**INEC SERVICOM PAGE**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

 INEC SERVICOM Page is introduced to provide information on the Commission for improved electoral service.

 The Page is designed to speed up information flow, promote the sharing of experiences

 on best practice and encourage the dissemination of innovative ideas. On the Page, INEC SERVICOM will provide information on Elections/Procurement processes as may be required by Citizens under the Freedom of Information Act.

**2.0 ABOUT SERVICOM IN NIGERIA**

 In June 2003, President Olusegun Obasanjo declared:

 “Nigerians have for too long been feeling shortchanged by the quality of Public Service.

 Our Public Offices have too long been showcases for the combined evils of inefficiency/

 Corruption, whilst being impediments to effective implementation of Government Policies.

 Nigerians deserve better. We will ensure they get what is better”.

 On 21st March, 2004 SERVICOM was created as SERVICE COPMACT WITH ALL NIGERIANS (SERVICOM). SERVICOM is committed to providing the basic services to which Citizens are entitled in a timely, fairly, honestly, effective and transparent manner. SERVICOM require all Ministries, Departments, Parastatals and Agencies to prepare and publish (not later than the first day of July, 2004). SERVICOM CHARTERS which provisions includes;

* Quality service designed around customers’ requirements
* Setout citizens entitlements in ways they can readily understand
* List of fees payable and prohibit illegal demands
* Commitment to provision of services within realistic time frames
* Specify officials to whom complaints may be addressed
* Publicize these details in conspicuous places accessible to the public
* Conduct and Publish surveys of customer satisfaction.

**3.0 WHAT IS SERVICOM** SERVICOM is an acronym for SERVICE COMPACT with all Nigerians. The SERVICOM office was established within the Presidency to:

* Co-ordinate the formulation and operation of SERVICOM Charters
* Monitor and report progress in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and performance under SERVICOM obligations
* Carry out survey of services and Customer satisfaction.

**4.0 INEC SERVICOM**

In June, 2010 INEC established a SERVICOM desk and in 2013 it was upgraded to a Division under the Directorate of Administration.

 INEC is one of the Government Agencies that have Offices nationwide with responsibilities covering the entire citizenry. The Commission provides services to Stakeholder timely, fairly, honestly, effectively and transparently.

**5.0 STRUCTURE/STAFF**

The SERVICOM Division is at present made up of two units namely;

1. Customer Relations/Service Improvement Unit/Freedom of Information Desk and
2. Charter Unit

 The Division is currently headed by;

 i. A Nodal Officer (Deputy Director), with

 ii One other Deputy-Director, an Assistant Director; and

iii. Six (6) supporting staff

 At the Commission Headquarters, each Department/Directorate has a SERVICOM Desk officer that report to the SERVICOM Division. The Division submits Reports of activities to the Commission then to SERVICOM Presidency for evaluation.

 The Commission in its determination to improve service delivery in the State Offices appointed Focal Desk Officers to co-ordinate SERVICOM activities in the State and feed the Headquarters for actions.

**6.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 2011 AT A GLANCE**

 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act was signed into law on 28th May, 2011. The Act was to promote transparency, openness and accountability in Public Offices. The underlying philosophy of the Act is that Public Officers are custodians of a public trust hence the public have the right to know what the Officers do.

 Section 1 (1) of the Act says:

 “The right of any person to access or request information, whether or not contained in any written from which is in the custody or possession of any Public Official, Agency or Institution, however described.”

 The right granted by the FOIA can be exercised by anyone irrespective of age, race or gender. Citizens have the right to public records and documents held in the custody of Public and Private Institutions and Services.

 Sections 4 and 5 provide that response to access request should be given within seven (7) days. A Public Institution must grant access to a request for records or information within a time limit of seven (7) days.

 It is worthy to note that, there are Penalties for destruction of records. Section 10 of the Act provides sanctions against the destruction or falsification of records and documents.

 **Section 8** of the FOIA provides that fees shall be limited to standard charges for document duplication and transcription where necessary. Therefore, access to information is free.

 Also, Public Institutions must keep proper records. The FOIA places responsibilities on Public Institutions to ensure that they keep records and information about their activities, operation and businesses. It also requires them to maintain properly organized information and records to facilitate easy access to such information, in addition to proactively publishing information about the institution by print, electronic and online sources. The Act also makes it mandatory that public institutions must train public officers on the provisions of the Act and the proper implementation of the Act.

 **Section 27** of the FOIA provides immunity for Public Officers against any form of Civil or Criminal Proceeding/disclosure in good faith of any information pursuant to the FOIA. Thus, Public Officials who blow the whistle of failure of public duty, abuse of power, mismanagement of resources or corruption are entitled to be protected against legal proceedings and from reprisals.

 **Section 11-17 exempts** certain information/records from public access. Such information include the disclosure of which could damage the conduct of international affairs and defense of Nigeria; information on administrative law enforcement proceedings and investigation, personal information, third party information such as trade secrets and commercial or financial information, information and records pertaining to professional privileges, journalism confidentiality, legal practitioner and health worker privileges and course materials are similarly exempted.

 There is a Right of access to Remedies, including Judicial Review. The Act allows everyone the right to initiate proceedings in court to compel any Public Institution to comply with the provisions of the Act. It also provides a thirty-day window within which anyone who has been denied access by any Public Institution can bring the matter to court for a judicial review. The National Human Rights Commission would also, under the laws applicable to it, have a role in ensuring proper implementation of the rights in the FOIA.

 Lastly, the FOI Act places ultimate responsibility and obligation for implementation of its provisions on the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation. By the first day of February of each year, all Public Institutions must submit to the Attorney-General an Annual Compliance Report. The INEC FOIA Desk at present is manned by a Deputy Director (GL.16). In keeping with the rules of FOIA, 2011, the Commission on 18th November, 2017 had conducted Customized Training for Directing Cadre with Resource Persons from Ministry of Justice to enlighten the officers on the ‘’ ***Effective Implementation of FOIA***.’’

 The Commission has been implementing the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to ensure compliance and promote accountability in public service.

**7.0 CUSTOMER RELATIONS/ SERVICE IMPROVEMENT DESK**

 Customer Service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. It is the sum total of what an organization does to meet customer expectations and produce customer satisfaction.

 The Commission by the nature of its services relate with the Public who come to take services and contribute in the sustenance of a robust democratic. Culture in Nigeria. Some of the Commission’s Customers (Stakeholders) are the Electorate, Political Parties and their Candidates, Civil Society Organizations, Election Observers, Security Agencies, the Media, Tertiary Institutions, Local and Foreign Observers (External) including INEC staff (Internal).

 The Customer Relations/ Service Improvement Desk investigate/analyze complaints by Customers to ascertain and differentiate the complaints about service provision and service delivery. The officer ensures that action is taken to remedy the cause of justified complaints.

 The SERVICOM Division has over the years been prompt in delivering services with unparallel commitment, competence and skills required by the service. The quality of service the Electorate receives is aimed at improving the credibility and public image of the Commission.

**8.0 SERVICE CHARTER DESK A** Service Charter is a public statement about the services an organization provides. It is an undertaking made to Stakeholders by an Organization about the services they should expect. It is developed to re-orient an Organization towards its Customer’s satisfaction. The Commission has developed its Service Charter since 2005. Owing to changes and innovations that have taken place in the Commission, the Service Charter is being reviewed for maximum benefits.

 The Charter Desk performs the following functions:

1. Guides the Departments/Directorates and other service frontlines on Charter formulation.

2. Liaises with the Stakeholders for their input while formulating the Commission’s Service Charter

3. Vets the Commission’s Charter to ensure conformity with SERVICOM approved guidelines

4. Monitors the implementation of the Commission’s integrated as well as Local Charter periodically.

5. In conjunction with the Service Improvements Desk Officer, co-ordinates the review of the Commission’s Charter.

 6. Periodically briefs the Nodal Officer with regards to 1-5 above.

 The Service Charter of the Commission as is being reviewed will afford the Commission, Stakeholders and Staff some benefits as it will help in clarifying expectations and in managing overall performance and service improvement. At the moment, the Service Charter has been approved and will soon be published and launched.

 **Olayide Okuonghae**

 **Deputy-Director (SERVICOM)**

 **26th June, 2018**