



**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY**

Sekou Toure Avenue, MONROVIA LIBERIA



**Policy and Guideline for Access to Environmental  
Information**

**Issued Pursuant to Section 101 of the Environmental  
Protection and Management Law of Liberia (EPML)  
And the Freedom of Information Act of Liberia  
(FOIA)**

**Drafted April 2025, Revised March 2026**

REGULATORY INSTRUMENT No. **RI/C&E/LEGAL/SMT**  
**001-03/26**

**March, 2026**

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## **REGULATORY INSTRUMENT**

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by (Part XI Sections 101) of the Environmental Protection & Management Law of Liberia, and the Freedom of Information Act of Liberia (FOIA), Aligned with the UNECE Aarhus Convention, the Equator Principles, and International Good Practice, the Environment Protection Agency promulgate the following Regulations:

**Instrument** : **Guideline and Policy on Access to Environmental Information, 2026**

**Instrument no** : **RI/C&E/LEGAL/SMT/001-03/26**

**Prepared by** : **EPA/IESIATRC**

**Approved by** : **Management Team/Executive Director, EPA**

**Effective date** : **12/05/2024**

## **Section 1: Introduction and Legal Basis**

This Guideline establishes the policy framework and procedural requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia for ensuring public access to environmental information. It is intended to operationalize the principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation in environmental governance, consistent with Liberia's legal and institutional framework.

The Guideline is anchored in **Section 101 of the Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML)**, which guarantees the public's right to access environmental information held by public authorities, subject to limited exceptions. It further aligns with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of Liberia, which affirms the broader right of citizens to obtain information from public institutions in a timely and accessible manner.

In addition to national legal instruments, this Guideline is informed by internationally recognized principles and best practices that promote open and accountable environmental governance. These include the principles embodied in the UNECE Aarhus Convention, which emphasize access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters. It also reflects the objectives of **Sustainable Development Goal 16** under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly with respect to ensuring public access to information and strengthening transparent and accountable institutions.

Furthermore, the Guideline draws on the environmental and social risk management standards promoted under the Equator Principles, which require transparency and stakeholder engagement in project financing, as well as the commitments undertaken through the Open Government Partnership, which encourage governments to adopt concrete measures to enhance openness, citizen participation, and public accountability.

Collectively, these legal and policy foundations reinforce the EPA's mandate to ensure that environmental information is accessible to the public, that decision-making processes are transparent and participatory, and that mechanisms exist for accountability and redress. This Guideline therefore serves as a practical instrument to guide public authorities, project proponents, and stakeholders in implementing these obligations in a consistent and effective manner across Liberia.

## Section 1.1 Definition

- a. **FOI:** Free of Information
- b. **FOIA:** Freedom of Information Act of Liberia
- c. **EPML:** Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia
- d. **EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency
- e. **UNECE:** United Nation Economic Commission for Europe
- f. **International principles under the UNECE Aarhus Convention:** refers to a set of globally recognized legal and governance principles that guide how environmental information and decision-making should be handled.
- g. **SDG 16:** Sustainable Development Goal 16, meaning; “peace, justice, and strong institution.
- h. **Equator Principles:** refer to a set of internationally recognized standards used by financial institutions to **assess and manage environmental and social risks in large projects.**
- i. **Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments:** are the specific promises or actions a government agrees to implement under the Open Government Partnership to make governance more transparent, accountable, and participatory.

## Section 2: Purpose and Objectives

- Promote transparency and informed public participation in environmental governance;
- Standardize how EPA handles requests for environmental information;
- Ensure protection of sensitive, confidential, and proprietary data;
- Uphold Liberia’s obligations under regional and global access-to-information frameworks.

## Section 3: Scope of Environmental Information Covered

Environmental information under this guideline includes:

- Laws, policies, regulations, and standards on environment and natural resource management;
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), Environmental Management Plans (EMP), permits, and compliance records;
- Air, water, noise, soil, and emission monitoring data;
- Inspection, audit, and investigative reports;

- Risk assessments and emergency response plans;
- Natural resource licenses (mining, logging, land use);
- Community consultations, grievances, and redress reports;
- Proprietary or business-sensitive data (with access limitations).

#### **Section 4: Principles of Access to Environmental Information**

- **Transparency:** Information is presumed accessible unless justifiably restricted;
- **Timeliness:** Response to requests within 7 working days, extendable to 14 days with justification;
- **Accessibility:** Available in understandable formats, languages, and platforms;
- **Protection:** Safeguard trade secrets, personal data, and national interest;
- **Proportionality:** Restriction of access is minimal and justified.

#### **Section 5: Classification of Information and Access Conditions**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Access Level</b>	<b>Conditions/Restrictions</b>
a.	Project Brief, EIA, EMP, Permit Records, Audits, RAP	Public	Freely available
b.	Monitoring Reports & Emissions Data	Public	Upon request in available formats
	Environmental Quality and Geospatial Data	Restricted	Fees Charge
c.	Compliance Reports, Part of an EIA/ESIA,	Public	Redaction of sensitive content where needed
d.	Technical Inspection Reports	Partial	Requires prior internal review before release
e.	Investigative Reports	Conditional	Summary public; full version after resolution
f.	Proprietary, technological,	Restricted	Access to anonymized or non-

No.	Information Type	Access Level	Conditions/Restrictions
	Business Data, Hazardous Info		commercial version only
g.	Risk and Health Impact Assessments	Public	Available in summary and technical form
h.	Standards, Regulations, Guidelines	Summary Public	Published, or Available upon Request
i.	Emergency Plans	Summary Public	Full content restricted for safety and security reasons

### **Section 6: Procedure for Information Requests**

- Submit request via email, form, or letter to the EPA FOI Officer;
- Clearly identify the information type, period, and delivery format;
- EPA shall acknowledge receipt within 2 working days;
- Full response within 7 days or with written explanation for extensions.

### **Section 7: Proactive Disclosure and Publication**

EPA will publish:

- Permit issuances, renewals, and enforcement notices quarterly;
- Annual summaries of EIA approvals, audit outcomes, and fines;
- Community meeting reports and consultation outcomes;
- Policy updates, standards and laws via EPA website and county field bulletin boards.

### **Section 8: Grounds for Exemption or Refusal of Access**

Requests may be denied if:

- Information relates to national defence, enforcement, or security;
- Disclosure undermines active legal or regulatory investigations;
- Third-party confidentiality or intellectual property may be breached;

- Requests are excessive, repetitive, or unjustified.

**Section 8.1: Refusal Requirements**

**All refusals must include:**

- Written justification with legal reference;
- Explanation of appeal rights and contact office.

**Section 9: Appeals Process and Oversight**

- Appeals submitted to EPA Legal Unit within 15 working days;
- EPA shall convene a 3-member review panel (Legal, FOI, Technical);
- Final appeal decision issued within 21 working days with full explanation.

**Section 10: Data Integrity and Retention**

- EPA shall retain all disclosed records for a minimum of 5 years;
- Maintain digital access logs for accountability;
- Implement EPA’s Data Integrity and Cybersecurity Standards;
- Maintain redaction versions and rationale in secured document control systems.

**Section 11: Institutional Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Division/Office</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
EPA Information Unit	Receive and process FOI requests
Legal Affairs	Review appeals and sensitive content
Compliance & Enforcement	Provide EIA/ESIA, ESMP, Audit Reports, and Geospatial Data
ERRS	Provide monitoring and environmental quality data
Intersectoral	Provide Environmental education and awareness data
MEA	Provide Conventions protocols and sector specific Data
IT & Records Division	Secure archiving and access tracking

EPA County Field Offices	Disseminate updates and notices locally
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### Section 12: Access Formats and Language Requirements

- Formats: PDF, Excel, printed, GIS files (when applicable);
- Delivery: Email, flash drive, or physical copy (if justified);
- Languages: Key public documents to be translated into major Liberian languages;
- Public radio and posters used for low-literacy and rural outreach.

### Section 13: Schedule of Fees

Service	Cost
First 20 pages	Free
Additional pages	USD 0.10 per page
Flash drive or digital copy	Free
Environmental Quality Data	Based on EPA Fees schedule
GIS/maps/datasets	Case-by-case basis

### Section 14: Public Awareness and Outreach

- EPA shall conduct annual environmental rights and FOI awareness events in at least six counties;
- Use of community radio, school events, and posters for outreach;
- Feedback from citizens shall be collected and used to improve access processes.

### Section 15: Annexes

#### Annex I: FOI Request Form Template

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: FOI Officer, Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

Subject: Request for Environmental Information

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of (Organization/Address), hereby request access to the following information:

\_\_\_\_\_

Time period requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred format (PDF/Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annex II: FOI Denial Response Template**

EPA Reference No: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear [Requester's Name],

We regret to inform you that your request dated [Insert Date] for access to [Insert Subject] has been declined based on Section [Insert Legal Clause] of the FOI Act / EPML.

Reason(s) for denial:

You may appeal this decision within 15 working days to the EPA Legal Unit. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

EPA FOI Officer

**Annex III: Sample Redacted Report Notice**

This document has been partially redacted in accordance with the Environmental Protection and Management Law, FOI Act, and EPA's Information Access Guidelines.

Sections removed include:

- Personal data
- Proprietary or trade secret content
- Active investigation references

#### **Annex IV: Public Radio Announcement Template (Koloqua)**

"Hello ma people, this na EPA ya! If you wan know anything about da mining, forest, water business or who spoil da environment, you can now ask EPA! Just write small letter or come to EPA office. We will tell you if de paper free or if you pay small for copy. EPA here to protect your land, your water, and your health."

#### **Annex V: Additional Note**

##### **A. The Aarhus Convention is built on three core pillars:**

###### ***1. Access to Environmental Information***

- a. The public has the right to obtain environmental information from government authorities.
- b. This includes data on pollution, environmental risks, policies, and project impacts.

###### ***2. Public Participation in Decision-Making***

- a. Citizens must be given the opportunity to participate in environmental decisions (e.g., ESIA processes, permitting, policies).
- b. Participation should be early, meaningful, and informed.

###### ***3. Access to Justice***

- a. People have the right to challenge environmental decisions or failures in court or through administrative processes.
- b. This ensures enforcement and accountability.

##### **B. SDG 16 is about building a society where:**

- a. People live in **peace and safety**,
- b. Laws are **fairly enforced**,
- c. Institutions (like courts, EPA, ministries) are **transparent, accountable, and effective**.

#### **D. Core idea behind the Equator Principles**

Before financing a project, banks require:

- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- Risk classification (High, Medium, Low)
- Mitigation and management plans
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting

#### **E. Open Government Partnership Commitment**

OGP is a global initiative where countries work with civil society to:

- Promote transparency
- Fight corruption
- Improve citizen participation
- Strengthen governance systems

#### **DRAFTING AND ENDORSEMENT**

Prepared By: John K. Jallah Jr  _____ Director, Compliance and Enforcement  Date: April 4, 2025	Reviewed By: Dweh S. Boley Sr.  _____ Deputy Executive Director for Technical Services  Date: _____
Review and updated by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia	

#### **BINDING FORCE**

These Regulations shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable to all aspects of Access to Environmental Information in Liberia.

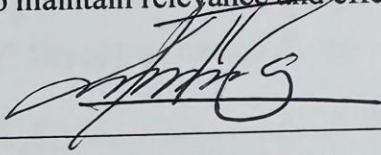
Done on this 4<sup>th</sup> Day of April A.D. 2025.

Updated on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of March, A.D. 2026 in the city of Monrovia, County of Montserrado, Republic of Liberia;

This document has been reviewed and is hereby approved for implementation. The approval confirms that the document aligns with applicable standards and objectives and may be acted upon by the responsible authorities.

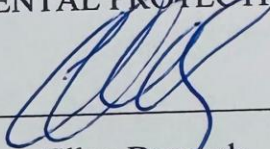
The EPA will oversee implementation, coordination, and any necessary follow-up to ensure the document is effectively applied. Periodic review and oversight will be undertaken as required to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Dr. Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/SECRETARY OF THE BOARD AND POLICY COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Hon. Magdalene Ellen-Dagoseh  
Minister, Ministry of Commerce  
**CHAIRPERSON**  
**EPA BOARD AND POLICY COUNCIL OF LIBERIA**