Government of Sierra Leone
Public Sector Reform Unit, Office of the President

Capacity and Needs Assessment of Records Management in the Sierra Leone Public Service

Final Report

International Records Management Trust

nova

June 2014

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INTRODUCTION

1   By Contract No PSRU/CQS/01/04/14 dated 29th April 2014, the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), with funds provided by the International Development Association, engaged the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) to carry out a **Capacity and Needs Assessment of Records Management in the Sierra Leone Public Service**.

2   An Inception Report and an Interim Report were submitted in May 2014. These are reproduced at Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively. The full Terms Of Reference for the project and the terms of reference for experts and support staff are attached at Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

3   This Final Report provides accurate and relevant information about the current capacity within MDAs for effective and efficient management (use, storage, maintenance) in the short-term and long-term of paper and electronic-based public records at both institutional and national level. It also sets out proposals and recommendations for establishing a new National Records and Archives Department, putting in place the necessary legislative and regulatory framework to support it, creating the physical infrastructure by constructing a new National Records and Archives building, and developing the skills required as Sierra Leone makes the transition to the electronic environment.

4   Specific activities, as stated in the Terms of Reference, included:

- Review the legislative and regulatory framework for records management and archive administration in the public service.

- Review institutional arrangements including records storage capacity in MDAs.

- Assess the capacity of systems and procedures capable of capturing, maintaining and providing access to records as evidence through time.

- Assess staff capacity to manage government records in both paper and electronic environments.

- Assess physical facilities/ location (defining the required building, which should be capable of supporting professional workflow and of protecting and preserving paper and electronic records).

- Develop recommendations on short and long-term options for records management and archives

5   The deliverables were defined as:

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- A comprehensive report on the status of systems and processes for managing records in the MDAs, Local Councils and Provincial Secretary's Offices, including usage, maintenance and storage in both the short term and long term.

- A draft of a legal and regulatory framework for records management and archive administration.

- Standards and guidelines for classification schemes and retention schedules.

- Indicative costs and realistic and practical recommendations for:

  ◊ a successful transition to an ICT (e-governance and e-records) environment, utilising as far as possible the existing Public Archives Office and the Records Management cadre of staff in MDAs and taking into account that Government funds are limited

  ◊ physical facilities capable of receiving, protecting, and preserving paper and electronic records.

Acknowledgements

6   The advice and guidance of Ms Sidratu Koroma, Director of the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), is gratefully acknowledged. Dr Ernest Surrur, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of Civil Service, is also specially thanked for his advice. The Director General, Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) and his senior staff, and the Director of Communications, Ministry of Information and Communications, provided valuable background information and support. Permanent Secretaries, Provincial Secretaries and senior staff of the Ministries and local authorities visited are also thanked. A list of people consulted is at Appendix C.

ASSESSMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

7   The Assessment was limited to selected MDAs, Local Councils and Provincial Secretary's Offices as identified in the Terms of Reference. These represented a realistic sample of small, medium and large institutions. However, the findings and recommendations provided in this report are of relevance to the wider public service including subvented agencies.

8   The following institutions were included in the Assessment:

MDAs:

- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Ministry of Marine Resources and Fisheries

- Ministry of Energy (including National Power Authority (NPA))
- Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
- Ministry of Water Resources (including Guma Valley Water Company and Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO))
- Ministry of Information and Communications
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

Local Councils:

- Kono District Council
- Kenema District Council
- Port Loko District Council
- Freetown City Council.

Provincial Secretary's Offices:

- Bo (Southern Province)
- Makeni (Northern Province)

Methodology

9   The primary activity of the Project was a detailed assessment of records and information management in ten MDAs, four local councils and two provincial secretary's offices.   Structured interview questions and a detailed data-gathering questionnaire were prepared so that the assessment was consistent and comprehensive across all MDAs and councils.

10   By using a standardised approach, the consultants were able to carry out a thorough analysis, quantify and summarise findings, identify priorities and potential solutions and make recommendations for short- and long-term improvements in records and archives management at institutional and national levels.   The assessment was not intended to be a complete account of all records generated across government, but provided a representative sample to enable recommendations and potential solutions to be proposed.

11   The assessment was undertaken on the ground by a small team of qualified and experienced Sierra Leoneans, led by the team leader, and supported off-site by other experts.   Prior to beginning data-gathering, the team was given training so that they were able to apply the assessment methodology consistently and accurately.   To document findings, one data sheet was completed for each centralised filing system, and a separate data sheet for each type or series of records created and held outside the central filing systems, whether paper or electronic.

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12   As well as examining the records themselves, the project team gathered information on institutional arrangements and responsibilities for records management, the capacity of systems, procedures and staff to manage access and exploit records, and the physical facilities for maintaining both paper and electronic records. The IT expert was responsible for assessing the existing IT capability (technical infrastructure, systems and software currently in use, and professional skills in managing the technical infrastructure, systems and software) and identifying issues and gaps.

13   At the MDA and council level, the assessment collected data on:

- organisational structure and reporting lines for records and information management

- business processes, especially in relation to record-keeping, including information flows and information sharing requirements

- records management systems for current and semi-current records, including storage; classification and indexing; security and access; retention and disposal

- use of ICT for information management, communication, access, sharing, storage, etc

- human and material resources for records management

- access needs in relation to records and information

- records retention and disposal

- training needs of staff.

14   Visits to MDAs were completed between 14th and 27th May. Dates of visits and follow-up visits are shown in the table below.

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Table 1: Field Visits

Date	MDA
14/05/2014	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
15/05/2014	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
19/05/2014	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
	Ministry of Information and Communications
21/05/2014	Ministry of Water Resources (Water Directorate)
22/05/2014	Ministry of Water Resources (SALWACO and Guma Valley Water Co)
23/05/2014	Ministry of Energy
26/05/2014	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
27/05/2014	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Freetown City Council
02/06/2014	Bo District Council Bo City Council
03/06/2014	Kenema District Council
04/06/2014	Kono District Council Kono City Council
05/06/2014	Bombali District Council Bombali City Council
16/06/20146	Provincial Secretary's Office, Southern Region
17/06/2014	Provincial Secretary's Office, Eastern Region
19/05/2014	Provincial Secretary's Office, Northern Region

15   Information gathered on records management systems and capacity was recorded on standard questionnaire forms. Data was extracted from the forms and entered in analysis tables. Sample completed questionnaire forms are at Appendix D.

Findings

16   Improved ICT infrastructure will greatly increase the potential to conduct business electronically. However, Sierra Leone must also address the lack of capacity, material resources, systems and infrastructure to manage the records and information. Lack of a reliable power supply is also a significant challenge. The overall finding of the assessment was a lack of skills, resources, basic standards, systems, and procedures for managing the Government's records and information base and for enabling public servants to access and share the information they need.

Central Filing Systems[1] and the Fragmentation of Institutional Records

17   Centralised paper filing systems maintained by ministry or department records offices (formerly called registries) are likely to be required for many years to come until there is a transition to well managed, reliable and complete electronic records. Paper files, if well managed, will provide the most complete official record, even though for day-to-day purposes electronic documents may increasingly be created and used. The key requirements, however, are that filing systems are managed according to rules and procedures that enable individual documents to be filed correctly and found when needed, and that the central filing systems are supported and used correctly by records creators in the organisation. Poorly managed filing systems are likely to break down and lose the trust of their users. In fact, this has already happened in many cases. Without reliable filing systems, central and local government authorities are at risk of being unable to access the information they need to carry out their mandate and functions.

18   Recent reorganisations and changes in organisational structure in some ministries have resulted in files being created and held by individual action officers. This is also a consequence of officials losing trust in their old central filing systems that have been managed by poorly trained and poorly resourced staff who lack the skills and basic filing supplies and storage equipment to manage records. Failure to protect the confidentiality of certain records is an additional issue. Official records should be treated as a key resource that requires a budget and resources. Records management cannot be regarded as one of the lowest priority activities assigned to the least skilled staff, if the Government is to function effectively and citizens are to trust public sector information.

19   The objective should be to reduce the amount of time most staff have to spend on managing records and information. This can only be achieved by introducing policies, systems and procedures that, wherever possible, assign record-keeping activities to appropriate staff and make records management a routine that is consistent with international good practice standards. The qualified records managers who have been appointed to ministries in recent years have yet to make an impact and bring about improvements because they have not received the support they need to do their jobs well. They are well-placed to enable change if given the opportunity. However, there has been reluctance in some MDAs to accept their advice and enable them to initiate records management improvement programmes. For example, some records managers were not provided with accommodation and had their grades and responsibilities questioned. Permanent Secretaries and heads of departments need to ensure that the records managers are supported to exercise their professional skills.

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[1] 'Central filing systems' refer to the policy, administrative and operational files kept at the Ministry, Department or Directorate level.

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20 A good filing system consists of easily accessible files that 'tell a story', each providing the information needed to understand, for example, the development of a policy, a relationship and interaction with another organisation, the background to a particular event, or the planning and execution of a project or programme. Case files, such as personnel files, should also 'tell a story', in this instance a full and accurate account of an individual's career. A well-kept file should also provide precise information about the dates of the documents it contains (when they were created), their origin (which office created them and under whose authority, who signed them) and the records to which they relate such as previous and later correspondence.

21 A good filing system provides meaningful titles and logical reference numbers for each file so that they are easily found; it should also group files into 'series' that relate to the same broad function of the organisation. A good filing system should connect related files and indicate the existence of previous and later parts of the same file.

22 Electronic systems cannot easily replace these attributes. Even those electronic records management systems that work well (and many do not) rely on far more effort being made by the records creators to apply metadata (information about the record) to enable records to be filed correctly and found in future. The need for greater effort in the electronic environment is taken into account in the recommendations made in this report. In traditional paper filing systems, records staff should be capable of performing the routine tasks of opening new files, giving files titles, indexing them, filing new documents, finding files when required and removing semi-current records from the current filing system. In short, paper filing systems have many benefits and should continue to be maintained and well managed in the transition to the electronic environment.

23 Electronic[2] records (word processed documents, spreadsheets, emails and other 'office' documents) are increasingly used to create and distribute information, but as yet in Sierra Leone there are no electronic record-keeping systems or scanning/ digitisation programmes that meet even the most basic records management standards. No standards are in place for maintaining the integrity of electronic records through time, and staff rely on flash drives and email to share information. Databases and specialised applications that contain records are currently regarded as outside the expertise and responsibility of records managers. This disconnect between electronic records and records management standards is probably the greatest risk to the information assets of MDAs.

24 A critical question is: are records accessible to the staff who may need them? Currently, electronic mail, desk top-created records such as word-processed documents and spreadsheets, data sources and outputs, and a variety of paper records, are held in disconnected systems managed by the record creators or main users rather than institutionally. (Issues relating to power supply and ICT

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[2] 'Electronic records' is the term commonly used to include also 'digitised' records that are strictly speaking digital images.

infrastructure are dealt with separately in paras xx to 59 of this report.) As an example, email is becoming a common method of communicating information within government, and with individuals and organisations outside government. It is beginning to replace the traditional office memoranda and hardcopy letter. However, practices vary widely as to which email service provider is used, where emails are kept, how they are organised (if at all) and how long they are kept. There are no internal policies or rules for managing emails, yet a lot of the Government's institutional information is in the form of emails.

25   An unplanned and ad hoc transition to the electronic environment will make records less accessible, not more accessible. In how many places will public records be held if all management level staff across the public sector work from their desk top computers and communicate by email without centralised record-keeping systems? There will be confusion about the location of the 'official record' and common occurrences of situations in which information about the same activity, organisation, event or person does not match. A strategic objective is to ensure that the information resources created in different systems are managed as an integrated whole. Integration of record-keeping systems may be thought of as a series of incremental improvements, starting with purely paper records and ending with a fully integrated electronic records or 'content' management system that provides information about, and access to, both paper and electronic records. The stages include:

- Paper forms and records are created and held as the source of information.

- Paper forms and records are created; electronic records are also created at the desk top and printed and filed until such time as reliable electronic records management systems can be introduced; some information is held in databases and other electronic systems; some paper records are scanned and held as digital images.

- Records are created and held electronically and are the principle source of information; some paper records continue to be held.

- Records in all formats (paper, electronic, digitised) are managed in an integrated records management or content management system. Workflow, business practices and record keeping are integrated.

26   The Government Archives has produced a *Records Office Procedures Manual* that provides guidance on handling correspondence, creating and maintaining a filing system based on the keyword indexing system, transferring semi-current records to the Government Records Centre, and other standard tasks. The *Procedures Manual* was not in use in any of the ministries visited. Without a procedures manual, rules and standard procedures cannot be applied. Some of the basic control books specified in the *Manual* (registers for incoming and outgoing correspondence, way

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books and file movement records) are used but there is no consistency of practice. The creation, titling and numbering of files seems largely to be ad hoc.

27   As part of an earlier phase of the Records Management Improvement Programme, a small number of MDAs have already benefitted from improved filing systems based on the procedures covered by this Manual. Many of the Grade 8 and Grade 9 records managers who have been posted to ministries have experience of implementing the procedures. If provided with the authority, cooperation and resources needed, they are well-placed to decongest filing systems of semi-current files and restructure filing systems so that they operate far more effectively and can be trusted again by ministry staff.

Detailed Analysis

28   Despite the best efforts of records and secretarial staff, central paper filing systems are generally inadequate to support the information needs of senior staff and heads of departments/ units. Table 2 below provides an analysis of centralised filing systems in the ten target ministries.

Table 2: Central Filing Systems by MDA

Questions	MEST	MMRF	ME	MoHS	MAFFS	MLGRD	MWR	MIC	MLSS	MSWGCA
[1] Is there a file index?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[2] Are there rules for giving files titles?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[3] Is there a logical classification scheme or numbering system for these records?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
[4] Is the Filing System intended to document the Ministry's core business functions/ decision-making processes?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[5] Do some depts or units maintain their own filing systems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[6] If so, are there some core records that are not kept centrally	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[7] Are some records (or copies) in electronic form?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[8] If so, is there an internal network (eg, shared network drive) for sharing records	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[9] Do officials create/ use records on stand-alone computers/ laptops	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[10] Are there rules for classifying and giving titles to electronic records/ folders?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[11] Does the Ministry have a web site and domain name for emails?	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
[12] Are the electronic records a complete 'copy' of the paper records?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

[13] Are the paper records a complete 'copy' of the electronic records?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
[14] Are there rules for retention?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[15] Are any records deleted or destroyed?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
[16] Are current files mixed with non-current files?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[17] Do these records contain personal or confidential information that requires extra security? If Yes, are security arrangements adequate?	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/ No
[18] Do back up copies exist?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[19] How frequently are the records used? Hourly, daily weekly, monthly, annually, rarely, never	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
[20] What is the date span of these?	2008-2014	2004-2014	1970-2014	1992-2014?	1990-2014	1960-2014	1970-2014	1960-2014	1960-2014?	1960-2014
[21] Are procedures for keeping these records covered by a procedures manual or standard?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[22] Is there a dedicated staff member responsible for these records?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[23] If yes, has he/ she received training in records management?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
[24] How would you assess power reliability?	>50%	<50%	>50%	<50%	<50	<50%	>50	>50%	<50%	<50%
[25] Is there a dedicated server room?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	yes	No	No

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29   The following points summarise findings and implications.

- In all ministries, central filing systems are used at least daily, suggesting that they are still needed as a valuable source of information even if they cannot always supply the records required.

- There are no proper file indexes to enable efficient searches to be made.

- There are no rules for giving file titles, so there is inconsistency; many file titles may not reflect the contents of files, leading to problems in finding records. Where file numbers exist, staff do not always understand how the numbers are created and what their components represent, thus undermining any logical structure of the filing system.

- All ministries keep some core records in files held by individual or units that are not part of the central filing system. The critical question here is whether any of the records in the decentralised filing systems should also be held in the central system so that information is complete, and vice versa. There is no problem with having decentralised filing system, for example, for the professional wing of a ministry or for a directorate within a ministry, provided it is well constructed. Appendices xx and xx provide some examples of records held outside central filings systems. The question is whether information is shared between the central administration and the directorates as required. Ultimately, electronic records management systems will enable far more efficient information sharing. Apart from the technical training to use such systems effectively, staff will also need training in the ethical requirements of record-keeping (how to deal with personal and/ or confidential information, how to restrict access to certain classes of information, etc). Appendix E reproduces existing instructions for the management of 'top secret', 'secret' and 'confidential' records. However, these instructions provide no guidance on how to classify records according to the sensitivity of their contents, or on the physical custody of classified. The *Draft Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* at Appendix H include some general guidance on the security of records.

- There are currently no internal networks or electronic record-keeping systems, such as shared network drives, to enable information sharing. In the meantime, officials who create electronic documents either have to use email, or share documents using flash drives. Records shared in this way continue to be kept in personal workspaces, where there are no rules for filing or managing records, leading to a further fragmentation of the institution's information base and confusion about what constitutes the institutional record. Also, public servants tend to take with them 'their records' held on their laptops or personal computers when they transfer to another office, resign or retire, with the result that institutional memory is lost. Ministries are at risk of failing to comply with

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the Right of Access to Information Act if they do not know what information they hold or how it can be accessed.

- The vast majority of officials who use email use external email and internet service providers. Ministries have not yet created or implemented their own 'domain' names and email addresses. Few ministries have functional websites.

- Electronic records and paper records do not match. In other words, there are some records that only exist as electronic records. When officers consult the paper files there are often documents missing. It is to be expected that some records only exist as paper records, but these are or should be held in filing systems and should be able to be found. In no cases are electronic records held in comparable electronic systems that come anywhere near to meeting even the most basic international good practice requirements. Ultimately, electronic records management or content management systems will manage records in all formats (paper, electronic, digital) but this cannot be achieved by a few simple steps such as purchasing off-the-shelf software or scanning paper documents. It will take costly investment, careful management and capacity building, and a huge planning and change management effort that will involve a gradual revolution in working cultures.

- There are no rules in place for retaining and disposing of records, and in only one ministry have any records been destroyed[3]. Retention and disposal schedules were prepared in during the Records Management Improvement Project in 2007-08 but were never approved and will now be out of date. Typically, in the absence of authoritative instructions, all records are retained because of the fear of being accused of destroying public records. In all ministries, current records are mixed with non-current records. Typically, some records date back to the 1960s-70s. All ministries need to have in place a 'retention and disposal schedule' to determine when records can be destroyed, transferred to the Government Records Centre or transferred to the National Archives. Without authorised retention and disposal schedules, ministries will inevitably retain for too many records and overburden their storage facilities and, at the same time, records of potential historical value to the nation will not be safeguarded by transfer to the National Archives. Wherever possible, retention and disposal should be rules-based and routine. This applies equally to electronic records. Retention and disposal schedules should cover all records created and held throughout each ministry regardless of their format.

- Nearly all ministries (those recently created are the only exceptions) need to be 'decongested' of semi-current and non-current records that are no longer required for reference. A very large quantity of government records can be destroyed because they have no further operational or historical value, or

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[3] Records Retention and Disposal Schedules must not be confused with rules for the disposal of Government assets, which have been issued.

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transferred to the Government Records Centre as semi-current records, or transferred to the National Archives for permanent preservation. Authorised retention and disposal schedules will enable ministries to take disposal actions.

- All ministries visited keep some personal records or records requiring extra security. In most cases (seven out of ten), security arrangements are adequate. The implications are obvious. More generally, records and information security is poor and records can be tampered with or removed, as has been in the shown in Anti-Corruption Commission cases.

- All ministries have a dedicated staff member responsible for the central filing system. Seven out of ten of these officers have received training in records management. It is clear, however, that they need support and cooperation to bring the filing systems up to a standard that complies with the *Records Office Procedures Manual*.

Recommendation 1: Central filing systems need to be improved by the introduction or re-introduction of standard procedures. *The Records Office Procedures Manual* provides a basis for this. Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs should be supported by Permanent Secretaries to develop proposals, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, to improve filing systems.

Recommendation 2: MDAs should include provision in their budgets for supplies to maintain their filing systems.

Local Council Central Filing Systems

30   The situation in the Local Councils and PSOs visited is similar to that found in the ten ministries. Local Council and Provincial Secretary Office (PSO) filing systems are analysed in the table which follows.

Table 3: Local Council Central Filing Systems

Questions	FCC	PSO-SOUTH	PSO-EAST	DISTRICT COUNCIL-KENEMA	CITY COUNCIL-KENEMA	DISTRICT COUNCIL-KONO	CITY COUNCIL-KOIDU/KONO	PSO-NORTH	DISTRICI COUNCIL-PORT LOKO
[1] Is there a file index?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[2] Are there rules for giving files titles?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[3] Is there a logical classification scheme or numbering system for these records?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[4] Is the Filing System intended to document the Ministry's core business functions and decision-making processes?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[5] Do some depts or units maintain their own filing systems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[6] If so, are there some core records that are not kept centrally	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[7] Are some records (or copies) in electronic form?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[8] If so, is there an internal network (eg, shared network drive) for sharing records	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[9] Do officials create/ use records on stand-alone computers/ laptops	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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[10] Are there rules for classifying and giving titles to electronic records/ folders?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[11] Does the Council have a web site and domain name for emails?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[12] Are the electronic records a complete 'copy' of the paper records?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[13] Are the paper records a complete 'copy' of the electronic records?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[14] Are there rules for retention?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[15] Are any records deleted or destroyed?	No	No	NO	No	No	No	No	No	No
[16] Are current files mixed with non-current files?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[17] Do these records contain personal or confidential information that requires extra security? If Yes, are security arrangements adequate?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No	Yes/ No
[18] Do back up copies exist?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[19] How frequently are the records used? Hourly, daily weekly, monthly, annually, rarely, never	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily

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[20] What is the date span of these?	1996-2014	1970-2014	1950-2014	2004-2014	2004-2014	2004-2014	2004-2014	2004-2014	2004-2014
[21] Are procedures for keeping these records covered by a procedures manual or standard?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[22] Is there a dedicated staff member responsible for these records?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
[23] If yes, has he/ she received training in records management?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
[24] How would you assess power reliability?	<50%	No	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%	<50%
[25] Is there a dedicated server room?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

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31   In summary:

- There are no standards or documented procedures for maintaining filing systems.

- Departments keep their own records and some core records are not kept centrally.

- There are no retention and disposal rules and no records are destroyed when they have no further value.

- Some records are in electronic form and do not exist as paper copies. Those in electronic form are not protected and are not easily accessible.

- Current and semi-current records are mixed together.

- While six of the nine offices hold records dating from 2004, two offices have records dating from the 1950s and 1970s respectively. These older records need to be destroyed, transferred to the Records Centre or transferred to the Archives.

32   There are also several notable differences between central and local government offices:

- All filing systems in the local government offices visited contain personal or confidential information that require extra security but in no cases are security arrangements adequate.

- All offices have a dedicated member of staff responsible for the filing system but in no cases have the staff members been trained in records management.

Recommendation 3: Records staff in local government offices should be trained in basic records management principles and procedures. The Government Archivist should prepare a plan and budget to carry out this training and seek the necessary resources.

Records Kept Outside Central Filing Systems

33   Appendix F shows findings in a sample of records maintained outside central filing systems. These include filing systems maintained by ministry professional wings, separate directorates or divisional records; in one case, they contain 'case' records (teachers' personnel files). Appendix G includes findings for a number of separate records systems maintained by the Ministry of Health. These are discussed separately in the next section.

34   Again, the situation is similar to centralised filing systems and local council records. Notable findings can be summarised as:

- All of these records series include some records in electronic form.

- All of these records need to be shared more widely within the ministry.

- There are no rules for retention or disposal and in most cases, no records are destroyed.

- All these series contain records of potential permanent value.

- All filing systems contain personal or confidential information that require extra security but in no cases are security arrangements adequate.

- Some of these records date back to the 1950s and 60s.

Recommendation 4: Records staff in MDAs who have not been trained should attend training in basic records management principles and procedures. Refresher courses should be provided for staff who have been trained in the last five years. The draft *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* (Appendix H) may be used to prepare the training programme. The Government Archivist should prepare a plan and budget to carry out this training and seek the necessary resources.

Specialist Records

35   Appendix G provides and analysis of seven categories of records that come under the authority of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS). Findings are broadly similar to other records series previously described. The significance here is that MoHS (and other ministries) hold records that are vital sources of information for the ministry itself and for the citizens of Sierra Leone and that these records require their own systems and standards.

- **The Central Medical Stores.** A software application (CHANNEL) is used to maintain records of all drugs in the stores. It automatically calculates and gives the total of drugs available in the stores. The software generates hard copies of records of every transaction.

- **Births and Deaths records**. These include personal information on Sierra Leone nationals, specifying name, parentage, date, place and time of birth/ death etc. Birth and death registration is performed in 1,020 Health Centres across the country. These records need to be permanently preserved for obvious reasons. In Freetown, the records (the earliest dating back over a hundred years) are held

in accommodation that is situated **next to a bakery**. At present, these records are at very high risk of being lost.

- **Connaught Hospital Records**. These include patient records. Clinical records management has its own methodologies and systems. For clinicians and health professionals working in hospitals, patient medical histories are required to deliver effective treatment to individual patients. For non-professional health workers at the primary health care level, a minimum level of record keeping is required both for continuity of treatment and, in referral cases, to provide basic information about treatment for the high levels of the health service. Patient records also provide the data from which information is extracted and aggregated for planning and monitoring Sierra Leone's nation-wide health service.

36   **There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to records management**. Requirements for managing specialised records will differ. Each category of records may need its own systems, procedures and training needs. However, the broad principles still apply: records must be protected against unauthorised change, destruction or alteration, they must be authentic and reliable at all times, they must be accessible to authorised personnel and they must be preserved for as long as needed.

ICT Infrastructure for Electronic Records

37   The assessment aimed to determine the readiness of MDAs for transition to electronic records management. The assessment included an analysis of the current infrastructure required to implement dedicated electronic records management, and an analysis of processes related to electronic records management that are already in place. The analysis was based on the data from questionnaires filled in for MDAs, local councils and provincial secretary' offices. Findings are summarised as:

Basic Infrastructure

- Power Supply

  ◊   90% of responders described their power supply reliability as less than 50%

  ◊   Only 8 % of analysed locations is equipped with a backup power generator.

- Server Rooms/ Data Centre

  ◊   Only one location is equipped in the dedicated server room with climate and access control.

21

Network Infrastructure

- Wide Area Network (WAN)

  ◊ There are no dedicated WAN connections between MDAs, local councils and provincial secretary's offices.

  ◊ Some kind of internet connection is available in 67% of locations and internet connection reliability is assessed as 69%.

- Local Area Network (LAN)

  ◊ A local area network is available in 50% of the locations visited. In most cases it is combination of Wi-Fi (radio) and Ethernet (cable) networks. In some locations not all employees have LAN and thus Internet access.

Hardware

- Document Scanners

  ◊ There are multifunctional devices, including scanners, in 42% of the locations visited.

System and Software

- Authentication service: a directory service (Microsoft Active Directory) is implemented in 17% of the locations visited locations.

- E-mail service: An e-mail server is implemented in only one of the locations visited.

Assessment Conclusions: ICT Infrastructure for Electronic Records

38 Currently only one location, the Ministry of Information and Communications, meets all pre-requisites for the implementation of the electronic record management system. Recommendations are made in paras 75 to76 to host an electronic records management system in this location.

Other Significant Findings

39 Before registry systems deteriorated, inward correspondence was typically received at a single entry point in the Records Office. Because users lost trust in the Records Office, the common practice now in many ministries is for all correspondence to be received by the PS's secretary, date stamped and passed to the PS, who then minutes to an action officer to take necessary action. When action on a transaction is completed, a copy of the resolution or response is filed by the PS' secretary, a copy is kept by the action officer and another copy is sent to the Records Office to place on the subject file if there is one. As noted earlier, separate sets of records are kept by professional wings and directorates as well as specialist advisers. The overall consequence is that the most important institutional records are managed by secretarial and other staff who have little or no records training.

40 This practice may vary slightly between ministries. However, in most of the ministries visited, the central filing system has all but collapsed. Records are kept by individual officers and the PS's secretary maintains subject files for copies of records sent by action officers to the PS. The PS's files are for the use of the PS only. At times, action officers have to produce records from their own files to complete the information available in the PS's files. In this same ministry, a separate overarching set of records, mostly case files, are kept by the professional wing. This is a recent development resulting from a functional review of the ministry that created directorates. Within the professional wing, the directorates themselves keep copies of records for their own reference. The separation of 'administrative' records under the PS and 'case' records under the professional wing is not in itself a problem. The concern is that there is no coordination of records and information in the ministry, a tendency to fragment the official record within functional areas and the creation of a multiplicity of records systems that do not conform to any standards.

Recommendation 5: Secretarial and other staff who handle core institutional records should be included in the training programme in basic records management principles and procedures

41 Storage facilities. In many cases, storage facilities are wholly inadequate, especially for semi- and non-current records. Files stuffed into broken filing cabinets and wooden cupboards are common findings. Older records tend to be abandoned. This situation would not arise if MDAs followed disposal policies and procedures and consistently and routinely transferred semi-current records to the Government Records Centre. Older records need to be managed until they can be destroyed or transferred to the National Archives. However, as noted in a later section of this report, the Records Centre and Archives are now full and large transfers cannot be made until new facilities are available.

Recommendation 6: Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, should prepare proposals to decongest current filing systems of semi-and non-current records, store them separately and organise and list them so that

they can be retrieved if needed. Appendix I shows the cost of a workshop for managing semi-current records in an MDA.

Recommendation 7: As an interim measure, the National Asset Commission should be approached to explore the possibility of acquiring a warehouse or comparable large storage accommodation to serve as a temporary records centre to hold inactive and semi-current records cleared from MDAs.

Recommendation 8: Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, should begin the preparation of comprehensive retention and disposal schedules. These will need to be reviewed and authorised before implementation. The Government Archivist will need further support to plan and develop schedules for all MDAs.

Records and Information Management and the National Development Agenda

42   A key theme of the Agenda for Prosperity is to improve the information base of Government. Information cannot be relied on unless it is managed through time in a way that relates the information to its source, maintains the authenticity of the information, and connects it to other information that provides the context and gives it meaning. All MDAs must depend on information and records management systems to carry out their mandates and inform the decision-making of Government, development partners and the private sector investors. These information and records systems include paper and electronic records, databases, management information systems, and a wide range of business applications which in turn depend on reliable source data, often in the form of records.

43   Most sectors of Government are challenged by a lack of reliable information. A key strategy of the Agenda for Prosperity is to develop appropriate information communication technology. Pillar 4 (International Competitiveness) aims to improve ICT infrastructure as an essential underpinning factor. Improved ICT infrastructure will greatly increase the potential to create, receive and access information electronically. However, Sierra Leone must also address the lack of capacity, material resources, systems and procedures to manage the records and information. Lack of a reliable power supply is also a significant challenge. The overall finding of the assessment was a lack of skills, resources, basic standards, systems, and procedures for managing the Government's records and information base and for enabling public servants to access and share the information they need. These shortcomings must be addressed in the goals of the Agenda for Prosperity are to be achieved.

44   Pillar 3 (Accelerating Human Development) provides an illustration. It includes the implementation over five years of the Education Capacity Development Strategy. This consists of 'strategies to strengthen nine areas: human resource management, teacher management, planning and coordination, decentralisation, financial capacity,

communications and information-sharing, systems data and **records management**, monitoring and supervision of institutions, procurement and distribution of teaching and learning materials'. Strengthened records and information management is critical pre-requisite for all the other areas. Pillar 3 also includes the objective to develop an integrated health information system. This cannot be achieved without improving, for example, patient and health care records to enable data to be collected.

45 Pillar 7 (Governance and Public Sector Reform) is heavily dependent on improving records and information management. Recruitment and right-sizing, pay reform, institutional strengthening and performance management all require the creation of and access to reliable human resource records and information. A direct link between human resource data and the payroll will be needed. Pillar 7 recognises that 'good data are crucial for a strong public service sector'. 'The overall policy goal is for Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) to coordinate, collect, compile, analyse and disseminate high quality and objective official statistics. Data will be used to assist informed decision-making, and discussion within the government, business and the media, as well as the wider national and international community. Official statistics will be relevant, have integrity and be easily accessible to all.'

46 Within the Justice Sector, case management, records management, archiving and court recordings are automated. However, there are still difficulties in accessing comprehensive and systematic statistics and other information at the institutional level. Across the sector, paper files are still largely maintained and stored manually, and many files have been lost misplaced or destroyed. Documents cannot be found. Tracking the progress of matters (ie accessing information) remains a problem for the Judiciary, the Law Officers' Department, the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General, the Police and Prisons and other justice MDAs.

47 Some of the ministries visited made available their five-year Strategic Plans. The strategic plans of two Ministries (Labour and Social Security; Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs) and their relationship with the Agenda for Prosperity were discussed in detail in the Interim Report. **What is clear is that the objectives stated in these strategic plans cannot be accomplished without good information management.** For example, reliable data on employment and employment challenges are dependent upon reliable information and records systems. Current record-keeping systems are recognised as weak. New records and information systems and greatly improved IT infrastructure are needed to promote and achieve increased information sharing and cooperation with other ministries and stakeholders. IT infrastructure is discussed in detail in a later section of this report.

48 Many of the challenges faced by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs relate to a lack of information and information management. The Ministry's strategic plan notes that the Government's Decentralisation Policy has put the local government/ local councils in charge of delivering social services, and has given the Ministry the task of monitoring, supervising and coordinating activities at the local level. Again, weak or non-existent data collection and record-keeping mechanisms are

recognised as a fundamental problem. The Strategic Plan indicates at least 20 MDAs with which the Ministry will need to share information. The creation and exchange of information needs to be at the centre of the results-based management system.

49   The Agenda for Prosperity's Results Framework itself will require accurate information and access to it, to measure and monitor performance in each sector.

TRANSITION TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS SYSTEMS

50   As noted in the Inception Report, the trend internationally is towards computerising business processes, using new technologies to transform the way work is done and doing more at less cost. The expectation is that ICT will 'modernise' Government and provide the basis for accurate and reliable information, informed decision-making, effective service delivery, citizen access to information and anti-corruption efforts. Already, few areas of government are now purely paper-based and many public servants, particularly at the decision-making level, now or in the near future, will carry out much of their daily work on computers, communicating through email and sharing information on networked office systems. In the longer term, technology will connect central and local government, citizens and the private sector.   The vision is of government business conducted primarily electronically rather than on paper. However, there are many challenges in achieving this vision including an adequate ICT infrastructure, the necessary human and material resources and a high level of inter-governmental planning, co-ordination, communication, information sharing and planning.

51   Many of the software applications already in use are not record-keeping systems: data may be changed or deleted and cannot necessarily be relied upon to support evidence-based governance. **The key records management requirements have not been met, namely, that records of transactions and processes are fixed in time and unchangeable, and that rules for retention and disposal are applied.** The regulatory framework and capacity needed to manage them are not in place.   Records management needs to be built into the transition to the electronic environment. The long-term aim is to move from the current situation (reliance on paper records, poor access to information, limited information sharing, lack of IT skills and infrastructure) to an e-Government platform in which public servants are able to create, access, use, share and manage information electronically.

52   The successful transition to an ICT environment is a huge undertaking which will take many years to achieve.   Few if any governments around the world have so far achieved this objective, which involves fundamental changes in the way governments and public servants work, carry out their wide range of functions and services, and interact with each other and with stakeholders and citizens. Computerisation is not a single solution but many different solutions that all should comply with overall standards, such as architecture, data management, records management, interface and security, but be designed to serve specific purposes.

53   A step by step approach is recommended as part of a long-term strategy. Initial steps are recommended below. The strategy will need to be closely coordinated with, and work alongside, ICT initiatives and technologies, such as line of business applications (payroll, accounting, licencing, etc) and specialist management information systems. As individual public servants increasingly work and communicate electronically from their desktops, standards are needed to ensure that the information they create, disseminate and receive is organised and managed effectively. This should be the role of a new, well-trained Records and Archives Department working to implement a National Records Policy. The new Department will prepare guidelines, provide advice and training, monitor and support MDAs to ensure that information captured or generated on paper and electronically is trustworthy, evidence-based and can be accessed for as long as required.

54   Computerisation in the public service involves more than acquiring hardware, software and network connections. It involves changing the working culture and business practices, and designing and integrating ICT systems that incorporate the essential practices and controls required to manage, protect and provide reliable information over time. This in turn depends on an infrastructure of records management policies, standards and procedures; and trained staff to manage electronic records to an acceptable level of professional practice.

55   In order to achieve this fundamental change in working culture, capacity will need to be developed, both within the Records and Archives Department and across the record creating MDAs, to support the transition to effective electronic information systems. International experience shows that to achieve its objectives, it will be essential to build strong cooperative relationships between records professionals and those responsible for IT and e-government within the Government.

56   In many countries, the shared network drive has been, or continues to be, a stepping stone in the transition to proper records management systems in the electronic environment. A network drive is in simple terms a storage device on a local network (LAN) within an organisation, usually located on a server. The advantage is that those connected to the network can view and share files that are saved on the shared drive.

57   Currently few shared network drives exist in the Government of Sierra Leone. Typically, shared network drives used for sharing electronic records soon become unmanageable if they are not operated according to rules for filing, creating and naming folders, controlling versions, etc. Each section usually has its own set of folders serving its needs and tends to access only its own folders. This results in a lot of duplication and overlap with the same documents filed in many places, there is frequently misfiling and redundant folders are created, often with meaningless titles. The problem of identifying the official record is not solved. Word or word string searches can help locate documents but are not reliable and become time-consuming as the network files increase and more 'hits' are returned from the many hundreds of documents stored. Knowledge about where documents are filed is often in people's

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heads and not shared institutional knowledge. A common observation about shared network drives is that no-one is managing them, anyone can open a folder and start filing documents, or create a folder with or without password protection, and anyone can edit or delete documents. The risk is that the 'story' behind a decision or event becomes even more fragmented.

58   It could be argued that MDAs should wait for the introduction of proper content management systems. However, for organisations in countries with limited resources, acquiring a content management system or ERMS may be extremely challenging given the costs and the lack of available expertise. If shared network drives are governed by rules and assigned responsibilities for managing the folder structure, filing, organising, labelling and retaining/ deleting records, they can be effective information tools. A dedicated shared network drive manager and rules for maintaining drive content would serve as preparation for the transition to proper electronic records management/ content management systems. Interim guidelines on managing shared network drives could be developed and introduced as MDAs acquire local networks. The guidelines would include developing standards and a classification scheme (sometimes called a metadata schema) that can be migrated easily to the schema developed for the content management system or ERMS when this technology is acquired.

Recommendation 9: Shared network drives, overseen by a dedicated network drive manager and governed by rules for managing content, should be considered as a stepping stone towards electronic records management systems.

Digitisation

59   Scanning can be an attractive approach to improving access to hard copy information and to communicating it electronically. Large-scale scanning projects are also seen as a solution to storage problems. Storing high volumes of paper documents and ensuring that they are easily accessible costs time and money. Digital images can be stored cheaply and technology can be used to find individual items. However, the business case and cost-effectiveness of large-scale scanning projects may be more complex than this. For example, can the paper originals be destroyed? Are there future migration requirements to ensure continued access to digitised records? A business case must be established before embarking on large-scale scanning projects.

60   The UK National Archives has issued standards and requirements for digitisation that are free to download from the National Archives website (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk). The standards are designed for government institutions that wish to digitise any of their paper records. They cover the whole digitisation process from initial scanning through to delivery of the images for preservation. A distinction is made between

'digital records'[4], that is, the images that are legal record for permanent preservation, and 'digital surrogates', that is, images of paper records that are retained as the legal record. All records digitised at, or for, The National Archives are delivered for preservation as JPEG 2000 part 1 files conformant with the latest version of ISO/IEC 15444-1 JPEG 2000 part 1 and saved with the extension .jp2. If scanning software does not produce .jp2 files natively, images must be converted.

Recommendation 10: A business case must be established and cost-effectiveness demonstrated before embarking on large-scale scanning projects.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ERMS)

61   Electronic records management systems depend on availability of many other services. Before an ERMS can be implemented, some pre-requisites must be met. Some pre-requisites depend on how the electronic records management system will be implemented. For example, if there is one central system for the whole of Government, installed in one central location, most of the pre-requisites are relevant to only that central location. If there is a distributed approach, those pre-requisites are relevant to each location where electronic record management system will be implemented. Implementation must in any case be gradual across all the institutions of Government. The transition to electronic records management must also follow the national strategy for improving ICT infrastructure project and be consistent with strategic plans in MDAs.

62   Whatever the solution, implementation and maintenance of an ERMS will require dedicated technical skills. Although implementation can be outsourced, maintenance will need skilled administrators and support, such as a help desk. Depending on selected approach and architecture, administrators are required in one central location or in all locations. Architecture, hardware, software and network considerations are discussed later in this section.

63   Two other critical factors must be considered. Firstly, ERMS solutions are available as 'open source' products. This does not mean that they are free, and costs (eg for configuration and customisation) may be comparable to those for proprietary products. There are advantages and disadvantages in using open source products. For example, they tend to rely on a user community to fix problems, rather than a company, and they may be less user friendly than proprietary products. Appendix J lists the advantages and disadvantages of using open source products.

Recommendation 11: Open source products should generally not be used because of the potential risks.

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[4] The term 'digital records' is used here in its strictly accurate meaning, that is, 'digital' images of paper or electronic records.

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64   Secondly, there is an extensive literature of international standards and technical and user requirements for electronic records management. Some of the more important standards are listed below. Some national and state archives in a number of countries (USA, UK, Australia, and Norway) have also issued useful guidance that helps to interpret the standards and define requirements.

- ISO 15489: Information and Documentation -- Records Management. Parts 1 and 2

- ISO 23081: Records management processes - Metadata for records

- ISO 30300: Information and documentation: Management Systems for Records – Fundamentals and Vocabulary

- ISO 30301: Information and documentation: Management Systems for Records – Requirements

- MoReq2010 (Modular Requirements for Records Systems).

Recommendation 121:   International standards should be used to guide the implementation of electronic records management. Full compliance is not expected (or achievable) but a level of compliance is essential to protect the integrity of Government records.
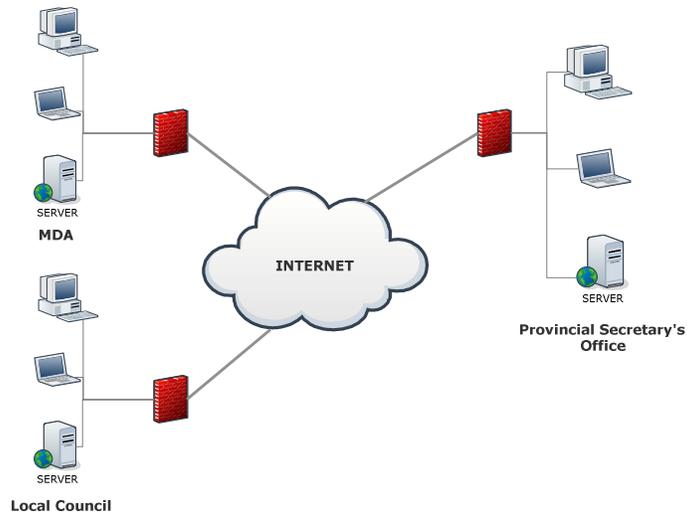

Architecture

65   There are three possible approaches to implementing an ERMS:

- distributed architecture
- centralised architecture
- cloud architecture.

Distributed Architecture

66   In the distributed approach, the ERMS is hosted in each location (ministry, local council, etc). The system in each location will be independent of the systems in all other locations, thereby restricting information sharing. For example, a search for a document or information will be restricted to one location only. Each location (ministry, local council, etc) must meet all pre-requisites and have a dedicated server room.

Figure 1: Distributed Architecture

Centralised Architecture (Local Cloud)

67 The ERMS is hosted in one central location (an MDA or data centre). The users in all other locations use a Wide Area Network (WAN) or internet connection and Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access the ERMS. This location must be located in the dedicated data centre or in the server room in one of the MDAs.

Figure 2: Centralised Architecture
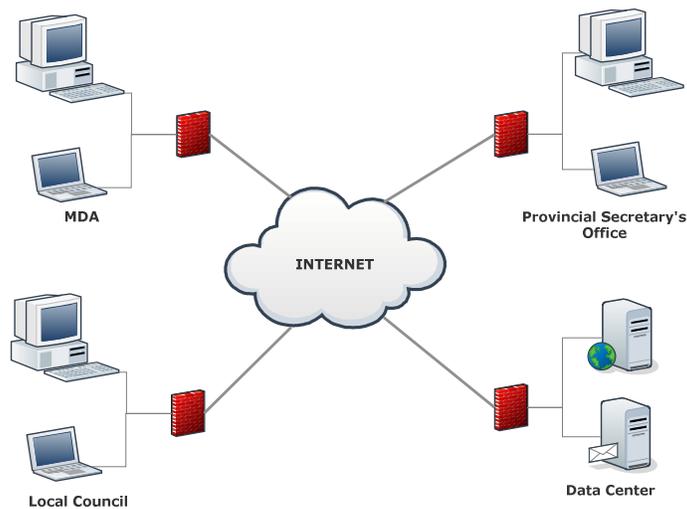
Cloud Architecture

68 The ERMS is hosted in a third-party cloud computing infrastructure. In this approach the system will most likely be hosted outside Sierra Leone. Users from all locations

(ministries, local councils, etc) use an internet connection and VPN to access the ERMS. Cloud Services use a subscription licensing model and therefore have a lower initial license cost, but subscription fees must be paid on a recurring basis.

Figure 3: Cloud Architecture
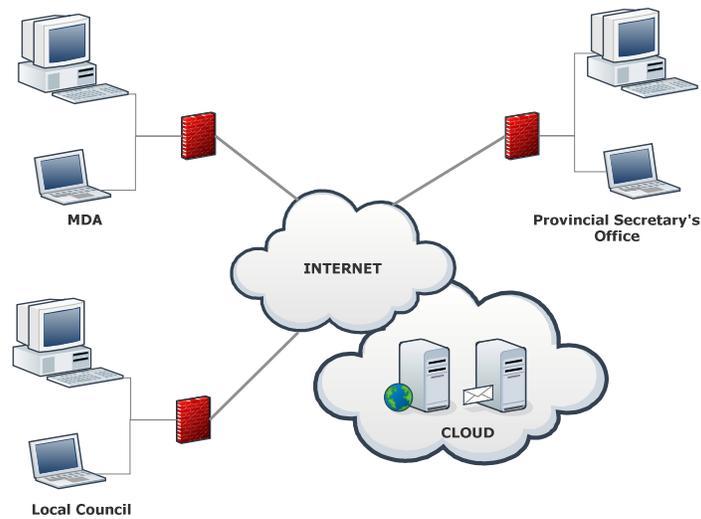
Pros and Cons of Distributed vs Centralised vs Cloud

69   There are pros and cons for each approach. The table below lists them and highlights significant risks.

Table 4: Pros and Cons of Distributed vs Centralised vs. Cloud

	Distributed	*Centralised*	*Cloud*
Pros	• Does not depend on internet connections	• Only 1 data centre required • Support staff with specific skills is required only in central location • Possibility for searching for document across all locations	• Low initial cost • Cloud service provider responsible for support and maintenance • Possibility for searching for document across all locations
Cons	• Server room is required in each location • No overall search • Support staff with specific skills is required in each location • High initial cost	• Depends on quality of internet connections • Medium initial cost	• Subscription licensing model • In some countries (ie USA) the national government can gain access to the documents without any knowledge or notice to Sierra Leone government • Document are stored outside Sierra Leone jurisdiction and any issues must be resolved in courts outside Sierra Leone
Risks	• High initial cost • Highly skilled IT administrators will be required in each location	• Power outage or internet connection failure in central location will make whole system unavailable to all users	• Document are stored outside Sierra Leone jurisdiction

Recommendation 13: The Government of Sierra Leone should evaluate the risks and costs of distributed vs centralised vs cloud solutions before making a decision to proceed with a Government-wide strategy for electronic records management. Based on the assessment and analysis of findings, the preferred option is a centralised solution because of its lower cost and lower risk as compared with a cloud solution.

Recommendation 14: A cloud solution should only be used if the Government decides that the risks involved are not an issue. However, a cloud solution could be considered as a temporary solution. A cloud-hosted solution could be used to design and implement the solution in the development and user acceptance stage. It can then be migrated to the centralised physical location for production release.

Basic infrastructure

Power Supply

70   Apart from the obvious requirement for continuous power supply, IT systems are vulnerable to power surges and sudden loss of power. Sudden power loss may cause loss of data and can compromise system integrity. Each location must therefore be equipped with a UPS (battery power backup) system to protect against power surges and enable all servers to be shut down in a controlled manner. Ideally, each location should be equipped with power generators, making the location independent of the electricity provider.

Server Rooms/ Data Centres

71   Servers require the right balance of physical and environmental conditions to operate properly. Altering this balance can cause the computer to fail in unexpected and often undesirable ways. Even worse, the computer may continue to operate, but erratically, producing incorrect results and corrupting valuable data.

72   Appendix K lists the threats to servers and server rooms and their impact. To avoid these threats, each location where the electronic records management system (ERMS) is implemented should have a dedicated server room with climate and access control and continuous monitoring of climate and physical access.

Network Infrastructure

73   The ERMS usually works in a client-server model. In the client/ server model, the server hosts, delivers and manages most of the resources and services to be used by the client. This type of architecture has one or more client computers connected to a central server over a network or Internet connection. Client/ server architecture may also be referred to as a networking computing model because all the requests and services are delivered over a network.

Wide Area Network (WAN)

74   A wide area network (WAN) is a telecommunications network that covers a broad area (ie it links across metropolitan, regional, national or international boundaries) using leased dedicated telecommunication lines. A WAN may be used to give users access to an ERMS. If there is no possibility of directly connecting MDAs, local councils and provincial secretary's offices using dedicated lines, VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) should be established to provide secure access to the ERMS.

Local Area Network (LAN)

75   A local area network (LAN) is a computer network that interconnects computers within a single ministry, department, agency, local council or provincial secretary's office. Ethernet over twisted pair cabling, and Wi-Fi are the two most common technologies currently used to build LANs. It is important to implement desired security protection to radio based Wi-Fi networks.

Hardware

Servers

76   The ERMS must be installed on dedicated servers or virtual servers. The specification of servers may vary depending on selected architecture and software. The servers must be located in the server room or the dedicated data centre to provide protection against unauthorised physical access and environmental hazards.

Scanners

77   Document scanners are required for digitisation of the paper-based documents.

System and Software

Authentication service

78   Electronic records management processes depend on the authentication and authorisation of system users. A directory service must be implemented prior to implementation of the ERMS. The preferred solution is Microsoft Active Directory. Active Directory (AD) is a directory service that Microsoft developed for Windows domain networks and included in most Windows Server operating systems as a set of processes and services. An AD domain controller authenticates and authorises all users and computers in a Windows domain type network. For example, when a user logs into a computer that is part of a Windows domain, Active Directory checks the submitted password and determines whether the user is a system administrator or

normal user. Active Directory makes use of Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) versions 2 and 3, Microsoft's version of Kerberos, and DNS.

E-mail Service

79   The ERMS uses e-mails to communicate with users. When tasks are assigned to users, reminders are sent using e-mails. An email service must be implemented prior the ERMS.

Preferred ERMS Solution

80   There are many ERMS solutions available on the market. One of the leading solutions is Microsoft SharePoint 2013. Microsoft offers basic SharePoint functionality free as SharePoint 2013 Foundation but this provides limited functionality. Three editions are available: SharePoint Foundation 2013; SharePoint Server 2013 Standard Edition; and SharePoint Server 2013 Enterprise Edition. A comparison of these editions is available at:
      http://blog.blksthl.com/2013/01/14/sharepoint-2013-feature-comparison-chart-all-editions/

81   **SharePoint 2013 Enterprise is the recommended solution.** Microsoft SharePoint is a web application framework and collaboration platform developed by Microsoft. SharePoint comprises a multipurpose set of web technologies backed by a common technical infrastructure. By default, SharePoint has a Microsoft Office-like interface and it is closely integrated with the Office suite that it has a familiar 'look and feel'. The web tools are intended for non-technical users. SharePoint can provide intranet portals, document, file and records management, collaboration, social networks, extranets, websites, enterprise search and business intelligence. It also has system integration, process integration and workflow automation capabilities.

82   According to Microsoft, SharePoint is used by 78% of Fortune 500 companies (the top 500 corporations in the USA).   Between 2006 and 2011, Microsoft sold over 36.5 million user licenses. SharePoint 2013 follows records management industry good practices although it is not fully ISO 15489 compliant. However, it is possible to extend SharePoint functionality to be fully ISO 15489 compliant. The recommended implementation is RecordPoint (http://www.recordpoint.com.au/) on the top of the SharePoint 2013 Server.

83   SharePoint 2013 provides out-of-the-box records management functionality. It includes:

      • Full Document Management Capabilities
      • Document ID
      • Multi-Stage Retention
      • Per-Item Audit Reports

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- Hierarchal File Plans
- File Plan Report
- Taxonomy and Centralised Content Types
- Content Organiser
- Virtual Folders – Metadata Navigation
- In-Place Record Declaration
- Support for tens of millions in a single 'records centre'.

84   SharePoint 2013 also introduces Site Based Retention: retention policies can be assigned to a site and all objects created within that site are bound by its retention policy.

85   There are two approaches to records management in SharePoint 2013: Records Centre and In-Place Records.

Records Centre

86   This consists of a central 'archive' for holding all records. Advantages include:

- easier to view all records in an organisation
- centralised control (cross Site Collection)
- manual upload or custom 'Send To' action, plus Content Organiser Rules
- Content Type-based or Folder-based retention
- additional metadata policy or workflow may be applied to records.

In-Place

87   Documents marked as records remain in their original location. Advantages include:

- easier to maintain original security and findability
- distributed responsibility
- 'Declare Record' button in ribbon
- Content Type-based retention only
- no additional site provisioning required.

Recommendation 15: SharePoint 2013 Enterprise is recommended as the preferred ERMS solution. A pilot project or 'proof of concept' should be designed as a first step.

88   Currently, the Ministry of Information and Communications, is the only MDA that meets all pre-requisites for the implementation of the ERMS and is the only location where the ERMS can be hosted. The lack of secure connections (WAN or VPNs), authentication and e-mail services prevents other locations from using the electronic record management system hosted elsewhere.

Recommendation 16: the Ministry of Information and Communications should pilot the introduction of SharePoint 2013 Enterprise.

89   Approximate costs for implementing SharePoint 2013 in the Ministry of Information and Communications are at Appendix L. There are many factors that will affect the final cost. Apart from the approach taken (distributed vs. centralised vs. cloud solutions) there are variable costs associated with the technical support required to install, customise and document the new system and transfer skills so that it can be sustained. Installation costs will be in the range $125,000 to $160,000 to which must be added the cost of flights, accommodation and subsistence for SharePoint experts.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

Open Government and the Right to Access Information

90   A key action point of the Government of Sierra Leone's *Open Government Partnership National Action Plan* is a commitment to build 'a reliable and trustworthy evidence-based information/data management system to support policy-making and service delivery across the public service'. The Action plan notes that this requires an integrated records and information management strategy linked to a sound legal and organizational structure and a capacity-building program. The Action Plan commits to the Government to pass and bring into operation a 'robust and proactive Archives and Records Management Bill[5] to support the implementation of the Right to Access Information Act'. This is within the overall Action Plan commitment to implement the Right to Access Information Act, passed in October 2013, which aims to improve transparency across Government by making information readily available and accessible. An ambitious programme, to be completed by the end of 2014, includes training, sensitisation of the public, assessment of readiness and a pilot open data portal. The Right to Access Information Act is seen as a tool for controlling corruption, supporting accountability and transparency, enforcing rights and enabling a free flow of information. Access to good quality information engenders trust between institutions of government and citizens, and strengthens the democratic process. At the same time, access to good quality information brings substantial benefits to the public sector, including the availability of information to support decision-making, economic analysis, monitoring and measuring policy implementation, and providing a basis for planning, improving, delivering and monitoring services for citizens.

91   However, at present the Government's records systems are not strong enough to protect the records or organise them to enable efficient retrieval; the passage of the

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[5] Although the Draft Action Plan refers to the 'Archives and Records Management Bill' the title 'National Records and Archives Bill' is recommended as this better reflects the function of managing public records and archives in a continuum as the product of the same processes.

new Records and Archives Act will not, in itself, change this situation. There is no mention in the Draft Open Government Partnership Action Plan of the activities required to improve the management of records and information as a prerequisite of Access to Information. The draft Action Plan comments that the new Archives and Records Act will 'serve as a key tool to informing database management and archiving of key government documents that will be stored in formats that are accessible to the public vis-à-vis print and electronic mediums'. However, the Act will do no more than provide a starting point. **A cultural change is required in the way ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) do their work and create, manage, and access the records and information they need. Records will have to be treated as a valuable government asset, resources will have to be invested, and capacity will have to be developed.**

92   **The Right of Access to Information Act 2013 sets rigorous requirements for the quality, management and accessibility of records and adds more urgency to the need to improve the existing infrastructure and capacity for managing public sector records. However, the Act cannot succeed without equally rigorous requirements for the management of records and information.** The Act gives every person the right to access information held by, or under the control of, a public authority. Any person making a request for information is entitled to have the public authority confirm or deny whether it holds information of the description specified in the request; and where the public authority holds information of the description specified in the request, that person is entitled to have the information communicated to him/ her.

93   Section 7 of the Act gives the applicant the choice of receiving a copy of the information, *inspecting a record containing the information* [our italics], receiving a summary of the information or being allowed to take notes, extracts or samples of any materials. Implicit in this Section, therefore, is the recognition that records or documentary evidence contain the information required and that the records or information can be accessed.

94   Section 8 of the Act places an obligation on public authorities to be proactive in publishing (ie, making public) certain classes of information, such as the particulars of the public authority's organisation, functions and duties, the powers and duties of its officers and employees, and the procedures followed in the decision making process, including channels of supervision and accountability. Section 8 (f) requires the publication of 'a guide sufficient to enable any person wishing to apply for information under this Act to identify the classes of information held by it, the subjects to which they relate or the location of any indexes to be consulted by any person.' **In common with Access to Information legislation in other jurisdictions, each public authority must adopt and disseminate a 'publication scheme' setting out the classes of records that the authority will publish on a proactive basis.**

95   Section 27 is more explicit about 'records' in that it requires every public authority 'to record and maintain records of its activities in a manner that facilitates the right to

information'. It also requires the Information Commission established by the Act to issue a 'Code of Practice' relating to keeping, managing and disposing of records, as well as the transfer of records to public archives.

96   Other Sections of the Act deal with the exemption of certain classes of information from the duty to disclose, for example, personal information concerning an individual.

97   **To meet the requirements of Sections 7, 8 and 27, as well as the exemption sections, each public authority must have organisational and intellectual control of its records. It must know what records it holds and how its records can be accessed. However, there is a more fundamental requirement. The public authority must meet acceptable standards, for example as defined in the Code of Practice, for the management of its records throughout their lifecycle from their creation or receipt to their ultimate disposal, either by destruction or transfer to the National Archives. At present, this is not the case, but it is achievable given strong official support.**

98   One of the deliverables of this Assessment Project is:

'Classification schemes, retention schedules standards and guidelines for managing records reviewed and recommendations outlined.'

In response to this term of reference, Appendix H sets out draft *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities*. This is, in effect, the first draft of a Code of Practice envisaged by the Right to Access Information Act. These *Standards and Guidelines*, when approved, form the basis of a training programme for Records staff and those officials with responsibilities under the Right of Access to Information Act.

Recommendation 176: The draft *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* (Appendix H) should be reviewed by relevant government stakeholders to assess their suitability of a Code of Practice for Managing Records, as envisaged by the Right of Access to Information Act.

99   **Public authorities will not be able to meet the requirements of the Right of Access to Information Act, and the standards set by any Code of Practice for records management, unless they have the capacity, staff and tools to manage their records and information, paper and electronic.** The approach of the Assessment Project is to assume, in keeping with well-documented international experience, that archives and records management professionals are the most appropriate experts to support this aspect of the Right of Access to Information Act. **There are already archives and records management professionals in Sierra Leone.** The objective should be to adopt a realistic strategy to achieve an acceptable standard of records management across the public sector, and to develop the skills required to achieve those standards, taking into account resource constraints and the need to transition to the electronic environment.

100 Section 28 of the Right of Access to Information Act requires public authorities to appoint 'as many public information officers in all offices or units as they have at the local, district, provincial and national levels as is necessary to enable it to provide information to persons requesting information.' A 'public information officer' will be the principal contact person within each public authority to deal with requests from persons seeking information; and the information officer must be of sufficient rank within the public authority to be empowered (subject to the oversight of the Permanent Secretary or equivalent administrative head) to make binding decisions in relation to information disclosure under the Right of Access to Information Act. The relationship between these public information officers and the professional records managers within public authorities needs to be defined. In some jurisdictions, access to information and records management responsibilities are brought together in the same unit.

Recommendation 187: The relationship between public information officers and records managers within public authorities should be defined and a decision made about whether to combine these roles in the same operational units.

New National Records and Archives Act

101 The Draft Open Government Partnership Action Plan is committed to passing a new Archives and Records Bill. **For many years it has been recognised that the Public Archives Act of 1965, enacted before the advent of computers and the full development of records management as a separate discipline, is now wholly inadequate.** The deficiencies of the Act are well known:

- The 1965 Act gives the Public Archives Office the authority to examine any 'archives' in the custody of any Government office and advise on their care, custody and control, but it does not cover current and semi-current records that are still used or of potential use to the Government office.

- It does not cover local government records.

- It does not recognise records in formats other than paper, such as electronic and digital records.

- It does not recognise records management as an important function of good governance.

102 A new Act was drafted in 2008 as part of the Records Management Improvement Programme in Sierra Leone. The draft Bill was far more consistent with more recent Archives and Records legislation in other jurisdictions by providing for the management of records from their creation, throughout their use, to their ultimate disposition.

103   No further action has been taken on the 2008 draft Bill. However, in October 2012 the newly-formed Society for Knowledge Management-Sierra Leone (SKM-SL) held a consultative forum on the repeal of the 1965 Act that recommended drafting a new Archives Bill.   The forum was followed up in March 2013 with a stakeholders' workshop to discuss the draft of a new National Records and Archives Bill similar to the 2008 draft.

104   A new draft of a National Records and Archives Bill, based on these earlier drafts, is at Appendix M. This will need to be reviewed again by stakeholders and approved by senior government officials before presentation to Cabinet. A Minister will need to table the draft Bill (for example, the Minister of Information and Communication, the Minister of Political and Public Affairs or the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Recommendation 19: The draft National Records and Archives Bill (Appendix M) should be reviewed by stakeholders and approved by senior government officials before presentation to Cabinet.

National Records Management Policy

105   Many countries around the world have adopted a national Records Management Policy as a critical and easily updateable component of the legislative and regulatory framework for Government archives and records, as recommended in the international standard, *ISO 15489: Information and Documentation -- Records Management*. **The Records Management Policy provides an overarching framework of accountability and responsibility for managing public records according to acceptable standards. It treats records as assets equal in significance to other assets such as human and financial resources.**

106   A draft Records Management Policy is at Appendix N. The proposed Policy requires ministries to:

- assign responsibility for the Policy to Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments

- integrate records management requirements into programme and systems development, implementation, evaluation and reporting

- share records within and across ministries to the extent possible to maximise the value and use of the information they contain

- ensure the relevance, authenticity and quality of records for as long as required

- establish, measure and report on a programme and strategy for the management of records.

107 Implementation of the Policy will need to be incremental (ie in phases aligned with the capacity of MDAs to deliver); sensitive to existing resource constraints; aimed at integrating records and electronic records management; and strategic. The Policy will need to be issued under the authority of a senior Government official. This could be the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, who is charged by paragraph 68 (3) (c) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone to co-co-ordinate and supervise the work of all administrative heads of ministries and departments in the public service. An alternative authority is the Secretary to the President who supervised the pen Government Partnership.

108 If the Policy is approved, the immediate requirement will be to identify in each MDA those offices responsible and accountable for records management. Implementation of records management programmes may be guided by *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* (Appendix H). It is important that the approach to implementation should be systematic and phased given the objective of developing a government-wide records management infrastructure that is supportive of the Right to Access Information Act.

Recommendation 20: The draft Records Management Policy (Appendix N) should be reviewed by stakeholders and approved by senior government officials before presentation to Cabinet.

A PROPOSED NEW NATIONAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES BUILDING

109 **Archives are an essential part of a nation's collective memory. The existing Public Archives Office (Sierra Leone's National Archives) lacks its own dedicated building. Staff and archives are currently housed in accommodation at Fourah Bay College. All storage space is now full. The National Archives cannot continue to manage the country's documentary memory without putting at risk irreplaceable historical materials.**

110 The recommendation is for a 'rebranding' of the Public Archives Office as 'The Records and Archives Administration of Sierra Leone' and the development of a new vision and mission to accompany plans for a new national archives law and records management policy. A new building to house the National Archives has the potential to be a valuable cultural asset for the government and citizens and an important contributor to Sierra Leone's national identity.

Recommendation 21: The Public Archives Office should be renamed the National Records and Archives Administration of Sierra Leone.

111 The Public Archives Office also manages the Government Records Centre at Tower Hill. This facility was established in 1991 to hold the Government's semi-current records, that is records that are no longer used in the conduct of current business but must be retained because of their continuing legal, financial, audit or business, and

cannot yet be destroyed or transferred to the national archives. **The Government Archivist is required to accept custody of semi-current records but the Records Centre is full and cannot accept more records.** As a result, MDAs cannot transfer their semi-current records and large accumulations of records continue to grow in many Government offices. The whole purpose of the Government Records Centre is undermined, that is, to manage semi-current records, provide a reliable access service and save costs.

112 Building requirements therefore consist of two principal interconnected elements:

- A record centre to store semi-current records. The facility is functional and basically a warehouse, but needs to be secure and constructed to standards that enable paper and electronic record to be protected against sunlight, humidity, vermin and other environmental hazards. Storage capacity for paper records:

  ◊ Existing holdings: 10,000 linear metres
  ◊ Estimated expansion for the next 25 years: 10,000 linear metres.

- A national archives building constructed to high standards, where historical records can be permanently preserved in controlled conditions and made available. The design of the building should reflect its unique purpose as the repository for the nation's documentary history. Storage capacity for paper records:

  ◊ Existing holdings: 8,000 linear metres
  ◊ Estimated expansion for the next 25 years: 8,000 linear metres.

113 Growth and disposition rates in the UK, Ghana and Tanzania, examined in 2007 for comparison purposes, recommended allowing for an average annual growth rate of at least 3%. However, this is misleading in the case of Sierra Leone as there is a huge backlog of unprocessed semi-current and non-current records in MDAs and a backlog of unreviewed records in the Government Records Centre. Lack of storage space in the Archives and Records Centre, plus a shortage of manpower and action to process the records has meant that a backlog of at least 10 to 20 years should be taken into account. To add to the storage requirement, little attention has been paid to Government records at the district level. In future, a national network of regional or district level storage facilities for semi-current records should also be considered. In the meantime, the central facilities are likely to have to receive some district records

114 These two elements may be constructed as part of one building, or separately as two buildings, on a single site so that their respective operations can be coordinated and integrated. An area of approximately one to two acres (0.4 - 0.8 hectares; or 4000 - 8000 square metres) would be necessary. Ghana provides a model where a National Records Centre was built on vacant ground within the existing National Archives complex. However, there are obvious savings and efficiencies to be gained by constructing a new building to include both functions (national archives and records

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centre). It is relevant to note that the National Records Centre in Ghana, in the first decade of its operation, generated savings in the cost of space and storage equipment at ministries that exceeded the cost of constructing the records centre.

115   **Possible sites need to be located.** The site chosen needs to be strategically located within easy reach of government offices and on land not liable to flooding. In 2007/08 a possible site was identified on Tower Hill, close to government offices. This land is flat, not liable to flooding and environmentally secure.

Recommendation 22: The Government Archivist should work with relevant stakeholders to identify a suitable site for the construction of a combined National Archives and Records Centre.

116   The new building will need to include facilities and equipment to manage an increasing volume of transfers in electronic and digital formats. At the same time, the adoption of new technologies across the public sector is unlikely to affect the growth rate of paper-based records for the foreseeable future. Even though government offices now generate records electronically, paper copies are also produced for legal, administrative or reference purposes. **International experience shows that computerised systems do not necessarily generate less paper. In fact, everywhere in the world, the quantity of paper records has increased from year to year. While digital storage for records may eventually ease the pressure on storing paper records, this will not impact significantly in Sierra Leone for many years.** Furthermore, the conversion of existing paper records to digital format is, in many cases, not justified by the cost, taking into account that most categories of records are destined for destruction. **Cost-benefit analysis and a strong business case are required for any digitisation programme. Storage capacity in both facilities should therefore provide adequate space for growth over at least a twenty-year period as more paper records become semi-current and need to be transferred.**

117   **The new building could also be combined with other functions recently proposed by the Government of Sierra Leone:** a data centre and the documentation centre to reflect and promote the history and culture of the State, as required by the Right of Access to Information Act, section 27 (3).

Recommendation 23:   When planning the new National Archives and Records Centre, facilities for managing electronic records should be included.

118   The National Archives and Records Centre should be equipped with desktop computers to enable NRC staff to manage the holdings through a computerised database of accessions and a shelf location system, and also an Internet connection and scanning equipment so that paper documents urgently required can be digitised and emailed to ministries as a high-speed retrieval service.

Costs and Location

119   The records storage capacity of the proposed National Records Centre will need to be a minimum of 10,000 linear metres with an additional 10,000 linear metres for future transfers. Three standard sized boxes occupy a linear metre. 10,000 linear metres of shelving would therefore enable 30,000 boxes of records to be stored immediately. By comparison, the National Records Centre in Ghana has a capacity of approximately 50,000 linear metres. Based on records centre plans prepared for the Governments of Tanzania, Ghana and Uganda, and taking into account local costs in Sierra Leone, the cost of constructing, shelving and equipping the National Records Centre is estimated to be £750,000 in 2007 ($1,273,687 at current exchange rates).

120   For the combined National Archives/ Records Centre building, this figure should be at least doubled. The storage capacity of the Archives will need to be a minimum of 8,000 linear metres with an additional 8,000 linear metres for future transfers. However, the specification for the National Archives requires construction to a higher standard to provide the facilities and storage for the permanent preservation of its holding (see below). A ballpark figure at present day prices is likely to be in the region of £2,000,000 ($3,400,000) for a combined building. More design work is needed to enable costs to be more accurately quantified. If the Government of Sierra Leone wishes to proceed with seeking funds for construction, it is recommended that the design specifications in this report should be reviewed by a suitable qualified archivist/ records manager working with an architect and/or quantity surveyor.

Recommendation 24:   A new building to accommodate the National Archives and Government Records Centre is estimated to cost approximately $3,400,000. More precise cost estimates would need to be prepared by an architect and quantity surveyor, based on the specifications in this report.

Requirements for the National Archives

121   National Archives normally have three functions:

- select records, in whatever format, of long-term historical value for permanent preservation

- preserve all records selected for permanent preservation

- make records available to members of the public and government.

122   A feature of successful national archives programmes is the establishment of systems that manage the records of government in a continuum from their creation as part of current business operations to their ultimate disposal, either by destruction or by preservation as archives. This requires the establishment of clear linkages between the ministries, departments and agencies that create the records and the archival

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institution that safeguards those records selected for permanent preservation. For this reason, National Archives have developed a fourth function over the past decades:

- advise and guide government ministries, departments and agencies in the management of their current and semi-current records, and information.

123 **To ensure that archives of enduring value are selected and preserved, there must be an underpinning regulatory framework of facilities, policies, systems, procedures and qualified staff. Without this framework, it is not possible to safeguard and manage the nation's archives and make them available for purposes of study and research.**

124 The main functions to be undertaken in a new National Archives building should include the following:

- administration of an integrated archives and records management programme

- acquisition and maintenance of the national archives

- production of the catalogues, indexes and other finding aids

- archives conservation

- liaison with external archives, information systems, services and programmes

- provision of specialised advice on records, archives and information management to government and the private sector

- promotion of cultural and historical activities.

125 These functions and services are described in more detail in Appendix O and form part of the specifications for the new building. There are a number of publications freely available that can be used to guide the design and construction standards of a new building. These include:

- *Building a Low Cost Archives in the Tropics.* Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA), May 2003. http://www.parbica.org/content/BuildingLowCostAchivesBuildingsReport_tcm50-74758.pdf

- *Archive Buildings In A Tropical Climate And With Low Resources: ICA Study 17.* International Council on Archives, 2005. http://www.ica.org/10798/studies-and-case-studies/ica-study-n17-archive-buildings-in-a-tropical-climate-and-with-low-resources.html

- *Archives and Record Storage Building.* Whole Building Design Guide: a programme of the National Institute of Building Sciences (USA), 2010.
  http://www.wbdg.org/design/archives_records.php

- *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records.* National Archives of Australia Storage Standard, December 2002.
  http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/standard_tcm16-47305.pdf

Requirements for the Records Centre

126 The establishment of a National Records Centre is fundamental to developing a cost-effective and sustainable approach to managing official records. Over the last several decades, official record-keeping has deteriorated across all areas of government. There are significant gaps in the official records but, at the same time, vast quantities of inactive records occupy expensive office space in government buildings. A records centre provides an essential service to MDAs, enabling them to reduce storage costs and at the same time maintain access to their semi-current information assets that are made available on request to duly authorised officers.

127 A records centre consists of high-density, low-cost storage, equipped with a system for retrieving and consulting records held. Good records management practice requires that all semi-current records are assigned a retention period at the end of which they are either destroyed because they have no further value, or they are transferred to the National Archives for permanent preservation as part of the nation's documentary memory. Some records can be destroyed when they cease to be of reference value for current business, but the majority must be held for an additional number of years according to legal, audit, operational and other requirements. For instance, payment vouchers must be kept for audit purposes and if audits are delayed, the records may need to be kept for longer than the normal scheduled period of the current year plus six years. **Some records are required to be held for much longer periods before their ultimate disposition. Policy and subject files may need to be reviewed long after they have ceased to be current records, for example after 20 or 25 years, to determine their eventual disposal.** (The length of the retention period will need to take account of the legal requirement to open records for public inspection according to Archives legislation.) Key personnel and pension records of public servants must be kept until all rights have expired, usually after death. Pension rights may extend to the spouse for some time after the death of the person concerned. The great majority of government records will eventually be destroyed. Typically, fewer than 5% of the total number of records created are eventually sent to the National Archives for permanent preservation.

128 The National Records Centre will make an important contribution to government efficiency by providing a centralised, secure and well-organised storage facility. It will enhance the effective use of information in government and improve efficiency and accountability. It will also help to ensure that records of national importance to the

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history and development of Sierra Leone are managed throughout their life cycle and transferred to the National Archives at the appropriate time.

Staffing Requirements and Skills for Records Centre Staff

129 The duties required of NRC staff are in line with those expected of records management and records office staff in other roles. Existing members of the National Archives staff and Records Management Improvement Team already have the necessary professional background and generic skills to supply the staffing requirements of the NRC, although on-the-job training will be needed in the use of the new systems, and there will be some specialised functions that will require additional training, such as maintaining a database of transfers and storage locations. There is sufficient time while the NRC is being planned, designed and constructed, to identify suitable staff, to ensure that they have the relevant skills to perform their new duties, and also to ensure that additional training requirements relating to new systems and procedures can be met.

A NEW RECORDS AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT AND A RECORDS AND ARCHIVES CADRE

A New Department for Government Records and Archives

130 The cornerstone of the long-term strategy for public sector records will be a strong central authority. A new National Records and Archives Department is required, enabled by an updated Records and Archives Law. The new Department should have the statutory authority to set standards for managing public records throughout their life cycle from creation to ultimate disposal, and to ensure that public authorities comply with those standards.

Staffing the HQ organisation

131 A series of proposed organisational charts for the new Records and Archives Department is provided at Appendix P. These show a progression in the expansion of the Department over a five-year timeframe. Appendix P Table 1 gives an indication of the functional structure of the Records and Archives Department at its creation. Initially, there will be two Deputy Director positions: one Deputy Director will take charge of activities in relation to Current Records and one will take charge of Semi- and Non-Current Records. The Director will have management responsibilities for the Department's administration, finance and staffing. A Regional Records Management Unit will have responsibility for those records maintained by Local Councils and Provincial Secretary's offices. The Unit will be responsible for ensuring that national

standards are followed and that records management systems are consistent and sustainable.

132 Appendix P Table 2 gives an indication of what the organisation will look like at Year 3. The main change is expansion in the capacity of the organisation to support the electronic records environment, both as it impacts on the departmental organisation itself and in providing training and support to MDAs. This is shown by the creation of a third Deputy Director position responsible for Technology, and the provision of enhanced IT Services and support for digitisation. Up to this point (Year 3) technology and IT services will be part of the Records Management and IT Training Unit.

133 Appendix P Table 3 presents a further refinement of the organisational structure at Year 5, with a strengthening of the Training Unit and consolidation of the role of the Technology Directorate as it provides underpinning support for the introduction of electronic records and content management across Government.

134 The following staff structure is proposed for the new Records and Archives Department, showing projected growth by year three:

Table 5: Staff Structure of Records and Archives Department

Title	Grade	Number in Year 1	Projected Number in Year 3
Director	13	1	1
Deputy Director	11	2	2
Records Manager	10	9	9
Records Officer	9	15	20
Records Supervisor/ Senior Records Manager	8	1	2
Records Clerk	5	5	11
Trainee Records Clerk	3	0	5
Confidential Secretary	7	1	1
Senior Secretary	5	0	2
Secretary	4	0	1
Senior Driver	3	1	1
Driver	1	1	2
Messenger/Cleaner	1	1	2

135 A comprehensive set of Job Descriptions for National Archives staff will be found at Appendix Q. These are for guidance only and should be read in conjunction with the proposed Scheme of Service for the Records and Archives Cadre at Appendix R. Those job descriptions that represent new positions, which will support the introduction and management of electronic records, and will present a particular challenge in terms of recruitment are:

- Deputy Director of Technology
- Head of Digitisation
- Digitisation & Digital Preservation Officer
- Head of IT Services

- Website Manager

Recommendation 25: The staff structure and organisational structure for the Records and Archives Department should be reviewed by the Public Service Commission, HRMO and other stakeholders as required in conjunction with the draft Scheme of Service.

136 In some countries, the Director of Records Services appoints all records staff working in MDAs. This model may, however, place an impossible burden on the Director and create a potential conflict of interest if records staff have two reporting lines, one to the National Records and Archives Department and one to the MDA. To achieve the necessary co-ordination and standards across government, it is recommended that the Director should be responsible for the appointment of all senior records staff at Grade 8 and above.

Recommendation 26: The head of the new Records and Archives Department should appoint records staff at Grade 8 and above and in accordance with the established PSC procedures.

137 Skills in electronic records management will be essential as more and more information is created digitally. Initially, this function should be included in the responsibilities of the Records Management Training Unit, recognising that staff of the new Department themselves require training and that, over time, the importance and impact of this function will grow, leading to the establishment of a separate Technology Directorate. New skills will be needed both to manage the current electronic/ digital records created and used by MDAs, and to manage semi-current digital records and those digital records that have been selected for permanent preservation in the Archives. This will require a seamless continuum of processes to protect the records' integrity. A 'trusted digital repository' will be needed to manage the records to be permanently preserved. Planning work to establish the digital repository should begin as soon as possible so that digital records are not irretrievably lost.

138 These specialist 'technology' posts require skills that are not currently available in Sierra Leone and it will take some time to develop the skills and knowledge required. Archives and records management professionals usually build their skills over any years of practical experience. In the short term, it will be necessary to pursue several options to strengthen in-country capacity. Suitably qualified Sierra Leoneans with graduate or post-graduate degrees in appropriate disciplines could receive professional training overseas, with a focus on electronic records management. This could be formally at a higher education institution or informally by secondment to a Government organisation. Secondments of staff from other National Records and Archives organisations could be considered. Finally, the in-country curriculum in archives and records management should be strengthened. Staff appointments would need to be made in stages as the National Records and Archives Department begins to

take shape as a functioning entity and as the key source of expertise in electronic records management.

139 The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs shows in a proposed organogram (yet to be fully implemented) that the records management function is included in the Directorate of Human Resources/ Administration and Finance, whereas data/ information management for decision making and planning is placed under the Directorate of Policy Development and Strategic Planning. The Regional Office structure shows a position for an Information Systems Officer. This suggests that there is a division between 'manual' record-keeping and electronic/ digital information systems and the risk of poor integration and coordination of information resources. The proposed organisational structure for the National Records and Archives Department, as noted, envisaged the development of skills in electronic records and information management. It would make more sense in the longer term for MDAs to combine data/ information management and records management in the same function or at the very least not separate them in unrelated directorates.

Recommendation 27: Suitably qualified Sierra Leoneans should receive professional training, with a focus on electronic records management. This could be at a higher education institution or by secondment to a Government organisation overseas. Secondments of staff from other National Records and Archives organisations to Sierra Leone should also be considered.

Recommendation 28: The in-country curriculum in archives and records management at INSLICS should be strengthened, especially in the area of electronic records and information management.

Assessing Staff Capacity

140 As noted earlier in this report, there is a need for an extensive training programme, particularly for the junior records staff in Grades 1 to 3 and secretaries, few of whom have ever had any formal training in records management.

141 The table below gives an indication of the scope of the training need.

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Table 6: Records Staff, Grades and Years' Experience

MDA	Designation	Grade	Years of Experience
MLGRD	Senior Records Officer	8	4
	Records Clerk	3	39
	Records Clerk	3	30
	Records Clerk	3	35
MSWGCA	Records Clerk	3	40
	Records Clerk	3	36
Connaught	Records Clerk	1	26
Hospital	Records Clerk	2	19
	Records Clerk	3	20
	Records Clerk	2	20
	Records Clerk	2	18
	Records Clerk	2	18
	Records Clerk	2	18
	Records Clerk	2	21
	Records Clerk	3	20
	Records Clerk	3	19
	Records Clerk	2	14

142   What is particularly striking from these figures is the length of service of the staff and, by implication, the ages of the staff concerned, many of whom must be nearing retirement. Recruitment of new staff, who are likely to be more familiar with using IT, provides an opportunity for training in new procedures. With the increasing need to move forward in the transition to the electronic records environment, there will also be a significant training need in this area.

Assessing the Staffing Structure in MDAs

143   Criteria are needed to calculate the numbers of records staff required in each MDA, based on measurement of workloads. The working assumption is the need for at least one Records Officer (G9) per ministry or large department (such as the Accountant General's Department). He/ she will be supported by one or two professional Records Cadre members at Grade 5 or 8 depending on the complexity and volume of records in that MDA. Among the criteria that need to be considered, are the following:

•   volume and date span of current records

•   volume of incoming and outgoing correspondence

•   separate records-creating directorates, units, etc (eg professional wing vs administrative wing) and information-sharing needs

•   specialist records; whether the focus is on policy or case records

- responsibility for separate or semi-autonomous agencies

- proportion of paper to electronic records that are being maintained and complexity of record-keeping systems

- records management and data responsibilities assigned by law or regulations (eg Accountant General's Department (financial records), Education (teachers and schools records), Health (patient records)

- number of file movements per day

- proportion of confidential and non-confidential files that are being handled

- number and condition of storage locations

- tracking system/s required

- proportion of duplicate records that are being held

- proportion of semi-current records being held.

144 The classification, structure and grading of positions in the new National Records and Archives Cadre should be developed in line with the regulations that apply to the Civil Service as a whole. These grading rules apply to staff in Provincial Secretary's offices and to the public service staff of Local Councils, but there are some differences in pay levels with Records staff working in the core Civil Service. The following categorisation of grades apply:

- Grades 8 to 13 - senior cadre
- Grades 4 to 7 - junior officers
- Grades 1 to 3 - minor officers.

145 In assessing staff requirements in MDAs, the relative size of MDAs is also a factor. As a starting point, Ministries have been categorised according to size of records office (large, medium and small) in the table below..

Table 7: List of Ministries with Recommended Size of Records Offices

Large	Medium	Small
1 Office of the President	1 Office of the Vice-President	1 Political & Public Affairs
2 Finance & Economic Development	2 Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation	2 Fisheries & Marine Resources
3 Health & Sanitation	3 Works, Housing & Infrastructure	3 Defence
4 Attorney General & Justice	4 Lands, Country Planning & the Environment	4 Internal Affairs
5 Information & Communications	5 Labour & Social Security	5 Energy
6 Agriculture, Food Security & Forestry	6 Trade & Industry	6 Tourism & Culture
7 Local Government & Rural Development	7 Transport & Industry	7 Social Welfare, Gender & Children's Affairs
8 Education, Science & Technology	8 Chief of Staff, State House	8 Mineral Resources
	9 HRMO	9 Water Resources
		10 Youths
		11 Sports
		12 Resident Ministers – East, South & North (Covered by the respective Provincial Secretary's Offices)

146 The recommended staff complement for each category is as follows, though these numbers are for guidance only and need to be verified using the criteria listed above.

- large ministry: 1 x G9, 3 x G5, 5 x G3 (9 staff)
- medium ministry: 1 x G8, 2 x G5, 4 x G3 (7 staff)
- small ministry: 1 x G8, 2 x G3 (3 staff)

Table 8: Estimate of Records Staff Needs in MDAs

MDAs	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 5	Grade 3	All grades
Large (8)	8		24	40	72
Medium (8)		8	16	32	56
Small (11)		11		22	33
Totals	**8**	**19**	**40**	**94**	**161**

Assessing the Scheme of Service

147 An assessment was made of the current draft Scheme of Service, developed in 2008, to determine whether the concepts and terminology were up to date and to reflect any new legislation and organisational changes that had occurred in the intervening years. Based on this assessment, an amended draft was prepared, taking into account in particular the need to incorporate the management of electronic records.

148 An amended and up-to-date draft Scheme of Service is at Appendix R. The draft needs to be reviewed by HRMO to ensure it is fit for purpose. HRMO may wish to consider the restrictive nature of the age requirements may need to be changed.

Recommendation 29: The draft Scheme of Service should be reviewed by HRMO and other stakeholders as required in conjunction with the staff structure and organisational structure for the Records and Archives Department.

The Position of the Records and Archives Department

149 The Public Archives Office is currently supervised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. However, the new Records and Archives Department needs to be strategically positioned to fulfil its crosscutting role for the whole of Government and the public sector in terms of introducing common good practice standards and supporting the transition to effective work practices in the digital environment. Under a sector ministry the new Department's contribution to the national development agenda would be more limited, but placing it under the Office of the President and the direct supervision of the Secretary to the President would make it possible to achieve a greater impact. In Ghana, The Gambia, Tanzania and Uganda, the placement of the records and archives department under the office responsible for public service management and reform is providing a basis for developing effective records services in the rapidly changing public sector environment.

150 The new Department will need to be furnished with an appropriate budget. Until now, the Public Archives Office has received a quarterly subvention but it barely covers salaries for the small staff. To make matters worse, the subvention is not paid promptly. The proposed budget for the 2014 fiscal year 2014 was approximately le 182,000,000 ($42,000) but this will not be forthcoming.

Recommendation 30: The Records and Archives Department should be positioned within the Office of the President and directly supervised by the Secretary to the President.

Recommendation 31: The Records and Archives Department should be provided with a realistic budget based on its Government-wide role.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment of Records Management

Recommendation 1: Central filing systems need to be improved by the introduction or re-introduction of standard procedures. *The Records Office Procedures Manual* provides a basis for this. Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs should be supported by Permanent Secretaries to develop proposals, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, to improve filing systems.

Recommendation 2: MDAs should include provision in their budgets for supplies to maintain their filing systems.

Recommendation 3: Records staff in local government offices should be trained in basic records management principles and procedures. The Government Archivist should prepare a plan and budget to carry out this training and seek the necessary resources.

Recommendation 4: Records staff in MDAs who have not been trained should attend training in basic records management principles and procedures. Refresher courses should be provided for staff who have been trained in the last five years. The draft *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* (Appendix H) may be used to prepare the training programme. The Government Archivist should prepare a plan and budget to carry out this training and seek the necessary resources.

Recommendation 5: Secretarial and other staff who handle core institutional records should be included in the training programme in basic records management principles and procedures

Recommendation 6: Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, should prepare proposals to decongest current filing systems of semi-and non-current records, store them separately and organise and list them so that they can be retrieved if needed.

Recommendation 7: As an interim measure, the National Asset Commission should be approached to explore the possibility of acquiring a warehouse or comparable large storage accommodation to serve as a temporary records centre to hold inactive and semi-current records cleared from MDAs.

Recommendation 8: Grade 8/ 9 records managers in MDAs, under the guidance of the Government Archivist, should begin the preparation of comprehensive retention and disposal schedules. These will need to be reviewed and authorised before implementation. The Government Archivist will need further support to plan and develop schedules for all MDAs.

Transition to Electronic Records Systems

Recommendation 9:   Shared network drives, overseen by a dedicated network drive manager and governed by rules for managing content, should be considered as a stepping stone towards electronic records management systems.

Recommendation 10:   A business case must be established and cost-effectiveness demonstrated before embarking on large-scale scanning projects.

Requirements for an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)

Recommendation 11: Open source products should generally not be used because of the potential risks.

Recommendation 12: International standards should be used to guide the implementation of electronic records management. Full compliance is not expected (or achievable) but a level of compliance is essential to protect the integrity of Government records.

Recommendation 13: The Government of Sierra Leone should evaluate the risks and costs of distributed vs centralised vs cloud solutions before making a decision to proceed with a Government-wide strategy for electronic records management. Based on the assessment and analysis of findings, the preferred option is a centralised solution because of its lower cost and lower risk as compared with a cloud solution.

Recommendation 14: A cloud solution should only be used if the Government decides that the risks involved are not an issue. However, a cloud solution could be considered as a temporary solution. A cloud-hosted solution could be used to design and implement the solution in the development and user acceptance stage. It can then be migrated to the centralised physical location for production release.

Recommendation 15: SharePoint 2013 Enterprise is recommended as the preferred ERMS solution. A pilot project or 'proof of concept' should be designed as a first step.

Recommendation 16: the Ministry of Information and Communications should pilot the introduction of SharePoint 2013 Enterprise.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework for Records and Archives Management

Recommendation 17: The draft *Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Records in Public Authorities* (Appendix H) should be reviewed by relevant government stakeholders to assess their suitability of a Code of Practice for Managing Records, as envisaged by the Right of Access to Information Act.

Recommendation 18: The relationship between public information officers and records managers within public authorities should be defined and a decision made about whether to combine these roles in the same operational units.

Recommendation 19: The draft National Records and Archives Bill (Appendix M) should be reviewed by stakeholders and approved by senior government officials before presentation to Cabinet.

Recommendation 20: The draft Records Management Policy (Appendix N) should be reviewed by stakeholders and approved by senior government officials before presentation to Cabinet.

A Proposed New National Records and Archives Building

Recommendation 21: The Public Archives Office should be renamed the National Records and Archives Administration of Sierra Leone.

Recommendation 22: The Government Archivist should work with relevant stakeholders to identify a suitable site for the construction of a combined National Archives and Records Centre.

Recommendation 23: When planning the new National Archives and Records Centre, facilities for managing electronic records should be included.

Recommendation 24: A new building to accommodate the National Archives and Government Records Centre is estimated to cost approximately $3,400,000. More precise cost estimates would need to be prepared by an architect and quantity surveyor, based on the specifications in this report.

A New Records and Archives Department and a Records and Archives Cadre

Recommendation 25: The staff structure and organisational structure for the Records and Archives Department should be reviewed by the Public Service Commission, HRMO and other stakeholders as required in conjunction with the draft Scheme of Service.

Recommendation 26: The head of the new Records and Archives Department should appoint records staff at Grade 8 and above and in accordance with the established PSC procedures.

Recommendation 27: Suitably qualified Sierra Leoneans should receive professional training, with a focus on electronic records management. This could be at a higher education institution or by secondment to a Government organisation overseas.

Secondments of staff from other National Records and Archives organisations to Sierra Leone should also be considered.

Recommendation 28: The in-country curriculum in archives and records management at INSLICS should be strengthened, especially in the area of electronic records and information management.

Recommendation 29: The draft Scheme of Service should be reviewed by HRMO and other stakeholders as required in conjunction with the staff structure and organisational structure for the Records and Archives Department.

Recommendation 30: The Records and Archives Department should be positioned within the Office of the President and directly supervised by the Secretary to the President.

Recommendation 31: The Records and Archives Department should be provided with a realistic budget based on its Government-wide role.

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