



UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHT TO INFORMATION



WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION?

- The right of every Tanzanian to seek, receive and disseminate information on diverse issues of importance to the society.
- This right is protected and guaranteed under article 18 of the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

WHY IS THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION IMPORTANT?

- It is a fundamental human right protected by the national constitution. It enhances accountability and transparency of government activities.
- It enhances citizens' knowledge of how the country is governed.

WHAT LAWS REGULATE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION?

- Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, (Cap 2)
- Access to Information Act, 2016
- Media Services Act, 2016
- Tanzania Communications and Regulatory Authority Act, 2003
- Cybercrime Act, 2015

WHO IS ENTITLED TO REQUEST INFORMATION BEING HELD BY A PUBLIC OFFICE?

- Every citizen of Tanzania is entitled to request information of public interest held by a public office that is operated by public funds i.e. government ministries and agencies, parastatal organizations etc.

WHICH PUBLIC OFFICES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING REQUESTED INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC?

- All public offices run by public funds (tax) such as government ministries, parastatal organizations, etc. are required by law to grant citizens' access to public interest information under their custody.



WHICH INFORMATION HELD BY A PUBLIC OFFICE IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC?

- Government decisions on social and economic welfare such as social services provision, infrastructure development, human rights issues, public health, political processes, country governance, justice, etc.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING INFORMATION HELD BY A PUBLIC OFFICE?

- Submit a request for information in an official letter to the relevant public office.
- The request letter should include:
 - the name and address of the information seeker
 - a clearly written address of the public office that the information is being requested from
 - sufficient and clear details that enable the public office to identify the information that is being requested
- The information request should be delivered in hand, post or through internet communication (if available).

**Remember to correctly address the letter to the public office that you are requesting information from.*

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A PUBLIC OFFICE TO PROCESS AND RESPOND TO AN INFORMATION REQUEST?

- The information holder shall work and give feedback on the requested information within 30-days after the request is received.

WHAT SPECIFIC DUTIES MUST GOVERNMENT BODIES FOLLOW TO ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION?

- Deal with all information requests within the prescribed 30-day period
- Appoint information officers to handle public requests for information
- Provide assistance to information seekers
- Keep records of information held under its authority
- Publish certain information on their functions in the Gazette on a regular basis



WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR INFORMATION REQUEST IS REJECTED BY A PUBLIC OFFICE?

- The responsible public office will send the requester a written notification explaining the grounds for the rejection of your request.

IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION BE DENIED UNDER THE LAW?

- When the use of the requested information is unknown.
- When the information poses a threat to public safety, national security etc.
- When the requested information encourages the commission of an offense, is an unwarranted invasion of privacy, causes harm, or undermines international relations and/or lawful commercial interests.

ARE THERE ANY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ONE RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM A PUBLIC BODY?

- Yes, the recipient should not distort the information otherwise, he/she may face punishment for violating the law.

WHAT FURTHER ACTIONS MAY BE TAKEN IF YOUR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IS DENIED BY A PUBLIC OFFICE?

- File a complaint to the Head of the Institution who should make a decision within 30 days;
- In case of another denial, appeal to the Minister for legal affairs for a final decision;
- File a case in the High Court for review.