



## NAMIBIA

**2014** REPORT ON THE MOST OPEN AND SECRETIVE  
GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

## INTRODUCTION

Access to information held by government or public institutions is not easily obtainable. Though freedom of expression and human rights are guaranteed in a democratic Namibia, secrecy prevails, as there is no access to information law or even a government communication policy to guide public service information officers on how and when to communicate with the public.

Rather, Namibia's legal background is primarily designed to encourage secrecy and confidentiality, with apartheid-era legislation, such as the *Protection of Information Act 1982*, still in need of repeal.

Access to information is necessary for the realisation of the basic rights to freedom of opinion and expression that are guaranteed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, numerous other international human rights instruments, and the Namibian Constitution. The Namibian Government is not legally obligated to share or disclose any details regarding their operations and largely acts under a veil of secrecy, unless it decides on its own accord to share information or the information is leaked to the media by whistleblowers. Access to information is also essential for people to realise their basic right to participate in the governing of their country and to live under a system based on the informed consent of the electorate.

Access to information provides the public with the opportunity to report and comment on issues of local interest, which are recognised as critical enablers for empowerment of the poor and for social liberty. An improved information flow and a greater range of communication channels are needed to meet the information needs of the poor and rural citizens, and to advance perspectives in policy discourse.

The right of access to information is also guaranteed by Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which has been further developed by the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa as a fundamental and inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy and development, including socio-economic development.

In addition to the absence of an access to information law, Namibia still does not have legislation protecting whistleblowers, which can act as a deterrent to citizens reporting dishonesty, bribery, and corruption.

New regulations added to the *Research, Science and Technology Act 2004*, which requires government permission to conduct research, further dampened citizens' access to information when inserted in 2013. The Act now defines research as "the systematic investigation or analysis into, and study of, materials, sources and the physical universe in order to establish facts and knowledge and reach conclusions". It also demands that any organisation or individual conducting any activity that could be termed 'research' apply to the government-appointed National Commission of

Research, Science and Technology for permission. The regulations stifle freedom of expression, access to information, and academic freedom.

In September, asserting its right to access public information, the Access to Information (ACTION) Namibia Coalition called on President Hifikepunye Pohamba to release the fourth Delimitation Commission report. The report not only contains recommendations made by the Commission, but also the views expressed during public hearings and direct submissions. The government's decision to create additional constituencies, split the Kavango Region in two, and rename several constituencies and regions is presumably based on the report.

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is in the process of developing an access to information policy, which should precede the drafting of a Bill on access to information. Two new laws that will further impact the public's access to information is the Data Protection Bill and the Cyber Law. It is unclear at this time when these will be enacted. Towards the end of 2014 Namibians will go to the polls to vote in the National Assembly and Presidential Elections.

## RATIONALE AND RESEARCH PARAMETERS

MISA Namibia joined other MISA Chapters in participating in a study to establish the most open and secretive government and public institutions. MISA Namibia selected eight institutions to survey. The survey began on the 16th of June and was concluded on the 16th of July 2014.

The following government and public institutions were surveyed:

1. Roads Contractor Company (RCC)
2. Namibia Housing Enterprise (NHE)
3. National Council (NC)
4. National Planning Commission (NPC)
5. Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (MYNSSC)
6. Ministry Of Health and Social Services (MHSS)
7. Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)
8. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF)

## AIM OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to assess the level of openness in government and public institutions in the country. The results of the study will continue to inform MISA Namibia's campaign for legislation on access to information (ATI).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of transparency in government and public Institutions against international standards and principals on ATI.
- To influence the adoption of practices, laws and a culture that promotes transparency and openness in government and public Institutions.
- To encourage citizens to exercise their fundamental right to access to information generated, held and under the control of government institutions necessary for accessing other socio-economic rights.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, and seeks to evaluate the level of public access to information held by government and public institutions. Each MISA Chapter conducts research by evaluating the websites of government and public institutions along with submitting oral and written requests for information. This method seeks to establish the transparency and efficiency of government and public institutions in providing information to the public.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Category 1:** Evaluation of government and public institution websites to determine the access and presence of credible and updated public information, which includes but is not limited to: powers and functions of the institution in question; vacancy and budgetary allocations; procurement procedures and contact details and reports.

**Category 2:** This category was divided into two sections, namely written questionnaires and oral requests for information. These instruments were adopted to determine the ease with which public information is obtained from government and public institutions.

### Description of Assessment Criteria

The total number of points allocated to categories 1 and 2 is 20 points (n = 20) each. Points are awarded based on the researcher's answer: Yes (2 points); Partial (1 point); No (0 points). Government ministries and institutions fell into one of the following groups in accordance with the number of points that they received.

#### Category 1: Website Analysis

**Group 1: (0 – 6)** Absence of a website or an extremely poor website containing no or almost no relevant public information.

**Group 2: (7 – 13)** Average website containing some relevant public information.

**Group 3: (14 – 20)** Well organised, transparent website providing a good amount of relevant public information.

#### Category 2: Written Request/Oral Request

**Group 1: (0 – 6)** Denied access to reasonable information request or acted with high levels of secrecy.

**Group 2: (7 – 13)** Displayed an average level of openness in allowing access to public information.

**Group 3: (14 – 20)** Displayed openness in allowing access to public information. Institution was helpful and transparent.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

MISA Namibia concluded that most institutions were not reluctant to grant access to information when they were contacted, but failed to eventually respond to the questions sent to them via email, after confirming that they had received the email and would reply in due time. Access to the information of public institutions is primarily reliant on whether public relations officers are efficient in their duties. A special mention must be made of Aina Shikesho, public relations officer at the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture. She paid special attention to our researcher, responding almost immediately and granting the researcher an interview within two days. It was the quickest and most efficient response of all the public institutions. Most websites had all the necessary information needed to make contact, and even though they were not completely up to date, the information was not excessively outdated.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. Roads Construction Company

#### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.rcc.com.na/>

The website was not up to date with recent activities or news feeds, but the information was still relevant, well presented, and useful.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Not working hours
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

**Total Score: 15/20**

#### CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Roads Construction Authority:

- Briefly describe the RCCs mandate.
- What are your main forms of income?
- Which region received the most infrastructure development over the past 24 months?
- Which international quality standards are followed by the RCC?
- Who designs the RCC's annual work plan in terms of infrastructure development nation-wide?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Mr Celsius Edward, Public Relations Clerk
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		Rauna Mumbuu, the Corporate communications officer at RCC sent the researcher this mail: "I guess these questions will be suitable for RA (Roads Authority), they are responsible for designing the country's road network and its development thereof. RCC, we are just a contractor"
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?		•	
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No information was received

**Total Score: 6/20**

## 2. National Housing Enterprise

### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.nhe.com.na/>

The website proved to be informative and well presented. Last year it was not up and running. The website is well organised and useful.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Not the working hours
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

**Total Score: 13/20**

### CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the National Housing Enterprise:

1. What is your budget for 2014/15?
2. How much of this is used for salaries and board fees?
3. What are the cheapest and most expensive housing options available in Windhoek? Please describe the design and location of the houses.
4. How many people are on your waiting list for Windhoek?
5. How long has the 10th person on the list waited for a house?
6. What are some of the challenges faced by NHE to provide affordable housing?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Mr G Gronewalt
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')		•	
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?		•	
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?		•	
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No information was received

**Total Score: 2/20**

### 3. National Council

#### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

[www.parliament.gov.na](http://www.parliament.gov.na)

The National Council is part of Parliament and therefore they share a web address. The section that is provided for the National Council on the webpage provides very little information under the various sub-headings. It is well presented and organised but lacks detailed information. It is also not up to date.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		Last update was in 2011
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?			•	Members are presented but not in an organisational structure, nor are their responsibilities as members of Parliament detailed
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?			•	They have Bills, Acts and Hansards
c) Reports, policies, programs?		•		
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Not the working hours
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?		•		

**Total Score: 7/20****CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION****The following questions were sent to the National Council:**

1. What is the National Council's mandate?
2. Are the National Assembly and the National Council equally important? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Which Bills did the National Council approve in 2013/14?
4. How does the National Council engage with grassroots Namibians?
5. What is National Council's budget for the 2014 financial year and how is it applied?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Momley Amushendje, Public Liaison Officer
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No information was received

**Total Score: 8/20****4. National Planning Commission****CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE****<http://www.npc.gov.na/>**

The website was well presented and very informative. It is useful, well organised and contains relevant information.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			Last updated in 2014
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?	•			
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?		•		
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Working hours unavailable
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

**Total Score: 17/20**

## CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the National Planning Commission:

1. Does the NPC also partake in national campaigns such as national health campaigns, data collection exercises with the NSA or the My Namibia, My Pride Campaign? If so, how?
2. How does the NPC ensure grassroots understanding and participation in its work?
3. What is civil society's role in the achievement of our national development goals?
4. What have been the achievements and challenges in regard to the implementation of NDP4 thus far?
5. How important are international partnerships to achieve our national development goals, e.g. the European Union's partnership with the NPC?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Michael Mutonga, Director: Administration
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		Mr Mutonga replied telephonically
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	He did not reply with information requested
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No information was received

**Total Score: 8/20**



## 5. Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture

### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mynssc.gov.na/>

The website is not very informative, nor is it up to date with current affairs or news feeds. The website is organised and contact details are available.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programs?		•		
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?			•	Employment procedures unavailable
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	The name and job titles of employees are not provided with the telephone numbers, nor are there working hours
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?	•			

**Total Score: 8/20**

### CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture

1. How does the ministry aim to reduce youth unemployment during the 2014/15 budget year?
2. How do you involve the youth when developing strategic plans, policies and action plans?
3. Who is your main target for youth programmes – urban or rural youth?
4. What are the main youth development projects?
5. How do you ensure that gender equality measures are understood and implemented by project coordinators?

(Note: Information was obtained orally; staff were very friendly and helpful. Interview took place with Mr Andrew Jules)

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Aina Shikoshe, Public Relations Officer
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		They replied immediately and granted the researcher an interview in two days
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)	•		

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')	•		
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.	•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	•		

**Total Score: 18/20**

## 6. Ministry of Health and Social Services

### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE <http://www.mhss.gov.na/>

The website is useful and contains relevant information. It is up to date and well organised.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?	•			
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?	•			
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Working hours not available
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?		•		

**Total Score: 15/20**

### CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Health and Social Services:

1. How many state hospitals are there in the country?
2. How many national health campaigns have been planned for 2014 and how many of these have been implemented?
3. What has been the biggest health scare in 2014?
4. How many nurses and doctors are employed by the Ministry of Health and Social Services nationwide?
5. What is the budget for the 2014 financial year and how much is allocated for infrastructural development?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Charles Usurua (researcher was directed to him by Public Relations Officer)
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	Mr Usurua directed the researcher to the Permanent Secretary and advised the researcher to put in a formal request by sending a letter from the researcher's "institution"
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?		•	
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No Information was received

**Total Score: 6/20**

## 7. Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mgecw.gov.na/>

The website is not up to date in terms of its recent activities but its functions were well placed and it contains applicable information, which is useful.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?			•	
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?		•		
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?	•			
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Not the working hours
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?		•		

**Total Score: 12/20**

## CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare:

1. What policies and laws do you use to bring about gender equality?
2. What gender equality projects are being implemented to bring about gender equality?
3. What child grants does the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare have?
4. Briefly describe the work of the ministry in relation to gender based violence (GBV).
5. What are the biggest challenges of the Ministry in achieving its mandate?

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Rosa Nikanor, Public Relations Officer
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?	•		
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?	•		
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.	•		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	•		
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	•		

**Total Score: 16/20**

## 8. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry

### CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

<http://www.mawf.gov.na>

The website is not up to date with recent events and activities, but it is informative and the information is relevant. The Ministry's activities are well placed and it easy to use.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
1. Does this website contain up to date information?		•		Last update: 30 September 2013
2. Does the website contain the following:				
a) A description of its powers, as well as data on the organisational structure, the functions, and the responsibilities of the administration?	•			
b) A list of laws, Acts etc. issued within the scope of its powers?	•			
c) Reports, policies, programs?	•			
d) Budget and expenditure?		•		
e) Information about procurement procedures, signed contracts?		•		
f) Vacancy and employment procedures?	•			

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional Information
g) The name and address, telephone number, and the working hours of the respective institution?			•	Working hours unavailable
h) The contact details of public officials?	•			
i) A mechanism to request and receive a response to electronic messages and requests for information?		•		

**Total Score: 11/20**

## CATEGORY 2: REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The following questions were sent to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs:

- Why does the Ministry have projects that involve the community?
- How many beneficiaries/participants are registered for the ministry's initiatives such as Greensheme, Etunda and community forestry? How many are male and how many are female?
- What skills do they develop by being part of these initiatives?
- How is the sustainability of community-based projects ensured?
- Please share one or two success stories with regard to community involvement in agricultural production.

n = 20	Yes	No	Additional Information
1. Is there an official designated to take and respond to information requests? (Please state title of officials in 'Additional Information')	•		Nekundi Erasmus, Public Relations Executive
2. Did the institution reply within 21 days? (If less than 7 please state in 'Additional Information')	•		Only to confirm they had received the mail and will reply and answer the questions in due time. The questions remained unanswered.
3. Did the Institution respond to a request for information?		•	
4. Does the authority publish their procedures for dealing with information requests?		•	
5. Did the institution provide all of the information requested? (If partially please mark 'No', indicate in 'Additional Information' how much of the information requested was supplied)		•	
6. Did the institution provide written reasons for the refusal of information? (If information was not refused, please contact institution to find out what the policy is in this regard – if they supply written reasons for refusal mark 'Yes')		•	
7. Did the institution disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure etc.		•	
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		•	
9. Did the institution acknowledge your request for information within 7 days?	•		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		•	No information received

**Total Score: 6/20**

## RESEARCH CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is the most open public institution, closely followed by the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture and the National Planning Commission.

The National Housing Enterprise (NHE) and National Council rank the lowest, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry ranking only marginally better.

The NHE also ranked the lowest in last year's research. Important to note however, is that in 2013 their website was under construction during the time of review. This year, they received an average score for their website, but again scored lowest on the request for information.

The National Council and NHE rank the same, but the award will go to the NHE, because the National Council's Public Liaison Officer did respond to our request for information.

Some notable incidents: The Ministry of Health and Social Service's Public Relations Officer referred our researcher to the Senior Health Programme Officer, who directed her to send a formal request to the Permanent Secretary from her academic institution. We did not pursue the issue further, as we were assessing the ability of a member of the public to access information – not an organisation.

The Roads Construction Company's Corporate Communications Officer responded that the questions were more suited for the Roads Authority, also reviewed in 2013, stating that "they are responsible for designing the country's road network and its development thereof. RCC, we are just a contractor." However, they are, in accordance with the information available on their website, a State-owned enterprise.

In 2013, the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) scored second and third place as Most Open Public Institutions, but their score was much lower this year, which could be attributed to a change in staff. At the time of the research, the NPC had no Public Relations Officer (PRO), as they did in 2013, and we were referred to the Director of Administration. At the MAWF, there is currently only a Public Relations Assistant.

## THE MOST SECRETIVE PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN NAMIBIA

The most secretive public institution was found to be the **National Housing Enterprise**.

## THE MOST OPEN PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN NAMIBIA

The most open public institution was found to be the **Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Government needs to employ skilled, competent information officers. At a MISA Namibia facilitated one-day workshop for government Information and Communication Officers on how to constructively engage with the media last year, only one out of nine participants had training as a PRO. Another concern was that a number of the participants needed to be convinced that they are spokespeople for the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and not the ruling party, SWAPO.

Recommendations made by participants included:

- For a Communication Policy to be developed by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, which would provide guidelines to government communicators on how to conduct external communication, in particular with the general public.
- For a consultation meeting to be held between the media and government communicators, in order for both parties to discuss challenges in communication and provide solutions.
- For government communicators to form part of their ministries' management committees. It was highlighted that very few of them are updated on developments within their ministries and are only informed about something when the media calls them for further information, or to get a quote.

MISA Namibia remains committed to ensuring that Namibians' right to access to information is realised through strengthening the ability of public institutions and the media to provide up to date and relevant information to the public, as well as the promotion greater transparency and accountability within government. MISA Namibia also strives to promote multiple channels of communication to facilitate easier access to public information.