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ASSESSING INFORMATION DISCLOSURE PRACTICES FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) COMPLIANCE AID-FOI TOOL

The Iloilo State College of Fisheries (ISCOF) in its implementation of the Freedom of Information (FOI) pursuant to Executive Order No. 2, s. 2016, needs to conduct self-assessment regularly. Self-assessment can help the College improve the FOI practices, procedures and compliance.

On this regard, the Assessing Information Disclosure Practices for FOI (AID-FOI) Compliance Tool developed by Michael P. Canares of Step Up Consulting Services in partnership with the Philippine Government's FOI Project Management Office shall be adopted effective FY 2022.

This AID-FOI Tool is a survey to be accomplished by FOI Receiving Officers (FROs) to determine the capacity and performance of agencies and to assess whether the conditions within an agency are appropriate for FOI mechanisms to be effective.

A set of indicators to assess FOI implementation revolves around the following essential components.

- 1) Leadership
The success of FOI programs is influenced by the commitment of agency leaders in ensuring that necessary systems, processes, and resources are in place for FOI mechanism to work.
- 2) Rules
Rules and regulations ensure that standard ways of working are followed in the process of handling and responding to information requests.
- 3) System
Systems are set of formal and informal processes that enable the agency to function. Access to information requires different systems and processes – from how requests are entertained to how they are responded to.
- 4) Resources
Resources make possible the functioning of FOI systems. Equipment and technology make possible the timely and relevant response to information requests.
- 5) Monitoring
Monitoring the implementation of rules and regulations, the functioning of systems and the application of appropriate resources is critical to ensure that the FOI mechanism is achieving its desired objectives.

THE AID-FOI QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (optional) _____ Date _____

Designation/s _____ ISCOF Campus in : _____

Note: The agency in this questionnaire refers to **ISCOF**.

Element 1: Leadership

Indicator 1: Level of commitment of agency leaders to institutionalize FOI within the agency.

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Applicable
Agency leaders (top or middle managers) provide guidance to the team implementing the FOI (e.g. attending meetings of the FOI team, responding to their questions, issuing directives to support FOI implementation within the agency).					
Agency leaders (top or middle managers) provide resources for successful FOI implementation (e.g. annual financial budget, people to implement FOI, necessary equipment).					
Agency leaders (top or middle managers) provide timely decisions on FOI matters (e.g. approval of requests, directives to personnel for compliance).					
Agency leaders (top or middle managers) provide motivation to the FOI implementation team in the agency to encourage successful FOI implementation (e.g. giving encouragement or recognizing the FOI team's work).					
Agency leaders (with authority regarding agency policy) actively participate in the crafting of the agency's FOI guidelines.					
Agency leaders (with authority regarding agency policy) reviews compliance to FOI guidelines.					
Agency leaders (with authority regarding agency policy) initiate a review of agency policy when certain inefficiencies are observed.					
Comments					
Means of Verification (e.g. minutes of meetings, agency budget, interoffice communication, policy pronouncements)					

Element 2: Strategic and Policy Framework, Guidelines and Performance

Indicator 2: Presence of whole-of-agency policy, strategy, guidelines and procedures regarding FOI implementation.

	Yes	No	NA	Comments
The agency's strategic plan includes provisions related to FOI implementation (e.g. transparency, access to information).				
The agency has issued specific guidelines for FOI (e.g. FOI manual).				
The agency FOI guidelines are accessible to all in digital format and downloadable from the agency's website.				
The agency FOI guidelines are accessible to all in hardcopy and available to citizens.				
The agency FOI guidelines have very specific provisions on:				
a. How FOI will be implemented				
b. Who is responsible for its implementation				
c. How citizens can request information				
d. How long requests can be processed				
e. How citizens can complain if their request is not responded to				
The agency policy has been disseminated to all officials within the agency.				
Agency employees handling data and information are all oriented with how the agency policy works.				
The agency has disseminated the FOI policy to all its customers/ constituents.				
The agency has proactively informed all its customers/constituents about the policy.				
The agency has written guidelines for receiving FOI requests, including				
a. Determining what constitutes a request				
b. Providing acknowledgment of receipt				
c. Assisting the requester				
The agency has written guidelines for processing requests, including:				
a. Coordination within the agency in responding to the request				
b. Timeframes				
c. Cost determination				
d. Fee collection (when applicable)				
e. Transfer of request from one office in the agency to another (when applicable)				
f. Transfer of request to another agency (when applicable)				
The agency has written guidelines for responding to requests (e.g. granting or denying), including:				
a. Process for determining release of information				
b. Means for providing the requested information				
c. Means for providing notice of denial				
d. Reason for denial of information requested				

	Yes	No	NA	Comments
The agency has written procedures for logging in and tracking requests and responses, including:				
a. Updating the log/tracker to keep it current				
b. Tracking a request in one central recording system				
c. Detailing the request from submission to processing to resolution, including transfers and internal reviews				
The agency has written guidelines for the internal review of FOI requests, including:				
a. Receiving requests for review				
b. Reviewing agency's rationale for initial decisions				
c. Issuing findings and decisions				
The agency has written procedures on processing requests, including:				
a. Identifying who in the agency holds the information				
b. Searching and finding information				
c. Determining release				
d. Deciding on redactions				
e. Deciding on denials				
The agency has written procedures in transferring requests to other agencies, including:				
a. Identifying the correct agency				
b. Transferring the requests				
c. Providing notice of transfer to the requester				
The agency has written procedures for issuing and servicing responses, including:				
a. Provision of requested documents				
b. Notice and collection of fees where applicable				
c. Sending notices of denial				
d. Sending notices of the requester's right to appeal				
The agency has written procedures in capturing the following information				
a. Number of requests				
b. Number of transfers				
c. Number of denials				
d. Reasons for denial				
e. Number of days to respond to requests				
The agency has written procedures on proactive disclosure (i.e. not just responding to FOI requests but providing information to citizens on a regular basis), including:				
a. Identifying and listing documents that will be proactively disclosed				
b. How the documents will be disclosed (e.g. website, notice boards)				
c. Regularity in the disclosure of the data				
d. Format of the document when disclosed (e.g. PDF, MS Word, spreadsheet)				
e. People responsible for the disclosure process				
f. Publishing information that is frequently requested through the FOI channel				

	Yes	No	NA	Comments
The agency has record management policy in dealing with paper-based information.				
The agency has record management policy in dealing with digital information.				
The agency has written guidelines in record management (regardless of format), including:				
a. Creating records				
b. Organizing records				
c. Storing records/preserving records				
d. Retaining records				
e. Securing records				
f. Retrieving records				
g. Accessing records				
The agency has written guidelines in records security, including:				
a. Determining classification				
b. Internal access to classified documents				
c. Transmission of classified documents				
d. Creation of index or other forms of identifying classified documents				
The agency has written guidelines and procedures in managing paper records, including:				
a. Creation				
b. Records organization				
c. Inventory				
d. Indexing and logging				
e. Access permission				
f. Retention and disposal				
The agency has written guidelines and procedures in managing digital records, including:				
a. Creation				
b. Records organization				
c. Inventory				
d. Indexing and logging				
e. Access permission				
f. Retention and disposal				
The agency's data management system is decentralized.				
Access to the agency's data is available for everyone working in the organization.				
Means of Verification				
<p>Note: In the comments column, indicate how this policy, procedure or guideline, has been implemented, the reasons for your answer.</p>				

Element 3: Structure, Systems, and Resources

Indicator 3: Presence and functioning of structures and systems to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of FOI implementation.

	Yes	No	NA	Comments
One or more agency official has been appointed to handle FOI implementation.				
One or more agency official has been informally tasked to handle FOI implementation.				
The agency officials handling FOI implementation are also doing other functions besides ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of FOI implementation.				
The agency officials handling FOI implementation have the authority and mandate to perform their functions.				
The names of agency officials tasked to handle FOI implementation are made known to the public.				
The agency official/s tasked to handle FOI implementation has/have				
a. The time required to fulfill his/her function				
b. The staff needed to fulfill his/her function				
c. The financial resources needed to fulfill his/her function				
The official/s tasked to handle FOI implementation received specialized training on FOI and access to information to effectively do his/her job.				
All agency employees are oriented about the FOI policy and their roles in its implementation.				
All agency employees receive regular information about the progress of FOI implementation within the agency.				
The agency has training materials related to the agency's FOI guidelines, procedures and processes and these are made available to all employees.				
Agency official/s tasked to handle FOI implementation has/have regular access to:				
a. Computers				
b. Stable internet connection				
c. Scanners				
d. Photocopiers				
The agency has created a physical space where citizens can make written FOI requests.				
The agency has created an online space where citizens can make online FOI requests.				
One or more agency official has been appointed to handle proactive disclosure of information.				
One or more agency official has been informally tasked to handle proactive disclosure of information.				
The agency officials handling proactive disclosure functions are also doing other functions besides ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of proactive disclosure mechanisms.				

Element 4: Monitoring

Indicator 4: Presence and functioning of monitoring systems for FOI implementation.

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Applicable
The agency monitors its FOI functions and duties.					
The agency issues FOI implementation reports on a regular basis.					
The agency's internal audit department includes FOI functioning as part of its auditable areas.					
The agency reviews the performance of the personnel assigned to handle FOI implementation to determine how they perform their tasks and functions.					
The agency captures statistics on FOI implementation and discloses this to the public.					
The agency captures statistics on proactive disclosure implementation and makes this available to the public.					
The agency monitors its proactive disclosure practices.					
The agency monitors its records management functions and practices.					
One or more agency official has been appointed to oversee and monitor FOI implementation.					
Comments					
Means of Verification (e.g. minutes of meetings, agency budget, interoffice communication, policy pronouncements)					
Note: (In the comments column, indicate how this policy, procedure or guideline, has been implemented, the reasons for your answer, or a further explanation).					