



METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS & SEWERAGE SYSTEM

REGULATORY OFFICE

People's Freedom of Information (FOI) Manual

Updated as of 20 January 2021



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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose: The purpose of this Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office ("MWSS RO") People's Freedom of Information ("FOI") Manual (Manual) is to provide the process to guide and assist Filipino citizens in requesting for information under Executive Order (E.O.) No. 2, Series of 2016, on FOI. (**Annexes "A" and "B"**)

1.2 Structure of the Manual: This Manual prescribes the rules and procedures to be followed by the MWSS RO when it receives a request for information ("RFI") (**Annex "C"**). It sets out the definition of relevant terms, standard operating procedures, remedies in the event of a denial of a request, fees, and administrative liabilities for non-compliance.

1.3 Coverage of the Manual: The Manual shall cover all requests for information directed to the MWSS RO under E.O. No. 2, Series of 2016.

1.4 Responsible Officers (Annex "D"):

1.4.1 FOI Champion: The MWSS RO's Chief Regulator shall be the FOI Champion, who shall be responsible for all actions carried out under this Manual. The Chief Regulator shall designate specific officers to act as FOI Receiving Officer ("FRO") and FOI Decision Maker ("FDM"). He shall also designate members of the Central Appeals and Review Committee ("CARC").

The functions of the FOI Champion include overseeing the implementation and compliance of the agency in the FOI program; supervising, leading, directing, and administering the creation and operation of the FOI team of the MWSS RO; and representing the MWSS RO in various boards/commissions/committees/and task forces dealing with FOI policy matters.

1.4.2 FOI Receiving Officer (FRO): The FRO shall preferably come from the Public Information Department ("PID") of the MWSS RO. The FRO shall hold office at the Office of the Chief Regulator ("OCR").

The functions of the FRO shall include receiving on behalf of the MWSS RO all requests for information and forwarding the same to the appropriate office that has custody of the records; monitoring all FOI requests and appeals; providing assistance to the FDM; providing assistance and support to the public and staff with regard to FOI; compiling statistical information as required; conducting an initial evaluation of the request and advising the requesting party whether the request will be forwarded to the FDM for further evaluation; or denying the request.

1.4.3 FOI Decision Makers (FDM): The FDMs shall preferably be composed of one (1) primary FDM from the Office of the Chief Regulator (OCR) and one (1) FDM from each Regulation Area. The FDMs shall evaluate the RFI and have the authority to grant or deny the request.

1.4.4 Central Appeals and Review Committee (CARC): The CARC shall be composed of three (3) officials with a rank not lower than a Department Manager ("DM"). They shall review and analyze the denial of RFIs and provide expert advice to the Chief Regulator as regards such denials. The CARC may recommend new guidelines for denial of RFIs.



SECTION 2: DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **CENTRAL APPEALS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (CARC).** The committee that shall review and analyze the denial of RFIs and provide expert advice to the Chief Regulator on the denial of such requests.
2. **CONSULTATION.** The process where the MWSS RO requests the opinion of another agency when the former locates records containing information of interest to the latter as to whether such records may be disclosed before a final determination is made.
3. **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.
4. **FOI.gov.ph.** The website that serves as the government's comprehensive FOI website for all information on the FOI. It provides a central resource for the public to understand the FOI, to locate records that are already available online, and to learn how information that is not yet publicly available may be requested, among other features. FOI.gov.ph also promotes agency accountability by displaying detailed statistics contained in Annual FOI Reports.
5. **EXCEPTIONS.** Information that should not be released and disclosed in response to RFIs because they are protected by the Constitution, laws, or jurisprudence. (**Annex "E"**)
6. **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, Series of 2016. 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.
7. **FOI DECISION MAKER (FDM).** The officer who evaluates the RFI and has the authority to grant or deny the same.
8. **FOI RECEIVING OFFICER (FRO).** The primary contact in MWSS RO whom a requesting party may contact about FOI matters, including the FOI process or pending RFIs.
9. **FREQUENTLY REQUESTED INFORMATION.** Information released in response to a certain RFI that has become or is likely to become the subject of substantially similar requests in the future.
10. **FULL DENIAL.** When the MWSS RO cannot release any records in response to an RFI for certain reasons which include: 1) the requested information is exempt from disclosure in its entirety or 2) records responsive to the request could not be located.
11. **FULL GRANT.** When the MWSS RO is able to disclose all records in response to an RFI.



12. **INFORMATION.** Any records, documents, papers, reports, letters, contracts, minutes, transcripts of official meetings, maps, books, photographs, data, research materials, films, sound and video recording, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data, computer stored data, and 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 the MWSS RO pursuant to any law, EO, rules and regulations or in connection with the performance or transaction of official business by the MWSS RO.
13. **INFORMATION FOR DISCLOSURE.** Information promoting awareness and understanding of policies, programs, activities, and rules affecting the public, government agencies, and the community and economy. It includes information encouraging familiarity with the general operations, thrusts, and programs of the government. This information may be already made publicly available without a written request in line with the policy of proactive disclosure and open data.
14. **MANUAL.** The MWSS RO's People's FOI Manual.
15. **MULTI -TRACK PROCESSING.** A system that divides incoming RFIs according to their complexity. In processing RFIs, simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one track while the more complex ones are placed in a different track. Requests requiring expedited processing are placed in other separate tracks. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
16. **OFFICIAL RECORD/S.** Information produced or received by a public officer or employee, or by the MWSS RO in an official capacity or pursuant to a public function or duty.
17. **OPEN DATA.** Publicly available data structured in a way that enables its full discovery and use by end users.
18. **PARTIAL GRANT/PARTIAL DENIAL.** When the MWSS RO is able to disclose certain portions of relevant records in response to an RFI, but must deny other portions of the request.
19. **PENDING REQUEST OR PENDING APPEAL.** An RFI or administrative appeal for which the MWSS RO has not yet taken final action. It captures anything that is open at any given time including requests still within the statutory response time.
20. **PERFECTED REQUEST.** An RFI which reasonably describes the records sought and is made in accordance with this Manual.
21. **PERSONAL INFORMATION.** Any information, whether recorded in a material form or not, from which the identity 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.
22. **PROACTIVE DISCLOSURE.** Information made publicly available by the MWSS RO without any RFI.



23. **PROCESSED REQUEST OR PROCESSED APPEAL.** The number of requests or appeals where the MWSS RO has completed its work and sent a final response to the requester.
24. **PUBLIC RECORDS.** Include information required by laws, executive orders, rules, or regulations to be entered, kept, and made publicly available by a government office.
25. **RECEIVED REQUEST OR RECEIVED APPEAL.** An RFI or administrative appeal that the MWSS RO has received within a fiscal year.
26. **REFERRAL.** Process wherein the MWSS RO locates a record that originated from, or is of otherwise primary interest to another agency, it will forward that record to the other agency to process the record and to provide the final determination directly to the requester.
27. **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI).** A written request submitted to the MWSS RO personally or by e-mail (foi@ro.mwss.gov.ph) using the FOI Standard Request Form or electronically through the eFOI Portal.
28. **SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION.** As defined in the Data Privacy Act of 2012, or as may be amended thereafter, shall refer to personal information:
 - a. About an individual race, ethnic origin, marital status, age, color, and religious philosophical or political affiliations;
 - b. 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;
 - c. Issued by government agencies peculiar to an individual which includes, but is not limited to, social security numbers, previous or current health records, licenses or its denials, suspension or revocation, and tax returns; and
 - d. Specifically established by an executive order or an act of Congress to be kept classified.
29. **SIMPLE REQUEST.** An RFI that the MWSS RO anticipates will involve a small volume of material or which will be processed relatively quickly.

SECTION 3. PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

In providing access to information, the MWSS RO shall likewise afford full protection to a person's right to privacy, as follows:

- (1) The MWSS RO shall ensure that personal information, particularly sensitive personal information, in its custody or under its control, is disclosed only as permitted by and pursuant to existing laws;
- (2) The MWSS RO shall protect personal information in its custody or under its control by making reasonable security arrangements against unauthorized access, leaks or premature disclosure;

- (3) The FRO, FDM, or any employee or official who has access, whether authorized or unauthorized, to personal information in the custody of the MWSS RO, shall not disclose that information except as authorized by existing laws.

SECTION 4. STANDARD PROCEDURE (See *Annex "F"* for workflow)

4.1 Receipt of RFI. A requesting party may submit a written request to the MWSS RO personally or by email (foi@ro.mwss.gov.ph) using the Standard Request Form or electronically through the eFOI Portal. The FRO shall receive the RFI and check its compliance with 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 RFI.

Requests can be made through e-mail, provided that a scanned copy of the FOI Standard Request Form and valid proof of identification are attached in the e-mail.

If the requesting party is unable to make a written request, they may make an oral request to the FRO who shall reduce the same in writing. Further, it must be clearly indicated that the request was accomplished by the undersigned FRO because the requesting party was unable to make a written request.

The request shall be stamped received by the FRO, indicating the date and time of the receipt of the written request, and 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 e-mail requests, the e-mail 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.

The MWSS RO shall respond to requests promptly, within fifteen (15) working days 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 public holiday or when a suspension of work is declared. In computing for the period, Art. 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 received by the FRO, or electronically through the MWSS RO FOI e-mail inbox (foi@ro.mwss.gov.ph) or through the eFOI Portal. However, when the e-mail request generates an 'out of office' message with instructions on how to redirect the message to another contact, the date of receipt shall be the day when the specified contact receives the request; or
- (b) If the MWSS RO requests from the requesting party further details to identify and locate the requested information, the fifteen (15) working days shall commence the



day after it receives the required clarification from the requesting party. If no clarification is received within sixty (60) calendar days, the request shall be closed.

4.2 Initial Evaluation. After receipt of the RFI, the FRO shall evaluate the contents of the request subject to the following guidelines.

4.2.1 Requested information is not in the custody of the MWSS RO: If the requested information is not in the custody of the MWSS RO, following referral and discussions with the FDM, the FRO shall undertake the following steps:

- If the records requested refer to another agency, the request shall be immediately transferred to such appropriate agency through the most expeditious manner. The MWSS RO must inform the requesting party that it does not have the information requested within the fifteen (15) working day limit.
- If the records refer to an office not within the coverage of E.O. No. 2, Series of 2016, the MWSS RO shall advise the requesting party and provide the contact details of that office, if known.

4.2.2 Requested information is already posted and available online: If the requested information is already posted and made publicly available in the MWSS RO website (ro.mwss.gov.ph), data.gov.ph or foi.gov.ph, the FRO shall inform the requesting party and provide the URL where the requested information is made available.

4.2.3 Requested information is substantially similar or identical to the previous request: If the requested information is substantially similar or identical to a previous request by the same requester, the request shall be denied. However, the FRO shall communicate the reason for the denial.

4.3 Transmittal of Request by the FRO to the FDM: After receipt of the RFI, the FRO shall subsequently notify the FDM. The copy of the RFI shall be forwarded to such FDM within two (2) days of receipt. 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.

4.4 Role of FDM in processing the request: Upon receipt of the RFI from the FRO, the FDM shall assess and clarify the request, if necessary. They shall make all necessary steps to locate and retrieve the information requested.

If the FDM needs further details to identify or locate the information, they shall, through the FRO, seek clarification from the requesting party. The clarification shall suspend the running of the fifteen (15) working day period and shall resume the day after FRO 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 whether the records may be disclosed before making any final determination. The consultation shall likewise suspend the running of the fifteen (15) working day period and shall resume the day after its conclusion.

4.5 Role of FRO in transmitting 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 and the transmittal of such to the requesting party within fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of RFI.

4.6 Request for an Extension of Time: If the information requested requires extensive search of the MWSS RO's records facilities, examination of voluminous records, the occurrence of fortuitous events, or other analogous cases, the FDM should inform the FRO and provide reasons for extension.

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.

4.7 Notice to the Requesting Party of the Approval/Denial of the Request: Once the request is approved or denied, the FDM shall immediately prepare the written response to the requesting party.

4.8 Approval of Request: In case of approval, the FRO shall ensure that all records for release are properly inventoried and documented prior to such actual release. The FRO shall, within the prescribed period, prepare the letter informing the requesting party of the grant of the RFI and the applicable fees, if any. The letter shall contain the list of documents for release.

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

An RFI shall be denied by the FRO on the following grounds:

- a) Wrong agency or the information is not within the agency;
- b) Invalid request or the RFI is not counted as a valid FOI request; or
- c) The request is identical or substantially similar to a previous request from another requesting party which has been previously denied by the MWSS RO.

An RFI shall be denied by the FDM on the following grounds:

- a) The MWSS RO 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;
- d) The request is identical or substantially similar to a previous request from the same requesting party which has been previously granted or denied by the MWSS RO; or
- e) The RFI is a vexatious request.



SECTION 5. REMEDIES IN CASE OF DENIAL

A requesting party whose RFI has been denied may avail themselves of the remedies set forth below:

- (1) Administrative FOI Appeal to the CARC:
 - a. A requesting party may appeal the denial of their request by filing a written appeal to the CARC within fifteen (15) calendar days from the notice of denial or from the lapse of the period to respond to their request.
 - b. The appeal shall be decided by the CARC within thirty (30) calendar days from the filing of the appeal. Failure to decide within this 30-day period shall be deemed a denial of the appeal.
- (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 6. REQUEST TRACKING SYSTEM

The MWSS RO shall establish a system to trace the status of all the RFIs it has received. The system may be paper-based, online, or both.

SECTION 7. FEES


1. **No Request Fee.** The MWSS RO shall not charge any fee for accepting RFIs.
2. **Reasonable Cost of Reproduction and/or Copying of the Information (Annex "G):** The FRO shall immediately notify the requesting party in case that reasonable reproduction and/or copying fees are needed in order to provide the requested information. The MWSS RO shall not be obliged to reproduce, copy, and/or release the information until it receives full payment of the reproduction and/or copying fees. The fifteen (15) working day period shall be suspended after the notice informing the requesting party of the applicable fees is released and shall resume the day after the FRO receives the Official Receipt evidencing full payment. If no Official Receipt is presented by the requesting party after thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of notice, the request shall be closed.
3. **Exemption from Fees:** The MWSS-RO may excuse the payment of fees upon approval of a written request by the requesting party which contains the reason/s for such exemption.

SECTION 8. 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.

Approved by:



PATRICK LESTER N. TY
Chief Regulator



ANNEX "A"
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 02, S. 2016

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 Section 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 agencies, 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, agencies, 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 RFI 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 RFI

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 RFI: *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.

(d) Each government office shall establish a system to trace the status of all requests for information received by it.

(e) 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. 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) calendar 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 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Your Rights

1. What is Freedom of Information or FOI?

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Program is the Government's response to the call for transparency and full public disclosure of information. FOI is a government mechanism, which allows Filipino citizens to request any information about government transactions and operations, provided that it shall not put into jeopardy – privacy and matters of national security.

The FOI mechanism for the Executive Branch is enabled via Executive Order No.2, series of 2016.

2. What is eFOI?

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Program is the Government's response to the call for transparency and full public disclosure of information. FOI is a government mechanism, which allows Filipino citizens to request any information about government transactions and operations, provided that it shall not put into jeopardy – privacy and matters of national security.

The FOI rules and exceptions also apply to the eFOI platform.

3. What is Executive Order No. 2 S. 2016?

Executive Order (EO) No. 2 s. 2016 is the enabling order for FOI. EO 2 operationalizes in the Executive Branch the People's Constitutional right to information. EO 2 also provides the State policies to full public disclosure and transparency in the public service.

EO 2 is an important enabling mechanism to promote transparency in the government's administrative process. Through FOI, citizens are empowered to make a formal request to get information held by the government, barring certain sensitive and important data related to the nation's security. FOI complements continuing proactive information disclosure efforts where agencies are duty-bound to publish information in the spirit of openness and transparency.

FOI is an integral element of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Good Governance Plan aligned to reforms and initiatives that pursue greater transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance. EO 2 was signed by the President on July 23, 2016.

4. Who oversees the implementation of EO 2?

The Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) oversees the implementation and operationalization of the FOI Program pursuant to Memorandum Order No. 10, s. 2016 issued by the Office of the Executive Secretary. PCOO serves as the coordinator of all government agencies to ensure that the FOI Program is properly implemented.

5. Who can make an FOI request?

Any Filipino citizen can make an FOI Request. As a matter of policy, requestors are required to present proof of identification.

6. What information can I ask through FOI?

Information, official records, public records, and, documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions – as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development.

7. What agencies can I request information from?

An FOI request under EO 2 can be made before all government offices under the Executive Branch, including Government -Owned and/or -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

8. How do I make an FOI request?

The request process slightly varies depending on which platform is used.

FOI Platform:

- a) Place your request in writing by filling out a request form and submit the form to the agency's Receiving Officer (Download the form [here](#)). State your full name and contact information, and provide a valid copy of your government-issued ID as proof of your identity. Describe in detail the document you wish to access.
- b) The Receiving Officer shall validate the request and will log it accordingly on the FOI tracker or registry.
- c) If deemed necessary, the Receiving Officer may clarify the request on the same day it was filed, such as specifying the information requested, and providing other assistance needed by the Requestor.
- d) The request will be forwarded to the Decision Maker for proper assessment. The Decision Maker shall check if the agency holds the information requested, if it is already accessible, or if the request is a repeat of any previous request.
- e) The request shall be forwarded to the officials involved to locate the requested information.
- f) Once all relevant information is retrieved, officials will check if any exemptions apply, and will recommend appropriate response to the request.
- g) If necessary, the head of the agency shall provide clearance to the response.
- h) The agency shall prepare the information for release, based on your desired format. It shall be sent to you depending on the receipt preference.

eFOI Platform:

Like the paper-based FOI platform, requests made through the eFOI platform will be automatically sent to the agencies concerned for immediate processing.

You will be required to create an eFOI account. Through this account, you will see a dashboard of your FOI requests, and the results of your FOI requests.

eFOI Requestors must create/log in to his/her account:

- a) Click the Log-in button and enter the email address and password.

- b) In case the requestor is a new user, click the Sign-up button, and provide the required information.
- c) Once logged-in, the user will be directed to the Dashboard. The Dashboard contains all the requests done by the account owner.
- d) Click the Make a Request button. Once clicked, the user may choose the name of the agency.
- e) User will be directed to the Make a Request Page. Complete the required fields. Once sent, the request will be forwarded to the Receiving Officer of the concerned agency.
- f) The same process of clarification, retrieval, and approval of release applies to the eFOI platform.
- g) Once approved, the response will be posted to the user's Dashboard.

9. Is there a Manual for this FOI program?

Yes, the People's FOI Manual is designed for the general public to guide them in making FOI requests. A People's FOI Manual should include the following:

- 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.

People's FOI Manual

The People's FOI Manual is designed for the general public to guide them in making FOI requests. A People's FOI Manual should include the following:

6.1 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;

6.2 the person or office responsible for receiving requests for information;

6.3 the procedure for the filing and processing of the request as specified in the succeeding section 9 of this Order;

6.4 the standard forms for the submission of requests and for the proper acknowledgment of requests;

6.5 the process for the disposition of requests;

6.6 the procedure for the administrative appeal of any denial for access to information; and,

6.7 the schedule of applicable fees.

Fees

10. How much does it cost to make an FOI request?

There are no fees to make a request. But the agency may charge a reasonable fee for necessary costs, including costs of printing, delivery, reproduction and/or photocopying.

Processing Times

11. What will I receive in response to an FOI request?

You will be receiving a response either granting or denying your request.

If the request is granted, you can expect to receive the documents as an attachment, through the eFOI portal, email, or be requested to collect the documents at the agency you had applied to. If the request is denied, the agency will give an explanation on the denial.

12. How long will it take before I get a response?

The standard processing time is fifteen (15) working days.

13. Can an agency extend the processing time?

Yes. In some instances, an agency may need more time to review your request and thereby extend the processing time. Under such circumstances, an agency will inform you of an extension, which shall not be longer than twenty (20) working days.

14. Can I have my request expedited?

There is no process by which requests can be expedited. All requests will be reviewed equally on a case-by-case basis and allotted the fifteen (15) working-day processing period from the time of receipt.

Complaints Handling

15. What if I'm not satisfied with how the Agency handled my FOI request?

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may write an appeal letter to the person or office next higher in authority (or based on the appeals mechanism published on the FOI manual of the agency) within fifteen (15) calendar days from the receipt of such response. The appeal shall be decided within thirty (30) working days by said person or office next higher in authority.

If all administrative remedies are exhausted and no resolution is provided, you may file the appropriate case in the proper courts in accordance with the Rules of Court.

**Important Information****16. Privacy**

Once deemed valid, your information from your application will be used by the agency you have applied to, to deal with your application as set out in EO 2. If the agency gives you access to a document, and if the document contains no personal information about you, the document will be published online in the agency's disclosure log, along with your name and the date you applied, and, if another person, company or body will use or benefit from the documents sought, the name of that person, entity, or body.

17. Copyright

According to Section 176 of the Intellectual Property Code (RA No. 8293, as amended), no copyright shall subsist in any work of the Government. However, prior approval of the government agency or office wherein the work is created shall be necessary for the exploitation of such work for profit. Such agency or office may, among other things, impose as a condition the payment of royalties. No prior approval or conditions shall be required for the use of any purpose of statutes, rules and regulations, and speeches, lectures, sermons, addresses, and dissertations, pronounced, read or rendered in the courts of justice, before administrative agencies, in deliberative assemblies and in meetings.

g) How do I make an FOI request?

- a. The requestor is to fill up a request form and submits to the agency's Receiving Officer. The Receiving Officer shall validate the request and logs it accordingly on the FOI tracker.
- b. If deemed necessary, the Receiving Officer may clarify the request on the same day it was filed, such as specifying the information requested, and providing other assistance needed by the Requestor.
- c. The request is forwarded to the Decision Maker for proper assessment. The Decision Maker shall check if the agency holds the information requested, if it is already accessible, or if the request is a repeat of any previous request.
- d. The request shall be forwarded to the officials involved to locate the requested information.
- e. Once all relevant information is retrieved, officials will check if any exemptions apply, and will recommend appropriate response to the request.
- f. If necessary, the head of the agency shall provide clearance to the response.
- g. The agency shall prepare the information for release, based on the desired format of the Requestor. It shall be sent to the Requestor depending on the receipt preference.

h) How much does it cost to make an FOI request?

There are no fees to make a request. But the agency may charge a reasonable fee for necessary costs, including costs of printing, reproduction and/or photocopying.

i) What will I receive in response to an FOI request?

You will be receiving a response either granting or denying your request.

If the request is granted, the information requested will be attached, using a format that you specified.

Otherwise, the agency will explain why the request was denied.

j) How long will it take before I get a response?

It is mandated that all replies shall be sent fifteen (15) working days after the receipt of the request. The agency will be sending a response, informing of an extension of processing period no longer than twenty (20) working days, should the need arise.

k) What if I never get a response?

If the agency fails to provide a response within the required fifteen (15) working days, the Requestor may write an appeal letter to the Appeals and Review Committee within fifteen (15) calendar days from the lapse of required response period. The appeal shall be decided within thirty (30) working days by the Appeals and Review Committee.

If all administrative remedies are exhausted and no resolution is provided, requestors may file the appropriate case in the proper courts in accordance with the Rules of Court.

l) What will happen if my request is not granted?

If you are not satisfied with the response, the Requestor may write an appeal letter to the Appeals and Review Committee within fifteen (15) calendar days from the lapse of required response period. The appeal shall be decided within thirty (30) working days by the Appeals and Review Committee.

If all administrative remedies are exhausted and no resolution is provided, requestors may file the appropriate case in the proper courts in accordance with the Rules of Court.

ANNEX "C"

FOI STANDARD REQUEST FORM



METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS & SEWERAGE SYSTEM

REGULATORY OFFICE

Tracking Number: _____

Please read the following information carefully before proceeding with your application. Use blue or black ink. Write neatly and in **BLOCK** letters. Improper or incorrectly-filled out forms will not be acted upon. Tick or mark boxes with "X" where necessary. Note: (◀) denotes a **MANDATORY** field.

A. Requesting Party

You are required to supply your name and address for correspondence. Additional contact details will help us deal with your application and correspond with you in the manner you prefer.

1. Title (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss)	2. Given Name/s (Including M.I.)	3. Surname
◀ _____	◀ _____	◀ _____
4. Complete Address (Apt/House Number, Street, City, Municipality, Province)		
◀ _____		
5. Landline/Fax	6. Mobile	7. E-mail
_____	◀ _____	_____
8. Preferred Mode of Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Landline <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Number <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Address	
	(If your request is successful, we will be sending the documents to you in this manner.)	
9. Preferred Mode of Reply	<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Address <input type="checkbox"/> Pick-Up at Agency	
10. Type of ID Given	<input type="checkbox"/> Passport <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License <input type="checkbox"/> SSS ID <input type="checkbox"/> Postal ID	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Voter's ID <input type="checkbox"/> School ID <input type="checkbox"/> Company ID <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____	
11. Are you applying for exemption from the payment of reproduction fees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Reason/s: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> No.	

B. Requested Information

12. Agency – Connecting Agency (if applicable)	◀ _____	◀ _____
13. Title of Document/Record Requested (Please be as detailed as possible.)	◀ _____	

14. Date or Period (DD/MM/YY)	◀ _____	

15. Purpose	_____	

16. Document Type	◀ _____	

17. Reference Number (if known)	_____	

18. Any other Relevant Information	_____	

Republika ng Pilipinas
Pangasiwaan ng Tubig at Alkantarilyasa Kalakhang Maynila
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Regulatory Office
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105, Philippines

Office of the Chief Regulator 435-8900
Administration and Legal Affairs 435-8902
Customer Service Regulation 435-8903
Financial Regulation 435-8901
Technical Regulation 435-8904

ro.mwss.gov.ph

C. Declaration

Privacy Notice: Once deemed valid, your information from your application will be used by the MWSS-RO to deal with your application as set out in the Executive Order No. 2, Series of 2016 (Freedom of Information). If the MWSS-RO gives you access to a document, and if the document contains no personal information about you, the document will be published online in the MWSS-RO's disclosure log, along with your name and the date you applied, and, if another person, company or body will use or benefit from the documents sought, the name of that person, entity or body.

I declare that:

- The information provided in the form is complete and correct;
- I have read this Privacy Notice; and
- I have presented at least one (1) valid proof of my identity.

I understand that it is an offense to give misleading information about my identity, and that doing so may result in a decision to refuse to process my application, among others.

Signature

Date Accomplished (DD/MM/YY)

D. FOI Receiving Officer (INTERNAL USE ONLY)

Name (Print Name)

Agency – Connecting Agency (if applicable, otherwise N/A)

Proof of ID Presented
(Photocopies of originals should be attached)

☐ Passport ☐ Driver's License ☐ SSS ID ☐ Postal ID
☐ Voter's ID ☐ School ID ☐ Company ID ☐ Others

The request is recommended to be:

☐ Approved ☐ Denied

If Denied, please Tick the Reason for the Denial

☐ Invalid Request ☐ Incomplete ☐ Data already Available Online

☐ Repeated or similar request by the same party ☐ Data Privacy Act

☐ Exception Which exception?

FOI Receiving Officer (FRO) Assigned (Print Name)

FOI Decision Maker (FDM) Assigned to Application (Print Name)

Decision on Application

☐ Successful ☐ Partially Successful ☐ Denied ☐ Cost

If Denied, please Tick the Reason for the Denial

☐ Other Agency ☐ Data Privacy Act ☐ Not an FOI request

☐ Exception Which exception?

Date Request Finished (DD/MM/YY)

Date Documents Sent (DD/MM/YY)

FOI Registry Accomplished

☐ Yes ☐ No

FRO Signature

Date (DD/MM/YY)



ANNEX "D"
FOI OFFICERS OF THE MWSS RO

Designation	Name	Position	Contact Details
Primary FOI Decision Maker (FDM)	Ivan Bernard T. Samson	Head Technical Assistant, OCR	3435-8900 ivan.samson@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FDM	Rosendo O. Alegre	Manager, Complaints Services Monitoring Department, CSRA	3435-8903 rosendo.alegre@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FDM	Maricris T. Laciste	Manager, Water Quality Control Department, TRA	3435-8904 maricris.laciste@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FDM	Rosalinda T. Valdez	Acting Manager, Tariff Control Monitoring Department, FRA	3435-8901 rosalinda.valdez@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FDM	Lawrence Ivan Manalo	Senior Corporate Attorney, Legal Department, ALA	3435-8898 / 3435-8899 lawrenceivan.manalo@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FOI Receiving Officer (FRO)	Ma. Karmela B. Dizon	Secretary, Public Information Department, OCR	3435-8900 karmela.dizon@ro.mwss.gov.ph
FRO	Senior Information Officer	Public Information Department, OCR	3435-8900 foi@ro.mwss.gov.ph
Central Appeals and Review Committee (CARC)			foi@ro.mwss.gov.ph
	Joan Michelle S. Antonio	Manager, Public Information Department, OCR	3435-8900 joanmichelle.antonio@ro.mwss.gov.ph
	Crescenciano B. Minas, Jr.	Manager, Legal Department, ALA	3435-8898 / 3435-8899 crescenciano.minas@ro.mwss.gov.ph
	Joel A. Dominguez	Manager, Operations Monitoring Department, TRA	3435-8904 joel.dominguez@ro.mwss.gov.ph



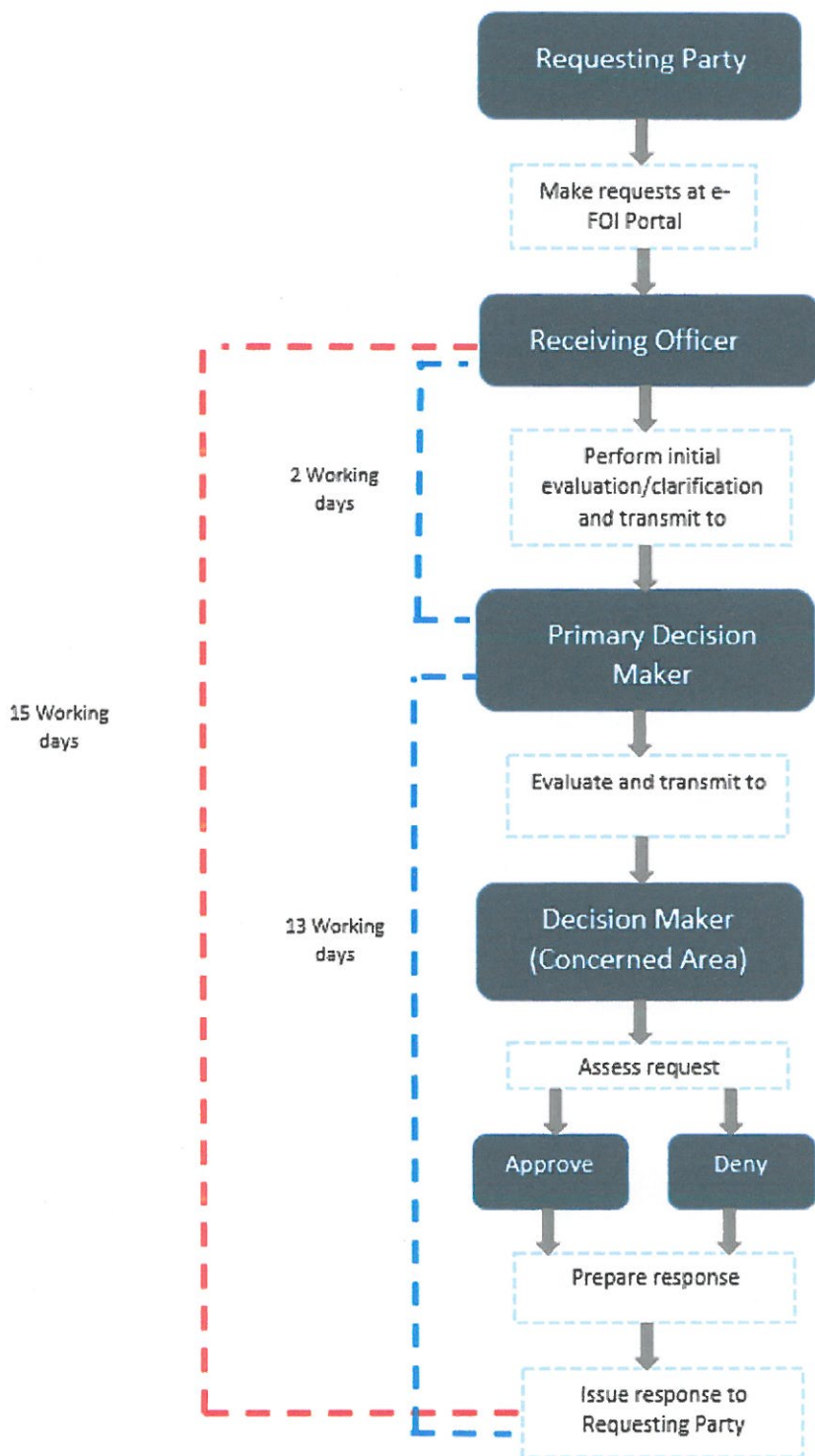
ANNEX "E"
LIST OF EXCEPTIONS TO EO No. 2, S. 2016

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 and personal safety;
4. Information deemed confidential for the protection of the privacy of persons and certain individuals such as minors, victims of crimes, or the accused;
5. Information, documents or records known by reason of official capacity and are deemed as 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 to information under laws, jurisprudence, rules and regulations.

¹These exceptions only apply to governmental bodies within the control and supervision of the Executive department. Unless specifically identified, all officials, officers, or employees in the Executive branch in possession of the relevant records or information may invoke these exceptions.

ANNEX "F-2"
eFOI Request Workflow





ANNEX "G"
SCHEDULE OF FEES

Hard Copies

Black and white – Php 2.00 per page

Colored – Php 10.00 per page

Certified True Copy – Php 20.00 per page

Digital Copies

Digital copies are to be uploaded on the MWSS RO Website or sent via e-mail free of charge (only for available digitized data).