

Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)

Freedom of Information (FOI) Manual



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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this Freedom of Information (FOI) Manual is to provide the process in guiding and assisting the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), together with its bureaus/services and offices, in dealing with requests for information received under Executive Order (E.O.) No. 2 on FOI. **(Annex "A")**
2. **Structure of the Manual:** This Manual shall set out the rules and procedures to be followed by the DAR, and its bureaus/services and offices, when a request for access to information is received. The DAR Secretary is responsible for all actions carried out under this Manual and may delegate this responsibility to an Undersecretary heading the Public Assistance or Information Unit of the Department and the respective Heads of the bureaus/services, and offices. The Secretary, or the respective Heads, may delegate a specific officer to act as the Decision Maker (DM) who shall have overall responsibility for the initial decision on FOI requests, (i.e. to decide whether to release all the records, partially release the records or deny access).
3. **Coverage of the Manual:** The Manual shall cover all requests for information directed to the DAR and all its bureaus/services and offices as follows:
 - a) Office of the Secretary
 - b) Undersecretary for External Affairs and Communications Operations Office (EACOO)
 - c) Undersecretary for Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Office (FASPO)
 - d) Undersecretary for Support Services (SSO)
 - e) Undersecretary for Field Operations Office (FOO)
 - f) Chief of Staff, Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Office (LAO)
 - g) Chief of Staff, Undersecretary for Finance, Management and Administration Office (FMAO)
 - h) Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Research Office (PPRO)
 - i) Undersecretary for Mindanao Affairs and Rural Development (MARD)
 - j) Assistant Secretary for FASPO
 - k) Assistant Secretary for SSO
 - l) Assistant Secretary for FOO
 - m) Assistant Secretary for LAO
 - n) Assistant Secretary for FMAO
 - o) Assistant Secretary for PPRO
 - p) DARAB Secretariat

- q) Planning Service (PS)
- r) Clientele Relations Service (CRS)
- s) Policy and Research Service (PRS)
- t) Management Information Systems Service (MISS)
- u) Administrative Service (AS)
- v) Finance and Management Service (FMS)
- w) Agrarian Reform Capacity Development Service (ARCDS)
- x) Management Information Systems Service (MISS)
- y) Bureau of Land Tenure Improvement (BLTI)
- z) Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance (BALA)
- aa) Legal Service (LS)
- bb) Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development (BARBD)
- cc) Project Management Service (PMS)
- dd) Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) Secretariat
- ee) Public Assistance and Media Relations Service (PAMRS)
- ff) Legislative Liaison External Affairs Service (LLEAS)
- gg) Regional, Provincial and Municipal Offices

4. **FOI Receiving Officer:** There shall be an FOI Receiving Officer (FRO) designated at the DAR. The FRO shall come from the DAR office responsible in doing public assistance or information or its equivalent. The FRO shall hold office at the Clientele Relations Service 2nd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

The functions of the FRO shall include receiving on behalf of the Department or any of its bureaus/services and offices, all requests for information and forward the same to the appropriate office which has custody of the records; monitor all FOI requests and appeals; provide assistance to the FOI Decision Maker; provide assistance and support to the public and staff with regard the FOI; compile statistical information as required; and, conduct initial evaluation of the request and advise the requesting party whether the request will be forwarded to the FOI DM for further evaluation, or deny the request based on the following:

- a. That the form is incomplete; or
- b. That the information is already disclosed on the DAR's Official Website (www.dar.gov.ph) or at data.gov.ph.

Bureaus/services and offices of the DAR shall assign their respective FROs. **(Annex "B")**

5. **FOI Decision Maker:** There shall be an FOI Decision Maker (FDM), designated by the DAR Secretary, with a rank of not lower than a Director or its equivalent, who shall conduct the evaluation of the request

for information and has the authority to grant the request, or deny it based on the following:

- a. **The DAR does not have the information requested;**
 - b. **The information requested contains sensitive personal information protected by the Data Privacy Act of 2012;**
 - c. **The information requested falls under the list of exceptions of FOI; or**
 - d. **The request is an unreasonable subsequent identical or substantially similar request from the same requesting party whose request has already been previously granted or denied by the Department.**
6. **Central Appeals and Review Committee:** There shall be a central appeals and review committee composed of three (3) officials with a rank not lower than Assistant Secretary or its equivalent, designated by the Secretary of the DAR to review and analyze the grant or denial of request of information. The Committee shall also provide expert advice to the Secretary on the denial of such requests. The heads of the bureaus and offices shall likewise create a Central Appeals and Review Committee within bureaus and offices in similar manner stated herein.
7. **Approval and Denial of Request to Information:** The FDM shall approve or deny all request for information. In case the FDM is on official leave, the Secretary of the DAR may delegate such authority to his Chief of Staff or any Officer not below the rank of a Director. The heads of the bureaus/services and offices shall likewise have the authority to delegate such authority in the same manner.

SECTION 2: DEFINITION OF TERMS

data.gov.ph. The Open Data website that serves as the government's comprehensive portal for all public government data that is searchable, understandable, and accessible.

eFOI.gov.ph. The website that serves as the government's comprehensive FOI website for all information on the FOI. Among many other features, eFOI.gov.ph provides a central resource for the public to understand the FOI, to locate records that are already available online, and to learn how to make a request for information that is not yet publicly available. eFOI.gov.ph also promotes agency accountability for the administration of the FOI by graphically displaying the detailed statistics contained in Annual FOI Reports, so that they can be compared by agency and over time.

INFORMATION. This shall pertain to any record, document, paper, report, letter, contract, minutes and transcript of official meeting, map, book, photograph, data, research material, film, sound and video recording, magnetic or other tape, electronic data, computer stored data, any other like or similar

data or materials recorded, stored or archived in whatever format, whether offline or online, which are made, received, or kept in or under the control and custody of any government office pursuant to law, executive order, and rules and regulations, or in connection with the performance or transaction of official business by any government office.

INFORMATION FOR DISCLOSURE. Information promoting the awareness and understanding of policies, programs, activities, rules or revisions affecting the public, government agencies, and the community and economy. It also includes information encouraging familiarity with the general operations, thrusts, and programs of the government. In line with the concept of proactive disclosure and open data, these types of information can already be posted on government websites, such as data.gov.ph, without need for written requests from the public.

OFFICIAL RECORD/S. This shall refer to information produced or received by a public officer or employee, or by a government office in an official capacity or pursuant to a public function or duty.

OPEN DATA. This refers to publicly available data structured in a way that enables the data to be fully discoverable and usable by end users.

PUBLIC RECORDS. This shall include information required by laws, executive orders, rules, or regulations to be entered, kept, and made publicly available by a government office.

PUBLIC SERVICE CONTRACTOR. Shall be defined as a private entity that has dealing, contract, or a transaction of whatever form or kind with the government or a government agency or office that utilizes public funds.

PERSONAL INFORMATION. This shall refer to any information, whether recorded in a material form or not, from which the identify of an individual is apparent or can be reasonably and directly ascertained by the entity holding the information, or when put together with other information would directly and certainly identify an individual.

SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION. As defined in the Data Privacy Act of 2012, shall refer to personal information:

- (1) About an individual race, ethnic origin, marital status, age, color, and religious philosophical or political affiliations;
- (2) About an individual health, education, genetic or sexual life of a person, or to any proceedings for any offense committed or alleged to have committed by such person, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings;
- (3) Issued by government agencies peculiar to an individual which includes, but not limited to, social security numbers, previous or current health

- records, licenses or its denials, suspension or revocation, and tax returns; and
- (4) Specifically established by an Executive Order or an act of Congress to be kept classified.

SECTION 3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADMINISTRATIVE FOI APPEAL. An independent review of the initial determination made in response to a FOI request. Requesting parties who are dissatisfied with the response made on their initial request have a right to appeal that initial determination to an office within the agency, which will then conduct an independent review.

ANNUAL FOI REPORT. A report to be filed each year with the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) by all government agencies detailing the administration of the FOI. Annual FOI Reports contain detailed statistics on the number of FOI requests and appeals received, processed, and pending at each government office.

CONSULTATION. When a government office locates a record that contains information of interest to another office, it will ask for the views of that other agency on the disclosability of the records before any final determination is made. This process is called a "consultation."

EXCEPTIONS. Information that should not be released and disclosed in response to a FOI request because they are protected by the Constitution, laws or jurisprudence.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI). The Executive Branch recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern, and adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest, subject to the procedures and limitations provided in E.O. No. 2. This right is indispensable to the exercise of the right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making.

FOI CONTACT. The name, address, and phone number of each government office where you can make an FOI request

FOI REQUEST. A written request submitted to a government office personally or by email asking for records on any topic. An FOI request can generally be made by any Filipino to any government office.

FOI RECEIVING OFFICE. The primary contact at each agency where the requesting party can call and ask questions about the FOI process or the pending FOI request.

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED INFORMATION. Info released in response to an FOI request that the agency determines have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records.

FULL DENIAL. When the DAR or any of its bureau or office cannot release any record in response to an FOI request, because, for example, the requested information is exempt from disclosure in its entirety or no records responsive to the request could be located.

FULL GRANT. When a government office is able to disclose all records in full in response to an FOI request.

MULTI-TRACK PROCESSING. A system that divides incoming FOI requests according to their complexity, so that simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track, and more complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.

PARTIAL GRANT/PARTIAL DENIAL. When a government office is able to disclose portions of the records in response to an FOI request, but must deny other portions of the request.

PENDING REQUEST OR PENDING APPEAL. An FOI request or administrative appeal for which a government office has not yet taken final action in all respects. It captures anything that is open at a given time including requests that are well within the statutory response time.

PERFECTED REQUEST. An FOI request, which reasonably describes the records sought and is made in accordance with the government office's regulations.

PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE. Information made publicly available by government agencies without waiting for a specific FOI request. Government agencies now post on their websites a vast amount of material concerning their functions and mission.

PROCESSED REQUEST OR PROCESSED APPEAL. The number of requests or appeals where the agency has completed its work and sent a final response to the requesting party.

RECEIVED REQUEST OR RECEIVED APPEAL. An FOI request or administrative appeal that an agency has received within a fiscal year.

REFERRAL. When a government office locates a record that originated with, or is of otherwise primary interest to another agency, it will forward that record to the other agencies to process the record and to provide the final determination directly to the requesting party. This process is called a “referral.”

SIMPLE REQUEST. An FOI request that an agency anticipates will involve a small volume of material or which will be able to be processed relatively quickly.

SECTION 4. PROMOTION OF OPENNESS IN GOVERNMENT

1. Duty to Publish Information. The DAR shall regularly publish, print, and disseminate at no cost to the public and in an accessible form, in conjunction with RA 9485, or the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007, and through their website, timely, true, accurate, and updated key information including, but not limited to:

- a. A description of its mandate, structure, powers, functions, duties and decision-making processes;
- b. A description of the frontline services it delivers, and the procedure and length of time by which they may be availed of;
- c. The names of its key officials, their powers, functions and responsibilities, and their profiles and curriculum vitae;
- d. Work programs, development plans, investment plans, projects, performance targets and accomplishments, and budgets, revenue allotments and expenditures;
- e. Important rules and regulations, orders or decisions;
- f. Current and important database and statistics that it generates;
- g. Bidding processes and requirements; and
- h. Mechanisms or procedures by which the public may participate in or otherwise influence the formulation of policy or the exercise of its powers.

2. Accessibility of Language and Form. The DAR shall endeavor to translate key information into major Filipino languages and present them in popular forms and means.

3. Keeping of Records. The DAR shall create and/or maintain in appropriate formats, accurate and reasonably complete documentation or records, policies, transactions, decisions, resolutions, enactments, actions, procedures, operations, activities, communications and documents received or filed with them, and the data generated or collected.

SECTION 5. PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

While providing for access to information, the DAR shall afford full protection to a person’s right to privacy, as follows:

- a. The DAR shall ensure that personal information, particularly sensitive personal information, in its custody or under its control is disclosed only as permitted by existing laws;
- b. The DAR shall protect personal information in its custody or under its control by making reasonable security arrangements against unauthorized access, leaks or premature disclosure;
- c. The FRO, FDM, or any employee or official who has access, whether authorized or unauthorized, to personal information in the custody of the DAR, shall not disclose that information except as authorized by existing laws.

SECTION 6. STANDARD PROCEDURE *(See Annex "D" for flowchart)*

1. Receipt of Request for Information.

- 1.1** The FOI Receiving Officer (FRO) shall receive the request for information from the requesting party and check compliance of the following requirements:

- The request must be in writing;
- The request shall state the name and contact information of the requesting party, as well as provide valid proof of identification or authorization; and
- The request shall reasonably describe the information requested, and the reason for, or purpose of, the request for information. (See **Annex "E"**)

The request can be made through email, provided that the requesting party shall attach in the email a scanned copy of the FOI application request, and a copy of a duly recognized government ID with photo.

- 1.2** In case the requesting party is unable to make a written request, because of illiteracy or due to being a person with disability, he or she may make an verbal request, and the FRO shall reduce it in writing.
- 1.3** The request shall be stamped received by the FRO, indicating the date and time of the receipt of the written request, the name, rank, title and position of the public officer who actually received it, with a corresponding signature and a copy, furnished to the requesting party. In case of email requests, the email shall be printed out and shall follow the procedure mentioned above, and be acknowledged by electronic mail. The FRO shall input the details of the request on the Request Tracking System and allocate a reference number.
- 1.4** The DAR or any of its bureaus and offices must respond to requests promptly, within the fifteenth (15) working day following the date of

receipt of the request. A working day is any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or a day which is declared a national public holiday in the Philippines. In computing for the period, Article 13 of the New Civil Code shall be observed.

The date of receipt of the request will be either:

- a. The day on which the request is physically or electronically delivered to the government office, or directly into the email inbox of a member of staff; or
- b. If the government office has asked the requesting party for further details to identify and locate the requested information, the date on which the necessary clarification is received.

An exception to this will be where the request has been emailed to an absent member of the staff, and this has generated an 'out of office' message with instructions on how to re-direct the message to another contact. Where this is the case, the date of receipt will be the day the request arrives in the inbox of that contact.

Should the requested information need further details to identify or locate, then the 15 working days will commence the day after it receives the required clarification from the requesting party.

2. Initial Evaluation. After receipt of the request for information, the FRO shall evaluate the contents of the request.

2.1. Request relating to more than one office under the DAR: If a request for information received requires to be complied with, by different bureaus and offices, the FRO shall forward such request to the said bureau and office concerned and ensure that it is well-coordinated, and monitor its compliance. The FRO shall also clarify with the respective FROs of such bureaus and offices that they will only provide the specific information that relates to their agencies, bureaus and offices.

2.2. Requested information is not in the custody of the DAR or any of its bureaus and offices: If the requested information is not in the custody of the DAR or any of its bureaus and offices, following referral and discussions with the FDM, the FRO shall undertake the following steps:

- If the records requested refer to another department, the request will be immediately transferred to such appropriate department

through the most expeditious manner and the transferring office must inform the requesting party that the information is not held within the fifteen (15) working day limit. The fifteen (15) working day requirement for the receiving office commences the day after it receives the request.

- If the records refer to an office not within the coverage of E.O. No. 2, the requesting party shall be advised accordingly and provided with the contact details of that office, if known.

2.3. Requested information is already posted and available on-line:

Should the information being requested is already posted and publicly available on the DAR website (www.dar.gov.ph), data.gov.ph or foi.gov.ph, the FRO shall inform the requesting party of the said fact and provide them the website link where the information is posted.

2.4. Requested information is substantially similar or identical to the previous request: Should the requested information be substantially similar or identical to a previous request by the same requesting party, the request shall be denied. However, the FRO shall inform the applicant of the reason of such denial.

3. Transmittal of Request by the FRO to the FDM: After receipt of the request for information, the FRO shall evaluate the information being requested, and notify the FDM of such request. The copy of the request shall be forwarded to such FDM within one (1) day from receipt of the written request. The FRO shall record the date, time, and name of the FDM who received the request in a record book with the corresponding signature of acknowledgement of receipt of the request.

4. Role of FDM in processing the request: Upon receipt of the request for information from the FRO, the FDM shall assess and clarify the request, if necessary. He or she shall make all necessary steps to locate and retrieve the information requested. The FDM shall ensure that the complete information requested be submitted to the FRO within ten (10) days upon receipt of such request.

The FRO shall note the date and time of receipt of the information from the FDM and report to the DAR Secretary or the designated Undersecretary or Assistant Secretary, or Heads of bureaus and offices, in case the submission is beyond the ten (10)-day period.

If the FDM needs further details to identify or locate the information, he shall, through the FRO, seek clarification from the requesting party. The clarification shall stop the running of the fifteen (15) working day period

and will commence the day after it receives the required clarification from the requesting party.

If the FDM determines that a record contains information of interest to another office, the FDM shall consult with the agency concerned on the disclosability of the records before making any final determination.

5. Role of FRO to transmit the information to the requesting party:

Upon receipt of the requested information from the FDM, the FRO shall collate and ensure that the information is complete. He shall attach a cover/transmittal letter signed by the DAR Secretary or the designated Undersecretary or Assistant Secretary, or Heads of bureaus and offices concerned, and ensure the transmittal of such to the requesting party within fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of the request for information.

6. Request for an Extension of Time: If the information requested requires extensive search of the government's office records facilities, examination of voluminous records, the occurrence of fortuitous events or other analogous cases, the FDM should inform the FRO.

The FRO shall inform the requesting party of the extension, setting forth the reasons for such extension. In no case shall the extension exceed twenty (20) working days on top of the mandated fifteen (15) working days to act on the request, unless exceptional circumstances warrant a longer period.

7. Notice to the Requesting Party of the Approval/Denial of the Request: Once the FDM approved or denied the request, he shall immediately notify the FRO, who then shall prepare the response to the requesting party either in writing or by email. All actions on FOI requests, whether approval or denial, shall pass through the Department Secretary, or any of his designated Undersecretaries or Assistant Secretaries for final approval.

8. Approval of Request: In case of approval, the FRO shall ensure that all records that have been retrieved and considered is checked for possible exemptions, prior to actual release. The FRO shall prepare the letter or email informing the requesting party within the prescribed period that the request was granted and be directed to pay the applicable fees, if any.

9. Denial of Request: In case of denial of the request, wholly or partially, the FRO shall, within the prescribed period, notify the requesting party of the denial in writing. The notice shall clearly set forth the ground or

grounds for denial and the circumstances on which the denial is based. Failure to notify the requesting party of the action taken on the request within the period herein provided shall be deemed a denial of the request to information. All denials on FOI requests shall pass through the Office of the DAR Secretary, or to his designated Undersecretary or Assistant Secretary.

SECTION 7. REMEDIES IN CASE OF DENIAL

A person whose request for access to information has been denied may avail himself of the remedy set forth below:

1. Administrative FOI Appeal to the DAR's Central Appeals and Review Committee: Provided, that the written appeal must be filed by the same requesting party within fifteen (15) calendar days from the notice of denial or from the lapse of the period to respond to the request.
 - a. Denial of the Appeal by the Heads of the DAR's bureaus and offices may be appealed by filing a written appeal to the DAR's Central Appeals and Review Committee within fifteen (15) calendar days from the notice of denial or from the lapse of the period to respond to the request.
 - b. The Appeal shall be decided by the DAR Secretary upon the recommendation of the Central Appeals and Review Committee within thirty (30) working days from the filing of said written appeal. Failure to decide within the thirty (30)-day period shall be deemed a denial of the Appeal.
 - c. The denial of the Appeal by the DAR Secretary or the lapse of the period to respond to the request may be appealed further to the Office of the President under A.O. No. 22, Series of 2011.
2. Upon exhaustion of administrative FOI appeal remedies, the requesting party may file the appropriate judicial action in accordance with the Rules of Court.

SECTION 8. REQUEST TRACKING SYSTEM

The DAR shall establish a system to trace the status of all requests for information received by it, which may be paper-based, on-line, or both.

SECTION 9. FEES

1. **No Request Fee.** The DAR shall not charge any fee for accepting requests for access to information.

2. Reasonable Cost of Reproduction and Copying of the Information:

The FRO shall immediately notify the requesting party in case there shall be a reproduction and copying fee in order to provide the information.

Such fee shall be the actual amount spent by the DAR in providing the information to the requesting party. The schedule of fees shall be posted by the DAR.

3. Exemption from Fees: The DAR may exempt any requesting party from payment of fees, upon request stating the valid reason why such requesting party shall not pay the fee.


SECTION 10. ADMINISTRATIVE LIABILITY

1. Non-compliance with FOI. Failure to comply with the provisions of this Manual shall be a ground for the following administrative penalties:

- a. 1st Offense - Reprimand;
- b. 2nd Offense - Suspension of one (1) to thirty (30) days; and
- c. 3rd Offense - Dismissal from the service.

2. Procedure. The Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service shall be applicable in the disposition of cases under this Manual.

3. Provisions for More Stringent Laws, Rules and Regulations. Nothing in this Manual shall be construed to derogate from any law, any rules, or regulation prescribed by any body or agency, which provides for more stringent penalties.


CONRADO M. ESTRELLA III
Secretary
Department of Agrarian Reform



ANNEX “A”

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 02

**OPERATIONALIZING IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH THE PEOPLE’S
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND THE STATE POLICIES
TO FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE PUBLIC
SERVICE AND PROVIDING GUIDELINES THEREFOR**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article 28, Article II of the 1987 Constitution, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest, subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law;

WHEREAS, Section 7, Article III of the Constitution guarantees the right of the people to information on matters of public concern;

WHEREAS, the incorporation of this right in the Constitution is a recognition of the fundamental role of free and open exchange of information in a democracy, meant to enhance transparency and accountability in government official acts, transactions, or decisions;

WHEREAS, the Executive Branch recognizes the urgent need to operationalize these Constitutional provisions;

WHEREAS, the President, under Section 17, Article VII of the Constitution, has control over all executive departments, bureaus and offices, and the duty to ensure that the laws be faithfully executed;

WHEREAS, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173), including its implementing Rules and Regulations, strengthens the fundamental human right of privacy, and of communication while ensuring the free flow of information to promote innovation and growth;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and existing laws, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. Definition. For the purpose of this Executive Order, the following terms shall mean:

(a) "Information" shall mean any records, documents, papers, reports, letters, contracts, minutes and transcripts of official meetings, maps, books, photographs, data, research materials, films, sound and video recording, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data, computer stored data, any other like or similar data or materials recorded, stored or archived in whatever format, whether offline or online, which are made, received, or kept in or under the control and custody of any government office pursuant to law, executive order, and rules and regulations or in connection with the performance or transaction of official business by any government office.

(b) "Official record/records" shall refer to information produced or received by a public officer or employee, or by a government office in an official capacity or pursuant to a public function or duty.

(c) "Public record/records" shall include information required by laws, executive orders, rules, or regulations to be entered, kept and made publicly available by a government office.

SECTION 2. Coverage. This order shall cover all government offices under the Executive Branch, including but not limited to the national government and all its offices, departments, bureaus, offices, and instrumentalities, including government-owned or -controlled corporations, and state universities and colleges. Local government units (LGUs) are encouraged to observe and be guided by this Order.

SECTION 3. Access to information. Every Filipino shall have access to information, official records, public records and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development.

SECTION 4. Exception. Access to information shall be denied when the information falls under any of the exceptions enshrined in the Constitution, existing law or jurisprudence.

The Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General are hereby directed to prepare an inventory of such exceptions and submit the same to the Office of the President within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of effectivity of this Order.

The Office of the President shall thereafter, immediately circularize the inventory of exceptions for the guidance of all government offices and instrumentalities covered by this Order and the general public.

Said inventory of exceptions shall periodically be updated to properly reflect any change in existing law and jurisprudence and the Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General are directed to update the inventory of exceptions as the need to do so arises, for circularization as hereinabove stated.

SECTION 5. Availability of SALN. Subject to the provisions contained in Sections 3 and 4 of this Order, all public officials are reminded of their obligation to file and make available for scrutiny their Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations, and the spirit and letter of this Order.

SECTION 6. Application and Interpretation. There shall be a legal presumption in favor of access to information, public records and official records. No request for information shall be denied unless it clearly falls under any of the exceptions listed in the inventory or updated inventory of exceptions circularized by the Office of the President provided in the preceding section. The determination of the applicability of any of the exceptions to the request shall be the responsibility of the Head of the Office, which is in custody or control of the information, public record or official record, or the responsible central or field officer duly designated by him in writing.

In making such determination, the Head of the Office or his designated officer shall exercise reasonable diligence to ensure that no exception shall be used or availed of to deny any request for information or access to public records, or official records if the denial is intended primarily and purposely to cover up a crime, wrongdoing, graft or corruption.

SECTION 7. Protection of Privacy. While providing access to information, public records, and official records, responsible officials shall afford full protection to the right to privacy of the individual as follows:

- (a) Each government office per Section 2 hereof shall ensure that personal information in its custody or under its control is disclosed or released only if it is material or relevant to the subject matter of the request and its disclosure is permissible under this order or existing law, rules or regulations;
- (b) Each government office must protect personal information in its custody or control by making reasonable security arrangements against leaks or premature disclosure of personal information, which unduly exposes the individual, whose personal information is requested, to vilification, harassment or any other wrongful acts.
- (c) Any employee, official or director of a government office per Section 2 hereof who has access, authorized or unauthorized, to personal information in the custody of the office, must not disclose that information except when authorized under this order or *pursuant to* existing laws, rules or regulation.

SECTION 8. People's Freedom to Information (FOI) Manual. For the effective implementation of this Order, every government office is directed to prepare within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the effectivity of this

Order, its own People's FOI Manual, which shall include among others the following provisions:

- (a) The location and contact information of the head, regional, provincial, and field offices, and other established places where the public can obtain information or submit requests;
- (b) The person or office responsible for receiving requests for information;
- (c) The procedure for the filing and processing of the request as specified in the succeeding section 9 of this Order.
- (d) The standard forms for the submission of requests and for the proper acknowledgment of requests;
- (e) The process for the disposition of requests;
- (f) The procedure for the administrative appeal of any denial for access to information; and
- (g) The schedule of applicable fees.

SECTION 9. Procedure. The following procedure shall govern the filing and processing of request for access to information:

- (a) Any person who requests access to information shall submit a written request to the government office concerned. The request shall state the name and contact information of the requesting party, provide valid proof of his identification or authorization, reasonably describe the information requested, and the reason for, or purpose of, the request for information: *Provided*, that no request shall be denied or refused acceptance unless the reason for the request is contrary to law, existing rules and regulations or it is one of the exceptions contained in the inventory or updated inventory of exception as hereinabove provided.
- (b) The public official receiving the request shall provide reasonable assistance, free of charge, to enable, to enable all requesting parties and particularly those with special needs, to comply with the request requirements under this Section.
- (c) The request shall be stamped by the government office, indicating the date and time of receipt and the name, rank, title and position of the receiving public officer or employee with the corresponding signature, and a copy thereof furnished to the requesting party. Each government office shall establish a system to trace the status of all requests for information received by it.
- (d) The government office shall respond to a request fully compliant with requirements of sub-section (a) hereof as soon as practicable but not exceeding fifteen (15) working days from the receipt thereof. The response mentioned above refers to the decision of the agency or office concerned to grant or deny access to the information requested.
- (e) The period to respond may be extended whenever the information requested requires extensive search of the government office's records facilities, examination of voluminous records, the occurrence of fortuitous cases or other analogous cases. The government office shall

notify the person making the request of the extension, setting forth the reasons for such extension. In no case shall the extension go beyond twenty (20) working days unless exceptional circumstances warrant a longer period.

(f) Once a decision is made to grant the request, the person making the request shall be notified of such decision and directed to pay any applicable fees.

SECTION 10. Fees. Government offices shall not charge any fee for accepting requests for access to information. They may, however, charge a reasonable fee to reimburse necessary costs, including actual costs of reproduction and copying of the information required, subject to existing rules and regulations. In no case shall the applicable fees be so onerous as to defeat the purpose of this Order.

SECTION 11. Identical or Substantially Similar Requests. The government office shall not be required to act upon an unreasonable subsequent identical or substantially similar request from the same requesting party whose request from the same requesting party whose request has already been previously granted or denied by the same government office.

SECTION 12. Notice of Denial. If the government office decides to deny the request, in whole or in part, it shall as soon as practicable, in any case within fifteen (15) working days from the receipt of the request, notify the requesting party the denial in writing. The notice shall clearly set forth the ground or grounds for denial and the circumstances on which the denial is based. Failure to notify the requesting party of the action taken on the request within the period herein stipulated shall be deemed a denial of the request for access to information.

SECTION 13. Remedies in Cases of Denial of Request for Access to Information.

(a) Denial of any request for access to information may be appealed to the person or office next higher in the authority, following the procedure mentioned in Section 9 of this Order: Provided, that the written appeal must be filed by the same person making the request within fifteen (15) working days from the notice of denial or from the lapse of the relevant period to respond to the request.

(b) The appeal be decided by the person or office next higher in authority within thirty (30) working days from the filing of said written appeal. Failure of such person or office to decide within the afore-stated period shall be deemed a denial of the appeal.

(c) Upon exhaustion of administrative appeal remedies, the requesting part may file the appropriate case in the proper courts in accordance with the Rules of Court.

SECTION 14. Keeping of Records. Subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations, government offices shall create and/or maintain accurate and reasonably complete records of important information in appropriate formats, and implement a records management system that facilitates easy identification, retrieval and communication of information to the public.

SECTION 15. Administrative Liability. Failure to comply with the provisions of this Order may be a ground for administrative and disciplinary sanctions against any erring public officer or employee as provided under existing laws or regulations.

SECTION 16. Implementing Details. All government offices in the Executive Branch are directed to formulate their respective implementing details taking into consideration their mandates and the nature of information in their custody or control, within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Order.

SECTION 17. Separability Clause. If any section or part of this Order is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force or effect.

SECTION 18. Repealing Clause. All orders, rules and regulations, issuances or any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Executive Order are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly: *Provided*, that the provisions of Memorandum Circular No. 78 (s. 1964), as amended, shall not be deemed repealed pending further review.

SECTION 19. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect immediately upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

DONE, in the City of Manila, this 23rd day of July in the year of our Lord two thousand and sixteen.

(Sgd.) **RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE**
President of the Philippines

By the President:

(Sgd.) **SALVADOR C. MEDIALDEA**
Executive Secretary

ANNEX “B”

FOI Receiving Officers of DAR and its Bureaus/Services and Offices

Name of Bureau/Service and Offices	Location of FOI Receiving Office	Contact Details	Assigned FOI Receiving Officer
a) Office of the Secretary (OSEC)	5 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	osec.secretariat@dar.gov.ph	Mayer Kristylle T. Pimentel
b) Office of Undersecretary for Foreign Assisted and Special Project Office (FASPO)	4 th Floor, FASPO Bldg., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usecberniefcruz@gmail.com	Jules Victor Espinas
c) Office of the Undersecretary for Support Services Office (SSO)	4 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usec.sso@dar.gov.ph	Hannah Frances Padilla
d) Office of the USec. for Policy, Planning & Research Office (PPRO)	2 nd Floor, FASPO Bldg., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usec.ppro@dar.gov.ph	Socorro Muffet Manahan
e) Office of the Undersecretary for Field Operations Office (FOO)	5 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	ufoo.oversight.agencies@gmail.com	Nelia Bueno
f) Office of Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Office (LAO)	5 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usec.lao@dar.gov.ph	Jocelyn C. Tabago
g) Office of the USec for FMAO	4 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usec.fmao@dar.gov.ph	Glynise Kaye Ijiran
h) Office of the USec. for Special Concern	5 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	usecsconcerns.secretariat@dar.gov.ph	Asmera Pangcoga
i) Office of the ASec for SSO	Ground Floor, FASPO Bldg, DAR Compound,	(02) 89254125 asec.sso@dar.gov.ph	Mary Ann Quiambao

	Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC		
j) Office of the Asec for FOO	5 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	asec2016foo@gmail.com	Reynolito Apolinar
k) Office of the Asec for LAO	DAR Annex Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	dar.aseclao@gmail.com	Oscar Santos
l) Office of the Asec for FMAO	2 nd Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	asecfmao.secretariat@dar.gov.ph	Chelsea Ledesma
m) Office of the Asec for FASPO	Annex Bld., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	afaspo.secretariat@dar.gov.ph	Vincent Ramos
n) Public Assistance and Media Relations Service (PAMRS)	2 nd Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	(02) 89286821 pamrscrd.foi@gmail.com	Teofilo Marco Legaspi Jr.
o) Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) Secretariat	4 th Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.parcsec@dar.gov.ph	Leonor Parial
p) Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB)	DAR Annex Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	09667812068 09610074462 darabsecretariat.helpdesk@gmail.com	Dante Lagan
q) Project Management Service (PMS)	1 st Floor, FASPO Bldg., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	darpmms2017@gmail.com	Severina Jubac
r) Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development (BARBD)	3 rd Floor, DAR Main Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.barbd@dar.gov.ph	Ted Adrian Damole
s) Bureau of Land Tenure & Improvement	Annex Bldg, DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.blti@dar.gov.ph	Marivic Bidaure

t) Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance (BALA)	3 rd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	09564960231 bala.communications.2020@gmail.com	Lailani Cortez
u) Legal Service (LS)	2 nd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	darcolegalservice2014@gmail.com	Jose Villanes Jr.
v) Planning Service (PS)	3 rd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.pps@dar.gov.ph	Ma. Victoria Sevillano
w) Policy and Research Service (PRS)	3 rd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.prs@dar.gov.ph	Garland Leila A. Cuarteros
x) Agrarian Reform Capacity Development Service (ARCDs)	2 nd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	arcds.dar@gmail.com arcdsod.secretariat@dar.gov.ph	Geraldine Sumatra
y) Administrative Service (AS)	1 st Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.adserve.dar@gmail.com	Sheila Imperial
z) Finance and Management Service	3 rd Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.fms@dar.gov.ph	Debbie Manaog
aa) Management Information System Service (MISS)	4 th Floor, FAPSO Bldg., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.miss@dar.gov.ph	Estrelita Tierra Leo Wishly Sapunto
bb) Internal Audit Division (IAD)	5 th Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	director.iad.osec@dar.gov.ph	Jake Campued
cc) External Affairs and Relations Service (EARS)	Annex Bld., DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC	ears.dar@gmail.com	Rowena Vasquez

Name of Regional Offices	Location of FOI Receiving Office	Contact Details	Assigned FOI Receiving Officer
dd) Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR)	#55, Bokawkan Road, (Corner Bokawkan-Guisad Road) Baguio City	(074) 4225873 4454497 rd.car@dar.gov.ph	Teresa Sebian-Domingo
ee) Region 1–Ilocos Region	Northgate Square, Añes Building, Carlatan, San Fernando City, La Union 2500	(072) 7005770 7005771 rd.01@dar.gov.ph	Noemi R. Biligan
ff) Region 2–Cagayan Valley	Regional Government Center, Carig Sur 2500 Tuguegarao City	(078) 3960699 3969710 rd.02@dar.gov.ph	Anthony V. Teofilo
gg) Region 3–Central Luzon	Pedmar Building, Dolores San Fernando City, Pampanga	(045) 9615008 9615561 rd.03@dar.gov.ph	Marita M. Rocha
hh) Region 4a–CALABARZON	3/F FAPsO Building, DARCO, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City	(02) 84269315 rd.04a@dar.gov.ph	Mario P. Lopez
ii) Region 4b–MIMAROPA	MIS Building, DARCO, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City	(02) 82549596 82570932 rd.04b@dar.gov.ph	Rocma M. Macarasam
jj) Region 5–Bicol Region	Lakandula Drive, Gogon, Legaspi City, Albay 4500	(052) 7426754 rd.05@dar.gov.ph parpomiles13@gmail.com	Christian C. Confesor
kk) Region 6–Western Visayas	3rd Street, Lawaan Village, Balantang, Jaro, Iloilo City	(033) 3290775 5032823 rd.06@dar.gov.ph	Leena Faith Villanueva
ll) Region 7–Central Visayas	Ground Floor, Legislative Building, Cebu Provincial Capitol Compound, Escario Street, Cebu City, Cebu 6000	(032) 2536913 rd.07@dar.gov.ph darrecosec7@yahoo.com	Alan B. Tudtud

mm) Region 8– Eastern Visayas	Sto. Niño Extension, Tacloban City, Leyte	(053) 8323223 rd.08@dar.gov.ph	Jose Alsmith Soria
nn) Region 9– Zamboanga Peninsula	Joicel Building, Tumaga, Zamboanga City	(062) 9550659 9550657 rd.09@dar.gov.ph	Socorro Reambonanza
oo) Region 10– Northern Mindanao	Macanhan, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro, 9000 Misamis Oriental	(088) 8581104 rd.10@dar.gov.ph ardaed10@yahoo.com	Apolinario J. Banaag
pp) Region 11– Davao Region	Km. 12, Catalunan Pequeno, Davao City	(082) 2930336 3212135 rd.11@dar.gov.ph ard1.11@dar.gov.ph	Rosario S. Maala
qq) Region 12– SOCCSKSARGEN	ORG Compound, Cotabato City	(064) 5521563 4213006 rd.12@dar.gov.ph	Levi G. Perales
rr) Region 13– CARAGA	CTP Building, Km.4, JC Aquino Highway, Libertad, Butuan City, Caraga	(085) 8156371 rd.caraga@dar.gov.ph records_darro13@yahoo.com	Grian D. Damarillos

ANNEX “C”

EXCEPTIONS TO THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

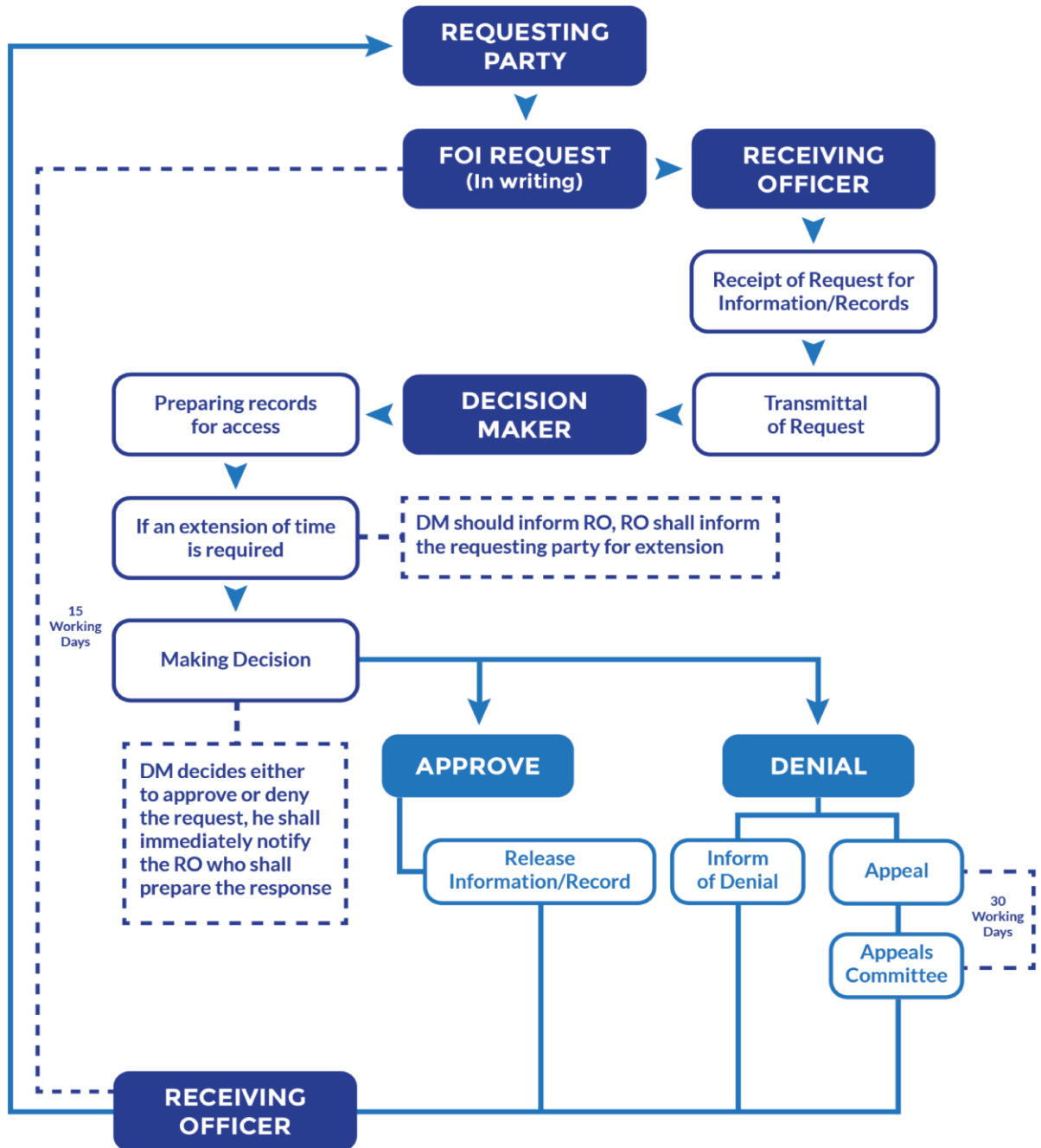
For the guidance of all government offices and instrumentalities covered by EO No. 2 (s. 20160) and the general public, the following are the exceptions to the right of access to information, as recognized by the Constitution, existing laws, or jurisprudence:¹

1. Information covered by Executive privilege;
2. Privileged information relating to national security, defense or international relations;
3. Information concerning law enforcement and protection of public personal safety;
4. Information deemed confidential for the protection of the privacy of persons and certain individuals such as minors, victims or crimes, or the accused;
5. Information, documents or records known by reason of official capacity and are deemed confidential, including those submitted or disclosed by entities to government agencies, tribunals, boards, or officers, in relation to the performance of their functions, or to inquiries or investigation conducted by them in the exercise of their administrative, regulatory or quasi-judicial powers;
6. Prejudicial premature disclosure;
7. Records of proceedings or information from proceedings which, pursuant to law or relevant rules and regulations, are treated as confidential or privileged;
8. Matters considered confidential under banking and finance laws, and their amendatory laws; and
9. Other exceptions to the right of information under laws, jurisprudence, rules and regulations.

¹ These exceptions only apply to governmental bodies with the control and supervision of the Executive department. Unless specifically identified, these exceptions may be invoked by all officials, officers, or employees in the Executive branch in possession of the relevant records or information. For the complete list of the Inventory of Exceptions to Executive Order (EO) No. 2, s. 2016 issued by the Office of the Executive Secretary, you may download the softcopy at bit.ly/foipco.

ANNEX “D”

FOI Request Flow Chart



ANNEX "E"

FOI Request Form

DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

PORMULARYO NG KAHILINGAN (FOI)

FOI Request Form

TITULO NG DOKUMENTO / (Title of the Document):

MGA TAON/PANAHONG SAKLAW / (Year):

LAYUNIN / (Purpose):

PANGALAN / (Name):

CONTACT Nos.

LAGDA / (Signature):

PETSA / (Date):

TIRAHAN / (Address):

KATIBAYAN NG PAGKAKAKILANLAN / (Proof of Identity):

PARAAN NG PAGTANGGAP NG IMPORMASYON/
(How would you like to receive the information?)

Passport No. _____
Driver's License _____
Other _____

- ☐ Email _____
☐ Fax _____
☐ Postal Address _____
☐ Pick-up (Office hours) _____

Gawaing itinalaga kay:

(Submitted to)

(Lumagda sa ibaba ng pangalang nakalimbag)

Petsa/Oras ng Pagkatalaga:

(Date / Time of Submission)

Taong nagpapatunay ng Gawaing Natapos:

(Certified by)

(Lumagda sa ibaba ng pangalang nakalimbag)

Uri ng isinagawang aksiyon:

(Type of action conducted)

Iniskedyul ni / (Received by):

FOI Receiving Officer

Remarks:

ANNEX “F-1”

FOI RESPONSE TEMPLATE - DOCUMENT ENCLOSED

DATE

Dear _____,

Greetings!

Thank you for your request dated _____ under Executive Order No. 2 (s. 2016) on Freedom of Information in the Executive Branch.

Your request

You asked for _____.

Response to your request

Your FOI request is approved. Please find enclosed a copy of _____ of the information you requested [in the format you asked for]

Thank you.

Respectfully,

FOI Receiving Officer

ANNEX “F-2”

FOI RESPONSE TEMPLATE - ANSWER

DATE

Dear _____,

Greetings!

Thank you for your request dated _____ under Executive Order No. 2 (s. 2016) on Freedom of Information in the Executive Branch.

Your request

You asked for _____.

Response to your request

Your FOI request is approved. The answer to your request is _____.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

FOI Receiving Officer

ANNEX “F-3”

FOI RESPONSE TEMPLATE - DOCUMENT AVAILABLE ONLINE

DATE

Dear _____,

Greetings!

Thank you for your request dated <insert data> under Executive Order No. 2 (s. 2016) on Freedom of Information in the Executive Branch.

Your request

You asked for <quote request exactly, unless it is too long/complicated>.

Response to your request

[Some/Most/All] of the information you have requested is already available online from <add details of where that specific information can be obtained e.g. data.gov.ph, foi.gov.ph or other government websites>.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to <insert name of Secretary and postal / e-mail address>. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within thirty (30) calendar days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with result of the review, you have the right to appeal to the Office of the President under Administrative Order No. 22 (s. 2011).

Thank you.

Respectfully,

FOI Receiving Officer

ANNEX “F-4”

FOI RESPONSE TEMPLATE - DOCUMENT NOT AVAILABLE

DATE

Dear _____,

Greetings!

Thank you for your request dated _____ under Executive Order No. 2 (s. 2016) on Freedom of Information in the Executive Branch.

Your request

You asked for _____.

Response to your request

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance this Office does not have [some of]* the information you have requested. However, you may wish to contact _____ at _____. Who may be able to help you. The reasons why we don't have the information are explained in the Annex to this letter.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to _____ and postal / e-mail address _____. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within thirty (30) calendar days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with result of the review, you have the right to appeal to the Office of the President under Administrative Order No. 22 (s. 2011).

Thank you.

Respectfully,

FOI Receiving Officer

ANNEX “F-5”

FOI RESPONSE TEMPLATE – UNDER EXCEPTIONS

DATE _____

Dear _____,

Greetings!

Thank you for your request dated _____ under Executive Order No. 2 (s. 2016) on Freedom of Information in the Executive Branch.

Your request

You asked for <quote request exactly, unless it is too long/complicated>.

Response to your request

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance we are unable to provide _____ of the information you have requested because an exception(s) under section(s) _____ of the List of Exceptions applies to that information. The reasons why that exemption(s) applies are explained in the Annex to this letter.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to <insert name of Secretary and postal / e-mail address>. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within thirty (30) calendar days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with result of the review, you have the right to appeal to the Office of the President under Administrative Order No. 22 (s. 2011).

Thank you.

Respectfully,

FOI Receiving Officer

ANNEX "G"



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
Tanggapang Pampanguluhan sa Operasyong Komunikasyon
Ermita, City of Manila

FOI-MC No. 21- 05

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

FOR : ALL AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, BUREAUS, OFFICES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH INCLUDING GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND/OR CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS (GOCCS), STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCS), AND LOCAL WATER DISTRICTS (LWDS)

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON THE REFERRAL OF REQUESTED INFORMATION, OFFICIAL RECORD/S AND PUBLIC RECORD/S TO THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT AGENCY OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "NO WRONG DOOR POLICY FOR FOI"

WHEREAS, Executive Order (EO) No. 02, s. 2016 was issued by President Rodrigo Roa R. Duterte to operationalize the Constitutional Right of Access to Information, and Policy of Full Public Disclosure in the Executive Department;

WHEREAS, Memorandum Order (MO) No. 10, s. 2016 designated the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) as the lead agency in the implementation of EO No. 02, s. 2016;

WHEREAS, Department Order No. 18, s. 2017, issued by the PCOO, created the Freedom of Information – Project Management Office (FOI-PMO) to exercise the mandate of MO No. 10, s. 2016;

WHEREAS, in order to ensure the policy of the President to have an open, transparent and accountable government, it is the mandate of the PCOO to develop programs and mechanisms to enhance the capacity of government agencies to comply with the FOI program;

WHEREAS, there is a need to break the prevailing "silo system" and lack of interconnection among government agencies, with the end goal of a government acting as a singular unit serving its primary client, its citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of PCOO's mandate to develop programs and mechanism to ensure compliance with the FOI program, particularly on addressing the issue regarding the referral of any requested information, official record/s, or public record/s to the appropriate government agency, these rules are hereby prescribed and promulgated for the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned:

Section 1. Purpose. – This rule seeks to set guidelines for the referral of any requested information, official record/s, or public record/s to the appropriate government agency by another agency which does not have in its possession or custody the requested information or records, or is not authorized to release the information to the public.

Section 2. Coverage. – This Order shall cover all government agencies under the Executive branch implementing the FOI Program, pursuant to EO No. 2, s. 2016 and all other related issuances, and applies to both paper-based and electronic form of requesting information.

Section 3. Request for Information. – Any person who requests for access to information shall comply with Section 9 of EO No. 02, s. 2016 and all other pertinent laws, existing rules and regulations, issuances, and orders. For purposes of this rule, information and records shall refer to information, official record/s, or public record/s as defined under EO No. 02, s. 2016.

Section 4. Acceptance of request. – As a general rule, all fully compliant requests for information shall be accepted by the FOI Receiving Officer (FRO) and FOI Decision Maker (FDM). No request for information shall be denied or refused acceptance by a government office unless the reason for the request is contrary to the Constitution, pertinent laws, existing rules and regulations, or it is one of the exceptions provided under the Inventory of Exceptions.

Section 5. Process of Referral. – When the requested information is not in the possession of a government agency (government agency no. 1 or GA1), but is available in another government agency (government agency no. 2 or GA2) under the Executive Branch, the request shall be immediately referred by GA1 to GA2 through the most expeditious manner but not exceeding three (3) working days from the receipt of the request. This shall be considered as the **"First Referral"** and a fresh period will apply.

Referral to the appropriate government agency shall mean that another government office is the proper repository or custodian of the requested information or records, or have control over the said information or records.

If GA1 fails to refer the request within three (3) working days upon its receipt, the FRO shall act on it within the remaining period to respond pursuant to EO No. 02, s. 2016. No fresh period shall apply.

If GA1, in good faith, erroneously referred the request to GA2, the latter shall immediately notify the former as well as the requesting party, that the information requested is not available in their agency.

GA2, to whom the request was referred under the First Referral may subsequently refer the request to another government agency (government agency no. 3 or GA3) under the procedure set forth in the first paragraph of this Section. This shall be considered as the “**Second Referral**” and another fresh period shall apply.

Referrals under this Order shall only be limited to two (2) subsequent transfers of request. A written or email acknowledgement of the referral shall be made by the FRO of the government agency where it was referred.

The requesting party shall be notified of the referral and must be provided with the reason or rationale thereof, and contact details of the government office where the request was referred.

Section 6. FOI Internal Messenger. - The FOI-PMO shall create a “**FOI Internal Messenger**”. Such feature shall be included in the dashboards of FROs and FDMs, located at the eFOI portal or www.foi.gov.ph, where all FROs and FDMs can ask or confirm with each other on which agency has the control and custody of any information or record being requested.

Please see Annex “A” of this Circular for the No Wrong Door Policy Flowchart.

Section 7. Status of the Request. – A request that is referred to the appropriate government agency is considered **successful** if the same is acknowledged and the requested information is disclosed to the requestor.

If GA3, after the second referral, still cannot provide the information requested, it shall deny the said request and shall properly notify the requesting party.

In all phases of the referral, the requesting party shall be informed in writing, email, and/or through the eFOI of the status of his/her request.

Section 8. Inventory of Receiving Officers and Decision Makers, and Agency Information Inventory. – For the convenience of all FROs and FDMs

in implementing this Circular, an inventory of the names and contact details of all designated FROs and FDMs of government agencies, and an Agency Information Inventory (AII) shall be compiled by the FOI-PMO.

The FOI-PMO shall be the central repository of the inventory of all designated FROs and FDMs and shall collate and update the names and contact information of the designated FROs and FDMs of each government agency. The inventory shall be posted at the eFOI portal, www.foi.gov.ph. FOI-PMO shall strictly adhere to Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

To assist the FROs in locating the requested information or record, an annual updating of the AII shall be required of all agencies on-boarded on the eFOI Portal. The consolidated inventory of information shall likewise be made available in the dashboard of the FRO and FDM for ease of access and information.

Section 9. Separability Clause. If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Memorandum Circular is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 10. Repealing Clause. All orders, rules and regulations, memoranda, circulars, and issuances or any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum Circular are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

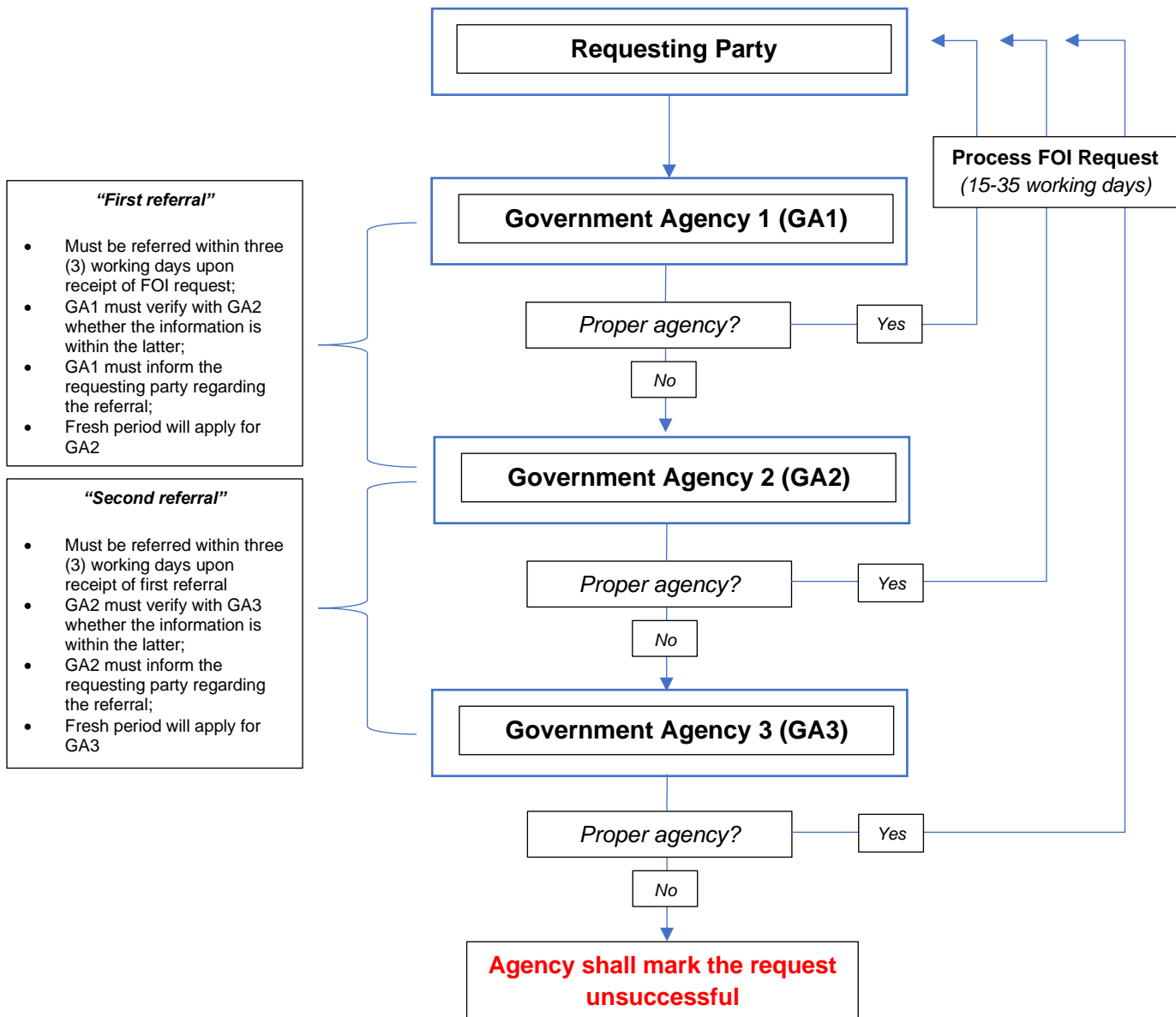
Section 11. Effectivity. This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

Manila, Philippines, 27th day of August 2021.


JOSE RUPERTO MARTIN M. ANDANAR
Secretary and FOI Champion

Annex A

NO WRONG DOOR POLICY FLOWCHART



NOTE:

If GA1 fails to refer the request within three (3) working days upon its receipt, the FOI Receiving Officer (FRO) shall act on it within the remaining period to respond pursuant to EO No. 2, s. 2016. No fresh period shall apply.