



Raise for Development and Humanitarian Aid (RDHA)

RDHA Retention Policy

RDHA Retention Policy is a fundamental pillar of our commitment to transparency, accountability and good governance. This policy is designed to ensure the effective and organized management of all important records and documents, in alignment with international best practices, the legal and regulatory requirements of the Republic of Sudan, and the standards of our esteemed donors.

1. Purpose and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- a. **Ensure Compliance:** Adhere to all local and international laws and regulations pertaining to record keeping.
- b. **Support Accountability and Auditing:** Provide complete and accurate records to support internal and external audits, donor reports, and evaluations.
- c. **Protect Information:** Safeguard the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of organizational data.
- d. **Enhance Operational Efficiency:** Streamline record management processes, facilitate information retrieval when needed, and reduce unnecessary storage.
- e. **Preserve Institutional Memory:** Retain important historical documents that contribute to institutional knowledge and operational continuity.

2. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all records and documents created, received, or maintained by RDHA, regardless of their format (physical or digital) or storage location. It encompasses all employees, volunteers, and external parties who handle the organization's documents.

3. Core Principles

Our document retention policy is based on the following principles:

- a. **Necessity and Importance:** Documents are retained only for the period necessary as dictated by legal, operational, or donor requirements.

- b. **Confidentiality and Security:** All documents, especially those containing sensitive information, are handled with the utmost confidentiality and security to prevent unauthorized access or damage.
- c. **Retrieval Capability:** Documents must be organized and indexed in a manner that allows for easy and effective retrieval when needed.
- d. **Responsible Disposal:** Documents are disposed of after the prescribed retention period in a secure and responsible manner that ensures data protection.

4. Document Retention Periods

The following retention periods have been determined based on the nature of the document, its legal and operational importance, and donor requirements:

A. Core Accounting and Financial Documents:

- 1. **Primary Accounting Books** (General Ledger, Journals, Subsidiary Ledgers, Asset Registers): **5-7 years** from the end of the relevant fiscal year.
- 2. **Audited Financial Statements** (Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Statement of Changes in Equity, Notes to the Financial Statements): **Permanent (indefinite)**.
- 3. **Audit Reports** (External and Internal): **Permanent (indefinite)**.
- 4. **Budget and Financial Planning Records:** **5-7 years** after the end of the budget cycle.

B. Supporting Documents for Accounting Transactions:

- 1. **Invoices** (Sales and Purchases), **Receipts, Credit/Debit Notes, Payment Orders, and Disbursement Documents:** **5-7 years** from the transaction date or the end of the fiscal year.
- 2. **Bank Statements, Transfer Notifications, Bank Reconciliation Documents:** **5-7 years**.
- 3. **Payroll and Compensation Records** (Payroll registers, Employment contracts, Attendance records, Tax and Social Security records): **5-7 years** from the employee's termination date or the document's date, whichever is longer.
- 4. **Fixed Asset Documents** (Purchase invoices, Depreciation schedules, Disposal documents): **5-7 years** after the asset has been disposed of.

C. Grant and Funding Documents:

1. **Grant Agreements and Donor Contracts: 5-7 years** after the final closure of the grant or contract expiration, or as per donor requirements, whichever is longer. (Always refer to the specific grant agreement terms).
2. **Financial and Programmatic Reports Submitted to Donors: 5-7 years** after the final closure of the grant.
3. **Disbursement Documents for Projects and Activities: 5-7 years** after the final closure of the grant.

D. Legal and Contractual Documents:

1. **Vendor and Service Contracts, Partnership Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding: 5-7 years** after the contract or agreement expires.
2. **Organization's Legal Registration Documents, Licenses, Compliance Certificates: Permanent (indefinite).**

E. Administrative and Operational Documents:

1. **Minutes of Board Meetings and Key Committees: Permanent (indefinite).**
2. **Approved Internal Policies and Procedures: 5-7 years** after being superseded or cancelled.
3. **Project Evaluation and Lessons Learned Reports: 5-7 years.**

5. Document Retention Mechanism

RDHA employs a comprehensive document retention system that combines physical and digital methods to ensure security, accessibility, and flexibility:

- **Digital Retention:**

- Digital copies are stored on secure servers protected by strong passwords and strict access controls.
- Regular backups of all digital data are performed to ensure recovery in case of disasters or data loss.

- An electronic classification and indexing system is used to facilitate efficient searching and retrieval of documents.
- Strict security procedures are implemented to protect data from unauthorized access or corruption.
- **Physical Retention:**
 - Physical copies are kept in secure cabinets or storage rooms protected from environmental factors (e.g., humidity, heat, fire) and unauthorized access.
 - Physical documents are organized and categorized systematically for easy retrieval.
 - A record of physical documents and their locations is maintained.

6. Document Disposal Procedures

After the prescribed retention period expires, unnecessary documents are disposed of in a secure and responsible manner to ensure the protection of sensitive data and information. Disposal procedures include:

- a. **Physical Documents:** Shredded or incinerated to ensure they cannot be reconstructed.
- b. **Digital Documents:** Permanently deleted from all servers and storage systems, including backups, using methods that prevent recovery.
- c. The document disposal process is documented, with a record maintained of disposed documents and their disposal date.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. **Senior Management:** Responsible for approving this policy and ensuring the allocation of necessary resources for its implementation.
- b. **Financial Manager:** Responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy regarding financial and accounting documents.
- c. **Department Managers:** Responsible for ensuring their staff adhere to and implement this policy for documents specific to their departments.

- d. **All Employees:** Responsible for understanding and complying with this policy in their daily handling of the organization's documents.

8. Review and Update

This policy is subject to periodic review (e.g., every [example: two years] or as needed) to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, and to keep pace with any changes in laws, regulations, or donor requirements.