



NAMIBIA

TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT 2020

The citizens' analysis of government openness



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“Public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good and everyone has the right to access information...”

African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights

www.africanplatform.org

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The MISA Transparency Assessment is a study conducted by local researchers according to specific guidelines. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions reported are those of the researcher and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *fesmedia* Africa or the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

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BACKGROUND

Since 2009, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has evaluated the level of openness of government and public institutions in its annual Transparency Assessment. Carried out by MISA Chapters alongside local researchers, the study seeks to establish the ease or difficulty with which citizens can access public information.

The study assesses whether public institutions proactively make relevant information available via an online presence in the form of a website or social media accounts. It further evaluates to what degree information is made available to citizens upon request.

Every year, on 28 September, MISA joins the international community in commemorating the International Day for Universal Access to Information. MISA marks the occasion through:



The regional launch of the MISA Transparency Assessment



Hosting National Golden Key and Golden Padlock Awards Ceremonies

DATA ANALYSIS

Category 1:

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

Category 2:

In this category, information requests are submitted to government and public institutions in order to determine the ease with which public information is obtained from government and public institutions.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The total number of points allocated to categories 1 and 2 is 20 points (n = 20) each.

Points are awarded based on the researcher's answer: yes (2 points); partial (1 point); no (0 points).

Public organisations fall into one of the following groups in accordance with the number of points they received:

Category 1: Website Analysis

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

Group 2 (07–13): Average website containing some relevant public information.

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

Category 2: Requests for Information

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

Group 2 (07–13): Displayed an average level of openness in allowing access to public information.

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

The following countries were surveyed in this 2020 MISA Transparency Assessment: Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

After several years of empty promises by the Namibian government to pass the Access to Information (ATI) law, the bill has finally been tabled in parliament. This long-awaited development was welcomed, not only by Namibian civil society players, but also by regional and international groups who have supported efforts to lobby the Namibian government to expedite the promulgation of an ATI framework.

However, the findings of this study show that public officials and citizens still need to be educated on the importance of ATI in people's lives. The lack of this understanding has led to limited citizen participation in the national discourse. Government organisations seem to have taken advantage of this and have become more secretive, often using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to not provide information. Against this backdrop, it is difficult for ordinary Namibians to access public information.

Furthermore, there has been public outcry that the lack of quality information in the public domain, especially in grassroot communities, impacted the results of the 2019 general elections. Many claim that the majority of rural votes were constituted by uninformed voters.

In addition, there is also a lack of additional sectoral and other laws which could support access to information. The Whistleblower Protection and Witness Protections Acts of 2017 remain non-operational despite a clear need for such legislation.

Ultimately, this research study shows that access to information in Namibia remains limited and heavily dependent on the information sought, who is requesting it, and which public organisation it is requested from.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH PARAMETERS

AIM OF THE STUDY

Access to information is an important ingredient for a functional democracy. The importance of public participation in promoting transparency and good governance cannot be undermined. This study investigated the extent to which public organisations provide public information to Namibian citizens, as well as to examine the level of transparency in government. The research was conducted from 17 July–12 August 2020.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine which organisations (both government and public) provide information to citizens upon request, timeously and with relative ease.
- To determine which organisations (both government and public) utilise online platforms to promote access to information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, and seeks to evaluate the level of public access to information held by government and public organisations. Each MISA Chapter conducts research by evaluating the websites of government and public organisations along with submitting written requests for information. This method seeks to establish the transparency and efficiency of government and public organisations in providing information to the public. All organisations were given 21 days to respond to requests for information.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Many public organisations demanded a formal letter identifying who sought the information, and why, before being willing to supply the information requested.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has also negatively affected the flow of information as many public organisations consistently used the pandemic as an excuse to not provide the information requested.

ORGANISATIONS SURVEYED

The following public organisations were surveyed:

1. Erongo Regional Council
2. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
3. Ministry of Finance
4. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
5. Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
6. Ministry of Health and Social Services
7. Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security
8. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
9. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation
10. National Youth Council of Namibia

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Category 1: Website analysis

- All organisations surveyed have active websites, although half of them do not contain updated information. Some official websites contain public records.
- It is becoming more common for public organisations to use social media platforms to share information. Some organisations consistently engage with followers on these platforms, of which Facebook seems the most popular.

Category 2: Requests for information

- An increasing number of public organisations recognise the importance of public access to information.
- Most public officials were responsive to information requests, although some demanded a valid reason from the person requesting it.
- Members of the public are more likely to receive information if they provide academic motivations or are affiliated with an organisation.
- The COVID-19 pandemic was often used as an excuse to withhold public information.
- Some organisations do not have designated officials to receive and respond to information requests.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.erc.com.na

The website contains up-to-date and useful content. The organisation's social media links for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are functioning with active engagements.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?			X	The website contains information on some programmes but there is not sufficient information about policies and reports.
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?	X			
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?			X	The website displays a vacancy page and application for employment, but does not provide employment procedures.
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	Working hours are not provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Chief Regional Officer, Director: General Services, Director: Development Planning, Deputy-Director: Human Resources Management, Deputy-Director: Administration, Deputy-Director: Finance, Deputy-Director: Rural Services, Deputy-Director: Development Planning
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			Yes, through a contact form.

Total score: 15/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Erongo Regional Council:

- How is the council planning to support small business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What is the strategy in place for the distribution of food parcels to people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What is being done to prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially in the region's informal settlements where people share basic amenities such as toilets?
- Does the council have a strategy for targeted testing, or is it reserved only for people who show symptoms

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?			X	It is unclear as the researcher was referred to several officials, none of whom were able to officially receive and respond to the request for information.
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?		X		
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?		X		
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?		X		
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		X		
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.		X		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		X		
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?			X	The organisation responded within seven days, but only after the researcher followed up on the request.
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		X		

Total score: 2/20

2. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.moe.gov.na

The website is consistently updated with relatively new information and data, specifically about the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the website contains many broken links. The organisation's Facebook page contains current information, however there is very little engagement with followers.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?		X		
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?	X			
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Director, Private Secretary
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			

Total score: 16/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture:

- How prepared is the ministry to implement alternative learning and teaching programmes in rural schools without electricity and information communication technology facilities, during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- To what extent is the ministry prepared to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in all schools, especially in rural areas?
- How many government schools do we have in Namibia and how many of them are experiencing challenges with reopening due to COVID-19?
- To what extent has the ministry's budget been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?	X			
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?	X			
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			A formal letter is required.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.	X			
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	X			

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?		X		The organisation responded within seven days, but only after the researcher followed up on the request.
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 17/20

3. MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

mof.gov.na

This website does not contain up-to-date information. However, it does contain links to the organisation's Facebook and Twitter pages, which are both frequently updated with relevant public information.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?			X	The organisation's powers are not on the website.
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?		X		
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	Working hours are not provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Minister, Deputy Minister, Personal Assistant to the Minister, Economic Advisor to the Minister, Secretary to the Deputy Minister, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Personal Assistant to the Executive Director
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			The website provides a government communication system.

Total score: 14/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Finance:

- Can the ministry provide clarity on the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the Namibian economy?
- To date, how much foreign aid has Namibia received for the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What is the ministry doing to assist small business owners whose businesses are struggling during COVID-19?
- What are some of the youth empowerment projects that the ministry is currently embarking on to support vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Chief Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?		X		
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?		X		
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?		X		
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			The officer indicated that the ministry was unable to respond to queries as the organisation was inundated with many issues at the time.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.		X		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		X		
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?		X		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		X		

Total score: 4/20

4. MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.mfmr.gov.na/home

The website does not contain up-to-date information. Although this organisation is registered on three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), it does not often post information nor engage with followers.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?				
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Minister, Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Public Relations Officer
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			The website provides a government communication system.

Total score: 13/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources:

- What is the ministry's mandate and how does it align with Vision 2030?
- What is the ministry going to do differently to ensure that ordinary Namibians benefit from fishing quotas?
- What is the ministry doing to ensure that fishermen are empowered to start their own fishing businesses in order to create jobs?
- To what extent is the ministry prepared to ensure that the fish products produced in Namibia are consumed by all citizens at little cost?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?	X			
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?	X			
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			A formal letter is required.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.			X	There is no information about budgets and structure.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	X			
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?	X			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 17/20

5. MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY, POVERTY ERADICATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.mgecw.gov.na

The website is professionally designed but slow to access and navigate. It does not contain up-to-date information. However, the organisation has a Facebook page which contains current and useful information.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	No working hours are provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Minister, Deputy Minister, Minister's Personal Assistant, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Public Relations Officer, Regional Head
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			The website has a link to the government communication system.

Total score: 16/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare:

- What is the ministry's mandate and how does it fit into Vision 2030?
- Has the ministry put any measures in place to specifically counter and/or assist victims of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How long does the ministry take to respond to gender-based violence incidents and is there a safe space for victims while procedures are underway?
- What is the ministry's strategy to address stigmatisation and discrimination against LGBTQ people?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?	X			
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?	X			
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			A formal request is required.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.	X			
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	X			
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?		X		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 16/20

6. MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.mhss.gov.na

The website contains up-to-date information, however the platform is technical and difficult to navigate. The organisation's social media pages include Facebook and Instagram.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	No working hours are provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			Minister, Deputy Minister, Minister's Personal Assistant, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Public Relations Officer, Regional Head
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			The website has a link to the government communication system.

Total score: 16/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Health and Social Services:

- Does the ministry have measures in place to provide psychosocial support for infertile people?
- What is the ministry doing to ensure that COVID-19 survivors receive the necessary support to deal with discrimination?
- Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?
- How is the ministry currently managing health complications stemming from illegal abortions?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?		X		
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?		X		
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?		X		
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			The officer explained that she was working from home due to COVID-19 and unable to access work-related emails.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.		X		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		X		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?	X			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?		X		

Total score: 6/20

7. MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, IMMIGRATION, SAFETY AND SECURITY

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.mha.gov.na

The website contains relevant content documents but lacks up-to-date information. The organisation's social media links are displayed on the website, however, not all of them are functional. The Facebook page contains up-to-date information.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?			X	
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	The working hours of the organisation are stated on the website.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?		X		
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?		X		

Total score: 11/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security:

- What process is the ministry following in issuing documents to children of non-Namibian citizens who were born in Namibia?
- When can we expect the borders to open for Namibians wishing to travel abroad?
- What mechanisms has the ministry employed to combat the spread of COVID-19 by foreign nationals illegally entering Namibia?
- Will foreigners who applied for 90-day visas in April, just before the outbreak of the pandemic, receive extensions when they are able to resume traveling?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?		X		
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?	X			
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			Official letter required when requesting for information, stating reason for request and what the information will be used for.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.		X		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		X		
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?		X		
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 10/20

8. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

www.mict.gov.na

This website contains relatively current information and documents, such as legal frameworks. The organisation uses three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) that are frequently updated with relevant information.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?			X	The organisational structure is not clearly shown.
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?	X			
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	No working hours are provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			

Total score: 15/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology:

- What is the ministry's plan of action for the implementation of the access to information law once it is passed by parliament and assented to by the president?
- Will the ministry ensure that there is accessible internet connectivity country-wide to support the e-learning efforts of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture?
- Does the ministry intend to provide financial support to media houses, apart from the existing national stimulus package?
- Is Namibia prepared for the 4th Industrial Revolution?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Chief Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?	X			
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?	X			
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			A formal request is required.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.	X			
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	X			
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?	X			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 18/20

9. MINISTRY OF LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

mol.gov.na

The website contains relevant information and is consistently updated with new content. The ministry has a very active and engaging online presence through social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?	X			
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?			X	No information about signed contracts.
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?			X	The website states that there are no vacancies but it does not display any employment procedures.
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?	X			
9. The contact details of specific public officials?	X			
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			

Total score: 16/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation:

- What is the ministry's mandate and how does it align with Vision 2030?
- How does the ministry promote economic prosperity and equity through investments?
- What is the ministry doing to ensure that the thousands of workers being retrenched does not add to the already high levels of unemployment in the country?
- What kind of psychosocial support is being provided for those who have lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?	X			The ministry responded to the information within seven days.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?	X			
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?	X			
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?			X	Responses to three of the four questions sent to the ministry were thoroughly provided.
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?	X			The ministry referred the researcher to another organisation that is better suited to respond to the query.
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.			X	Information about budgets were not disclosed but reference was made to the ministry's operations and structure.
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?	X			
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?	X			
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 18/20

10. NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA

CATEGORY 1: WEBSITE

nyc.org.na

The website does not contain up-to-date information. However, the Facebook page is regularly updated with current and relevant content, as well as active engagements with followers. The Twitter page is dormant.

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
Does the website contain the following:				
1. Up-to-date information?			X	
2. A description of the organisation's powers and structure, as well as its functions and responsibilities?	X			
3. A list of laws, acts, etc, issued within the scope of its powers?	X			
4. Copies of reports, policies or programmes?	X			
5. Information on budget and expenditure?		X		
6. Information about procurement procedures or signed contracts?		X		
7. Information about vacancy and employment procedures?		X		

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
8. The address, telephone number, and working hours of the organisation?			X	No working hours are provided.
9. The contact details of specific public officials?		X		
10. A mechanism to request and receive responses to electronic messages and requests for information?	X			A contact form is provided.

Total score: 10/20

CATEGORY 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A request for the following information was sent to the National Youth Council of Namibia:

- What is the mandate of the National Youth Council of Namibia and how does it align with Vision 2030?
- What are some of the youth empowerment projects that the council is currently embarking on to support vulnerable people such as the San, Ovahimba and LGBTQ people?
- How many young people have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how is the council prepared to assist them?
- What are some activities of the National Youth Council of Namibia which support youth participation?

n = 20	Yes	No	Partial	Additional information
1. Is there an official, who is designated to take and respond to information requests?	X			Chief Public Relations Officer
2. Did the organisation reply within 21 days?		X		
3. Did the organisation respond to the request for information?		X		
4. Does the organisation publish their procedures for handling information requests?		X		
5. Did the organisation provide all of the requested information?		X		
6. Did the organisation provide written reasons for the refusal of information?		X		
7. Did the organisation disclose information about its operations, budgets, structure, etc.		X		
8. Did the authority provide information without questioning the aims and motivations of the applicant?		X		
9. Did the organisation acknowledge the request for information within 7 days?			X	The organisation responded within 7 days after the researcher sent a reminder.
10. Was the information received clear and understandable?	X			

Total score: 3/20

SUMMARY

Organisation	Website	Request for information	Total score
1. Erongo Regional Council	15	2	17
2. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture	16	17	33
3. Ministry of Finance	14	4	18
4. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources	13	17	30
5. Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare	16	16	32
6. Ministry of Health and Social Services	16	6	22
7. Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration Safety and Security	11	10	21
8. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology	15	18	33
9. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation	16	18	34
10. National Youth Council of Namibia	10	3	13

RESEARCH CONCLUSION

Most public organisations have a strong online presence which allows them to communicate and share information with the public.

Public relations officers sometimes lack the capacity to distinguish between private and public information, and end up depriving citizens of their right to information. However, it is important to note the dramatic improvement in both responses of information requests and website reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Each organisation should have dedicated and educated officers to deal with information requests.
- Public officials should be educated on the importance of public access to information.
- Common standards of promoting access to information should be employed.
- Online platforms for government organisations should seek to communicate government's policies and programmes.
- Public organisations should encourage a culture of openness and transparency by proactively sharing information.



THE MOST SECRETIVE PUBLIC ORGANISATION IN NAMIBIA

The website of the National Youth Council of Namibia is rarely updated and the Twitter page is dormant. Although this organisation's Facebook page contains up-to-date information, its failure to respond to the information request demonstrates its low regard for people's rights of access to information.

Therefore, the 2020 Golden Padlock Award goes to the National Youth Council of Namibia.



THE MOST OPEN PUBLIC ORGANISATION IN NAMIBIA

Both the website and Facebook page of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation contains up-to-date information. The organisation responded timeously to the information request. The Public Relations Officer's commitment to information-sharing is commendable.

Therefore, the 2020 Golden Key Award goes to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation.