



ACCESS TO INFORMATION MANUAL

March 2025

Table of Contents

FOREWORD	3
1.0 INTRODUCTION	5
2.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT (2017)	7
3.0 AVAILABILITY OF THE MANUAL.....	7
4.0 PURPOSE OF THE INFORMATION MANUAL.....	8
5.0 FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURE OF SFFRFM.....	8
6.0 NAMES AND CONTACTS OF INFORMATION OFFICER.....	13
7.0 INFORMATION FOR DISCLOSURE.....	14
8.0 PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING INFORMATION	17
9.0 HANDLING OF REQUESTS	19
10. TIME FRAME FOR PROCESSING INFORMATION.....	19
12. INTERNAL REVIEW.....	20
14. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	21
15.0 CITIZENS PARTICIPATION	21

16.0 REVIEW OF THE MANUAL21

17.0 FEES..... 22

18.0 APPENDICES.....22

FORM 1: REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION.....23

FORM 5: REQUEST FOR INTERNAL REVIEW OF A DECISION.....28



FOREWORD

This manual was developed as a guide on how members of the public can access information held by Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi (SFFRFM). It describes the information available and provides guidance on the processes and principles governing access to that information.

The manual represents our commitment to transparency and accessibility in all our operations.

ACRONYMS

IO	:	Information Officer
SFFRFM	:	Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi
ATIA	:	Access to Information Act
CEO	:	Chief Executive Office
IIC	:	Institutional Integrity Committee
SOPs	:	Standard Operating Procedures

1.0 INTRODUCTION

SFFRFM is a public institution that was incorporated on 1st April 1988 as a Trust Fund under the Trustee Incorporation Act of 1962 to procure, store, distribute and sell fertilizers to smallholder farmers in Malawi. The Trust Deed of SFFRFM was varied in 2012 to enable the Fund diversify into other business lines. The varied Trust Deed mandates the Fund to buy, process and export agricultural commodities produced by smallholder farmers in Malawi.

The primary role of SFFRFM is to ensure that smallholder farmers have an opportunity to access and buy affordable fertilizer at all times.

To fulfil its mandate, SFFRFM currently operates a network of three (3) regional depots and 55 satellite depots spread across the country.

The objectives of SFFRFM include:

- a. To finance all imports of fertilizers required for use by smallholder farmers in Malawi, including storage, sales and distribution thereof;
- b. To acquire, control, maintain and operate any premises, including the fittings, machinery, equipment, fixture and stocks included therein or necessary therefore to be used for the administration and management of fertilizer supply programme of smallholder farmers in Malawi;

- c. To adopt and implement such procedures as shall ensure the right kind of fertilizer is always be available in sufficient quantities for supply at economic prices to the smallholder farmers throughout Malawi; and
- d. To finance all other acts, matters and things deemed appropriate by the trustees for giving effect to the objects of the Trust.



2.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT (2017)

The Access to Information Act (ATIA) 2017 grants the right to access information held by public and relevant private institutions; establishes processes and procedures related to obtaining that information, and addresses related matters. Furthermore, the ATIA mandates that information holders must create an information manual.

3.0 AVAILABILITY OF THE MANUAL

This manual can be accessed on the following platforms:

Facebook: @Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi

LinkedIn: @Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi

X: @sffrfm

The manual can also be accessed by requesting a copy from the Information Officer (IO) or email infoati@sffrfm.org. It is also readily available at the SFFRFM administration office. If an information seeker faces any challenges using or accessing this manual online, please contact the IO on +265888307438.

4.0 PURPOSE OF THE INFORMATION MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is primarily to outline the procedures for accessing information held by SFFRFM thereby ensuring adherence to ATIA Section 16 (1).

5.0 FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURE OF SFFRFM

a) Governance structure

The Ministry of Agriculture is the line Ministry for SFFRFM, which is a public trust. The Ministry's responsibilities include policy formulation, regulation and enforcement, and provision of technical support.

SFFRFM is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising seven members and three ex-officials who are Secretary for Agriculture, Secretary to Treasury and Secretary for Economic Planning and Development. The Board is further serviced by sub-committees, namely, the Business and Operations Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee and the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee.

b) Operational management

The Executive Management plays a pivotal role in directing SFFRFM's activities. The team comprises of four key positions, including the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Commercial Services and Human Resources and Administration Director.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing the operations of SFFRFM and ensuring that its objectives are met.

The Director of Finance is responsible for managing the Fund's financial activities, including accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting.

The Director of Commercial Services oversees the provision of commercial services and logistics management.

The Human Resources and Administration Director is responsible for managing SFFRFM's administrative and support functions, such as human resources and information technology.

Apart from the functions expressly carried under the three (3) directorates, other functions that report directly to the CEO include:

- i.** Internal Audit and Compliance
- ii.** Information and Communication Technology

- iii.** Procurement and Asset Disposal
- iv.** Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
- v.** Public Relations and Customer Experience

SFFRFM's headquarters is located in Blantyre, which serves as the central hub for the organization's activities. SFFRFM also has regional offices in Chirimba (Blantyre), Kanengo (Lilongwe), and Luwina (Mzuzu), which provide local support to clients and facilitate regional operations.

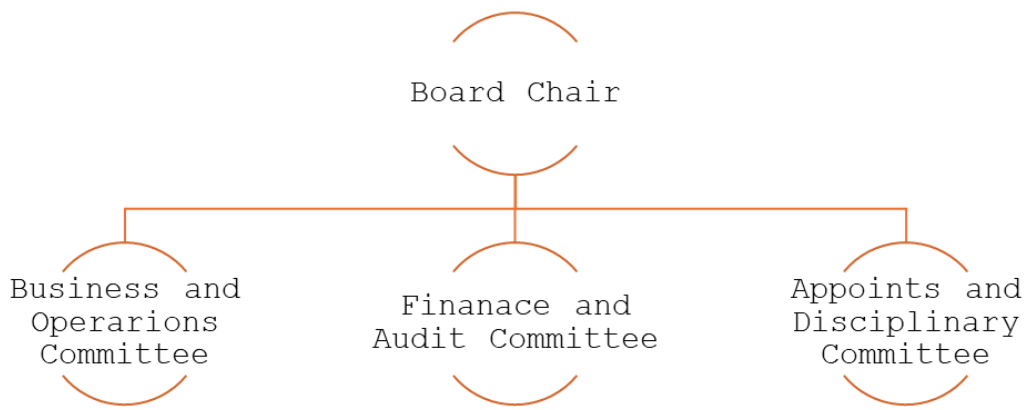


Figure 1: Governance Structure



Figure 2: SFFRFM Management Organogram

6.0 NAMES AND CONTACTS OF INFORMATION OFFICER

Name & Position	Information Officer Designation	Contacts
Grace Thipa	Information Officer	infoati@sffrfm.org +265 888 307 438 Ulimi House P.O. Box 2505 Blantyre.

7.0 INFORMATION FOR DISCLOSURE

This section provides categories of information that the public can access from SFFRFM in accordance with Section 15 of ATIA.

1. Acts and Regulations

- i. The Trust Deed
- ii. The Fertilizer Act
- iii. Public Finance Management Act.
- iv. Public Audit Act
- v. Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act.
- vi. Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act
- vii. Company registration documents
- viii. Guidelines and Policies
- ix. The National Fertilizer Policy

2. Policies

- i. Staff Terms and Conditions of Service
- ii. Code of Conduct
- iii. Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- iv. HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy

- v. Asset Management and Disposal Policy
- vi. Training and Development Policy
- vii. Audit Charter
- viii. Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy
- ix. Communications Policy
- x. Corporate Social Responsibility Policy
- xi. Credit Management Policy
- xii. Gender and Disability Mainstreaming Policy
- xiii. Performance Management Policy
- xiv. Recruitment Policy
- xv. Promotion Policy
- xvi. Safety, Security and Environmental Protection Policy
- xvii. Succession Planning Policy
- xviii. Transport Policy
- xix. Information and Communication Technology Policy

3. Forms

- i. Form 1 Request for Access to Information
- ii. Form 5 for Request for Internal Review of a decision

4. Reports

- i. Annual Reports
- ii. Audited Financial Statements
- iii. Survey Reports

5. Operational Documents

- i. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Training manuals and materials
- iii. Supplier Prequalification Reports
- iv. Audit Reports
- v. Stock Status Reports
- vi. Access to Information Act Implementation Reports
- vii. Institutional Integrity Committee (IIC) Reports

6. Contracts

No.	Contract	Service Provider
1.	External Audit	Graham Carr
2.	Legal Retainer Services	Wilson and Morgan Attorneys
3.	Property Management	Knight Frank
4.	Security Services	Buffalo Guards Ltd

5.	Cleaning Services	Workforce Recruitment Services
6.	Landscape Services	T and P Landscape Contractors

8.0 PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING INFORMATION

We have appointed our Information Officer to deal with all matters relating to information requests under ATI. Requests for information can be made;

a) Orally, in which case:

- i. The Information Officer (IO) must transcribe the oral request into written form.
- ii. The request must be directed to an Information Officer (IO).
- iii. Written versions should be read aloud to the information seeker to ensure comprehension and acceptance of the request's content.
- iv. The request must include sufficient details to properly identify the information seeker.

v. The information seeker must sign the written request transcribed by the IO.

vi. A third party may request information on behalf of someone who is illiterate, disabled, or a minor.

b) Email or other electronic form:

i. Access the formal request form from SFFRFM social media platforms:

- Facebook: @Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi
- LinkedIn: @Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi
- X: @sffrfm

ii. Submit the completed and signed form along with a copy of national identification, passport or driving licence to infoati@sffrfm.org.

iii. Complete and sign Form 1 in hard copies or hand written format and submit it to the IO.

9.0 HANDLING OF REQUESTS

- a. SFFRFM may provide the information record in the format requested by the information seeker or in its existing format, unless access to the record is lawfully denied according to this manual under ATIA Sections 28 to 36.
- b. Please note that the information seeker must adhere to the procedures outlined in this manual.
- c. If requesting information on behalf of someone else, the information seeker should specify their relationship with the individual seeking information and provide authorization proof.

10. TIME FRAME FOR PROCESSING INFORMATION

- a) The Fund is committed to acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 working days.
- b) A decision to grant or deny access to information will be communicated to the information seeker within 15 working days from the date of receiving the formal request.
- c) The information seeker should retrieve or access the information within 30 days from the date of communication from the Fund.

12. INTERNAL REVIEW

- a) An information seeker who has been denied access to information has the right to request for an internal review, either orally or in writing, through the Chief Executive Officer. The application must use Form 5 (Request for Internal Review of a Decision).
- b) The SFFRFM Internal Review Committee will comprise of at least 3 Directors and 1 senior manager in accordance with the ATIA. However, if any of these members are involved in the information being requested, an ad hoc committee will be formed.
- c) An application for internal review must be submitted within 60 days after being denied access to information.
- d)
- e) The internal review process will be completed within 21 days from the date of receiving the request.
- f)
- g) If the information seeker remains dissatisfied with the decision of the internal review committee, they may apply for an external review by the Malawi Human Rights Commission.

14. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- a) The institution utilizes a systematic method to document, classify, index, and securely store records in both physical and electronic formats. This approach ensures the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the records.
- b) SFFRFM also complies with legal and regulatory standards for record retention and disposal, adhering to relevant laws and guidelines.

15.0 CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

The following channels can be used to access information and report concerns: SFFRFM social media handles, physical mail and email. Where is the physical/postal address, where is the email?

16.0 REVIEW OF THE MANUAL

This manual shall be subject to periodic reviews to make it relevant and responsive to changing trends within SFFRFM and as prescribed by the Minister.

17.0 FEES

The following fees shall apply for the processing of a request for information:

No.	ITEM	AMOUNT (MK)
1	Reproduction of copy of the Malawi Human Rights Commission Guide	10,000
2	Reproduction of copy of Information Manual	10,000
3	Standard reproduction fees	5,000
	Reproduction over and above (3)	
	(a) For photocopying, per page	30
	(b) Where the record or part thereof is provided in an:	
	i. Alternate format, a fee not to exceed	50
	ii. Per page of braille	00
	iii. Per page of large print	100
	iv. Per CD	1,000

FORM 1

REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION

PART A __PARTICULARS OF INFORMATION HOLDER

Name of the institution/ information holder:

Address of the institution/ information holder:

Location District/Town/City/TA/Village:

PART B __PARTICULARS OF INFORMATION SEEKER

Full Name:

Date of birth:

Sex:.....

National ID Number:

Postal address.....

Physical address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

PART C__PARTICULARS OF PERSON ON WHOSE BEHALF THE REQUEST IS MADE

(To be completed if request is being made on behalf of another person). Particulars of person on whose behalf the request is made (Please attach any documentation that indicates that you are authorized to act for the other person).

Name:

Address:

.....

Identity Number:

PART D__PARTICULARS OF INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT

Provide details about the nature of information being sought and justification. Include relevant details that can help in retrieving the information, such as source, author, date of publication, etc.

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Explain the purpose for which you seek this information and why it is important that the Information should be provided to you.

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PART E__FORMAT OF INFORMATION BEING REQUESTED

State the format in which you want to access the information, e.g. print, electronic etc.

1. Normal print version (.....)
2. Braille print version (.....)
3. Other (state other preferred format)

Signed atthis.....day of

.....

Signature of the information seeker:

FORM 5

REQUEST FOR INTERNAL REVIEW OF A DECISION

**PART A__PARTICULARS OF INSTITUTION/INFORMATION HOLDER WHOSE
DECISION IS A SUBJECT OF THIS REQUEST**

Name of institution/information holder:

Address of institution/information holder:

Location (District/Town/City/):

Email Address:

Telephone:

PART B__PARTICULARS OF THE INFORMATION SEEKER

Full Name:

Date of birth:

Sex:

National ID Number:

Postal address:.....

.....

Physical address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

PART C__PARTICULARS OF PERSON ON WHOSE BEHALF THE REQUEST IS MADE

(To be completed if a request is submitted on behalf of another person)

Particulars of person on whose behalf the request is made

Full Name:

Date of birth:

Sex:

National ID Number:

Postal address:.....

.....

Physical address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Reason(s) for representing the information seeker:

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PART D_ SUMMARY OF REQUEST

(Provide a summary of your request for information and why the information should be provided to you. Give reasons why you disagree with the decision of the information officer).

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PART E_ TYPE OF ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Describe the type of assistance that you are looking for from the Head of the Institution to whom the request for information was addressed).

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Signed atthis..... day of 20

Signature of the information seeker:

Attach copies of the following documents if available

1. The request for information Form
2. The information officer's response to the request for access to information