



# DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINE

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MINISTRY OF HOME AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

JUNE 2022

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## FOREWORD

The Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA) was established in 1968. The MoHCA since then has occupied a centre stage in country's development. It is one of the 10 Ministries of the Royal Government with diverse but extremely important mandates. Some of the core mandates of the Ministry are:

1. Conserve, protect, develop and promote tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
2. Provide effective and efficient immigration and civil registration services;
3. Guide and support local governments in the efficient and effective implementation of decentralization priorities of the government;
4. Promote, support and facilitate effective disaster management;
5. Ensure stable law and order situation, prevent crime and protect life and property in the country; and
6. Strengthen border management and security through close coordination among law enforcement agencies.

In support of fulfilling the mandates, it is important to have a strong documentation culture within the organization for operational efficiency, increased transparency and collaboration, increased efficiency and standards. The existing mechanism of record management and documentation has issues concerning the validity, reliability, accountability and confidentiality of documents.

Further, there has been an issue in retrieving documents which impedes

decision making, thereby affecting the effective service delivery.

Thus, the MoHCA has initiated developing Guidelines on Documentation with the objectives to institutionalize a reliable and well-organized system of documentation and information management in a standardized approach.

This Guideline is intended to serve as a guiding document that will improve documentation culture by leveraging ICT. The Ministry would like to solicit all our departments and divisions to familiarize themselves with and strictly adhere to the provisions of the guideline in pursuit of enhancing good governance.

Wishing everyone a successful implementation!

TASHI DELEK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonam Wangyel', written in a cursive style.

(Sonam Wangyel)

**SECRETARY**

## INTRODUCTION

The Documentation Guideline is developed with the aim to improve the documentation system and build a productive documentation culture whereby the overall efficiency of the organization is improved.

The 'guideline' directs the agencies under the Ministry to maintain the information through types of documents and categorization. Once categorized, the documents have to be classified and may be declassified based on the assessment of implications to the interest of the organization or the country.

Preservation and protection of documents has also been highlighted while some of the documents could be disposed of after certain time period. Specific roles of the agencies are spelt out for uniform implementation of the initiative.

This guideline is designed to provide guidance and operational support and shall be reviewed for amendments as may be deemed.

## 1. Title

This Guideline shall be called, “**Documentation Guideline of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs**” (hereinafter referred to as “Guideline”).

## 2. Rationale

The rationale for this Guideline is to institutionalize a reliable and well-organized system of documentation and information management for MoHCA to protect and preserve the sanctity of important information or materials for posterity.

## 3. Objectives

The key objectives of this Guideline are as follows:

- 3.1. Preserve and strengthen institutional memory;
- 3.2. Strengthen data and information management;
- 3.3. Digitalize information and records;
- 3.4. Aid informed decision-making and planning;
- 3.5. Ensure easy access and systematic sharing of information and records;
- 3.6. Ensure safety and security of information and records; and
- 3.7. Ensure accountability for use of information and records.

#### 4. **Scope of Application**

This Guideline shall apply to all agencies under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, including local governments.

#### 5. **Documentation**

Documentation shall comprise of creating, collecting, classifying, cataloging, and archiving documents for institutional memory and recording.

#### **Types of documents**

All Agencies shall maintain the following information as part of the documentation process:

##### 5.1 Agency Profile

5.1.1 Name and year of establishment (*This section should contain the name of the office, year of establishment, its location, ownership certificates, and any changes thereafter including Registration Certificates, Resolutions adopted by Parliament, Government Orders and any other references*).

5.1.2 Vision, Mission and Mandate including organizational structure.

5.1.3 Chronology of Heads of the Agency.

5.1.4 Major milestones/achievements of the Agency (*details of milestone/achievement and the name of the*



*Head of the Agency*).

## 5.2 Memoirs

Heads of Agencies shall maintain a memoir which shall be passed down to their successors. The memoir shall include, but is not limited to the following:

5.2.1 Directives of the Royal Government

5.2.2 Policies

5.2.3 List of ongoing activities

5.2.4 Challenges, issues, and concerns

5.2.5 Matters that require follow-up

## 5.3 Documents relating to legal and policy frameworks

5.3.1 Acts, Rules and Regulations, policies, guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures and Terms of Reference

5.3.2 Agreements, Conventions and Memorandum of Understandings

5.3.3 Circulars, Notifications and Advisories

5.3.4 Plans and programs, annual budget outlay, project documents, and *ad hoc* activities.

## 5.4 Reports and Publications

5.4.1 Minutes of meetings and verbatim records of important meetings/conferences

- 5.4.2 Reports (research, training, tours, case studies, audit, and other relevant reports)
- 5.4.3 Journals, brochures, and pamphlets
- 5.4.4 Relevant media reports
- 5.5 Official correspondences
  - 5.5.1 Official correspondences
  - 5.5.2 Note sheet
  - 5.5.3 Email backup
- 5.6 Audio-visual and photographic records
  - 5.6.1 Audio-visual and photographic records of historical and national events
- 5.7 Handing-taking
  - 5.7.1 In addition to what is prescribed by the Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations, all Agencies shall maintain proper records of handing-taking. The outgoing official shall share his/her memoirs and verbal communications of unwritten directives/policies with the successor;
- 5.8 Others
  - 5.8.1 Documents related to the celebration of National events (Invitation Card, Guestlist, felicitation, list of Chief Guest and program)

## 6. Categorization

All Agencies shall categorize their documents based on the degree of sensitivity of the information contained in the document. Sensitivity shall be based on the damage to national security, foreign relations, and public interests that the unauthorized disclosure of the information or materials would cause. The level of classification shall indicate the relative importance of the document and defines who can access or handle such information.

Information or materials shall be classified as follows:

### 6.1. Classified

All information or materials labeled as “Top Secret”, “Secret” or “Confidential” shall be “Classified”. Classified information or materials shall be deemed sensitive for national security and foreign relations and must be protected.

The classification of information or materials labeled as “*Top Secret*”, “*Secret*” or “*Confidential*” shall be determined as follows:

***Top Secret:*** Unauthorized disclosure of information or materials which could cause exceptionally grave prejudice to the interest of national security and foreign relations of the State.

***Secret:*** Unauthorized disclosure of information or

materials which could seriously harm the interest of national security and foreign relations of the State.

**Confidential:** Unauthorized disclosure of information or materials which could harm the interest of national security and foreign relations of the State.

## 6.2 Restricted

Information or materials not labeled as “Top Secret”, “Secret” or “Confidential” but have implications on public interests or are prohibited by law shall be deemed “Restricted”. Such information or materials shall be handled with discretion to ensure that public order or the outcome of a process or rights guaranteed by law are not undermined or adversely affected.

## 6.3 Unclassified

All information or materials not labeled as “*Top Secret*”, “*Secret*”, “*Confidential*” or “*Restricted*” shall be deemed “Unclassified”. Such information or materials are those that have no implications on national security, foreign relations or public interests.

## 7. Declassification

Any information or materials may be declassified if the “Classified” information or materials no longer has any implications or adverse impacts on the interest of national

security, foreign relations or public interests of the State. The process of declassification shall be based on a comprehensive assessment to ensure that the interests of the above are protected.

## **8. Preservation and Protection**

All agencies shall:

- 8.1 Take appropriate measures to ensure an adequate level of protection of information or materials;
- 8.2 Preserve and protect their information or materials in hard and soft copies with a backup;
- 8.3 Maintain information or materials by duly authorized personnel who are permitted to handle or view; and
- 8.4 Maintain information or materials in a secure space under CCTV surveillance.

## **9. Disposal of hard copies**

Any information or materials which are “Unclassified” or related to routine administrative matters may be disposed of based on an assessment and recommendation by a committee established by the Agency for this purpose.

## **10. Access to information or materials**

- 10.1 “Classified” information or materials shall only be accessible by duly authorized personnel.
- 10.2 “Restricted” information or materials shall only be

accessible to individuals that require the information or materials to discharge their responsibilities.

10.3 “Unclassified” information or materials shall be accessible to the public.

## **11. Role of Agencies**

All Agencies shall:

- 11.1 Manage information or materials;
- 11.2 Designate at least one personnel for documentation;
- 11.3 Provide the required support and guidance to the designated personnel;
- 11.4 Identify space for storing and protection;
- 11.5 Maintain a standalone offline computer to store documents;
- 11.6 Set up a system for online sharing of documents within and among Agencies;
- 11.7 Digitalize records and documents;
- 11.8 Ensure access to information and records;
- 11.9 Enable systematic sharing of information and records;
- 11.10 Ensure safety and security of information and records;  
and
- 11.11 Ensure accountability for use of information and records.

## **12. Role of designated personnel**

Designated personnel shall:

- 12.1 Reflect his or her responsibility for documentation in their Individual Work Plan;
- 12.2 Be responsible for management of “Unclassified” information or materials; and
- 12.3 Maintain a catalogue of “Unclassified” information or materials.

## **13. Implementation**

All Agencies shall comply with and implement the Guidelines within a reasonable time frame. Directorate Services, MoHCA, shall guide and support the effective implementation of the Guidelines by all Agencies.

## **14. Amendment and Interpretation**

The Ministerial Coordination Meeting shall be the final interpreter of this Guideline and amend it if deemed necessary.

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