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Human Rights Commission

8th January, 2026

Press Release
For Immediate Release

GUIDANCE TO INFORMATION HOLDERS ON PROGRESSIVE COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

The Human Rights Commission hereby guides all information holders to intensify efforts towards full compliance with the Access to Information (ATI) Act, No. 24 of 2023.

The ATI Act came into force on 25th June, 2024, following the issuance of the Commencement Order under Statutory Instrument No. 35 of 2024, published in the Government Gazette by the Minister of Information and Media in accordance with section 1 of the ATI Act.

Pursuant to section 41 of the ATI Act, information holders were granted a two-year progressive compliance period, running from 25th June, 2024 to 25th June, 2026, to align their systems, processes and records management practices with the requirements of the ATI Act. The purpose of this compliance period is to afford information holders adequate time to organise, maintain and make information accessible in formats that facilitate every person's constitutional right to access information.

At the very minimum, information holders are required to proactively disclose basic institutional information, either electronically through digital platforms or in print. This includes information on institutional structures, establishment, mandates and functions, contact details and any other relevant information intended to enhance public access to services.

At the expiry of the compliance period on 25th June, 2026, the Commission shall commence the enforcement of administrative penalties against information holders that fail to comply with the provisions of the ATI Act. Information holders include all public institutions, as well as private entities and non-state actors that utilise public funds or are in possession of information of significant public interest.

After extensive stakeholder consultations and validation processes, the Access to Information Regulations, issued under Statutory Instrument No. 56 of 2025, were published in the Government Gazette on 29th August, 2025, pursuant to section 40 of the ATI Act. Additionally, on 5th December, 2025, the Commission published the Access to Information Guidelines in the Government Gazette through Gazette Notice No. 1624 of 2025, in accordance with section 38 of the ATI Act. These Regulations and Guidelines are intended to assist information holders understand and fulfil their obligations under the ATI Act, while also guiding information requesters on their rights and procedures for accessing information.

To support effective compliance, information holders are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the provisions of the ATI Act, which is freely accessible on both the National Assembly website (www.parliament.gov.zm) and the Human Rights Commission website (www.hrc.org.zm). Soft copies of the Regulations and the Guidelines are also freely accessible on the Commission's website: www.hrc.org.zm. The Commission remains available to provide further guidance in relation to the provisions of the ATI Act.

(Original Signed)

Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo
Chairperson
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION