

# **Records management programme towards good governance and service delivery in Singida Local Authorities, Tanzania**

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## **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the state of records management programmes in a bid to promote good governance and service delivery in Singida Local Authorities, Tanzania. The study used a case study design, which is qualitative in nature. Fifty employees of the SLAs constituted the target population of the study. The researcher collected data from 41 respondents selected by using census approach. Data were collected using face-to-face interviews, group discussions and observations. The study found that poor records management practices are attributable to lack of electronic records management (ERM) strategies such as security measures and professional staff, and poor control of record files, which affected good governance and service delivery. The study established that some offices visited had no keyword file classification system installed. However, there were no institutional and national legal frameworks for the SLAs to apply in managing their records, which resulted in poor records management. Consequently, the SLAs risked breaching confidentiality rules due to lack of security measures to guard against disaster and unauthorised access to records as indicators of poor governance. Further, there was no records appraisal and disposition conducted due to lack of specific records retention and disposal schedules in the SLAs under review. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the SLAs install a keyword file classification system which allows adopting electronic office system as recommended by legislation, formulate and implement records management legal frameworks.

**Keywords:** Records management, records management legal framework, good governance, service delivery, Singida Local Authorities, Tanzania

## 1. Introduction

The International Standard (ISO 15489) (2016) requires each public office to create records in any format that can be received and maintained as evidence of an activity and information produced by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or business transactions. Rutta (2020) proffers that good management of records require the establishment of an effective records management programme. Such programme entails having trusted and reliable records, reports and databases allowing managers to confidently make key decisions. Meanwhile, good governance and service delivery depend on the extent to which an organisation has managed to establish and managed to install a successful records management programme. Maseh and Mutula (2015) contend that complete and reliable records safeguard the rights of both the governors and the governed. Indeed, records enhance consistent and timely decision-making that fosters good governance and service delivery (Rutta 2020). Furthermore, Chaterera (2016) asserts that public offices cannot ensure transparency and accountability without creating and keeping records. Consequently, governments in different nations deliberately initiate and develop records management programmes in public offices to ensure effective, efficient and systematic control of records from their creation to disposition as a platform for fostering and entrenching good governance and service delivery.

Historically, modern records management programmes among public offices in the United States gained momentum through the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the 1940s, which inspected records management practices and provided guidelines for better management of records (Muemi & Rotich 2015). Similarly, the United Kingdom (UK) also established their National Archives as independent agency for improving records management in the country's public offices. Towards that end, the UK has enacted the Freedom of Information Act of 2002 and Data Protection Act of 1998 in addition to instituting the British Standard (BS) 5454-recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents standard for better management of records.

Initiatives for records management in countries like Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe were implemented in the 1960s by the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). South Africa and Botswana established National Archives and Records Services (NARS) and Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS), respectively (National Archives and Records Services Act of 2007 and National Archives of South Africa of 1996). These initiatives aimed to enhance the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of records management in public offices. Although African countries took initiatives to ensure effective records management programmes, local governments still face daunting records management challenges, which contribute to poor service delivery (Chaterera 2016).

In the Tanzanian context, to rescue the dire situation, the National Archives Act (No. 33 of 1965) was enacted to establish and empower the National Archives to have access to all public records and accordingly preserve such records (Hassan 2020). It was followed by the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) when the government recognised that good service delivery requires better records management in the public services. While the National Archives Act dealt with the management of non-current records (archives), it was silent about the management of current and semi-current records (Hassan 2020). This prompted the Tanzanian government to enact the Records and Archives

Management Act (RAMA) No. 3 of 2002, repealing the National Archives Act. The enactment of this legislation also led to the formalisation of the position of the National Archives as the Records and Archives Management Division (RAMD), currently known as the President's Office – Records and Archives Management Department (PO-RAMD) (Hassan 2020). Other subsequent initiatives include the formulation of the Registry Procedure Manual of 2007, *Desk Instructions for Registry Staff and Records Users of 2009*, Records Management Policy of 2011 and Guidelines and Procedures for Managing Personnel Records in Public Offices of 2013 (Sospeter 2020). Notwithstanding these initiatives, literature conveys poor service delivery in local authorities due to lack of an effective records management programme.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

The audit reports for the 2017/2018 fiscal year exposed that Singida Local Authorities lacked complete evidence for their transactions. These adverse reports raised questions regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of records management programmes in fostering good governance and service delivery in SLAs. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) has made concerted efforts to enhance the quality and effectiveness of records management in public offices. However, the records management programmes remain largely ineffective, devoid of better and qualitative management of records for fostering good governance and service delivery in local authorities (Pazi & Ringo, 2014; Marwa, 2015). Studies conducted by Marwa (2015), Athman (2019), Rutta (2020) and Leon (2020) established that Tanzania's local authorities have largely failed to attain good governance and service delivery. These results give the reason to assess records management programmes to foster good governance in local authorities. Marwa (2015) and Athman (2019) revealed that the Temeke Municipal Council (TMC) and Ilala Municipal Council (IMC) provided poor services due to poor records management. For instance, TMC was grappling with the challenge of slow movement of records, misplacement and loss of records and poor preservation practices that resulted in poor service delivery (Marwa 2015). Similarly, Athman (2019) found that records management programmes at the IMC suffered because of the absence of a records management policy, inadequate storage space, insufficient budget and lack of qualified records management personnel. As the actual state of records management in Singida Local Authorities remained largely indeterminate in the absence of a systematic research, this study sought to determine the state of records management programme and its influence on good governance and service delivery in SLAs.

## **3. Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the state of records management programmes in a bid to promote good governance and service delivery in SLAs.

## **4. Objective of the Study**

The study aimed to assess records management programme towards good governance and service delivery. Specifically, the study addressed the following objectives:

- To determine availability and use of records management legal frameworks to promote good governance and service delivery in SLAs.
- To examine records management system influence on records creation and capture for good governance and service delivery in SLAs.
- To examine records storage and protection measures to ensure good governance and service delivery in SLAs.
- To examine implementation of records management appraisal programme for good governance and service delivery in SLAs.

## **5. Literature review**

The literature reviewed is divided in five sub-sections: overview of records management programme, records creation and classification systems, records management legal frameworks, records storage and protection, and records appraisal and disposition as elements of a records management programme.

### **5.1 Overview of records management programme**

Rutta and Ndenje-Sichalwe (2021) postulate that an effective records management programme comprises formulating and enforcing policies and standards for records management throughout an organisation; implementing records management systems, letting staff know about good record-keeping practices and timely disposition of redundant records. In this regard, Rutta (2020) contends that good records management requires establishing an effective records management programme. This can serve as basis for engendering consistent, reliable methods for managing documents and records. Having trusted and reliable records, reports and databases empowers managers to make informed key decisions with heightened confidence.

### **5.2 Availability and use of records management legal frameworks for good governance and service delivery**

Studies showed that developed countries have generally improved records management programmes by availing and implementing records management legal frameworks. The Records Management Instructions Guidelines of 2002 enabled Australia to manage records well for improved service delivery and good governance in the country (Rutta, 2020). However, the situation in Africa in general and Tanzania in particular was awful. Bakare, Abdullah, Abioye, Olanrewaju (2016) found Nigeria's local authorities to suffer from poor records management due to lack of policies and guidelines, which could otherwise support such records management programme. In Tanzania, studies by Hassan (2020), Ndemanyisho (2014) and Kashaija (2019) identified lack of awareness and implementation of records management legal frameworks among public offices to hamper effective records management programmes. As a result, records are managed poorly and some are lost, hence there is no evidence for transparency and accountability as aspects of good governance.

### **5.3 Records management system influence on records creation and capture for good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

The state of records management systems in developed countries has been enhanced for effective records management programmes. As Ginsberg (2016) illustrates, Australia managed to comply with the Design and Implementing Records Keeping System (DIRKS) for installing a records management system. The country created metadata in ERM systems, which enhance effective classification, timely retrieval of records, and engender security of records for good governance and service delivery. On the other hand, studies of Athman (2019); Njeru, Chege and Ng'eno (2017) and Rutta (2020) in Africa revealed how records management systems on the continent were largely, albeit varyingly, too ineffective to meet all the records management programme requirements, affecting timely and consistent decisions in providing services. Njeru et al. (2017) evaluated the records management practices at the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya and revealed that records management was poor, resulting from ineffective records management programmes, which affected good governance and service delivery.

In the Tanzania context, even though legislation and policies require public offices to install the keyword filing classification systems, the system has not yet been installed in some of the local government authorities. For example, studies by Athman (2019) and Rutta (2020) carried out in IMC and Kinondoni Municipal Council (KMC), respectively, did not find a keyword filing classification system. This affects the process of record creation and capturing for service delivery and good governance, since records are not retrieved timeously.

Records management in many African nations generally, and Tanzania particularly, left much to be desired due to poor records management systems (Rutta, 2020). Consequently, such poor records management systems hindered access and use of records for consistent and timely decision-making in many local governments. Questions remain on how good governance and service delivery can be fostered and sustained in these local governments in the absence of an effective records management system.

### **5.4 Records storage and protection measures for good governance and service delivery**

Developed countries have somehow managed to implement more measures than African countries. Security measures for records instituted in developed countries prolong the lifespan of records for future reference (Marwa 2015). African nations still lag behind in securing such measures (Rutta 2020). Marwa's (2015) study conducted in TMC, found that records were not well-preserved to meet future reference needs. Ineffective security of records shortens the lifespan of records for future referencing. As a result, there was lack of reference for auditing, archives for future historical and research information. Leon's (2020) study on the management of semi-current records in Mbeya City Council (MCC), Tanzania, identified poor management of semi-current records due to lack of storage facilities, storage space and legal frameworks. Overall, the security mechanisms were largely inadequate to promote security and safety of records for future reference. Apparently, local authorities are vulnerable to losing information and breaching confidentiality due to poor protection of records against disaster and unauthorised access. Breach of confidentiality and loss of records can have a negative and often debilitating impact on good governance and service delivery because of incessant customer complaints and lack of public trust.

### **5.5 Records management appraisal programme for good governance and service delivery**

Public offices face challenges in appraising and disposing of records due to lack of retention and disposition schedules. Tshotlo and Mnjama (2010) found poor appraisal and disposition of records at Gaborone City Council in Botswana due to lack of retention and disposition schedules for vulnerable records, a situation that results in the unwitting destruction of even valuable records. In Tanzania, the National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011 insists on timely appraisal, transfer and destruction of records. However, it is mandatory to develop and implement retention schedules. Rutta (2020) found retention and disposal schedules to be absent at KMC, hence there is congestion of records due to ineffective disposal programmes. The situation resulted in lack of space for vital records, and poor retrieval of information to support timely service delivery. Such congestion of records, coupled with poor retrieval of information, hindered timely decision-making in the public office, which eroded public trust and affected good governance practices and service delivery.

## **6. Research methodology**

The study employed a multiple case study research design to conduct an in-depth investigation of the problem in SLAs, with the qualitative approach facilitating the collection and presentation of qualitative findings. This study was conducted in SLAs, specifically, in Singida Municipal Council (**Group 1**); Singida District Commissioner's office (**Group 2**), Singida District Council (**Group 3**), Ikungi District Council (**Group 4**), Ikungi District Commissioner's office (**Group 5**), Manyoni District Council (**Group 6**), Manyoni District Commissioner's office (**Group 7**), Itigi District Council (**Group 8**), Mkalama District Council (**Group 9**), Mkalama District Commissioner's office (**Group 10**) and Iramba District Commissioner's office (**Group 11**). Singida region was selected as one of the local authorities that require good records management practices for better execution of delegated governance and accountability functions. After all, the audit reports for the 2017/2018 fiscal year found the Singida local government authorities wanting for lacking complete evidence for their crucial transactions. The sample of 41 out of the targeted population of 50 respondents were selected. The study used a census approach whereby nine participants were not available. Nine other respondents were unavailable during data collection, hence their non-participation. Specifically, data were collected from 26 records personnel, 8=eight human resource officers (HROs), four administrative officers (AOs) and three personal secretaries (PSs). Records personnel and PSs are custodians and creators of records, respectively; HROs and AOs are creators and users of records. Moreover, HROs and AOs oversee records management units in their respective offices. Table 6.1 illustrates more.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents (n=41)

S/N	NAME	DESIGNATION	F	%
1.	Singida Municipal Council	Record personnel	4	9.8
		Human resource officers	2	4.9
2.	Singida District Commissioner's office	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Personal secretary	1	2.4
3.	Singida District Council	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Human resource officers	2	4.9
4.	Ikungi District Council	Record personnel	3	7.3
		Human resource officers	1	2.4
5.	Ikungi District Commissioner's office	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Administrative officers	1	2.4
6.	Manyoni District Council	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Human resource officers	1	2.4
7.	Manyoni District Commissioner's office	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Administrative officers	1	2.4
		Personal secretary	1	2.4
8.	Itigi District Council	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Human resource officers	1	2.4
		Administrative officers	1	2.4
9.	Mkalama District Council	Record personnel	3	7.3
		Human resource officers	1	2.4
		Personal secretary	1	2.4
10.	Mkalama District Commissioner's office	Record personnel	2	4.9
		Administrative officers	1	2.4
11.	Iramba District Commissioner's office	Record personnel	2	4.9
TOTAL			41	100

**Source: Field Data (2020)**

Data were collected using face-to-face interviews, group discussions and non-participatory observation. Interviews were held with HROs, AOs and PSs whereas records personnel participated in focused group discussions. In addition, the study used an observation guide to determine the real situation of records management, focusing on records creation and classification, storage and security, and legal compliance. The researcher observed legal tools, security measures and systems used to create and keeping records. Together, interviews, group discussions and observation ensured reliability and validity of data collected. The resulting qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis and then presented, analysed and discussed in accordance with specific objectives of the study. Finally, the study was attained through informed consent, voluntarily response, restricting personal bias, and participants and data were treated at high level of confidentiality.

## **7. Presentation of findings and results**

This section presents the results of the study.

### **7.1 Availability and use of records management legal frameworks for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

Records management legal frameworks such as RAMA and its regulations of 2007, and Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 to promote best records management for essence of good governance and service delivery. Both records personnel and HROs were asked to indicate which legal tools guide them in managing records. The responses were largely negative since the most of them were not even aware of any such legal frameworks. A few respondents, however, did mention the Registry Procedures Manual of 2007, which could be found in the offices. The study established that staff did not take initiatives to acquire records management Acts, policies and guidelines, which compounded the lack of managing records awareness problem.

Other respondents reported that they had never seen any legal frameworks at their workplace. One explained during a group discussion:

“I don’t remember them because I have never seen any policy or guideline at working place, I saw them last during my studies, it was the last time to hear about records management Act, policies, regulations and guidelines” [*Group discussion, Group 5*]

Consequently, it took individual initiative to acquire and access the Registry Procedures Manual of 2007. This was revealed by one of the participants, who pointed out, “I have my own Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 at home, which was not provided by management because I used my own initiative to get it” [*Group discussion, Group 1*].

Observations affirmed that there were neither institutional nor national legal frameworks available for use at the workplace in the SLAs. Due to lack of legal frameworks, current and semi-current records were mainly stored in record offices. Implicitly, the SLAs under review largely failed to ensure the availability and use of legal frameworks for better management of records as essential component of future reference and auditing of individuals’ actions.

### **7.2 Records management system used to create and capture records for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

Respondents were asked the systems used in SLAs, and findings showed that more than two systems such as alphabetical, alphanumeric and numeric were established and used in the same office in SLAs: “There is no guideline for records classification and system creation [...] alphanumeric system is used in administrative registry though other departments like land registry use numerical system” [*Group discussion, Group 1*]

When the researcher asked why the keyword system was not in use, the participants cited lack of resources and understanding among administrators as factors limiting the implementation of keyword system. This observation was supported by the following interview extracts:



“...when we proposed a keyword system, the management claimed that they lack resources to change the existing system, for the time being we need to focus on potential issues rather than keyword system, which does not differ with other systems” [*Group discussion, Group 4*]

“... we plan to install keyword file classification system but we are limited by budget constraints [*Interview, Group 1*]

Results showed that SLAs only created and managed paper-based administrative records. These councils mostly used numerical, alphabetical and alphanumeric systems to manage these administrative records. On the other hand, the District Commissioners’ offices have installed a keyword filing classification system but for paper-based records management. Although there were systems for managing records, they lacked guidelines on using such systems. It emerged that the records management system was largely ineffective due to lack of ERM strategies as a main requirement for e-governance, non-installation of keyword system in some offices which affected retrieval and use of records to support evidence, and absence of guidelines for guiding the creation and installation of a viable records management system to ensure availability of records for auditing, service delivery and decision-making.

### **7.3 Records storage and protection for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

The study also aimed to determine the general storage of records and security measures against disaster and environmental damage. Results revealed poor storage of records in SLAs, which endangered the lifespan of the records and threatened to compromise confidentiality. SLAs had not managed to put in place written disaster preparedness and vital records recovery plans. In case of disaster, SLAs records will be lost. There was also poor security measures in place trusted for disaster response. During observation, a bucket of sand was found near a records office for fire eruption response, as Figure 1 illustrates:



**Figure 1: Security measures found in SLAs**  
**Source: Field Data (2020)**

However, this measure alone was largely ineffective since there was a need for a well-established anti-fire system to ensure the records were not affected. Paradoxically, these same records offices were also used for storing dustbin and cleanliness tools, as Figure 2 illustrates:



**Figure 2: Storage of dustbin and cleanliness tools in record office in SLAs**  
**Source: Field data (2020)**

Figure 2 signals that records preservation measures were largely ignored. Records offices were reduced to storage of any kind of materials, which eroded their value as custodians of key documents that needed shielding against material that might spoil them. Moreover, these storage facilities were not only inadequate but also in poor condition. Furthermore, the storage space reserved for records was so inadequate, as both current and semi-records were kept in the same place. Consequently, records officers for both sets of records were in the same building. Figure 3 illustrates the poor storage facilities and lack of storage space found in the SLAs under review:



**Figure 3: Storage facilities used to keep records in SLAs**  
**Source: Field Data (2020)**

These deplorable conditions made the SLAs vulnerable to breaching the secrecy and confidentiality of records. Specifically, the researchers found no confidential registry. This observation was supported by evidence from the group discussions: “No one is restricted to enter the records office; some officers take files by themselves, also the security guard uses this room as a restroom at night” [*Group discussion, Group 2*]. Implicitly, the security of the records was compromised.

Also, in some offices, the records offices were located at the reception and, sometimes, records personnel also doubled as receptionist in the absence of substantive office-bearers. Some of the record offices even allowed both internal and external customers to access the records office for diverse services. Figure 4 shows an open space where external customers were served in the records office:



**Figure 4: Open space used to serve external customers in one of the SLAs offices**  
**Source: Field Data (2020)**

This state of records management creates an environment amenable to breaching confidentiality in public offices.

#### **7.4 Implementation of records management programme for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

The Tanzania National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011 requires timely appraisal and disposition of records. Regarding appraisal and disposition, both records personnel and HROs reported that there was no appraisal and proper disposal of records conducted in the SLAs.

“The document for which you have asked, the last time I saw it was when I was still in college, when our teacher came in class with it for demonstration purposes. Regarding the issue of appraisal, we have never done it [here] and I don’t know why? [*Group discussion, Group 10*]

Most respondents were not even aware of the retention schedule as an authorised guiding tool for appraisal and disposition. Moreover, some respondents admitted that they had never done any appraisal and affirmed the absence of any retention schedule in their respective offices. They referred to their college when undergoing training for such experiences. In other words, there was no institutional retention and disposal schedule in the SLAs, which hindered the appraisal and disposition of records:

Another respondent replied that they had never done any disposal in their office and conducting such appraisal was not even on the table yet; the only experience with appraisal was back in college:

“We have never conducted such activity and I don’t think if there is a single day when we will undertake such an appraisal because the management doesn’t even care about records personnel” [*Group discussion, Group 5*]

Closed files were found to be in poor condition due to lack of appraisal and disposition. These closed files were kept in the offices of AOs, records offices and storage facilities, and not in specialised records centres. Moreover, some of the semi-current records were piled on the floor in heaps while others were kept in bloated ballot boxes, which eventually became eye-sores. Figure 5 illustrates the unsystematic keeping of closed files in SLAs under review:



**Figure 5: Storage of closed files in SLAs**

**Source: Field Data (2020)**

Overall, SLAs did not transfer records to any records centre for preservation. Respondents concurred they knew about the existence of the records centre although they have never seen it and no one knew where the centre was. When researchers asked them to state whether RAMD has visited them to provide appraisal and disposition directives, most confirmed that RAMD never visited SLAs. Failure to transfer records to the records centre affected preservation of archives for future reference and auditing on resource use.

## **8. Discussion**

This section presents a discussion of findings of the study.

### **8.1 Availability and use of records management legal frameworks for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

There was poor records management since records depended on the records personnel's personal and accumulated experience without necessarily complying with the principles of best records management, as stipulated by legal frameworks. Lack of legal frameworks generally undermined the records management practices and had no recourse to directives, as provided for by legislation and policies. Implicitly, local authorities lacked awareness, hence, failed to use legal frameworks in managing records, which inevitably resulted in poor records management. Consequently, SLAs were in danger of losing valuable records and breaching confidentiality due to lack of compliance with legal frameworks, which in turn erodes and hindered the fostering of good governance and service delivery. These findings are consistent with Athman's (2019) study at IMC, which found poor management of the municipal records due to lack of a records management policy to guide record practitioners.



## **8.2 Records management system used to create and capture records for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

Municipal and district councils lacked a common system for managing records allowing for parallel use of numerical, alphabetical and alphanumeric systems in some offices. The Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 requires installation of a keyword file classification system. This problematical situation stemmed from lack of organisational guidelines and resources. Keyword systems were only installed in the Districts Commissioners' offices. The findings also revealed that SLAs failed to comply with the directives of the Registry Procedures Manual of 2007, which requires each public office to install and use keyword filing classification system due to lack of resources. As a result, records were managed poorly. Moreover, there was no effective control of records in creation, storage and use, accessibility and tracking, which hindered good service delivery due to failure to deal with records on time and providing feedback to customers. This observation agreed with Athman (2019) and Rutta (2020) who both found absence of a keyword system and e-records management in the local authorities they investigated in Dar es Salaam. The scenario raises questions regarding such records endangering good governance and accountability at grassroots level.

### **8.3 Records storage and protection for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

Good governance and service delivery depend on availability of documentation and evidence for individual actions, decisions and accountability, but were in danger since records were not well secured in SLAs. The state of these SLA records office appeared to go against the government initiatives aimed at protecting records in public offices for future reference and safeguard confidentiality. The poor security of records evident in many of the SLAs under review resulted in loss of information, which could lead to lack of accountability, denial of both employers' and employees' rights, and poor decision-making. Although both the RAMA and its regulations, National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011 and National Security Act No. 3 of 1970 emphasise security and confidentiality of records, the SLAs were far behind in attaining these records management ideals. These results complement findings by Marwa (2015) and Leon (2020), who found poor security and storage of records in Tanzania's local authorities.

## **8.4 Implementation of records management programme for promoting good governance and service delivery in SLAs**

The findings showed that the SLAs conducted no record appraisal and thus did not dispose of records. There was no evidence of any institutional and national retention and disposal schedule found in the SLAs under review. SLAs did not support the government's initiatives of developing General Records Retention and Disposal Schedule of 2005 for timely appraisal and disposition of public records. Moreover, SLAs failed to comply with the RAMA and its regulations, which require each public office to formulate and implement a retention and disposal schedule for timely appraisal and disposition of records. Due to the absence of timely appraisal and disposition of records, SLAs struggled with records congestion, inadequate storage space and facilities, since both active and inactive files are kept in the same records office. This does not only affect records management but also SLAs' resources, as they keep inactive records in expensive office accommodation. These findings resemble those by Kashaija (2019) who found that records appraisal in Tanzania was not

conducted effectively due to lack of institutional retention schedule, coupled with failure to implement the General Records Retention and Disposal Schedule of 2005.

## **9. Conclusion**

The study established that the records management programme was largely too ineffective to foster good governance and service delivery at the SLAs under review. As a result, the SLAs failed to attain the best records management practices such as appropriate record-keeping system, availability and use of records management legal frameworks, storage and security of records, timely appraisal and disposition, and addressing challenges that limit best records management practices. These poor records management practices affected good governance and service delivery in the SLAs. After all, poor records keeping and retrieval of information affected timely and informed decision-making, and could lead to a breach of confidentiality and customer complaints over the poor and unprofessional records services. Furthermore, good governance and service delivery also suffered since there was either a breach or potential breach of confidentiality, complaints and inconsistency in making decisions among both internal and external customers in need of accessing information contained in those records.

## **10. Recommendations**

SLAs need to implement records management activities, particularly in providing adequate budgets, storage facilities and enough space for executing records management activities and storage of records. Records, as the heart of an organisation, require much consideration for future reference. To boost efficiency, there was also a need to increase the number of records personnel to meet records management needs in addition to subjecting accounting officers, action officers and records practitioners to further and specialised training in modern records management systems. SLAs should also ensure the availability and use of records management legal frameworks such as the RAMA and its regulations of 2002, the National Records and Archives Management Policy of 2011, the General Retention and Disposal Schedule of 2005, Registry Procedures Manual of 2007 and Guidelines and Procedures of Managing Personnel Records in Public Offices of 2013. Furthermore, the SLAs must establish confidential registries and suitable location of open registries, and develop disaster preparedness and vital records recovery plans to protect records against disaster, and institute safeguards against unauthorised access. There is also a need to install the keyword filing classification system in all the districts and municipal councils to standardise the quality of records management system in use. For more control of records, SLAs should also improve file movement control tools.

## **Declarations**

The manuscript has not published to any other journal, it is a real work of authors identified. In attaining this research, ethical principles were considered since permission was granted for data collection, voluntarily participation and the principle of confidentiality in presenting and discussing results. Furthermore, manuscript and study meet all the ethical requirements of the journal and that of my institution or company, as well as legal requirements of the study country. There is no potential conflict of interest for the research. All authors are familiar with the content of this manuscript and gave consent to co-publish, and they contributed to the writing of the article manuscript. Authors take responsibility to keep participants' information confidential as required by legislation, including the

Protection of Personal Information Act, they were given consent to the Journal of South African Society of Archivist to publish the manuscript.

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