Republic of Rwanda

Ministry of Environment

Public Information Disclosure Policy

I. Objective and Scope

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) is committed to being accountable to its stakeholders, and an important part of this is ensuring that the information is shared in a transparent way.

MoE is committed to making information about its programs and operations public and considers public access to the information as an essential aspect of a good collaboration with its stakeholders, and is key for their contribution to its mandate.

The Policy is applicable to all information held by the Ministry of the Environment, "information(s)" means any content produced in any form. This can be information on paper, in electronic form or in the form of an audio, video or audiovisual recording in relation to a matter which concerns the activities of the Ministry.

The Policy applies as well on Information held jointly with third parties – memoranda of understanding, Donor agreements and other contractual arrangements, for example – and may be disclosed on a case-by-case basis with the consent of the interested parties.

The information held by the Ministry is made public primarily through the MoE website.

II. General Principles of access to information

As provided in article 3 of Rwanda Law N.04/2013 relating to access to information, every person has the right of access to information in possession of a public organ and some private bodies.
MoE reiterates its commitment to transparency in all its activities and insure to maximize access to information and documents in its possession.
The information will be publicly available to the extent reasonable and practical through the Ministry of Environment website.
The information to be disclosed include but is not limited to:

- Environment Laws, Policies and reports
- Multilateral Environment Agreements ratified by Rwanda
- Projects
- Job vacancies
- Press releases
- Events (Official visits, Campaigns, Meetings and Conferences

The Policy is based on the openness and transparency and on the principle that all information about the Ministry's activities and Projects operating under the Ministry of Environment is publicly available or available upon request unless there are other compelling reasons.

III. Standard of Disclosure

MoE seeks to maximize access to information that it produces and/or possesses and will therefore disclose any information not contained in the list of exclusion set out in section.

All documents in the MoE's possession subject to disclosure as per this Policy, will be released on the MoE's website or through other appropriate means or will be provided upon request.

The timing of disclosure of the different types of information may vary, based on the nature of the information as further set in Section VI of this Policy.

IV. Categories of information

The Ministry is committed to openness and transparency in the disclosure of information. However, legal, operational, and practical considerations are necessary to protect the interests of the institution as well as those of its staff, supervising agencies, and third parties with whom it works.
Such considerations result in certain exceptions to the disclosure principle.
All projects' documents in the MoE possession subject to disclosure as per this policy will be released on the MoE website or through other appropriate means or will be provided upon request to provide the public with a clear picture of the Ministry work and the way it administers financial resources received from its donors.
Information on Projects operating under the Ministry of Environment is therefore classified into three main categories: public information, information available on request, and confidential information.

IV.1 Information available to the Public

Information to be disclosed to the public are defined in the Section II of this Policy.

IV.2 Information upon request

Anyone may contact MoE to request any document or information which is not accessible on the MoE's website.
Request for information may be submitted in writing or via e-mail, as needed, addressed as follows:
(a) In writing: Ministry of Environment, Po. Box 3502 Kigali
(b) Via email: info@environment.gov.rw
All requests for information are handled by the Ministry through normal internal procedures.

Requests for information will be submitted in Kinyarwanda, English, or French and the response will be in the language of the requesting letter.

IV.3 Timelines for responding to requests

The MoE shall endeavor to respond to requests for information within 30 working days of receipt of a written request for information, unless additional time is required because of the scope or complexity of the information requested. In its response, the MOE shall either provide the requested information or the reasons why the request has been denied, indicating the particular provision(s) in this Policy that justifies the refusal.

The MoE may partially or wholly deny a request on the following grounds:

a) In accordance with the limitations set out or referred to in this Policy; and
b) If the request is deemed to be an excessive demand on the MOE's resources.

The MOE shall not be required to comply with, or respond to, repeated or unreasonable requests for information on the same subject from the same person, organization, or group if the MOE has provided such information after a previous request or has given reasons why it cannot provide information

IV.4 Confidential information

MoE is committed to having a transparent disclosure system in place for information. However, there are legal, operational, safety and security and practical considerations that mean that documents need to remain confidential. Information under the following categories is considered confidential and not to be disclosed to the public:

a) **Personal information**
MoE does not provide access to information and documents related to staff members or persons performing work for the ministry who are not staff.
This includes personal and employment-related information, such as human resources records, information of a personal nature received from consultants and goods and services providers, information on claims and the internal resolution of disputes except when the disclosure is required by laws, regulations or policies in place, information on investigations into allegations of serious misconduct (other than those reported to the senior management of the Ministry).

b) **Communication involving government institutions and other stakeholders**
MoE will not disclose information which may harm its relations with stakeholders and will not disclose communications with other public institutions marked as confidential.

c) **Safety and security**
The government of the Rwanda under law N° 04/2013 of 02/08/2013 relating to access to information, in its article 4 provides that information withheld by a public organ or private body shall not be published when it may:
1° destabilize national security

2° impede the enforcement of Law or justice,
3° involve the interference in the privacy of an individual when it is not of public interest,
4° violate the legitimate protection of trade secrets or other intellectual property rights protected by the Law;
5° obstruct actual or contemplated legal proceedings against the management of public organ.

In addition, MoE will not disclose information that would or would likely to compromise the security, safety or health of its staff, their families, consultants and contractors, and MoE assets.

d) Information provided in confidence

MoE will not disclose any information received from partners or third party in confidence.

e) Deliberative information

I. Information concerning internal deliberations or communications (including internal documents and communications between agencies or within the same office, such as letters, memoranda, and draft documents).
II. Documents related to communications, deliberations, and decisions of agencies and internal advisory committees.
III. Internal management documents produced by the Ministry to inform the management, including but not limited to internal memos, reports, self-assessments, and the risk register.
IV. Communications with public organs and other stakeholders with which the Ministry collaborates.

f) Information protected by professional secrecy

I. Information protected by professional secrecy or the disclosure of which may expose the Ministry to legal risks
II. Legal Advice and Requests for Legal Advice

g) Confidential internal documents

I. Internal correspondence;
II. Internal reports, analyses, memorandum reviews of internal or third party meetings, statistics prepared solely for internal decision making;
III. Guidelines, directives, and standard operating procedures of an internal nature, unless otherwise determined;
IV. Information related to internal administrative matters.

h) Financial information

I. Documents, analyses, correspondence, or other information prepared for financial and budgetary operations or internal or external financial reporting
II. Banking and billing information of suppliers of goods and services and consultants
III. Any financial information which, if disclosed, would harm the financial interests of the Ministry and any of its activities.

i) Other types of information

Other types of information which, due to their nature, their content, or the circumstances of their creation, their use, or their communication, are considered confidential in the interest of the Ministry or third parties.

V. Languages

MoE website uses English. Key documents will be published in this language. However, the Ministry has begun the process of having another version in Kinyarwanda to maximize the disclosure of information to the public.

VI. Summary of disclosures standards for key documents

VI.1. Documents.

Type of information	Time of disclosure	Methods to disclosure	Exceptions
Environment Laws, Policies	Upon adoption	Post on the website	N/A
Reports (environmental and climate change reports & monitoring and evaluation reports)	upon validation and approval	Post on the website	N/A
Project Beneficiary Information	Upon adoption of the project	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A
Press releases	Upon approval	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A
Job Vacancies, candidates +Results.	6 days before the application date	To Post on the website and through Smart HR	N/A

VI.2 Events.

Type of information	Time of disclosure	Methods to disclosure	Exceptions
Events	One week before	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A
Campaigns	Starting from the launching day	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A
Official Visits +Filed Visits	On the same day	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A
Meetings and Conferences	On the Kickoff Day	To Post on the website and on the social media platforms	N/A

Done on 13th March 2023



Patrick KARERA
Permanent Secretary