



Republic of Zambia

Public Service Records Management Policy

**Public Service Management Division
P.O. Box 30587
Lusaka
ZAMBIA**

October, 2012.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Table of Contents

Foreword	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Working Definitions	iv-vii
List of Acronyms	viii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Situation Analysis	1-4
3.0 The Vision	5
4.0 Rationale	5
5.0 Guiding Principles	5-6
6.0 Policy Objectives	6
7.0 Measures	7
7.1 Creation and Management of Records	7
7.2 Improved Access to Information	7
7.3 Standardisation and Integration of Records Management System	7-8
7.4 Security of Public Records	8
7.5 Staff Development and Retention	8
8.0 Implementation Framework	9
8.1 Institutional Arrangement	9
8.1.1 Public Service Management Division (PSMD)	9
8.1.2 Ministries, Provinces and other Public Service Institutions	9
8.1.3 Ministry of Finance	10
8.1.4 The National Archives of Zambia	10
8.2 Legal Framework	10-11
8.3 Resource Mobilization and Financing	11
8.4 Monitoring and Evaluation	11

FOREWORD


Government recognizes the critical role that records play in National Development and eventual attainment of the Vision 2030. Records are fundamental to democracy and national development as recorded information underpins the protection of human rights, the rule of law, fair and equal treatment of citizens as well as measures progress in socio-economic development.

The absence of a comprehensive policy to establish an integrated, effective and efficient records management system has led to uncoordinated records management in the Public Service. In addition, the inadequate local professional training and poor career progression in records management have led to high staff mobility to other professions that are perceived to be better within the Public Service. This has culminated into poor records keeping in most Ministries and other Public Service Institutions thereby contributing to poor service delivery.

To this effect, Government is determined to maintain reliable and accurate documentary evidence of its decisions and actions. To demonstrate its determination, Government has put in place the Public Service Records Management Policy.

The Policy contains the intention of Government to improve the management of records in Public Service Institutions. It provides clear direction for establishing an Integrated Records Management system covering creation, storage, retention, maintenance and disposal of records in all Ministries and other Public Service Institutions. The Policy also provides an Institutional framework, linking key players namely: Public Service Management Division (PSMD) as the overall coordinator of records management, National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) as the legal custodian of archival materials in Zambia and Ministries and other Public Service Institutions as implementers of the policy. The policy further provides for enhancement of career progression and skills for the records management cadre.

I, therefore, urge all Ministries and other Public Service Institutions to implement the provisions of this policy in order to improve the management of records in the public service.



ROLAND MSISKA (DR)
Secretary to the Cabinet
CABINET OFFICE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge all institutions and individuals who contributed ideas to the development of this policy. Sincere gratitude is extended to the participants of a Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop which was held from 13th to 17th August, 2007 where a sense of ownership and consensus was created. Their input in the formulation and preparation of this policy document was of great value to the Public Service. In this regard, I wish to make special mention of the following institutions:

- (a) National Archives of Zambia;
- (b) Bank of Zambia
- (c) Cabinet Office
- (d) University of Zambia
- (e) Evelyn Hone College

I particularly wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Inter-ministerial Technical Committee which included membership from the National Assembly of Zambia, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, Management Development Division, Policy Analysis and Coordination Division, Ministry of Transport, Works, Supply and Communication; the Public Service Management Division Quality Assurance Team comprising of Directors; and the Secretariat from Public Service Management Division during the development of this Policy in determining its shape and content.

I would also like to thank all those who are not mentioned here but played a part in the realization of this Policy.



VELEPI C. MTONGA (DR.)

Permanent Secretary

PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
WORKING DEFINITIONS

Custody	The responsibility for the care of documents based on their physical possession. Custody does not always include legal ownership or the right to control access to records
Database	A database is a collection of information that is systematically organized so that its contents can easily be accessed, managed, and updated.
Disaster	Written policies, strategies, procedures and information designed to mitigate the Preparedness Plan impact of threats to an organization's records and to recover them in the event of a disruption to daily operation
Disclosure	The process or means of making records available
Disposal	The transfer of records, especially non-current records, to their final state, either destruction or archive
Electronic Records	Records that are communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment and that have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Structure; the format of the electronic record and any links to attachments or other related documents; II. Content; the information in the structure of the electronic record conveying the evidence of the transaction; and III. Context; the information documenting the source in terms of the transaction to which it relates, creator, date, security and access, language, disposal, format etc. of the electronic record and which is normally separated in the structure from the content
Inactive records	Records no longer needed on a day to day basis but may be required for administrative, legal or historical reasons
Medium	The physical material, container, and/or carrier in or on which information is recorded (i.e. paper, film, and magnetic tape).
Metadata	Data that describes data such as the context, content and structure of records and their management through time.

Preservation	Processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic records through time.
Protocols	A system of digital message formats and rules for exchanging messages in or between computing systems and in telecommunications.
Public Archive	A public record that is under the control of the Director of National Archives
Public Information	Information that is meant for Public consumption which is not inconsistent with security, and the release of which is considered desirable or non-objectionable to the responsible releasing agency
Public Record	Means any record created or received by a person serving in a Public Service Institution during the course of their duty.
Public Service	Means the Civil Service, Teaching Service, and the Police and Prisons Services duly established under the Laws of the Republic of Zambia or an Act of Parliament
Public Service	A public institution is any Ministry, Division, Board Bureau, Commission, Authority, Institution Provincial and District Administration, Local Authority, Zambia Diplomatic Missions, or any other body created by an Act of Parliament
Record(s)	Information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. This include all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, disks, diskettes, recordings, and other documentary materials, which are prepared, owned and used, in the possession of or retained by a public agency or officer
Records Creation	The process of initiating and generating a record which is a first stage in the records lifecycle.
Records Lifecycle	A map of the stages in the life of a record from creation to disposal or transfer to archives.

Records
Management

Field of management responsible for the systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Registry

A recordkeeping or filing system run by staff tasked with the creation and management of files including storage and tracking.

Registry Service
Manual

A guide that describes standard categories that are used to organise records with common characteristics.

Retention Schedule

Instruction covering the disposition of records to ensure that they are retained for as long as is necessary based on their administrative, fiscal, legal and historic value.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Description</i>
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAZ	National Archives of Zambia
PAC	Policy Analysis and Coordination Division
PSMD	Public Service Management Division
RMCC	Records Management Coordinating Committee

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Records Management in Public Service Institutions has existed since the pre-independence era, however, there has, been no deliberate effort to have a policy to harmonize the various records management systems.

1.2 The absence of a Public Service Records Management Policy has led to poor management of records in the Public Service Institutions. This has resulted in, among others, delayed decision making, misfiling, pilferage of information and increased incidences of fraud.

1.3 The situation has been compounded by lack of regulatory framework, inadequate professional training and poor career progression in records management, resulting in lack of professionalism and continued staff mobility to careers perceived to be better within the Public Service.

1.4 This Policy, therefore, contains the intention of Government to effectively and efficiently manage records in the Public Service. It provides clear direction for establishing an Integrated Records Management system and promoting professionalism. The Policy also provides institutional arrangements in for its implementation.

1.5 The policy, therefore, applies to all Public Service Institutions and public officers generating, receiving and handling records. Public Service records include print and Electronic media and other documentary materials regardless of time period, age and language

2.0

SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 It is important to underscore the fact that there is no public service institution that can operate without an effective and efficient records management system. Over the years, records management in the Public Service has to a large extent remained poor. The registries in their current state have not been responsive to the demands of political pluralism, economic liberalism and emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). To this effect, registries have remained static compared to other operational areas in the Public Service Institutions.

2.2 The current challenges in records management has been compounded by absence of a policy which has led to inadequacies in the following critical areas:

2.2.1 REGISTRY SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

2.2.1.1 The Government of the Republic of Zambia institutionalized records management through establishment of registries in all government ministries and institutions including diplomatic missions accredited to foreign countries. In addition, Government introduced a standardized filing system in 1967 which was complemented with the issuance of Government Office Instructions which among other things deal with registry systems and procedures. However, there has been a continuous decline in efficiency and effectiveness in Registries throughout the Public Service which has ultimately negatively affected the performance of Ministries and Institutions in the delivery of public service.

2.2.1.2 Although Ministries and Institutions are involved in records management there is little uniformity in the manner records are managed. Furthermore, there is no strict adherence to guidelines for developing and implementing records management systems and procedures.

2.2.2 ELECTRONIC RECORD SYSTEMS

2.2.2.1 Currently, registries in the Public Service Institutions are predominantly paper based and pose operational challenges which include inadequate storage space, wear and tear, and cumbersome procedures which make it difficult to trace and retrieve records. The advent of technological change has had a bearing on the operations of the records management function. In this regard, some Public Service Institutions have installed computerized systems which include institutional websites, electronic mailing systems and document management systems with a view of improving operational efficiency. There has been, however, inadequate infrastructure to support electronic records management system. In addition, the computerization of some systems has been haphazard and has brought to the fore various challenges such as reliability, security, accessibility, compatibility and capacity to manage such systems.

2.2.3 CLASSIFICATION AND INDEXING

2.2.3.1 The classification and indexing of records in Public Service Institutions has been a major source of concern. There have been numerous cases of misfiling and misclassification and even difficulties in retrieving files. This has been compounded by limited availability of skills to classify and index records among registry cadre in the Public service. Consequently, there has been delayed decision making, unsynchronized actions, failure to detect fraud and timely prepare Audit Reports. This has adversely affected Public Service delivery.

2.2.3.2 In order to address these concerns, Government has been publishing and issuing the Registry Service Manual to guide the classification and indexing of Public Service records but without much success.

2.2.3.3 In the same vein, there has been irregular issuance of Government *Gazette* Notices of statutory portfolio functions of Government Ministries and Departments. It has been noted that some portfolios and functions have changed over time through creation of new ministries, division, merging and dissolving existing ministries and Institutions. This has posed a challenge to the management of government records within the Public Service.

2.2.4 ACCESS AND SECURITY

2.2.4.1 In terms of security, there have been lapses in the security of Public Service records resulting in leakages of information. Some of the leaked information contains confidential, sensitive and/or personal information.

2.2.4.2 The re-introduction of political pluralism in the 1990s has had its own effects on records management in the public service. It became apparent that the Public Service had to demonstrate tendencies of good governance through transparency and accountability. Though Citizens have now realized that they have a right to obtain information about the activities carried out by departments and organizations acting on their behalf, there have been inconsistencies in the provision of information to the public due to the absence of a records management policy and inadequate legislation to regulate and guide the provision of public information except for archival records.

2.2.5 LEGISLATION

2.2.5.1 The National Archives Act Cap 175 of the revised Laws of Zambia 1995 edition is the closest existing Law on records management in Zambia. The Act provides for a legal framework for the preservation and provision of access to records that have been selected as archives. However, the Act does not include the provision of managing records before they become Archives. Consequently, the National Archives Act in its current form does not adequately address challenges of records management in the Public Service.

2.2.5.2 In addition, records management in the Public Service has also been guided by other pieces of legislation under the Laws of Zambia such as the State Security Act, Public Finance Act and administrative circulars such as the Government Office Instructions, and various Cabinet Office Circulars. However, these pieces of legislation and administrative instruments have not been adequate to address the legal and administrative challenges of records management in the Public Service. This has led to inconsistencies in the management of records in the Public Service Institutions.

2.2.6 STAFFING

2.2.6.1 The Public Service has an elaborate structure for records management cadre with a clear path for career progression but it has largely remained unattractive to professionals due to low levels of grades. Furthermore, there has been lack of recognition of records management as a profession like any other within the public service resulting in low entry requirements for records cadre. This has led to registries being managed by personnel with some of the least qualifications in the Public Service which has negatively affected the effectiveness of the registry system and thus adversely impacting on delivery of the Public Service in the country. Further, the motivation amongst the records management cadre has remained low.

2.2.7 TRAINING

2.2.7.1 The Public Service has been experiencing challenges in skills and professional development of the registry cadre. This is partly because there has been inadequate tertiary education or professional training in the field of records management locally. In some instances where it is available, the curricula are at variance with the operations of the general public service.

2.2.7.2 BUDGETING, STORAGE AND EQUIPMENT

2.2.7.2.1 In the allocation of funds, the registry function is the least considered compared to other operational areas. In most instances where government allocates resources for records management in the national budget, there has been persistent misapplication of such resources by ministries and institutions to other seemingly pressing areas. This has resulted in failure to implement planned programs and activities such as procurement of storage facilities, equipment required and computerization of records, leading to inefficient and ineffective provision of registry services. Consequently, there has been poor delivery of public Services.

2.2.7.3 REGISTRY INSPECTIONS AND EVALUATIONS

2.2.7.4 Government has been undertaking inspections of government registries from time to time. There has been however, limited compliance to set records management systems, procedures and standards. This has been worsened by lack of a policy and adequate legislation on records management, thus negatively affecting public service delivery.

2.2.7.5 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The Public Service does not have a records disaster preparedness plan for protecting and recovering its records in the event of a disaster. If the situation is not addressed, it will result in loss of vital public records in the event of a disaster because of lack of strategies to protect documents and salvage registry operations to enable the public institution re-establish itself as soon as possible. Consequently, this may lead to breakdown in decision-making and ultimately negatively impacting on national development.

3.1 The vision of Government is to establish the best integrated, E-based and reliable records management system, taking into account international standards, that provides quality citizen centric services.

4.1 The absence of a records management policy has led to uncoordinated records management systems and practices; haphazard computerization of systems; inadequate infrastructure to support electronic records management system; inadequate skilled human resources and limited career progression. This has resulted in delayed decision making and therefore negatively impacted on public service delivery.

4.2 It is against this background that it was found necessary to develop a Public Service Records Management Policy. This Policy provides a compelling mechanism for improved records management in the Public Service.

5.1 The implementation of the Public Records Management Policy shall be guided by the following principles amongst others:

- (a) Records are a strategic resource for organisational and operational efficiency and national development; and should therefore be authentic, reliable, usable and secure;
- (b) All Public Service records created or received as part of Government Business are the property of Government and are to be captured in an appropriate medium;
- (c) Records so created or received must not be removed from Public Service institutions' control destroyed or otherwise disposed of except in accordance with this policy and relevant Acts and administrative circulars;
- (d) The right of persons to access Public information expeditiously;
- (e) The right to privacy and protection of Human Rights;
- (f) The right of access to information shall be interpreted and applied on the basis of a duty to disclose;

- (g) Adherence to classification codes and access levels;
- (h) Public Service Institutions shall at all times generate and maintain accurate and reliable evidence of Institutional business operation which shall be admissible in Courts of Law;
- (i) All Records are to be managed in accordance with the applicable Acts within the Laws of Zambia, administrative circulars and in conformity with international standards;
- (j) All Public Service Institutions shall allocate adequate financial resources to the records management function;
- (k) Heads of public service institutions are accountable for the implementation of records management policies throughout their respective institutions;
- (l) The records management system shall be managed by committed and professional staff; and
- (m) All employees are responsible and accountable for keeping accurate and complete records of their activities and prevent unauthorized disclosure of information.

6.0

POLICY OBJECTIVES

6.1 The overall objective of the Policy is to provide effective and efficient records management services in accordance with, international standards and best practices to ensure provision of quality services;

6.2 The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- (a) create and manage authentic, reliable and usable records in order to facilitate provision of quality services;
- (b) improve access to accurate and authentic information for timely decision making;
- (c) promote standardised, integrated and reliable records management systems for easy storage, processing and retrieval;
- (d) Secure Public Service records in order to protect the rights of employees, clients and stakeholders and inspire public confidence.
- (e) ensure continuous professional development and retention of staff to support effective management of records management system

To realize the vision and objectives of the policy, Government shall implement the measures as outlined in the following broad areas:

7.1 CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS

- (a) Review existing records management practices and procedures to establish information needs and systems requirements.
- (b) Design and implement an electronic records management system.
- (c) Develop and implement an effective tracking system and audit trails, ensuring effective and speedy retrieval of information.
- (d) Develop procedures for management of metadata.
- (e) Develop procedures for the continuous monitoring and reviewing of the records management processes.
- (f) Develop guidelines for establishment of retention schedules.

7.2 IMPROVED ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- (a) Develop and implement procedures to avoid duplication of records and promote information sharing, reduce cost and save space.
- (b) Develop and implement guidelines for identifying and selecting suitable media through which information should be accessed.
- (c) Develop and implement guidelines to ensure all records are easily located and readily accessible to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability.
- (d) Develop and implement guidelines and procedures to address requests for information by the public in relation to relevant legislations of the Laws of Zambia and appropriate administrative circulars.
- (e) Develop and implement awareness programs to raise the profile of records management within the Public Service Institutions.

7.3 STANDARDISATION AND INTEGRATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- (a) Develop standards for records management and monitor compliance.
- (b) Develop mechanisms to ensure adherence to standards that promote generation of accurate and reliable records.

- (c) Develop and implement mechanisms for provision of technical backstopping.
- (d) Develop and implement appropriate Information Sharing Protocols for the exchange of confidential and personal information.
- (e) Develop and enforce mechanisms for regularly reviewing and updating user guidelines and manuals to facilitate standardized operations of the records management systems.
- (f) Develop, implement and maintain standardized data bases for storage and retrieval of electronic records.
- (g) Develop and implement guidelines on procurement and installation of standardized records management equipment.

7.4 SECURITY OF PUBLIC RECORDS

- (a) Develop and disseminate procedures to protect records from unauthorized access, alteration or erasure and maintain adequate audit trails.
- (b) Provide guidelines for Responsible Officers and staff to ensure that all records are adequately secured and protected from unauthorized access.
- (c) Provide secure environment and storage facilities for protection of records from hazards and being accessed by unauthorized persons
- (d) Strengthen the system of disposal of records when no longer required for the conduct of current business.
- (e) Develop guidelines on the implementation of the back-up systems, audit trails and archiving of electronic records as a contingency for business continuity and recovery plan.
- (f) Develop guidelines for migration of records across systems and onto different types of media to safeguard the integrity of records across the life cycle
- (g) Review and strengthen legislation and guidelines for classification of records to facilitate authorized access

7.5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

- (a) Develop and implement a clear career progression for records management cadre
- (b) Provide an appropriate competency framework, to identify the knowledge, skills and corporate competencies required for records and information management
- (c) Develop and implement training programmes to build adequate capacity for effective and efficient records management.

8.0

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

8.1 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

8.1.1 PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

8.1.1.1 The Public Service Management Division (PSMD) shall be responsible for overall co-ordination of the records management function including policy review, monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. PSMD shall also ensure that policies, practices and procedures are adhered to.

8.1.1.2 Further, PSMD shall be responsible for:

- (a) developing and periodically reviewing records management policy, systems and procedures;
- (b) facilitating installation and operationalization of standardised records management systems and procedures;
- (c) conducting regular inspection of Public Service Registries to ensure compliance with standards for management of Public Service records;
- (d) providing in service training to registry cadre;
- (e) maintaining collaborative links with the National Archives of Zambia, and other local, regional and international institutions.

8.1.2 MINISTRIES, PROVINCES AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE INSTITUTIONS

8.1.2.1 All ministries, provinces and other public service institutions shall:

- (a) constitute Records Management Coordinating Committee (RMCC) which shall be responsible for:
 - i. drafting retention and disposal schedules in collaboration with National Archives of Zambia.
 - ii. approving transfer of semi current records into custody of National Archives of Zambia.
 - iii. ensuring that Registry personnel Liaise with Information Communication Technology personnel concerning the appropriate creation, usage, maintenance and disposal of electronic records in the Public Service.
- (b) Implement records management guidelines and procedures
- (c) Allocate resources to records management
- (d) Develop capacity in records management
- (e) Procure and install standardized records management equipment, hardware

8.1.3

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for coordinating resource mobilization and allocation in the country. In this regard the Ministry of Finance shall be responsible for provision of adequate resources to ministries, institutions and provinces.

8.1.4 THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZAMBIA

8.1.4.1 National Archives of Zambia is the sole institution responsible for custody of archival materials in the Republic of Zambia. In this regard the National Archives shall :

- (a) Facilitate the drawing up retention and disposal schedules in ministries, provinces and institutions
- (b) accept and store any public records which are transferred to the National Archives
- (c) lend Public Archives for display at commemorative exhibition or other special purposes.
- (d) provide for the making and authentication of copies of extracts from Public Archives required as evidence in legal proceedings or for other purposes;
- (e) Issue guidelines for which members of the public may access Public Archives in or use the facilities of the National Archives.
- (f) perform such other functions as are necessary for the purpose of the direction, management and control of the National Archives.

8.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

8.2.1 The implementation of this Policy will be complemented by the following policy and legal frameworks:

- (a) Constitution of the Republic of Zambia Cap 1;
- (b) National Archives Act, CAP 175
- (c) Public Finance Act, no 15 of 2004
- (d) State Security Act Cap 111;
- (e) Government Office Instructions of 2010;
- (f) Electronic Communications and Transactions Act of 2009.
- (g) Information and Communication Technologies Act of 2009

8.2.2 Though the National Archives Act, Cap 175 of 1995 of the Revised Edition of the Laws of Zambia does not include a provision of managing records throughout their life cycle, the Act will continue to provide a legal framework for preservation and provision of access to those records that have been selected as archives in the interim until the Records Act is put enacted.

8.2.3 Recognizing that the National Archives Act Cap 175 of 1995 in its current form does not address the management of active records and therefore, will impede the successful implementation of the Policy, Government will put in place a specific legislation to deal with management of active records and enable PSMD to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are adhered to.

8.3 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND FINANCING

8.3.1 Government will finance records management activities and mobilize resources through the National Budget and from stakeholders in the implementation of this policy.

8.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.4.1 The development of the Public Service Records Management Implementation Plan shall form the basis for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the implementation of the provisions of this policy. Specifically, the PSMD in conjunction with stakeholders shall develop an M&E system based on agreed performance indicators and targets.

8.4.2 In view of the above, periodic consultative reviews with stakeholders shall be in-built in the implementation process at all levels. The review process shall lead to the development of interventions and ultimately feedback into policy making cycle.



