSA, Local Government Service Commission, Ministry Of Technical And Higher Education, National Authorising Office, Office of the Administrator and Registrar General, Public Sector Reform Unit, Public Service Commission. | |

NORTHERN REGION

| NAME OF MDA | NUMBER OF PDIs SUBMITTED IN 2023 | NUMBER OF PDIs APPROVED | LIST OF PDIs REJECTED | REMARKS |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Makeni City Council | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| BOMBALI DIST.COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| TONKOLILI DIST. COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| UNIMAK | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| PORTLOKO DISTRICT COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION(TSC) | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |

EASTERN REGION

| NAME OF MDA | NUMBER OF PDIs SUBMITTED 2023 | NUMBER OF PDIs APPROVED | LIST OF PDIs REJECTED | REMARKS |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| KAILAHUN DIST.COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| KENEMA DIST.COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| KONO DIST.COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| SALWACO | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |

SOUTHERN REGION

| NAME OF MDA | NUMBER OF PDI _s SUBMITTED IN 2023 | NUMBER OF PDI APPROVED | LIST OF PDI _s REJECTED | REMARKS |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| BO DISTRICT COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| BO CITY COUNCIL | 1 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |
| PUJEHUN DIST. COUNCIL. | 2 | 1 | NONE | APPROVED |

PDI

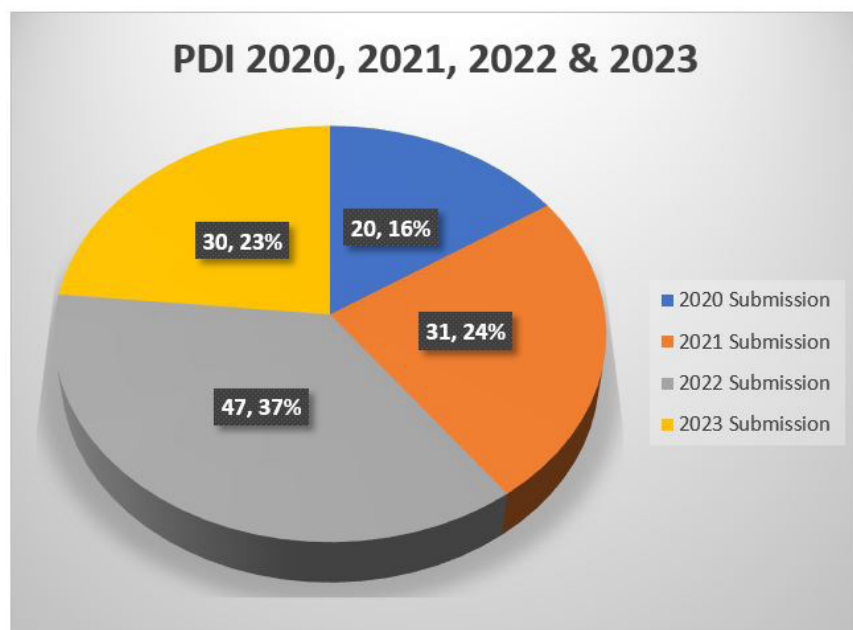
Western Area—18 –with 16 approved and 2 rejected

Northern Region—6 all approved

Southern Region—5 all approved

Eastern Region—3 all approved

TOTAL: 32 PDIs—30 approved and 2 rejected



The number of PDI's submitted shows that more MDA's have embraced the process as shown in the increase in the submission rate over years 2020 to 2023. The proactive disclosure of information is not a yearly obligation as the act clearly states and when the PDI has been approved by the Commission the Public Authority is obligated to periodically update changing information in the institution. The number of submissions for the 2023 year was 32 with 30 of them approved by the Commission owing to the fact the approved PDI's did not have to be resubmitted. There are still institutions which have not engaged in the process and the Commission would revert to the

courts if they still continue to resist fulfilling their obligations.

1. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The right of access to information applies to all public bodies, including at national and international levels. The fundamental governance principles of an access to information approach are transparency, participation and accountability. Such a basis makes access to information not only critical to all activities of government, but also beneficial to how citizens inform themselves. Sierra Leone being a signatory 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 realization 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.

4.1 NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Following the establishment of the Commission in 2014, lot of interest from the demand side of the process was

generated by citizens, the disabled, women & youth, as well as civil society organizations and development partners who had been concerned about getting access to vital information as a way to effectively prevent corruption. However, following the reconstitution of the Commission in 2018 that ushered the current leadership, it found that Citizens have been relatively slow to exploit the opportunities available to them to seek information, with barely more than hundred requests generated at that time and coupled with corresponding slow responses at the time. This was largely due to the limited knowledge of the demand and supply chain of the RAI process. It is worth noting that, the Commission maintained its national stakeholders with the following:

NCD

The RAIC participated in a Citizens platform meeting that was organized by the National Commission for Democracy on a topic “Analyzing a critical risk factor in Sierra Leone’s democracy: a focus on the 6th parliament of Sierra Leone.

NACED-OGP

The RAIC in its bid to strengthen national collaboration, participated in a steering committee meeting. The Coordinator of NaCCED in her opening statement mentioned that the consultative process of the development of the NAP5 aligned with government top 5 priority agenda. She stated that the deliberation will lead to a technical meeting who will now identify the milestones for an onward pre-cabinet presentation to solicit the political will. The Chairperson reminded the steering committee members that it is their responsibility to reflect on the achievements and lesson learnt from previous implemented action plans that have been submitted to the OGP.

According to the Minister of Information and Civic Education, Hon Chernor Bah, democracy is not an event or elections alone, but the contribution we all have to make, like what NaCCED is doing. He said we live in era dominated by fake news that is why as a Ministry they are always proactive in the disclosure of information. He concluded by saying that the only way to beat fake news is to provide timely, quality and credible news to the citizens. The Chairman of NaCCED referred to the occasion as a great day for the governance space as we prepare our NAP5. He furthered said that, the world is grappling with global challenges including climate change, economic issues, public access to information etc. which the OGP decided to correct these imbalances through the open government way.

In summary, the RAIC has also engaged other public authorities about the duty to promote accountability, transparency and good governance in order to deliver their statutory mandate in line with the RAI Act. Among these includes IMC, Stats SL, NATCA, NAO SDI, MRJD, MRCG, SLAJ etc.

4.2 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Commission through its collaboration, creates the room for international partnership. The commitment on the part of the Commission to maintain and develop influence within the global community in order to improve standards of access to information practices has set the stage for a more systematic and comprehensive approach. This has strengthened the RAI initiatives and improved the perceptions about the RAIC. It is important to note that, Sierra Leone can boast of having the 5th globally formidable RAI law. As such, the Commission is in partnership with international stakeholders such as ANIC, ICIC, UNESCO, UNDP, UN Resident Coordinator’s office etc.

ANIC

The African Network of Information Commissioners (ANIC) is a platform that brings together members of access to information oversight bodies from African countries. This important platform brings together Information Commissioners, Ombudsmen, and other Regulatory Authorities, including Transparency Councils or Boards responsible for protecting, promoting and regulating the respect of the right of access to information within their respective jurisdictions in Africa In recognition of the progress Sierra Leone has made in regulating records management , Succeeding in the development of the Records Management Code of

Practice Training Manual, on the 3rd November 2023, at a resolution of second executive committee meeting on the 3rd November, the African Network of Information Commissions (ANIC) selected the RAIC Sierra Leone to lead in the development of a standard records management code of practice for Africa and capacity-building strategy for ANIC Members. The Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw who sits on the Executive Committee of the African Network of Information Commissioners (ANIC) attended a symposium organized by this network in collaboration with UNESCO in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2023.

ICIC

Given its steady integration into ATI, Sierra Leone, through RAIC is making remarkable contributions to the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC), a network Sierra Leone officially joined as an accredited member on 24 September, 2019. The ICIC is an international body established to foster the protection and the promotion of access to public information as a fundamental pillar to social, economic and democratic governance in the world. 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 RAIC Information Commissioner, Dr Seaga Shaw served as a member of the Interim Executive Committee of the ICIC representing Africa between 2019 and 2021. At the ICIC 15th Annual conference held in Tirana, Albania between 2nd and 5th June, 2024, Sierra Leone won the bid to host the 17th edition of the ICIC in 2026.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the convening monitoring body for the Sustainable Development Goal 16.10.2. 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 interest in fostering transparency and accountability in Sierra Leone. The year under review saw UNESCO consistently collaborating with the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MOPED) to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the SDGs 16.10.2 which relates to Public Access to Information and the protection of fundamental rights in April 2023 for the financial year ending 31st December, 2022.

The RAIC joined UNESCO, together with other countries around the world to commemorate the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) on 28th September, 2023 on the theme "the importance of the online space for access to information". In observing this event on a local perspective, the RAIC convened MDAs, CSOs, media practitioners, researchers, local and development partners to discuss the significance of IDUAI, the emerging issues in Access to Information (ATI) and map the way forward. This event was hosted in Freetown and observed in regional headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni on the same day. The Global celebration of IDUAI 2023 was marked by a symposium hosted jointly by UNESCO and the UK at the University of Oxford's Bonavaro Centre for Human Rights on 28th September, 2023 on the same theme: "the importance of the online space for access to information". Sierra Leone was represented at this event by its Information Commissioner, Dr Seaga Shaw. Sierra Leone has since 2019 been participating in the annual UNESCO global survey on SDG 16.10.2 Public Access to Information and the Protection of Fundamental Freedoms.

PART III

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION COMMISSION
Audited Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2023

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 Standard: Financial Reporting.

Sections 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 2023 comprise

those of the Commission alone.

Results

The annexed Financial Statements disclose the financial activity of the Commission for the period ended 31st December, 2023.

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 2023 to 31st December 2023, 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 financial position as at 31st December 2023, the statements of comprehensive income, statement of cash flows 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 22.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Right to Access Information Commission as at 31st December 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended 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.

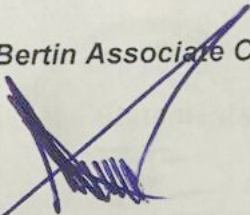
Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

- 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: 28/08/2024



Right to Access Information Commission
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 December 2023

| <i>In thousands of New Leones</i> | Notes | 2023 | | 2022 | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | SLE 000' | SLE 000' | SLE 000' | SLE 000' |
| Non-Current Assets | | | | | |
| Property Plant and Equipment | 6 | | 144 | | 112 |
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Cash and Cash equivalents | 7 | 43 | | 7,985 | |
| Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Payables | 5 | 147 | | - | |
| Current Assets- Current Liabilities | | - | 104 | | 7,985 |
| Net Assets | | | 40 | | 8,151 |
| Represented By: | | | | | |
| Accumlated fund | 8 | | 40 | | 8,151 |
| | | | 40 | | 8,151 |

The Financial Statements were approved on 22nd August 2024.

Chairman and Information Commissioner



Right to Access Information Commission

INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Notes

| | Note | 2023 SLE 000' | 2022 SLE 000' |
|--------------------------------------|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>In thousands of New Leones</i> | | | |
| INCOME | 3 | 2,150 | 1,700,980 |
| | | 2,150 | 1,700,980 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Administrative Expenses | 4 | 2,131 | 1,694,445 |
| Depreciation charges | 6 | 114 | 95 |
| Total Operating expense | | 2,245 | 1,694,540 |
| Surplus /Deficit for the year | | -95 | 6,440 |

Right to Access Information Commission

Cash Flow Statement

For the Year Ended 31st December 2023

| | Note | 2023 SLE 000' | 2022 SLE 000' |
|----------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>In thousands of New Leones</i> | | | |
| Operating activities: | | | |
| Result for the period | - | 95 | 6,440 |
| Adjustment for: | | | |
| Depreciation | 6 | 114 | 95 |
| Prior year adjustment | - | 39 | |
| Surplus before changes in workin capital | - | 20 - | 6,535 |
| Changes in Working Capital | | | |
| Increase/ Decrease in Payables | 11 | 147 | |
| Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities | | 127 | - |
| Investing Activities | | | |
| Property Plant and Equipment Acqusition | 6 - | 92 - | 113 |
| Net Cash Flow from Investing activities | - | 92 - | 113 |
| Changes in Cash and Cash Equivalents | | | |
| Net increase decrease in cash and cash equivalents | | 35 - | 4,425 |
| Balance as at 1 January 2023 | | 8 | 3,470 |
| Balance as at 31 December 2023 | | 43 | 7,895 |

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continue)

1. 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 2023 comprise those of the Commission alone.

a) Basis of Preparation

The Financial Statement have been prepared in accordance with Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the Laws of Sierra Leone including Right to Access Information Commission Act, 2013.

b) Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated to Leones at the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign exchange rate ruling as at that date. Foreign exchange differences arising from such transactions have been recognized and form part of the income statement.

c) Depreciation

Depreciation of tangible fixed assets has been provided on a straight line basis at the following annual rates, which have been calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful lives as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----|
| Computer and Accessories | - | 20% |
| Furniture & Fittings | - | 20% |

d) Income

Government grant and other grants are accounted for as and when they are received and no provision is made for grants due but not received by the Commission as at the balance sheet date.

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continue)

(f) Expenditure

All expenses are accounted for on a cash basis.

2(a) Accounting Policies

The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently to all periods presented in these financial statements.

Depreciation is recognised in income statement on a straight line basis over the estimated useful lives of each asset. The estimated useful lives of the assets are as follows:

Note to the financial statement (cont.)

In thousands of New Leones

3. Income

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | SLE '000' | SLE '000' |
| Government of Sierra Leone (Subvention) | 2,125 | 1,700,000 |
| Support from Natca | 25 | 980 |
| | 2,150 | 1,700,980 |

4. Administrative Expenses

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | SLE '000 | SLE '000 |
| Rent | - | 82,881 |
| Audit Fees | 38 | 25,185 |
| Electricity | 13 | 9,200 |
| Fuel | 688 | 340,400 |
| Internet/Web Hosting & ICT Support | 155 | 65,877 |
| Local Travelling/DSA/Relocation | 128 | 19,564 |
| Office & General | 5 | 175,822 |
| Programming/meetings | 362 | 81,973 |
| Computer & Printer | 63 | 112,658 |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 120 | 70,152 |
| Security | 38 | 45,700 |
| Stationery & Cartridges | 55 | 166,297 |
| Stipend | 49 | 22,500 |
| Provision | 15 | 34,900 |
| Imprest | 214 | 188,739 |
| Withholding Tax | 36 | 57,695 |
| Printing and designing | 123 | 153,326 |
| Furniture & Fittings | 29 | - |
| | 2,131 | 1,694,445 |

Note to the financial statement (cont.)

5. Payables**In thousand of New Leones**

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | SLE | SLE |
| | 000' | 000' |
| | - | - |
| Trade Payables-Government | 120 | - |
| Printing | 15 | - |
| Afcom | 12 | - |
| Vehicle Maintenance | 147 | - |

7.Cash and Cash Equivalent

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | SLE | SLE |
| | 000' | 000' |
| Bank of Sierra Leone | 39 | 6440 |
| Petty Cash | 4 | 1455 |
| | 43 | 7,895 |

8.Accumulated Fund

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | SLE | SLE |
| | '000 | '000 |
| | 8 | 43 |
| Accumulated Fund b/ford | (95) | 6,440 |
| Surplus/De?cit | 127 | 1,668 |
| Prior year adjustment | 40 | 8151 |

PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT

| | Computer Accessories | Furniture and Fittings | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------|
| IN NEW LEONE | SLE | SLE | SLE |
| COST: | 000 | 000 | 000 |
| AS at 1st January 2022 | 199 | 164 | 363 |
| Additions | 113 | | 113 |
| AS at 31st December 2022 | 312 | 164 | 476 |
| IN NEW LEONE | SLE | SLE | SLE |
| COST: | 000 | 000 | 000 |
| AS at 1st January 2023 | 312 | 164 | 476 |
| Additions | 63 | 29 | 92 |
| AS at 31st December 2023 | 375 | 193 | 568 |
| Depreciation | 000 | 000 | 000 |
| AS at 1st January 2022 | 117 | 98 | 215 |
| Charge for the year | 62 | 33 | 95 |
| AS at 31st December 2022 | 179 | 131 | 310 |
| Depreciation | 000 | 000 | 000 |
| AS at 1st January 2023 | 179 | 131 | 310 |
| Charge for the year | 75 | 39 | 114 |
| AS at 31st December 2023 | 254 | 170 | 424 |
| Carrying Amount: | | | |
| As at 1st January 2022 | 82 | 66 | 148 |
| As at 31st December 2022 | 133 | 33 | 166 |
| AS at 1st January 2023 | 133 | 33 | 166 |
| AS at 31st December 2023 | 121 | 23 | 144 |

PART IV. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

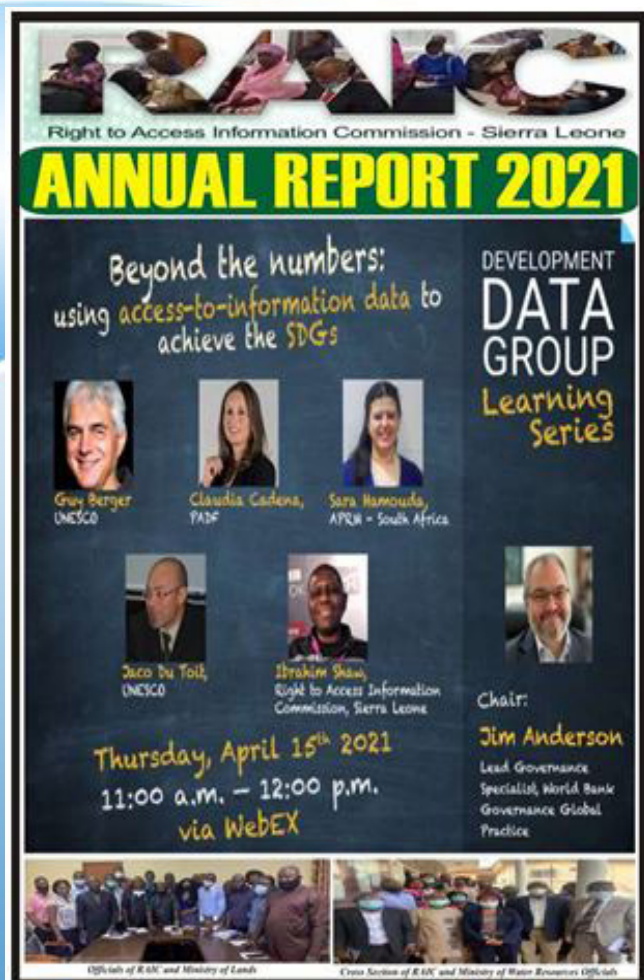
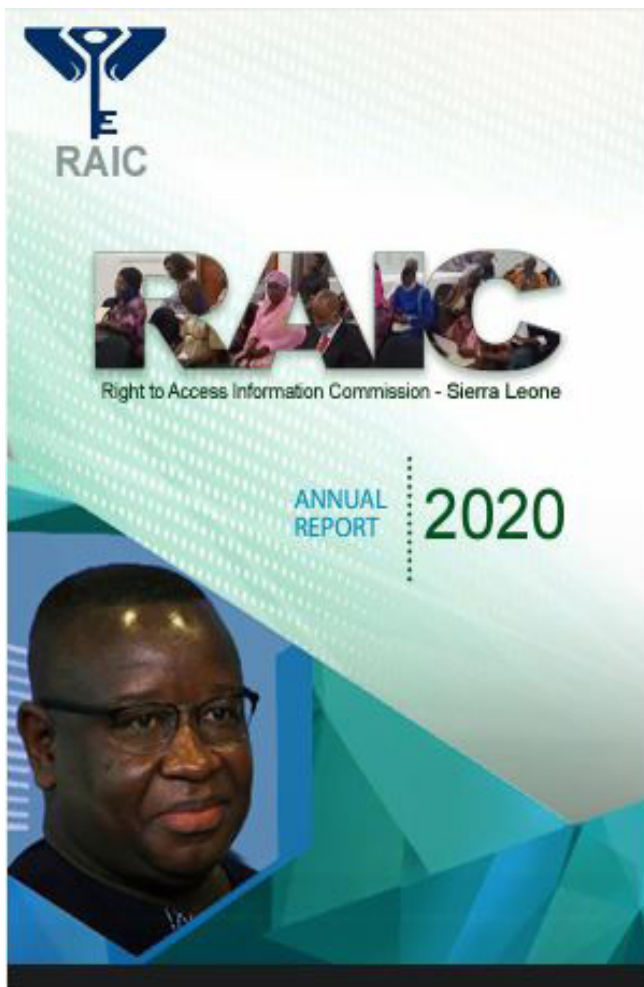
Notwithstanding the notable progress that the Commission had made in the year under review, the Commission continues to face significant challenges which includes:

- Inadequate of 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
- Information technology and communication inadequacies and risks.
- Inadequate stakeholder engagement and inadequate communication.
- 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;

PART V – KEY PRIORITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD

The following strategic priorities for moving forward are as follows:

- Enactment by GoSL of the Records and Archives Management and Data Protection Bills
- 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;
- Planning committee meetings ahead of the 17th ed. of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) 2026 to be hosted by Sierra Leone.
- Popularization and Capacity Building on the Digital ATI focussing on the RAI Regulations platforms.
- Capacity Building for RAIC Staff and Records Managers/Officers in targeted MDAs on Records Management and Records Management Code of Practice to serve as a monitoring mechanism.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ensuring that the operationalization of the mandate of the RAIC is guided by recent developments in the sector to ensure coherence and alignment, such as the development of legislation for cyber security, electronic transactions, social media, etc.;
- Identifying critical supporting components related to funding, human resources and other inputs for effective work;
- Engaging in more serious and aggressive approach for the improvement of conditions of service of staff;
- Developing and rolling out a communication and advocacy strategy to ensure an effective popularization of the RAI Act including simplification of the Act, translation of the Act into the local languages etc.;
- Expanding and strengthening Stakeholder/Partner relations and engagements especially with MDAs and other actors including Civil Society through investing in partnerships; and not just working with large ones, because smaller ones have proven to be quite effective in awareness-raising and service delivery;
- Improving complaints management and speeding up response to requests;
- Installing information request boxes in strategic locations nationwide and to encourage Information officers to make regular collection of those requests;
- The installation of landline telephone services for information requesters who may want to remain anonymous; 66 RAIC Annual Report 2022
- Setting up of Open Data Centres in the remaining 12 districts of Sierra Leone
- Working with the Ministries of Information and Civic Education, and Communication, Technology and Innovation to further develop and manage the GoSL Portal for promoting Access to Information by MDAs;
- Working with MDAs to develop a framework for regularly updating their websites and publishing their Annual Reports;
- Exploring opportunities for support and resource mobilization to enhance implementation of the Commission's programmes under the RAI Act, from national and international institutions;





Promoting Open Governance
for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development
Through Transparency and Accountability

RAIC

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