



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KAGAWARAN NG KAPALIGIRAN AT LIKAS NA YAMAN



MEMORANDUM

TO : All Regional Executive Directors
All Bureau Directors
All Heads of Attached Agencies

FROM : The Undersecretary
Legal and Administration

SUBJECT: COMPLIANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

DATE : JUL 10 2025

In line with the Department's commitment to transparency and accountability, and in adherence to Executive Order No. 2, s. 2016 (Operationalizing in the Executive Branch the People's Constitutional Right to Information and the State Policies of Full Public Disclosure and Transparency), all concerned are hereby directed to undertake the following:

1. Dissemination of OP Memorandum Circular No. 15, Series of 2023

All Offices are hereby instructed to disseminate the circular within your respective offices and units. This Circular provides updated guidelines and clarifications on the implementation of the FOI Program across national government agencies. Attached herewith is the copy of the circular and presentation from the FOI Decision Makers Symposium held last for your reference.

2. Establishment or Designation of a Bureau- and Regional-Level FOI Team

All offices are hereby requested to establish a Bureau- and Regional-Level FOI Team, composed of personnel tasked with overseeing and facilitating compliance with FOI requirements within your respective jurisdictions. The team must include a duly designated decision maker authorized to make determinations on FOI matters. Should such an FOI team already exist within your office, kindly submit a copy of the corresponding Special Order.

3. Submission of FOI Implementation Reports

To enhance FOI implementation all offices are likewise requested to submit a comprehensive report detailing any issues encountered,

MEMO NO. 2025 - 656

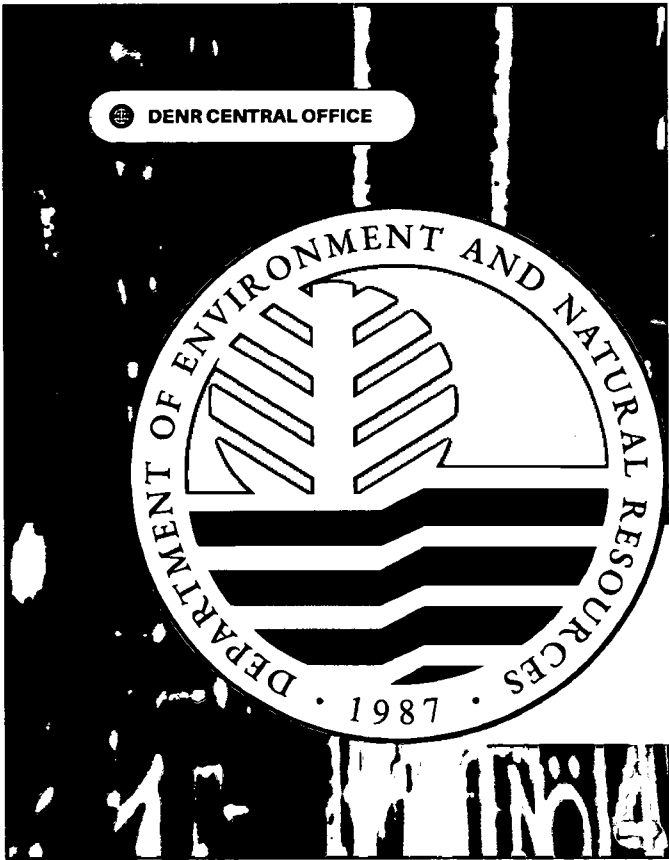
concerns raised, and best practices observed during the course of FOI implementation.

All required submissions must be forwarded on or before 30 September 2025 to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, via email at asec.admin@denr.gov.ph or through the proper official channels.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND COMPLIANCE.



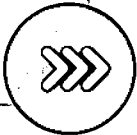
ATTY. ERNESTO D. ADOBO, JR., CESO I



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FOI DECISION MAKERS (FDMS) SYMPOSIUM

RUTH MANIGOS-TAWANTAWAN, CESO II
DENR Assistant Secretary for Administration
and Freedom of Information (FOI) Focal
Person



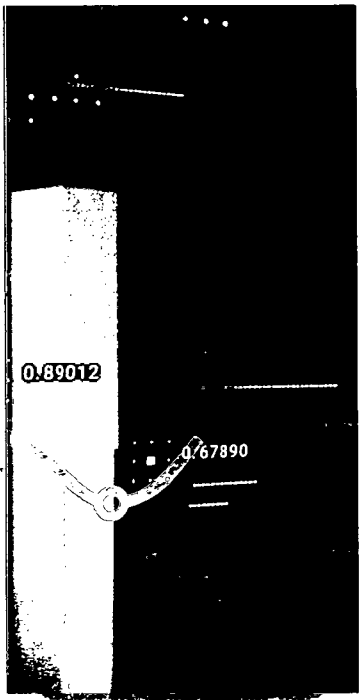
Memorandum Circular 15-2023

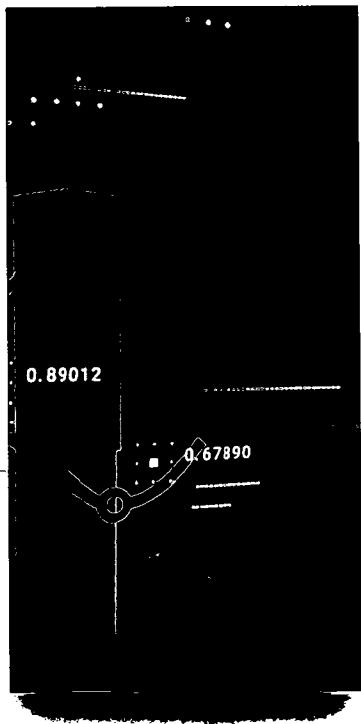
Exceptions to the Right to Information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy



- To safeguard national interests, protect individual rights, and ensure the effective functioning of government institutions:

- ① Information covered by Executive privilege
- ② Privileged information relating to national security, defense, or international relations





Memorandum Circular 15-2023

Exceptions to the Right to Information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy

- To safeguard national interests, protect individual rights, and ensure the effective functioning of government institutions:



Information on law enforcement and protection of public and personal safety



Information deemed confidential for the protection of the privacy of persons, including but not limited to minors, victims of crimes, and individuals under investigation or prosecution



Office of the President
of the Philippines
Malacañang

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 89

UPDATING THE INVENTORY OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE RIGHT TO ACCESS OF INFORMATION UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER (EO) NO. 02, SERIES OF 2016

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 4 of EO No. 02, series of 2016 (EO No. 02), the Office of the President (OP) issued a Memorandum circularizing the inventory of exceptions to the right to access information under EO No. 02 (Inventory of Exceptions) on 24 November 2016;

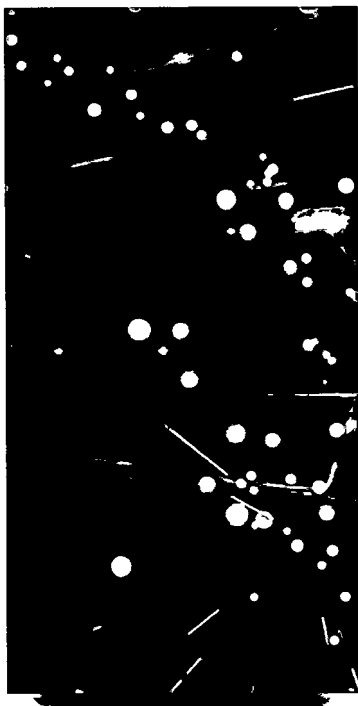
WHEREAS, Section 4 of EO No. 02 directs the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) to update the Inventory of Exceptions as the need to do so arises and the OP to accordingly circularize the same;

WHEREAS, Section 1 of Memorandum Circular No. 49, series of 2018, created the Inter-Agency Freedom of Information Exceptions Policy Committee (IA-FOI-EPC), with the DOJ and the OSG as co-chairs, to review the Inventory of Exceptions and periodically update the same to reflect changes in existing laws and jurisprudence; and

WHEREAS, the IA-FOI-EPC, through IA-FOI-EPC Resolution Nos. 2019-001 and 2021-001, proposed updates to the Inventory of Exceptions;

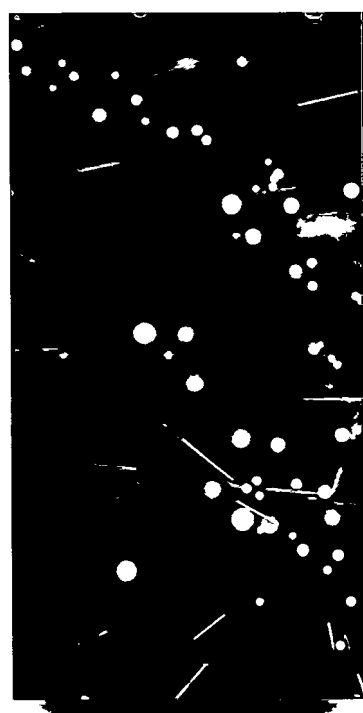
NOW THEREFORE, the attached updated Inventory of Exceptions is hereby circularized for the guidance of all government offices and instrumentalities covered by EO No. 02 and the general public.

FOI
Exceptions
List



FOI Exceptions List

- 1 Information covered by Executive Privilege**
- 2 National Security, Defense or International Relations**
- 3 Law Enforcement & Protection of Public & Personal Safety**
- 4 Confidential Information for the Protection of Privacy of Persons**
- 5 Confidential Information by reason of official capacity**



FOI Exceptions List

- 6 Prejudicial Premature Disclosure**
- 7 Records of Proceedings**
- 8 Confidential Information under banking and finance laws**
- 9 Other exceptions under laws, jurisprudence, and IRR**



FOI and DPA

The Data Privacy Act should NOT BE USED TO RESTRICT access to information that fall within matters of public concern.

Primarily, the Data Privacy Act does not apply to government officers and employees relating to their functions and positions, personal data in relation to government contracts and discretionary benefits given by government



FOI and DPA

The protection of privacy is emphasized in Section 7 of the FOI EO. This is not intended to shield government officials. Rather, this is for the protection of any personal data that may be contained in government records that is not relevant to the FOI request, particularly when it affects private citizens.





BACKGROUND OF FOI AWARDS

- In 2017, the FOI-PMO established the FOI Awards for government agencies and organizations who have made significant contributions to the development and progress of the FOI program in the Executive branch.
- FOI Memorandum Circular No. 6, s. 2017, authorized annual conduct of the FOI Awards.
- PCO Memo Circular No. 25 - 002 (2025 Freedom of Information Awards)



SCREENING COMMITTEE

- The Screening Committee shall be composed of the following: **one (1) representative from the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES)**, who shall also act as the **Chairperson**; **one (1) representative from the PCO**; **two (2) representatives from a NGO and/or CSO**; and **one (1) representative from FOI's Partner Agency**. Each representative shall have **equal voting rights**.

FOI AWARDS 2025



1st
Screening



2nd
Screening



Deliberation



2025 FOI Awards
Resolution

FOI AWARDS 2025

SCREENING AND EVALUATION PROCESS



1st SCREENING

Requirements	Legal Basis
FOI Manual	FOI Memorandum Circular No. 2, s. 2017
2024 FOI Reports	PCO FOI Memorandum Circular 25-001
Onboarding the eFOI Portal	FOI Memorandum Circular No. 3, s. 2017
With at least 95% response rate in processing FOI request <i>* with 10% increase in response rate for this year (2025) will encourage the implementing agencies to continue their good service and strive for a 100% response rate</i>	PCO MC No. 24-003, s. 2024 (Section 7.1. e. with at least 85% response rate in processing FOI request)
No Overdue Pending Requests <i>(as of 30 June 2025)</i>	PCO FOI MC No. 23-02, s. 2023



2nd SCREENING

Criteria	Indicators	Points
Criteria 1: Strategic and Policy Framework, Guidelines and Procedures	<i>Indicator 1:</i> Whole-of-agency policy, strategy, guidelines, and procedures regarding FOI implementation	16%
Criteria 2: Structure, Systems, and Resources	<i>Indicator 2:</i> Functional structures, resources, and systems to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of FOI implementation.	15%
Criteria 3: Reporting Compliance	<i>Indicator 3:</i> Complied with all the set requirements of the FOI Program	11%



2nd SCREENING

Criteria	Indicators	Points
Criteria 4: Response Mechanism	<i>Indicator 4:</i> Accuracy in responding to FOI Requests	45%
Criteria 5: Records Management	<i>Indicator 5:</i> The agency records management system is implied and integrated into its overall performance management system.	10%
Criteria 6: Best Practices	<i>Indicator 6:</i> Integrating best practices into established freedom of information frameworks	3%
TOTAL		100%



MAJOR AWARDS

FOI Champion

Conferred based on the exemplary implementation and performance of the awardees who have incorporated innovative approaches in information management, demonstrated strong commitment to FOI principles of openness and transparency, exhibited quality customer service to Requesting Parties, and promoted proactivity.

FOI Champion Hall of Fame

Special category conferred to FOI Champions who have won for three (3) consecutive years.

FOI Commitment to Excellence Award

Recipients of the FOI Champion Hall of Fame Award in previous years to recognize their consistent commitment to excellence in public service through the FOI Program implementation; Provided that the agency was able to comply with at least 95% of the criteria.



MINOR AWARDS

Plaque of Appreciation

Given to individuals, agencies, institutions, non-government organizations, or civil society organizations who demonstrated **exceptional or significant contribution to the FOI program's progress and development**



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For Central Office, Bureaus and Attached Agencies

- > Disseminate Memorandum Circular No 15 Series of 2023 to the DENR Regional Offices**



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For Central Office, Bureaus and Attached Agencies

- > Strengthen the organizational structure of the Department's Freedom of Information (FOI) Committee**
 - Creation of dedicated FOI Team**



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For Central Office, Bureaus and Attached Agencies

- Update DENR Special Order 2020-508 (Reconstitution of the DENR Freedom of Information Committee) with the inclusion of mandating the committee to screen and regularly update the Department's official list of exempted information pursuant to applicable privilege exemptions under FOI guidelines



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For Central Office, Bureaus and Attached Agencies

- Establish a dedicated FOI Receiving Office to accommodate walk-in or manual requests, strategically located on the Ground Floor to ensure greater public accessibility. This shall include the allocation of appropriate personnel and necessary resources to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of FOI-related services



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For DENR Regional Offices

- **Ensure the immediate and wide dissemination of the Office of the President’s Memorandum Circular No. 15, Series of 2016**



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For DENR Regional Offices

- **Issue a memorandum for the Regional Executive Directors to Regional Special Order to create a Regional FOI Team (from Regional Offices to CENRO level) to formally integrate frontline services with the e-FOI system, ensuring efficient and coordinated FOI response mechanisms at the regional level**



RECOMMENDATIONS

• For DENR Regional Offices

- For the Regional Office to submit any documentation to regional issues and concerns as well as best practices relative to the implementation of FOI policies.



**THANK
YOU!**



Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Administration





Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, 1100
Trunkline (632) 929-66-26 • 929-6628 • 929-6635 • 929-4028 • 929-3618
426-0465 • 426-0001 • 426-0347 • 426-0480 • 426-0491
Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) Trunkline (632) 988-3367
Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph>/E-mail: web@denr.gov.ph

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SPECIAL ORDER

No. 2020 - 508

**SUBJECT : RECONSTITUTION OF THE DENR FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

In the interest of the service and pursuant to Executive Order No. 2, entitled "*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*", the DENR Freedom of Information Committee (FIC) of the DENR is hereby reconstituted as follows:

Chairperson : Undersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources,
and Legislative Affairs

Vice-Chairpersons : Assistant Secretary for Enforcement

Assistant Secretary for Legal

Members : Director, Legal Affairs Service
Director, Internal Audit Service
Director, Knowledge and Information Systems Service
Director, Administrative Service
Chief, Internal Affairs Division
Chief, Records Management Division
Chief, Policy Studies Division
Chief, Program Monitoring and Evaluation Division
Chief, Development Communication Division
Chief, Public Information Division
Chief, Information Systems Division
Chief, Network Infrastructure Management Division
Chief, Statistics and Data Resource Management Division
Representative, EMB
Representative, MGB
Representative, ERDB
Representative, FMB
Representative, LMB
Representative, BMB
Representative, NAMRIA
Representative, LLDA
Representative, NRDC
Representative, NWRB
Representative, PMDC
Representative, PRA
Representative, PCSD


The Committee shall be assisted by the Secretariat to be composed of the following personnel:

1. Mario Bernabe R. Contreras, Jr., Management Division
2. Maribel D. Garcia, Records Management Division
3. Cris Angelo Vispo, Internal Affairs Division

The Committee shall have the following functions:

1. Oversee and ensure the effective implementation of Executive Order No. 2 and the DENR FOI Manual;
2. Conduct periodic review of the provisions of the DENR FOI Manual and to recommend updates and revisions to the Secretary; and
3. Perform other functions as may be provided by law, rules, regulations and other relevant issuances.

This Order shall take effect immediately and supersedes all orders inconsistent herewith.


ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary

