

**AN EXPLORATION INTO THE CURRENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
PRACTICES OF THE ROAD ACCIDENT FUND IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## DECLARATION

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I, Vanessa Neo Mathope, declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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## ABSTRACT

Records management best practice is essential in government bodies to facilitate accountability and to promote transparency. Records are indispensable for these organisations to conduct their official business effectively, as mandated by government, and to provide evidence of business transactions. However, research has shown that these organisations manage their records poorly. Very little attention is paid to the management of paper-based records – due to the popular belief of technology resolving all record-keeping problems. However, most technological solutions are not designed to manage records according to the standards of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA). Additionally the required, substantial customisation to the unique requirements per organisation is not done. In this way, records management becomes an expensive exercise that often results in significant service delivery problems. The purpose of this research is to establish whether the Road Accident Fund (RAF) complies with the conditions involved in the *Records Management Policy Manual* of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 (International Organization for Standardization 2016) for managing paper-based records and to determine the organisation's readiness for managing electronic records. The exploration follows a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Data is collected by means of document analysis, supplemented by interviews and observation. The findings reveal that the records management practices of the RAF are below par and do not fully comply with the records management legislative requirements of NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016. In order for the RAF to improve its records management practices, the study recommends the development and implementation of a records management programme to facilitate the implementation of the NARSSA *Records Management Policy* (National Archives and Records Service of South Africa 2007) and the development of standard processes and procedures.

**Key terms:** electronic records, governance, government body, Road Accident Fund, records, record-keeping, records management, service delivery, South Africa, paper-based records.

## **ABSTRAK**

Rekordbestuur beste praktyk is noodsaaklik in regeringsliggame om aanspreeklikheid te fasiliteer en deursigtigheid te bevorder. Rekords is onontbeerlik in hierdie organisasies vir die effektiewe volvoering van amptelike besigheid, soos deur die regering opdrag gegee en as bewys van die saketrasaksies wat plaasgevind het. Rekords word egter swak bestuur in hierdie instellings. Min aandag word gegee aan die bestuur van papiergebaseerde rekords as gevolg van die algemene aanname dat die gebruik van tegnologie alle rekordbestuur-probleme sal oplos. Die meeste tegnologie oplossings is egter nie ontwerp om rekords te bestuur volgens die standaarde wat deur die Nasionale Argiewe en Rekorddiens van Suid-Afrika (NARSSA) onderskryf word, sonder om aansienlike aanpassings te ondergaan wat dit in lyn sal bring met die unieke vereistes van organisasies nie. Hierdie aanpassings is duur en lei dikwels tot groter diensleweringprobleme. Die doel van hierdie ondersoek was om vas te stel of die Padongelukkefonds (RAF) voldoen aan die voorwaardes van NARSSA (2007) en ISO 15489-1:2016 vir die bestuur van papiergebaseerde rekords en om te bepaal of die organisasie se gereedheid vir elektroniese rekords. Die studie is kwalitatief en 'n gevallestudie is gebruik as ontwerp vir die ondersoek. Data is hoofsaaklik versamel deur dokumentanalise en aangevul met onderhoude en waarneming. Die bevindinge het aan die lig gebring dat die rekordbestuurspraktyke van die RAF onder gelyke mate is en nie volledig voldoen aan die wetlike vereistes vir rekordbestuur in NARSSA (2007) en ISO 15489-1:2016 nie. Om sy rekordbestuurspraktyke te verbeter, het die studie aanbeveel dat 'n rekordbestuursprogram ontwikkel en geïmplementeer word wat die implementering van rekordbestuursbeleid en die ontwikkeling van standardprosesse en prosedures binne die RAF sal vergemaklik.

## **SA BONAHALENG**

Ts'ebetso e ntle ea taolo ea lirekoto e bohlokoa ho mekhatlo ea mmuso ho tsamaisa boikarabello le ho khothaletsa ponaleto. Ho tsamaisa khoebo ea semmuso ka nepo joalo ka ha e laetsoe ke mmuso le ho fana ka bopaki ba litšebeliso tsa mmuso le ho fana ka bopaki ba litšebeliso tsa khoebo, litlaleho li bohlokoa haholo homekhatlo ena. Leha ho le joalo, lipatlisiso li bonts'itse hore mekhatlo ena e tsamaisa lirekoto tsa tsona hampe. Tlhokomelo e nyane haholo e fuaa batsamaisi ba lirekoto tse thehiloeng pampiring ka lebaka la tumelo e tloaelehileng ea hore ts'ebeliso ea mahlale e tla rarolla mathata a ho boloka rekoto. Le ha ho le joalo, litharollo tse ngata tsa mahlale ha li etselitsoe ho tsamaisa lirekoto ho latela maemo a ananeloang ke National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) ntle le ho etsa litlhahiso tse kholo ho li hokahanya le litlhoko tse ikhethileng tsa mokhatlo ka mong. Boikoetliso bona bo theko e boima 'me hangata bo baka mathata a bohlokoa a phano ea litšebeletso. Morero oa phuputso ena e ne e le ho netefatsa hore na Letlole la Kotsi ea Mebileng (RAF) le latela NARSSA le ISO 15489-1:2016 maemo a ho laola lirekoto tse thehiloeng pampiring le ho fumana hore na mokgatlo o ikemiselitse ho loka lirekoto tsa elektronike. Patlisiso e ne e le ea boleng, mme ho ile ha sebelisoa boithuto ba linyeoe e le moralo oa lipatlisiso. Boitsebiso bo ile ba bokelloa haholo-holo ka ho hlahloba litokomane le ho tlatsetsoa ka lipuisano le ho shebeloa. Liphuputso li senotse hore mekhoe ea tsamaiso ea taolo ea RAF e ka tlase ho maemo 'me ha e lumellane ka botlalo le litlhoko tsa molao oa taolo ea lirekoto e fumanoe ho NARSSA (2007) le ISO 15489-1:2016. Ho ntlafatsa mekhoe ea eona ea taolo ea lirekoto, phuputso e khothalelitse ho nts'etsopele le ho kenya tšebetsong lenaneo la taolo ea lirekoto le tla thusa ho kenya tšebetsong Leano la Tsamaiso ea Lirekoto le nts'etsopele ea tse tloaelehileng ho RAF.

## **DEDICATION**

This one is for me.

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During this study, I have come to acknowledge that, Without Christ, I am nothing. I am weak. I am helpless. My own strength – be it physical, mental, or emotional – simply does not last.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
ABSTRACT .....	ii
ABSTRAK .....	iii
SA BONAHALENG .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Background to the study .....	3
1.2.1 Overview of the Road Accident Fund (RAF) .....	5
1.2.2 Records management in the Road Accident Fund (RAF) .....	6
1.2.3 Functions of Correspondence and Document Management Services .....	9
1.2.4 Structure of Correspondence and Document Management Services .....	11
1.3 Problem statement .....	13
1.4 Research purpose and objectives .....	13
1.4.1 Research purpose .....	14
1.4.2 Research objectives .....	14
1.5 Research questions .....	14
1.6 Significance of the research .....	15
1.7 Justification of the study .....	17
1.8 Conceptual framework .....	19
1.9 Definition of key terms .....	21
1.9.1 Electronic record .....	21
1.9.2 Governance .....	21
1.9.3 Government body .....	21
1.9.4 Record .....	21
1.9.5 Records management .....	22
1.10 Research methodology .....	22
1.11 Ethical considerations .....	23
1.12 Dissertation structure .....	23



1.13 Summary.....	24
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	25
2.1 Introduction .....	25
2.2 NARSSA Policy Manual .....	25
2.3 ISO 15489-1:2016.....	29
2.4 Records management regulatory body .....	31
2.4.1 Characteristics of records .....	32
2.4.2 Standards applicable to records management.....	34
2.4.4 Records management best practice.....	41
2.5 Summary.....	44
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	45
3.1 Introduction .....	45
3.2 Records management in South African government bodies.....	46
3.3 Established records management practices in government bodies.....	47
3.4 Common records management problems.....	51
3.4.1 Non-compliance with record-keeping regulations .....	52
3.4.2 Lack of skills among records management employees .....	53
3.4.3 Lack of senior management support .....	56
3.5 Managing electronic records .....	56
3.6 Challenges associated with automation.....	57
3.6.1 Increased costs .....	58
3.6.2 Loss of security and privacy .....	58
3.6.3 Risks to the trustworthiness of records .....	59
3.6.4 Technological obsolescence .....	59
3.6.5 Lack of technical skills .....	59
3.7 Readiness for electronic records.....	60
3.8 Summary.....	64
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	66
4.1 Introduction .....	66
4.2 Research paradigm .....	66
4.2.1 Major research paradigms .....	66
4.2.2 Interpretivism.....	67
4.3 Research approach .....	68
4.4 Research design .....	70

4.4.1	Case study research design .....	70
4.5	Population .....	72
4.6	Sampling .....	72
4.6.1	Purposive sampling.....	73
4.7	Data collection .....	76
4.7.1	Data collection instruments.....	76
4.7.2	Data collection procedures .....	82
4.8	Data analysis.....	84
4.8.1	Step 1: Preparing for data analysis .....	85
4.8.2	Step 2: Reading .....	86
4.8.3	Step 3: Coding .....	86
4.8.4	Step 4: Description and themes .....	87
4.8.5	Step 5: Interrelated descriptions collected from the case study .....	87
4.8.6	Step 6: Data interpretation.....	87
4.9	Validity, reliability and credibility.....	88
4.10	Ethical considerations.....	90
4.10.1	Respect.....	91
4.10.2	Anonymity .....	92
4.10.3	Beneficence .....	92
4.10.4	Autonomy.....	93
4.10.5	Nonmaleficence .....	93
4.10.6	Justice .....	94
4.11	Summary.....	94
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....		96
5.1	Introduction .....	96
5.2	Response rate.....	96
5.3	Research results and findings .....	97
5.3.1	Compliance of RAF's paper-based records management processes to requirements.....	97
5.3.2	Shortcomings in the process of managing RAF's paper-based records .....	106
5.3.3	Influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide services to the public .....	110
5.3.4	RAF's readiness for electronic records .....	119
5.4	Interpretation of research findings.....	127

5.4.1	Theme 1: Established records management practices in government bodies	128
5.4.2	Theme 2: Managing electronic records .....	129
5.4.3	Theme 3: Common records management problems .....	133
5.4.4	Theme 4: Challenges associated with automation .....	136
5.3.5	Theme 5: Readiness for electronic records .....	145
5.4	Summary.....	147
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....		150
6.1	Introduction .....	150
6.2	Conclusions.....	150
6.2.1	Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 1 .....	151
6.2.2	Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 2 .....	152
6.2.3	Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 3 .....	152
6.2.4	Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 4 .....	152
6.3	Recommendations.....	153
6.3.1	Access.....	155
6.3.2	Classification .....	156
5.3.3	Retention and disposal .....	156
6.3.4	Storage and handling.....	157
6.3.5	Policies and procedures .....	159
6.3.6	Tracking .....	160
6.3.7	Training .....	160
6.4	Summary.....	161
REFERENCES .....		163
APPENDICES.....		171
Appendix A: NARSSA ACT .....		171
Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template .....		179
Appendix C: E-records readiness tool .....		186
Appendix D: E-records readiness score template .....		187
Appendix E: E-records readiness risk template .....		213
Appendix F: Advertisement for Records Manager vacancy.....		214
Appendix G: Interview guide .....		217
Appendix H: Observation checklist.....		220

Appendix I: UNISA ethical clearance .....	221
Appendix J: RAF's permission to conduct research .....	223
Appendix K: Informed consent .....	224
Appendix L: Confirmation of editing .....	225

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Motor vehicle accident fatalities per province .....	4
Table 1.2: Records management process of the RAF .....	10
Table 1.3: Road Accident Fund (RAF) claims registered, 2011–2020 .....	18
Table 1.4: NARSSA comparison.....	20
Table 1.5: ISO 15489-1:2016 comparison.....	20
Table 2.1: NARSSA requirements .....	26
Table 2.2: ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements .....	29
Table 5.1: Compliance of RAF’s paper-based records management to ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements .....	104

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Structure of Correspondence and Document Management Services at the RAF .....	12
Figure 2.1: Elements of the records management programme .....	43
Figure 4.1: Structure of the RAF Pretoria Regional Office management team .....	75

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACEO	Acting Chief Executive Officer
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
AIIM	Association for Information and Image Management
APP	Annual Performance Plan
BPM	Business Process Management
CAFS	Central Archives Filing System
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DM	Document Management
DMS	Document Management System
DoT	Department of Transport
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
ECM	Enterprise Content Management
ECTA	Electronic Communications and Transactions Act
EDMS	Electronic Document Management Systems
EDRMS	Electronic Document and Records Management Systems
ERMS	Electronic Records Management Systems
GIGO	Garbage in Garbage out
ICMS	Integrated Claims Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRMS	Integrated Documents and Records Management Systems
IG	Information Governance
IRMT	International Records Management Trust
IT	Information Technology
KDC	Karonga District Council
KM	Knowledge Management
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
NARSSA	National Archives and Records Service of South Africa
NDP	National Development Plan
OAR	Officers Accident Report
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act

PoPI	Protection of Personal Information
RAF	Road Accident Fund
RGM	Regional General Manager
RM	Records Management
RO	Research Objective
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SCM	Supplier Chain Management
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TOGAF	The Open Group Architecture Framework
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
WORM	Write Once Read Many



# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) (2007:1) states that good records management practices are essential in government bodies, so as to facilitate accountability and to promote transparency. For this reason, records are vital assets in government bodies, because they provide evidence of business transactions and explain why certain things have been done. Sections 32(1)(a) and (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) state that South Africa is a democratic country in which citizens are entitled to know what is occurring in government bodies (Republic of South Africa 1996a). This means that government bodies have a responsibility to be accountable to government and to South African citizens. Records communicate to the public what government bodies do and with what they deal; how they conduct business; and why they make certain decisions (NARSSA 2007:ii). In this way, good record-keeping becomes critical in the daily operations of government bodies, so as to ensure that records held by these bodies provide truthful evidence of, among others, business transactions (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:57).

However, government bodies often do not adequately manage the records created or received in the course of conducting their business (Ngoepe 2008:3). As a result, it takes longer for these bodies to deliver services to the public, because they cannot find accurate information to make decisions when required (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:4). Numerous records management scholars, including Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008), Schellnack-Kelly (2013) and Katuu (2015) opine that South African government bodies manage their records poorly, resulting in poor service delivery to the public. Additionally, as the governing body, NARSSA (2007:i) observes that institutions with poor record-keeping processes render poor services to their stakeholders.

In his investigation of the record-keeping processes of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Ngoepe (2008) found that poor records management processes contributed to disappointing service delivery levels in that government body.

In his study, Marutha (2011) established that poor records management practices severely affected service delivery of the public health care sector in the Limpopo Province. – Patients had to wait in long queues to receive their medical records before consultation and had been forced, at times, to consult a medical professional without their records, because the institution could not locate these records (Marutha 2011:ii). Both Marutha (2011) and Ngoepe (2008) argue that the foundation of success for all other organisational processes is to perfect record-keeping processes. Similarly, Schellnack-Kelly (2013:10) argues that there is a link between poor-performing institutions and their state of records management practices.

The scholars mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs demonstrate that, in most cases, government bodies do not know which records to create; what information these records should contain; or how to create records to ensure that they reflect good governance (Katu 2015; Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). This situation is occurring, in spite of NARSSA (2007:1) stipulating that good record-keeping is essential for good governance and the promotion of effective and efficient administration. Although records play an important role in enabling organisations to deliver timely services, government bodies often treat them as dispensable objects, rather than vital assets. Records management best practice provides a basis for policy formulation, thereby enabling government bodies to manage their resources properly and to deliver improved services to the public (NARSSA 2007:1). However, research has revealed that government bodies manage records in silos, without applying appropriate legislation governing the practice (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008).

Although good record-keeping also provides government bodies with the necessary tools required to demonstrate accountability in their operations and protect the rights of all individuals concerned (NARSSA 2007:1), records management scholars agree that this function is neglected and overlooked in these organisations (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). Instead, procuring and installing an information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure is emphasised, due to the popular belief that technology will quickly resolve all service delivery problems (NARSSA 2007:ii). Several government bodies, including the Office of the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape, have adopted technology for record-keeping.

Kwatsha (2010) and Munetsi (2011), who conducted studies at these institutions, revealed that, although technology had been adopted for resolving service delivery issues, it did not yield the envisaged results. Instead, the record-keeping systems implemented in these bodies resulted in more problems than anticipated solutions.

Through Section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, No 43 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996b), NARSSA compels all South African government bodies to manage records in their possession adequately, so as to ensure continued service delivery and to provide the authorities with authentic, reliable and usable records when required. This means that records should be managed as vital assets and not as mere objects that enable these organisations to complete their administrative work. Good records management can improve the quality of service that government bodies deliver to the public, provided that these organisations become sensitive to the concept of best practice in terms of record-keeping. Good record-keeping should no longer be discussed on the ground only, but should become a boardroom issue, similar to ethics and risk management. Records management and any resultant service delivery problems can be addressed, provided that higher authorities intervene to create a culture in government bodies in which records management flourishes (Katu 2015; Kwatsha 2010; Marutha 2011; Munetsi 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013).

Based on the research findings of Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), it can be argued that records management as a practice has become valueless, due to detrimental standards – in spite of the importance of records in the operations of government bodies – hence, this research into the current records management practices of the Road Accident Fund (RAF) as a South African government body. The following section provides a holistic overview of the RAF – the organisation investigated in this research.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

To date, records management practices at the RAF are paper-based (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017a:124–127). They do not adhere to the required standard of

managing records and fail to conform to the guidelines outlined in Records Management Performance Criteria (NARSSA 2007:223-229). Records Management Performance Criteria (see Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template) provides governmental bodies with relevant guidelines regarding records access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking, and training (NARSSA 2007:223-229). Even though the RAF is supposed to keep records to comply with legal requirements and protect stakeholders' rights, the organisation does not manage its records adequately.

In its operations, the RAF receives high volumes of paper-based records from stakeholders as proof of injuries or loss of life (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017a:124–127). According to a media statement issued by the Minister of Transport, Fikile Mbalula, on 23 January 2020, from 1 December 2019 to 15 January 2020, 1 390 fatal motor vehicle accidents were reported. At least 1 617 people died because of these accidents (Republic of South Africa. Department of Transport. 2020:3). As indicated in Table 1.1, lives were lost in all nine South African provinces. It should be noted that the numbers in Table 1.1 only represent accidents recorded during the 2019/2020 Christmas holidays, with numerous more accidents occurring throughout the year.

*Table 1.1: Motor vehicle accident fatalities per province*

Province	Fatalities
Eastern Cape	242
Free State	111
Gauteng	254
Kwa Zulu Natal	354
Limpopo	217
Mpumalanga	144
North West	110
Northern Cape	49
Western Cape	136

*Source: (Republic of South Africa. Department of Transport. 2020:3)*

While many people survive motor vehicle accidents, their lives are no longer the same after the incident. Some people sustain severe injuries that leave them permanently disabled and unable to work (RAF 2019:27). To assist these victims, the government developed a compensation system. Compulsory motor vehicle insurance coverage was made available to all road users through the RAF. The business of this entity is financed by levies charged on fuel (petrol and diesel) sales (RAF 2019:27).

### **1.2.1 Overview of the Road Accident Fund (RAF)**

The Road Accident Fund (RAF) was established by Parliament in 1996, when the Road Accident Fund Act (No 56 of 1996) came to effect, and the organisation commenced operations on 1 May 1997 (RAF 2019:27). As an agency within the Department of Transport (DoT), the RAF is responsible for administering compensation for bodily injuries on behalf of the government to motor vehicle accident victims (RAF 2019:21). The RAF provides compulsory social insurance cover to people who sustained bodily injuries from motor vehicle accidents or died (RAF 2019:27).

The Act was amended several years later and the Road Accident Fund Amendment Act (No 19 of 2005) came to effect on 1 August 2008 (Road Accident Fund 2019:35). However, the Road Accident Fund Act (No 56 of 1996) was not repealed when the Amendment Act came into effect. According to the RAF (2002:10–15), the organisation was in a dire financial situation, which necessitated significant changes in the organisational systems, processes, policies and procedures. Hence, the amendment in 2008 to sustain the institution financially and to simplify the claims procedure.

The Road Accident Fund Amendment Act (No 19 of 2005) introduced new regulations regarding who can claim from the organisation, as well as what and how much they can claim. For example, under the previous version of the Act (i.e. Road Accident Fund Act, No 56 of 1996), people could claim for “emotional shock”. This means that the RAF was liable for compensating a person for any loss or damage suffered by that person as a result of emotional shock (allegedly) induced in that person when that person – without personally being involved in a motor vehicle accident – witnessed or heard of the injury or death of another person in an accident (RAF 2002:13).

The Road Accident Fund Amendment Act (No 19 of 2005) no longer accommodates these types of claims (RAF 2019:35). Accidents that occurred before 1 August 2008 are assessed according to the Road Accident Fund Act (No 56 of 1996), while accidents that occurred after 1 August 2008 are assessed according to the Road Accident Fund Amendment Act (No 19 of 2005) (RAF 2019:35). In other words, if someone experienced “emotional shock” before 1 August 2008, when the Amendment Act came into effect, their claim might still be paid.

According to Sections 17(1)(a) & (b) of these acts, the RAF is mandated to compensate and rehabilitate road users, such as cyclists, drivers, pedestrians and passengers, who sustained bodily injuries or died from reckless driving resulting from motor vehicle accidents (Republic of South Africa 1996c & 2005). According to these two acts, the administration of the RAF is fault-based – i.e. before accepting liability for the claim, the RAF needs to investigate who was at fault for the accident. As part of its thorough investigations to determine fault, the RAF examines records submitted by claimants or representatives (RAF 2019:33).

For the RAF to fulfil its mandate of compensation, it must manage received records in ways that align and contribute to the organisational goals. The RAF’s vision is “... to provide the highest standard of care to road accident victims and to restore balance in the social system” (RAF 2019:31). Based on the type of stakeholder service that the organisation envisions, the records management business units need to provide the necessary support, so as to ensure that the RAF realises its vision. It is worth mentioning that the RAF operates in a highly litigious and dispute-ridden environment and, therefore, records need to remain authoritative to stand in court (RAF 2019:13). ISO 15489-1 describes *authoritative records* as authentic, reliable and usable records with integrity (ISO 2016:4).

### **1.2.2 Records management in the Road Accident Fund (RAF)**

On 9 February 2021, the RAF issued a Management Directive with the title, *Records Management Policy*. Attached to the directive, was the new *Records Management Policy and Standard Operating Procedure* document. The aim of the Management Directive was to inform all RAF employees of the Records Management Policy to be

used when creating, managing, storing and disposing records. According to this Management Directive, the RAF developed a new inclusive Records Management Policy, which was approved by the leadership of the organisation. The new policy replaced the Document Services Policy that used to be in place, as it only addressed the mailroom processes.

Furthermore, the Management Directive communicates that the newly developed policy includes the stipulation found in the repealed Document Service Policy, as well as the Records Management Standard Operating Procedure. According to this Management Directive issued, the new policy aligns to records management principles and stipulations of the National Archives and Records Services Act (No 43 of 1996). The Management Directive reveals that two business units in the RAF have similar record-keeping mandates.

This research was conducted at the RAF Regional Office in Menlyn (Pretoria), which is one of several offices that the organisation has countrywide, including its Head Office in Centurion (RAF 2019:270). Records management forms part of the Information Governance (IG) unit at the RAF Head Office (RAF 2020a). This unit provides appropriate standards that should be observed in creating, using, retaining and disseminating organisational information, regardless of its origin. These standards are developed through the efforts of a cross-functioning steering committee that consists of Information Technology (IT) Governance, Information Security, Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Service Continuity, Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Risk Management and Records Management (RAF 2020). This platform for a records management unit forming part of a committee, with the knowledge and expertise to establish new programmes to determine the value of the organisational information – only exists at the RAF Head Office.

Correspondence and Document Management Services are responsible for performing records management functions in the regional offices (RAF 2020). This business unit does not form part of ICT, as it does at Head Office, but is a stand-alone unit responsible for facilitating records creation, security, maintenance, use and disposal. The organisation has a records manager, who operates from the HEAD OFFICE in Centurion. According to the Records Management Policy of the RAF (2021:3), all the

other regional offices have Correspondence Managers, who are the custodians of records in their respective operational spheres.

Furthermore, the RAF Records Management Policy (RAF 2021:3) reveals that the Correspondence and Document Management Services unit is divided into two sections – the Mailroom, which is responsible for performing registry functions (NARSSA 2007:205–208), and the Central Archives Filing System, known only as CAFS, which is the filing area where records are stored. The Records Management Policy of the RAF discloses that Correspondence and Document Management Services exist to provide means of adequately managing records in various regional offices.

Although the Records Management Policy is excellent in principle, in practice, the systematic manner of managing records is not always adhered to, as each Regional Office follows its own records management processes. The Records Manager's office and Correspondence and Documents Management Services have a binding relationship, in that they are all responsible for managing the most vital organisational assets (records). However, these business units exist and operate in isolation, which results in dire record keeping problems. The management processes of records are inconsistent because they are not guided by the existing Records Management Policy published on 9 February 2021. Instead, processes are mainly manual and subject to human intervention. Furthermore, there are no records management mechanisms – in spite of the records management policy and standard operating procedure (SOP) being communicated through the Management Directive on 9 February 2021 – to compel RAF employees to practice proper record-keeping. The organisation manages its records in silos, without integration with systems, which would maximise their value.

An overview of the record-keeping history of the RAF is necessary to understand the current records management practices of the organisation. According to the Correspondence and Document Management Services Manager, the business unit was established in June 2013. There is very little information on the operations of the unit that performed record-keeping functions before the establishment of Correspondence and Document Management Services. However, according to the



Senior Administrative Officer (Supervisor) of the Mailroom, who has been employed in the Mailroom since its inception, the Mailroom and CAFS have always been part of the RAF. The two sections operated separately, until the establishment of Correspondence and Document Management Services in 2013.

The Mailroom performs various functions, such as receiving documents and running reception and the switchboard. As the annual reports contain no information on the development of this unit, the information provided by the Manager and the Senior Administrative Officer of the Mailroom was the only information available on the establishment of Correspondence and Document Management Services, which are responsible for performing records management functions in the Pretoria Regional Office.

### **1.2.3 Functions of Correspondence and Document Management Services**

A Registry is usually a physical place where records management occurs. According to NARSSA (2007:205), registry functions in government bodies include receipt, opening, sorting and dispatch of mail. In the RAF, all these functions are performed by the Mailroom, which is located in Correspondence and Document Management Services (RAF 2021). Although these units are divided into the Central Archives Filing System (CAFS) and the Mailroom, this discussion is biased towards the operations of the Mailroom, because this is where a great deal of record-keeping processes are performed. Based on observations, CAFS appears to be more involved with storage issues. However, this does not imply that the operations of CAFS are less important than those of the Mailroom. – CAFS takes care of the storage needs of the RAF and facilitates the movement of records. The Mailroom, on the other hand, performs registry functions, which are aligned with the research objectives and questions involved in this study. Hence, the bias.

The Registry exists to provide and control an institution's formal communication channels and to enable the organisation to perform its functions (NARSSA 2007:203). The Mailroom is responsible for managing the RAF's receptions (guests and documents) and the switchboard, thereby serving as a link between the RAF and internal and external stakeholders (NARSSA 2007:203). Employees in

Correspondence and Document Management Services receive the claim documents from external stakeholders on behalf of the RAF through document reception (hand-delivered mail) and courier companies, the Post Office and other regional offices. The Mailroom employees open, sort and dispatch received documents.

Table 1.2 demonstrates the RAF's records management processes according to the organisational records management policy and standard operating procedure issued with the Management Directive on 9 February 2021.

*Table 1.2: Records management process of the RAF*

Process	Description
Records creation	Correspondence and Document Management Services receive documents from external service providers through document reception, couriers, or collection from the Post Office and other regional offices. Upon receipt, the Mailroom opens, date stamps, sorts documents, creates spreadsheets for the received documents and arranges the documents in batches according to claim types (direct, represented, or supplier). Once documents have been received and date stamped to acknowledge receipt, they are delivered to the relevant business unit for registration. A claim is registered and a record is created by assigning unique identifiers known as the <i>claim</i> and <i>link number</i> .
Records classification	Once the unique identifiers are allocated to the claim documents, the file is covered; the claim and link numbers are written on the file cover page; and the file is taken back to the CAFS section in Correspondence and Document Management Services for barcoding. A barcode is allocated to the document cover page, which can be used to retrieve the record.
Records storage	CAFS also provides secure storage facilities to ensure that records are not accessed without authorisation, which may result in tampering.
Records preservation	Correspondence and Document Management Services is responsible for ensuring that claim records remain in a good condition. Activities to minimise the deterioration of information from paper-based records are conducted to prevent loss of material.

Process	Description
Records access	Correspondence and Document Management Services facilitates records access. As each business unit completes its processes, the claim record needs to be collected by CAFS employees to update the system and scan it out to the next unit that needs to work on the record. Should the RAF accept liability, the claim record moves back and forth between Correspondence and Document Management Services and other business units. Ideally, when the claim record moves from one business unit to the next, CAFS needs to capture the movement through the file tracking system to ensure that Correspondence and Document Management Services always knows where records are.
Records tracking	Correspondence and Document Management Services has an efficient record tracking system that enables CAFS to track the location of the paper-based records.
Records disposal	Correspondence and Document Management Services facilitates the disposal of records within the organisation. The RAF has a disposal authority that permits the shredding of duplicate copies. Shredding of duplicate copies is done quarterly by using an external service provider. This process entails that the business unit requesting disposal writes an Executive Summary requesting permission from the unit's Senior Manager. If permission is granted, the business unit works together with employees from the Mailroom to create disposal lists of the duplicate copies that will be shredded and pack the documents due for disposal in boxes for collection by the service provider. On the day of shredding, an official from the Mailroom is assigned to oversee the process to ensure that only prepared documents are shredded. On completion, the RAF is issued with the destruction certificate.

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

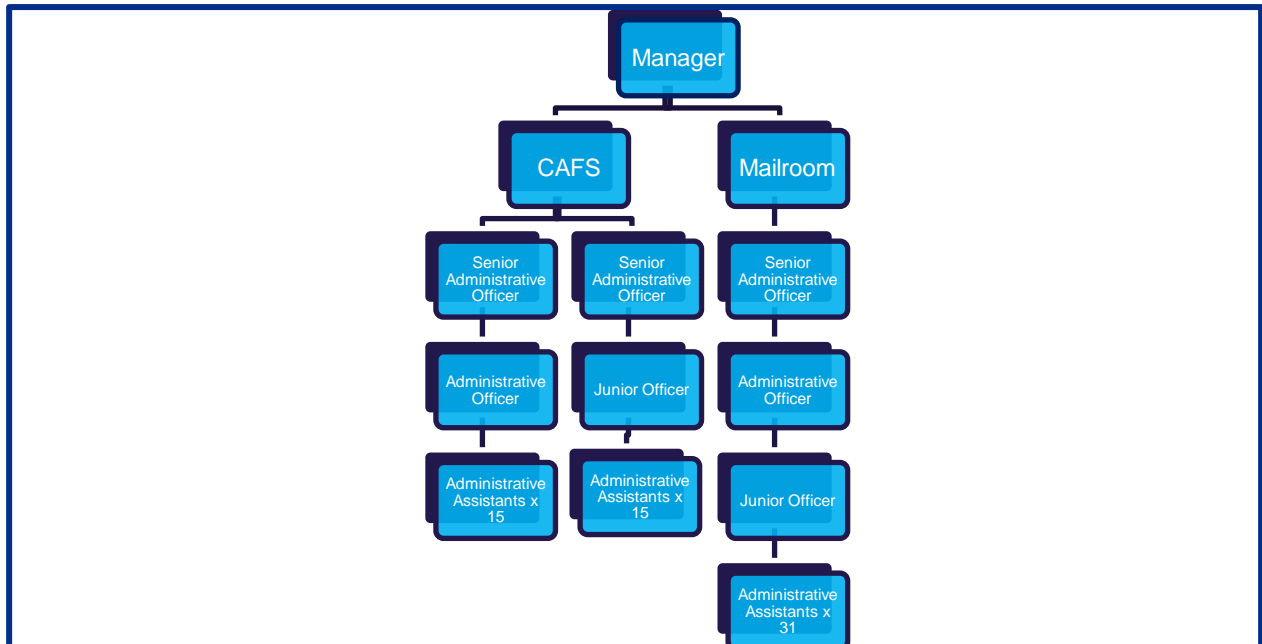
#### **1.2.4 Structure of Correspondence and Document Management Services**

According to the Senior Administrative Officer, upon this business unit's establishment in 2013, CAFS and the Mailroom were merged. Correspondence and Document Management Services operated with positions that were already in place. For example, the Mailroom had a Senior Administrative Officer and Administrative

Assistants, while CAFS had two Administrative Officers and Assistants. After the merger, Correspondence and Documents Management Services operated with a Manager, Senior Administrative Officer, two Administrative Officers and 61 Administrative Assistants.

According to the Correspondence Manager, the merger of these two sections resulted in more administrative assistants and enhancements to the structure were proposed to include more authoritative positions to ensure that reporting was structured to avoid pitfalls. Positions were created for two Senior Administrative Officers, two Administrative Officers and two Junior Administrative Officers to assist in establishing and maintaining reporting order in the business unit. At the time of this study, Correspondence and Document Management Services employed 69 personnel, which consisted of the Manager, three Senior Administrative Officers, two Officers, two Junior Officers and 61 Administrative Assistants.

*Figure 1.1: Structure of Correspondence and Document Management Services at the RAF*



Source: Researcher's own Compilation

### 1.3 Problem statement

As established in various annual reports, the operations of the RAF are still largely paper-based (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017a:124–127). However, the organisation constantly seeks ways to move to an electronic environment (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128). In seeking ways to move to an electronic environment, the registry is overlooked and poorly managed. Despite the RAF being a records-driven institution. As a result, it takes longer for the organisation to deliver services to the public, because accurate information cannot be found to make decisions when required (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:4).

In an article entitled *Road Accident Fund can't pay wages, accounts attached* (Versluis 2019) documents the sub-standard record-keeping of the RAF he reports that the RAF could not provide the necessary documentation to their attorneys, who represented them in court, and that claimants had to provide these records. This notion is echoed by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), as confirmed by the RAF in its *Annual report, 2018/2019*, where it reveals that the Auditor-General found the organisation's record-keeping to be poor (RAF 2019). Additionally, the Auditor-General revealed that "... management<sup>1</sup> did not implement proper record-keeping in a timely manner to ensure that complete, relevant and accurate information was accessible and available to support performance reporting" (RAF 2019:192). Hence, this exploration into the current records management practices of the RAF.

### 1.4 Research purpose and objectives

In the following sections, the research purpose and objectives involved in this study will be discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> "Management are those persons responsible for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, including those charged with the governance of the entity in accordance with legislation, in instances where they are required to perform such functions" (RAF 2019:229).

#### **1.4.1 Research purpose**

The purpose of this research was establish whether the RAF complies with NARSSA (2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 conditions for managing paper-based records such as access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking, and training, and to determine the organisation's readiness for electronic records.

#### **1.4.2 Research objectives**

In the context of the research purpose, the research objectives of this study are to:

1. Establish the RAF's paper-based records compliance in terms of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training against the conditions and requirements of the *Records Management Policy* of NARSSA (NARSSA 2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016).
2. Identify shortcomings in the processes of managing the RAF's paper-based records.
3. Examine the influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public.
4. Determine the RAF's readiness for electronic records.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

The research questions, which are aligned with the research objectives, are:

1. Do the RAF's paper-based records management processes comply with the requirements and conditions of the *Records Management Policy* of NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016?
2. What are the existing gaps in the processes of managing the RAF's paper-based records?
3. How does the use of paper-based records influence the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public?
4. Is the RAF ready for electronic records?

## **1.6 Significance of the research**

Section 13(2)(c) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) Act assigns NARSSA as the governing body with the responsibility and powers to inspect government bodies, such as the RAF (NARSSA 2007:231). NARSSA can conduct the following six types of inspections: (i) routine inspections; (ii) inspection of approved file plan implementation; (iii) inspection of approved filing system maintenance; (iv) appraisal inspection; (v) occasional inspection; and (vi) comprehensive inspection (NARSSA 2007:231–232).

According to the available documentation, the RAF was inspected only once by NARSSA – in 2016. From 26 to 29 September 2016, NARSSA employees conducted a comprehensive inspection at the RAF Pretoria and Johannesburg Regional Offices in response to an invitation sent by a senior official in records management, based in the RAF Head Office. According to NARSSA (2007:232–233), the purpose of a comprehensive inspection is to cover all aspects of records management practices in a governmental institution in-depth. This type of inspection is considered ideal for organisations that are experiencing wide-ranging record-keeping challenges.

As stipulated by NARSSA (2007:232–233), the process of conducting a comprehensive inspection involves the following actions:

- A NARSSA official sends a comprehensive inspection template to the organisation to be inspected;
- The organisation completes the template and returns it to NARSSA for processing;
- NARSSA sends officials to the organisation to conduct an on-site inspection, based on the issues raised in the template;
- NARSSA officials compile the inspection report and send it to the organisation that has been inspected; and
- Ideally, there should be a follow-up response to the inspection report. However, this has not happened.

Upon concluding the inspection, NARSSA officials recommended that the Pretoria storage facility was unsuitable for keeping essential records, mainly due to the water

pipes in the basement. The officials observed that, if the pipes were to burst, all the records could be damaged. NARSSA also recommended the installation of air-conditioners in the storage area. Furthermore, the officials recommended that employees working in the storeroom were trained in the use of fire extinguishers and that fire extinguishers be serviced regularly. However, none of the recommendations made have been implemented. Hence, this study.

Following the comprehensive NARSSA inspection (2016) and the recommendations in the inspection report, the RAF advertised and filled the position of Records Manager. Hence, the researcher found it necessary to assess the RAF's records management practices by using the same NARSSA inspection template. Most of the problems identified in the 2016 NARSSA inspection resulted from the vacant position of Records Manager. Since the records manager had been in office for over five years, the researcher expected the results of the assessment to be better than those of the 2016 NARSSA inspection.

The importance of records in the operations of the RAF cannot be over-emphasised and the organisation's lack of awareness of how damaging poor records management practices are to their existence prompted this study. It is necessary to investigate the research problem involved in this study, because it assesses whether processes for managing the most vital assets of the RAF are in place. The organisation should protect records in the same manner as its other valuable assets, so as to enhance service delivery; to adhere to the Batho Pele (People First) principle; and to maintain its corporate image.

The Batho Pele principle (Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration 1997), which is an initiative introduced in South Africa during the presidency of Nelson Mandela, encourages government bodies to deliver better services to the public. Perfecting manual records management practices at the RAF will assist the organisation in putting the people first by delivering improved services. This research is significant because it assesses whether processes for managing the most vital assets of the RAF are in place.



## **1.7 Justification of the study**

NARSSA (2007:8) stipulates that requirements for managing paper-based records should be satisfied before considering a change from paper-based to electronic records. However, at the time of the research, the RAF still found it challenging to comply with the stipulated requirements of managing paper-based records. The organisation attempted to change to electronic records management – without correcting the manual processes – which resulted in costly mistakes (RAF 2010:70).

The RAF should pay attention to the processes of managing paper-based records before considering automation to avoid what is known in Computer Science as the “Garbage in Garbage out”, or GIGO philosophy. The GIGO philosophy was made famous by the United States Army mathematician, William D. Mellin (1957), who proved that “... the quality of the information coming out cannot be better than the quality of the information that went in” (Seland 2018). If poor processes are automated at the RAF, they will not yield any positive changes. Instead, automation of poor processes may further deteriorate the quality of services that the RAF renders to its stakeholders and increase their expenditure.

The RAF has been trying to automate its processes for the past 20 years without any success. According to the Annual Report for the 2001/2002 financial year, the RAF’s administrative expenditure increased to R 247 086 million due to the implementation of new computer systems (RAF 2002:6). In the 2009/2010 financial year, the RAF attempted to automate their processes by implementing the Fineos system described as “... a global provider of enterprise software for clients in the insurance, assurance and banking industries” (RAF 2010:70). Although the Fineos system was supposed to provide a fully automated claims environment and a single platform for claims management within the RAF, the system implementation failed (RAF 2010:70).

To date, the RAF still does not have a single platform for managing claims, as envisaged in 2010 – despite the procurement and implementation of computer systems and various automation attempts. Furthermore, even after the failed Fineos experiment, the organisation remains determined to automate.

According to the 2017/2018 Annual Report, the organisation sought to automate some processes by introducing electronic forms or “e-forms” to shorten the turnaround time for processing claims and to improve service delivery (RAF 2018:123). However, the RAF still primarily operates in a paper-based environment when administering claims (RAF 2019:146). Although some of the data from these records is captured electronically on various systems, the organisation retains paper records, because they contain the complete information of a claim. This research is driven by the notion that the RAF should redirect its efforts to improve records management processes of paper-based records – in conformity to NARSSA requirements – before commencing with automation for record-keeping.

Since the organisation recorded an operational deficit of R1.3 billion in 2019 (RAF 2019:21), automation will require careful planning and budgeting. The RAF registered over 300 000 claims in 2020 (RAF 2020b:4). Table 1.3 outlines the number of claims registered by the RAF from 2011 to 2020.

*Table 1.3: Road Accident Fund (RAF) claims registered, 2011–2020*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of claims registered</b>	<b>Source</b>
2020	303 695	RAF (2020a:04)
2019	328 173	RAF (2019:04)
2018	271 933	RAF (2018:04)
2017	202 100	RAF (2017:04)
2016	188 864	RAF (2016:04)
2015	173 743	RAF (2015:02)
2014	147 168	RAF (2014:02)
2013	150 312	RAF (2013:22)
2012	172 859	RAF (2012:24)
2011	222 634	RAF (2013:22)

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

According to the constitutionally mandated public service philosophy of Batho Pele, the RAF should transform its ways of working. However, the transformation should make it possible to put the victims of motor vehicle accidents first. The findings of this study will create a deeper understanding of the dynamics embroidered in the management of records and the impact of poor record-keeping on organisational performance.

## **1.8 Conceptual framework**

When conducting a preliminary literature review for this study, it became evident that government bodies were managing their records without appropriate governance and were failing to adhere to the laws and statutes regulating compliance in record-keeping (Marutha 2018). This study examined the governance requirements for managing records in the RAF, which is a South African government body.

The *Records Management Policy Manual* of NARSSA (2007), which is prescribed for all government bodies, guided this research. The research results were also drawn by comparing the current RAF record-keeping processes to criteria in ISO 15489-1:2016, as established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which NARSSA endorses. ISO 15489-1:2016 applies to the creation, capture and management of records – regardless of structure or form – over time, in all types of business and technological environments. The researcher considered this comparison ideal, because ISO 15489-1:2016 intends to provide a framework for planning and implementing a records management programme.

This research focused on determining whether the RAF record-keeping complies with the NARSSA *Records Management Policy Manual* (2007) and ISO 15489-2016 requirements in terms of access to records, classification, retention, storage, handling, disposal, policies, procedures, tracking and training. ISO 15489-1:2016 also provides guidance and instruction for records management best practice. The NARSSA Policy Manual facilitates best practices by providing government bodies, such as the RAF, with correct record-keeping standards. The policy sets out specific conditions for managing every element in record-keeping.

Table 1.4 provides more information on the records management processes explored in this study.

*Table 1.4: NARSSA comparison*

<b>Process</b>	<b>NARSSA Policy Manual (2007)</b>
Access	Section 13(1) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) Section 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996
Classification	Section 13(2)(b)(i) of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996
Retention and disposal	Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996
Storage and handling	NARSSA (2007:33) NARSSA (2007:199–201)
Policies and procedures	Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act, No. 43 of 1996 NARSSA (2007:223–229)
Tracking	NARSSA (2007:12)
Training	NARSSA (2007:45)

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

Table 1.5 provides information on the processes explored in this study.

*Table 1.5: ISO 15489-1:2016 comparison*

<b>Process</b>	<b>ISO 15489-1:2016</b>
Access	Clause 8.4: Access and permissions rules Clause 9.5: Access control Clause 9.7: Access
Classification	Clause 9.4: Records classification and indexing
Retention and disposal	Clause 7: Appraisal Sub-clause 9.9: Implementing disposition
Storage and handling	Clause 9.6: Storage and handling
Policies and procedures	Clause 6: Policies and responsibilities
Tracking	Clause 8.1: Tracking

<b>Process</b>	<b>ISO 15489-1:2016</b>
Training	Clause 6.5: Training

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

## **1.9 Definition of key terms**

In the following sections, the key terms involved in this study will be defined.

### **1.9.1 Electronic record**

According to NARSSA (2007:iv), electronic records are created, received and stored by using computer technology. Electronic records include email messages, word-processed documents, electronic spreadsheets, digital images and databases.

### **1.9.2 Governance**

Governance involves the arrangement by means of which the institution controls and directs institutional affairs through laws and committees (Reitz 2011). Similarly, the RAF (2019:94) views *governance* as processes and systems by means of which government bodies are directed, controlled and held to account.

### **1.9.3 Government body**

Any institution that receives instructions and financial support to act on behalf of the government in providing services to the public is known as a *government body* (Reitz 2011). For example, the RAF is a government body, because it acts as an administrator of motor vehicle accident claims on behalf of government.

### **1.9.4 Record**

NARSSA (2007:4) and ISO 15489-1 (ISO 2016:2) define a *record* as documented information created, received and maintained as evidence and as an asset by the organisation in pursuit of legal obligations or business transactions irrespective of the form of its existence.

### **1.9.5 Records management**

The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) (International Records Management Trust 1999:14) and ISO 15489-1 (ISO 2016:3) define *records management* as a process whereby an organisation manages its records – regardless of the medium in which they have been created or received from external stakeholders – until their disposal.

### **1.10 Research methodology**

Silverman (2013:446) defines *research methodology* as the researcher's choices regarding the techniques used in the execution of a particular study. This study employed research techniques that enabled an in-depth understanding of the records management practices of the RAF, based on engagement with the organisation's employees.

According to Babbie (2014:456), research is guided by the researcher's world view, also known as a *paradigm*. This view is supported by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:84), who also regard a paradigm as a particular worldview. A research paradigm can be regarded as a frame of reference used to observe and understand a phenomenon (Babbie 2014:456). An in-depth understanding of a phenomenon can be achieved by conducting a qualitative investigation whereby the researcher listens to the participants' experiences and descriptions of a situation in which they directly involved. Yin (2011:287) opines that qualitative studies employ the interpretivist research paradigm, because they are influenced by both science and personal experience. Silverman (2013:443) agrees that the interpretivist research paradigm informs qualitative studies, which often seek to understand specific contexts in which a phenomenon has originated. The interpretivist research paradigm was considered as appropriate for this study, because it presents participants with the opportunity to express their views on current records management processes and the organisation's state of readiness as far as automation is concerned.

Within the qualitative research approach, a case study was used as the design for the investigation. Data was mainly collected by means of document analysis,

supplemented by interviews and observation. The research methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

### **1.11 Ethical considerations**

Ethical conduct was upheld throughout the research process by observing the policy on research ethics of the University of South Africa (UNISA) (2016). This policy requires the researcher to protect the rights and interests of concerned participants and institutions (i.e. the RAF and UNISA).

Furthermore, in adherence to accepted ethical norms and standards, the study is guided by the basic principles of research: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice (University of South Africa 2016:11–17). A comprehensive discussion on ethical considerations follows in Chapter 4.

### **1.12 Dissertation structure**

The dissertation is structured in the following chapters:

#### **Chapter 1**

The first chapter provides the background to the study, which constitutes the introduction, the research problem, research purpose and objectives, the scope and limitations of the study, the significance and justification of the study and the foundation of the research methodology.

#### **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 explains the conceptual framework within the research was conducted.

#### **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 presents the literature review, which focuses on the management of paper-based and electronic records.

#### **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 offers a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed in the study by focusing on the following topics: the research paradigm, research approach and design, the population, sampling methods, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 presents the analysis and interpretation of the research results, in order to establish the research findings.

## **Chapter 6**

As the final chapter, Chapter 6 provides the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

### **1.13 Summary**

In this chapter, a holistic and integrated overview of the study was provided by discussing the background to and context of the study, the problem statement, the research purpose, objectives and questions, and the justification and significance of the study. Key concepts were defined and clarified; the research methodology was identified; the ethical considerations relevant to research involving human research subjects were outlined; and the structure of the dissertation. The researcher explained why poor records management was a problem for the RAF and contextualised the study within context of the records management practices of the RAF. The research setting (i.e. the RAF) was provided by presenting the following information on the RAF: the organisational operations, finances, governance and sustainability, as well as its position as one of South Africa's vital public entities (RAF 2019:12). Furthermore, the business model of the RAF was explored, including its terms of service, so as to understand the type of records that the RAF creates and retains. Finally, the business units responsible for record-keeping at the RAF were identified and explained.

The next chapter presents and explains the conceptual framework for the study.



## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

A conceptual framework acts as a roadmap to a study by assisting the researcher to visualise his/her research and to put it into action. The main purpose of a conceptual framework is to guide to the researcher's thinking when the collected primary data is analysed and interpreted. Contrary to a theoretical framework, which is developed from existing theories, a conceptual framework is derived of concepts, formal theories or parts of theories and empirical research findings in scholarly literature. In this study, the conceptual framework was based on the research problem, objectives and research questions.

This study was guided by the *Records Management Policy Manual* of NARSSA (2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016. This conceptual framework was deemed as appropriate for this qualitative exploration, because both the NARSSA policy manual and ISO 15489-1:2016 demonstrate that, when approaches to the creation, capturing and management of records are based on appropriate laws and statutes, authoritative evidence of business is created, captured and managed. Adequately managing records according to established laws of the country provides government bodies with the necessary protection and support in service delivery (ISO 2016:vi). Furthermore, records management best practice enables these bodies to improve transparency, accountability, policy formulation and it improves the ability to make informed decisions (ISO 2016:vi; NARSSA 2007:1). Hence, the researcher drew records management compliance requirements for this study from the NARSSA policy manual, developed in 2007, and ISO 15489-1:2016.

### **2.2 NARSSA Policy Manual**

As previously stated, NARSSA provides government bodies with record-keeping conditions that constitute good practice. This manual informed the conceptual framework, in that concepts from the NARSSA Records Management Policy were used to frame the study.

The *Records Management Policy Manual* of NARSSA was relevant because it is prescribed for all government bodies, and these bodies can use it to monitor their compliance against correct conditions (NARSSA 2007:5). Furthermore, the researcher used the manual to collect information on sound record-keeping processes and procedures.

Kemoni (2008) encourages the framing of postgraduate research around existing policies. Based on Kemoni's (2008:112) assertions, NARSSA's policy manual was regarded as appropriate for guiding this research. The policy can be used as a conceptual framework to guide post-graduate research, because it provides records management guidelines and standards relevant to the practice.

As the regulatory body, NARSSA prescribes the records management processes with which organisations should comply, whether the created or received records are paper-based or electronic. Table 2.1 summarises the NARSSA requirements for various records management processes.

*Table 2.1: NARSSA requirements*

<b>Process</b>	<b>NARSSA Policy Manual (2007)</b>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NARSSA (2007:7) states that government bodies need to have ready access to the information. They are required to render their services to the public in an accountable manner.</li> <li>• According to Section 13(1) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996), the National Archivist ensures the proper management of records in government institutions (see Appendix A).</li> <li>• Sections 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the Act provides for the National Archivist to determine the conditions for the creation of electronic records and the conditions for the management of electronic records systems.</li> </ul>
Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to NARSSA (2007:15), correctly arranged and stored records are easily accessible and facilitate transparency and accountability, which are the cornerstones of democracy.</li> </ul>

Process	NARSSA Policy Manual (2007)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 13(2)(b)(i) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) provides for the National Archivist to determine the records classification systems that government bodies will apply.</li> </ul>
Retention and disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act, no public records under the control of government bodies may be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without a written disposal authority issued by National Archivist. Subsequently, these bodies need to implement a disposal programme that will enable the organisations to dispose of their records adequately and regularly, either by transferring them to an archival repository, or disposing of records without enduring value by destruction (NARSSA 2007:21).</li> <li>NARSSA issues the following three disposal authorities: standing, limited and general disposal authority (NARSSA 2007:21). According to NARSSA (2007:23), standing disposal authority is issued for current records. In contrast, limited disposal authority is issued for all terminated records, and general disposal authority is issued for specific types of records common in all government bodies, such as financial and personnel records.</li> </ul>
Storage and handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to NARSSA (2007:33), the records of government bodies require storage conditions and handling processes that consider their specific physical and chemical properties. The storage conditions and handling processes of these organisations should be designed to protect the records from unauthorised access, loss, damage, destruction, theft and disaster NARSSA (2007:199–201) provides ways that these bodies can adopt for protecting records against various perils, such as fire, the position of records storage areas, shelving, cabinets, fire sources, fire extinguishers, water, pests, extremes of temperature and humidity, light, dust, handling and unauthorised removal.</li> </ul>
Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act, the Records Management Division is responsible for inspecting government</li> </ul>

Process	NARSSA Policy Manual (2007)
	<p>bodies to determine whether their records management practices conform to the policies and procedures communicated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act specifies that the Records Management Division must examine the processes of the governmental institutions to determine their conformance to the conditions of the Act. Inspections are divided into the following six categories: routine inspection; inspection of the approved file plan implementation; inspection of approved filing system maintenance; appraisal inspection; occasional inspection; and comprehensive inspection (NARSSA 2007:223–229). Ideally, these inspections should take place annually.</li> <li>• When conducting these inspections, the Records Management Compliance Test for Officials of Government bodies and Statutory Bodies (see Appendix B) measures an organisation's compliance with the required standard (NARSSA 2007:223–229). Should there be anything with which the organisation's practice does not comply on completion of the inspection/s, NARSSA officials make recommendations to assist the organisation in improving and employing better methods for managing records that may enhance their record-keeping processes (NARSSA 2007:229).</li> <li>• NARSSA (2007:47) asserts that the Records Management Performance Criteria mentioned above can be used as a checklist by these organisations and as a basis to work from to monitor the organisations' compliance with NARSSA requirements in terms of policies and procedures.</li> </ul>
Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records tracking is the component of a records management system that ensures that records can be located when they are required (NARSSA 2007:12). Accurate recording and knowledge of the whereabouts of all records are essential in government bodies to ensure that the information they contain can be located quickly and efficiently.</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NARSSA (2007:45) states that records management is a shared responsibility between various users, including records</li> </ul>

Process	NARSSA Policy Manual (2007)
	managers and all other managers. Furthermore, NARSSA (2007:45) communicates that all records creators should be adequately skilled to create and manage reliable, authentic records. Therefore, in government bodies, all members of the management team, registry staff and users creating and using records while performing their functions in these bodies should be trained.

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

## 2.3 ISO 15489-1:2016

ISO 15489-1:2016 is relevant to any organisation that needs to ensure that their paper-based and electronic records are appropriately maintained, easily accessible and correctly documented – from their creation to ultimate disposal, be that through archiving, imaging, or destruction. The standard also ensures that disposal is conducted in a transparent manner and according to pre-determined criteria. Therefore, ISO 15489-1:2016 is crucial for government organisations that need to reassure government that they maintain accurate, detailed records according to the NARSSA policy. Table 2.2 summarises ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements for various records management processes.

*Table 2.2: ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements*

Process	ISO 15489-1:2016
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 8.4 communicates that government bodies should establish sets of rules identifying rights of access and the regime of permissions and restrictions applicable to records (ISO 2016:15). Categories of access and permissions rules that are applicable to records should be based on the results of an appraisal, such as the identification of personnel and the determination of records requirements (ISO 2016:15).</li> <li>• In accordance with Clause 9.5, access to records should be managed by using authorised processes. These bodies should adopt records systems to support the provision and restriction of employee access to records to ensure that access is appropriately managed (ISO 2016:17).</li> </ul>

Process	ISO 15489-1:2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clause 9.7 emphasises that records systems should be designed to support the easy use of records and, consequently, government bodies should develop and implement measures that enable swift access to records (ISO 2016:18).</li> </ul>
Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to Clause 9.4, classification links records to their business context by associating them with categories in a business classification scheme that links the record to the business being documented at an appropriate level, such as function or activity (15489-1 2016:17).</li> </ul>
Retention and disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clause 7 states that governmental bodies should evaluate their business activities to determine which records need to be created, captured and for how long the records need to be retained. This process is known as <i>appraisal</i> (ISO 2016:10).</li> <li>According to Sub-clause 9.9, these bodies should ensure that the process of disposal aligns with established rules and the current disposal authority. Adequate records systems must be designed to support the execution of disposition actions (ISO 2016:18). However, before implementing disposition, there should be a review to ensure that requirements for records have not changed (ISO 2016:19).</li> </ul>
Storage and handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clause 9.6: states that records, regardless of their format or media, should be stored in a way that protects them from unauthorised access, change, loss, or destruction, including theft and disaster (ISO 2016:17–18).</li> </ul>
Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clause 6 communicates that policies and responsibilities should support the fulfilment of the requirements for the creation, capture and management of records and the design, use and management of records systems (ISO 2016:8). Consequently, government bodies should ensure policies are supported by procedures that provide more specific instructions on creating, capturing, and managing records.</li> </ul>
Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clause 8.1 states that government bodies need to develop records controls, such as metadata schemas for records, business classification schemes, access and permission rules,</li> </ul>

Process	ISO 15489-1:2016
	and disposition authorities to meet records requirements (ISO 2016:13).
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 6.5 indicates that record creators – particularly those entrusted with managing records – should be competent to perform record-keeping tasks. Furthermore, their competency should be evaluated regularly, so as to ensure that they possess the adequate skills to keep up with the new developments in records management (ISO 2016:10). In accordance with Clause 6.5, the training programme should be ongoing and inclusive of various aspects, such as policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities for managing records.</li> </ul>

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

A records management programme consists of the elements of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage and handling, policies and procedures, tracking and training. Therefore, the sections in the NARSSA policy and ISO 15489-1:2016 containing specific conditions for dealing with the above-mentioned elements were examined in this study. The guidelines provided by NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016 aim to support records management employees in government organisations to develop and implement mechanisms and tools necessary for stimulating the processes of managing records, including the legal framework that governs the practice. The guidelines made available by NARSSA provide government bodies with a critical framework that can be adopted for planning and implementing systematic programmes for managing records.

## **2.4 Records management regulatory body**

In South Africa, NARSSA regulates the records management processes of all government bodies (NARSSA 2007:5). NARSSA, through the National Archives and Records Service Act (No. 43 of 1996), compels these institutions to manage their records in a manner that facilitates accountability, transparency, sound corporate governance, efficiency, and effectiveness. In terms of Section 13(1) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) record-keeping processes should be governed to ensure the accurate recording of business.

In terms of this legislation, government bodies need to control and manage their records according to the country's legislation, supporting policies, and directives of the institution (Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act, No.43 of 1996). Records need to be retained guardedly from the time they are created or received, throughout their lifecycle until their ultimate destruction (disposal or transfer to an archives repository). In addition, the NARSSA (2007:199–201) encourages these bodies to protect the records in their custody from threats of any form. Therefore, these organisations are required to ensure that records are not exposed to unauthorised access, fire, water damage, and pests (NARSSA 2007:199–201) and records should be stored in facilities designed for this purpose. Therefore, government bodies must also develop and implement control measures to facilitate the movement of records.

Despite all these policies and procedures that are in place for managing records in government bodies, previous research (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013) have shown that several organisations do not manage their records in a manner that meets NARSSA conditions and their record-keeping practices do not reflect best practice. Hence, this study reviews characteristics of records, standards applicable to the management of records, records management principles and best practice.

#### **2.4.1 Characteristics of records**

In Section 1.2.1 (Chapter 1), authoritative records were described as authentic, reliable, usable and having integrity (ISO 15489-1 2016:4). These are the characteristics of records according to the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) (1999), ISO 15489-1 (2016), and NARSSA (2007). In their operations, government bodies receive and create records.

Records received and created go through various processes before these bodies are able to make informed decisions and render services to the public. However, records must remain authoritative. NARSSA (2007:52) and ISO 15489-1 (ISO 2016:4) argue that, regardless of the number of times that records are used, they must remain authentic, reliable, usable, and have integrity. Records management exists to maintain these characteristics.



#### **2.4.1.1 Authenticity**

Records are the final statements of transactions that take place in the RAF (ISO 15489-1 2016:4). After receiving a claim, the RAF registers it and allocates a reference number (claim and link number), upon which a claim record is created (RAF 2019:33). Therefore, NARSSA (2007:52) and ISO 15489-1 (2016:4) both require that records held by the RAF should remain authentic, meaning that the organisation should be able to prove that records are a true reflection of what they appear to be.

Authenticity can be derived from the state of originality in which the records of government bodies remain, resulting from the record-keeping systems used to create or receive, maintain and use these records (NARSSA 2007:52; ISO 2016:4). Records are considered authentic on the condition that they are still complete and unaltered from when they were received, date-stamped to acknowledge receipt, registered, and filed by the government bodies (NARSSA 2007:52; ISO 2016:4).

#### **2.4.1.2 Reliability**

In the conduct of business, documents are exchanged between the RAF and external stakeholders to prove that injuries sustained or death were because of a motor vehicle accident (RAF 2019:33). Upon receipt of these documents, records are created.

NARSSA (2007:53) and ISO 15849-1 (ISO 2016:4) both specify that irrespective of the number of processes that these documents may be subjected to, once they are declared records, they must remain unaltered to provide evidence of the transaction that was initially documented. Reliability means that there should not be any additions, deletions, or corrections made to the records. According to NARSSA (2007:53) and ISO 15489-1 (2016:4), a record is considered reliable if it has not been manipulated in any way. Should changes be made to the record, it would no longer be regarded as providing evidence of the original transaction it had documented.

#### **2.4.1.3 Integrity**

The RAF's operations are characterised by high volumes of paper-based records, which stakeholders send as proof of loss of life or injuries sustained from motor vehicle accidents (RAF 2019:143). The Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) relies on these records to perform the necessary audit procedures on the performance

information to provide reasonable assurances in the form of an audit conclusion (RAF 2019:40). Therefore, records held by the RAF must have integrity. According to NARSSA (2007:53) and ISO 15489-1 (2016:5), records have integrity when they still have the same complete information after being used as they did when they were created or received.

#### **2.4.1.4 Usability**

Records can only be used if they are accessible, retrievable, and interpretable (ISO 2016:5). Records can be used by government bodies as long as they can honestly represent business activities that led to their creation and contain detailed information of why, when, how, and who participated in the activities that led to their creation (NARSSA 2007:53, ISO 2016:5).

According to the RAF (2019:121), the ICT business unit plays a vital role in ensuring that the organisation swiftly adopts technologies to process, store and protect the RAF's claims transactions and data. This unit is aware that records can only be used if they are accessible, retrievable, and interpretable (ISO 15489-1 2016:5).

#### **2.4.2 Standards applicable to records management**

NARSSA (2007:4–5) endorses various national standards, including SANS 15489, SANS 15801 and SANS 23081, so as to guide government bodies in creating authoritative and reliable records. Managing electronic records comes with additional requirements to which these bodies will have to adhere. Similar to paper-based records, NARSSA (2007:8) requires a strategy for managing electronic records. Consequently, before government bodies adopt the use of electronic records, the elements constituting best practice in this regard must be observed.

##### **2.4.2.1 SANS 15489: 2001**

SANS 15489: 2001, which involves records management, consists of the following two parts: Part 1: General and Part 2: Guidelines. The standard essentially addresses imaging or scanning hard copy documents and storing them in an electronic system. This standard provides guidelines for implementing records management best practice in the eight steps discussed below (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:152).

### ***i Preliminary investigation***

The relevant business unit/shave to seek information on the records management practices of the government body implementing an electronic record-keeping system, such as strengths and weaknesses. Thorough interviews have to be conducted with record-keeping employees to understand the current processes properly. The purpose of this activity is to understand all the different records created during the organisation's business operations and to gain an overview of the role of the various record-keeping business units, their purpose and their relationship to particular operations.

The findings of this activity will enable the relevant team/s to identify significant factors that influence the need for the institution to create and maintain records. By doing this, the record-keeping strengths and weaknesses of the government body will be identified and managed accordingly.

### ***ii Analysis of business activities***

Experts leading the change should conduct qualitative interviews with the employees working with the records. The functions, activities and transactions of each business unit should be documented to establish its hierarchy. An effective classification system can be developed and successfully implemented, if business processes are identified and recorded when engaging with employees performing the documented tasks.

### ***iii Identification of requirements for records***

Several factors – such as legislation, processes and procedures – drive the process of record-keeping. However, simply because NARSSA (2007) has a list of guidelines that should be observed when managing records, does not mean that the guidelines will be adopted in practice. Therefore, the appropriate records structure that satisfies the function or activity should be chosen only after records requirements for each business unit have been documented, so as to ensure that requirements for records are adequately identified.

### ***iv Assessment of existing systems***

NARSSA (2007:ii) reveals that government bodies often employ numerous disparate systems that compound the record keeping and information sharing problems, resulting in even greater service delivery problems. NARSSA (2007:ii) discourages government bodies from deploying disparate systems, because they constitute problems in proving the authenticity of records, resulting in diminished evidential weight of records created on a daily basis. The lack of integration between these systems hinders business units in government bodies from sharing electronic records with other business units. Therefore, prior to implementing an electronic record-keeping system, government bodies need to identify and analyse current record-keeping systems and determine whether they are effective. This activity will provide insight into the relationship between the organisation's business and its records.

The purpose of this activity is for the government body to develop a conceptual model of what the institution does and how it is done to understand how records relate to both the business and processes of the organisation.

#### ***v Identification of strategies for satisfying records requirements***

During this phase, strategies for satisfying records requirements should be developed and implemented. For example, the electronic records management policy should be communicated, with the established procedures for administering electronic records. Therefore, during this phase, the requirements for creating, receiving and keeping records to ensure accountability will be established. The purpose of this phase is to provide the government body with a platform to determine the most appropriate policies, procedures and standards applicable to the organisational records. This activity will enable the relevant business unit/s to make informed decisions about suitable strategies that can be adopted to enable the adequate management of records.

#### ***vi Design of a records management programme***

During this phase, the records management programme is designed, which entails changing the existing systems, processes and practices by adopting or integrating technological solutions. During this phase, government bodies will also determine how to best incorporate the changes into the existing systems to improve records management. Furthermore, all experts tasked with developing and implementing the

electronic record-keeping system need to work together during this phase to produce the most suitable specifications, based on the organisation's requirements for records.

#### ***vii Implementation of a records management programme***

The purpose of this phase is to identify and place appropriate processes and procedures into a programme. During this phase, the government body must have already documented policies, procedures and training materials necessary for electronic record-keeping. Documentation should be available to communicate the conversion process. The government body should generate reports to communicate the recorded progress and develop a project plan to explain how various strategies will be incorporated to implement a records management programme.

#### ***viii Post-implementation review***

The government body should monitor the effectiveness of the programme, so as to examine whether it produces anticipated results, by interviewing employees of all levels, using feedback form, and observing the records system in use. The purpose of this phase is to determine the effectiveness of the implemented electronic record-keeping system/s and to evaluate the effectiveness of the records management programme, so that deficiencies in the processes can be identified and corrected early in the process. During this phase, relevant business unit/s should analyse whether records are being created and organised according to the introduced record-keeping tools. For feedback purposes, the relevant business unit/s should be surveyed, interviewed and observed to evaluate whether introduced record-keeping mechanisms yield the anticipated results.

#### **2.4.2.2 SANS 15801: 2004**

According to ISO 15801: 2004 – adopted by South Africa as SANS 15801: 2004 – all electronic records management systems adopted by organisations must generate an audit trail (NARSSA 2007:5). The same system used for all electronic documents and records created or received, must generate this audit trail. The records management system should enable to organisation to detect tampering easily, so as to separate authentic and reliable records from those that are not. This standard requires the safe storage and preservation of audit trail records as Write once read many (WORM) media.

NARSSA (2007:8) specifies that electronic records should be created and managed according to sound records management principles similar to those that guide paper-based records to facilitate efficiency and accountability. Electronic records management best practices require effective management and procedures regarding retention of documents; responsible business unit/s; adequate archiving of records, regardless of their medium; and adherence to the conditions set out in the ECTA. Furthermore, paper-based and electronic records must be stored safely and must be easily accessible to relevant stakeholders when required.

According to Kwatsha (2010), Katuu (2015), Marutha (2016) and Munetsi (2011), requirements of an effective record-keeping system include compliance with the legal and administrative conditions in which government bodies operates. These bodies must have established policies and responsibilities that have to be clearly defined to ensure that the employees assigned to develop and implement the electronic record-keeping system/s include all relevant parties (Kwatsha 2010; Katuu 2015; Marutha 2016; Munetsi 2011).

#### **2.4.2.3 SANS 23081-1: 2006**

This standard sets the parameters for the minimum requirements of records metadata. By using metadata, government bodies can identify the record by allocating unique identifiers, record names, identification of different structures, details (such as the date and time of the creation, modification, or reading of the records), and the relationship of the document with other records. Furthermore, SANS 23081-1 requires the metadata to communicate the author and specific business unit that have generated or accessed the record (SABS 2001a; 2001b). This standard also specifies the recording of information on access and security restrictions, so that it is clear who is permitted to access which information.

SANS 23081-1 emphasises the importance of developing and implementing relevant policies and procedures to drive the process and to ensure that it is clearly understood from the onset how to create records; who will have access to do what on the system; and why these restrictions are in place (SABS 2001a). Furthermore, the metadata should also be aligned to the organisational business processes to ensure that

electronic records are as authentic, reliable and usable as paper-based records. Moving to an electronic environment should not cause government bodies to disregard basic record-keeping conditions, because SANS 23081-1 acknowledges the significance of record-keeping tools, such as file plans, disposal processes and pre-determined retention schedules. Subsequently, records management best practice conditions apply in the electronic record-keeping environment too.

### **2.4.3 Records management principles**

As in any profession, records management has established principles that employees need to observe when managing records. Per NARSSA's instructions, government bodies should develop and implement standard record-keeping mechanisms in line with established international principles. NARSSA has adopted international records management principles, which it provides to government institutions, with specific parameters for managing records. According to the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) (1999:5), organisations must govern their records management processes according to the following four principles: (i) the principle of *respect des fonds*; (ii) the life-cycle concept; (iii) the continuum concept; and (iv) the principle of levels of arrangement and description.

NARSSA expects government bodies to adopt international theories to formalise record-keeping processes, including the principles mentioned in the foregoing paragraph. However, since the study does not address the aspects of archives management, the principle of levels of arrangement and description will not be discussed. Therefore, the three principles of *respect des fonds*, the life-cycle concept and the continuum concept will be explored. As indicated in the following sections, these three principles provide guidelines for managing records during different phases.

#### **2.4.3.1 Principles of *respect des fonds***

This principle originates from the French term, *respect des fonds*, which means "respect for the creator of the records" (International Records Management Trust 1999:15) and, as pointed out by Schellnack-Kelly (2013:36), it dates to the French Revolution (1789–1799). Ngoepe (2008:3) argues that the *respect des fonds* principle is an essential rule that government bodies should observe when arranging and describing their records.

According to the IRMT (1999:15), this principle is associated with two distinct concepts – provenance and original order. *Provenance* refers to the “office of origin”, where records are created or received, whereas *original order* refers to the order and organisation of the created or stored documents (Ngoepe 2008:3).

Original order requires government bodies to manage records in their care adequately, as poor management of records in the office of origin results in poor quality records sent to an offsite storage facility where it may be difficult to retrieve (Ngoepe 2008:3).

#### **2.4.3.2 Lifecycle concept**

The lifecycle of records resembles that of humans, who are born, live and die (NARSSA 2007:51–52). The lifecycle concept, which be traced back to the 1930s, is considered the main conceptual framework for managing paper-based records (Chaterera 2013; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). American archivist and archival theorist, Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg, developed the concept in 1934 (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:39-41). According to the lifecycle concept, records are created, used and disposed of when no longer needed by organisations (NARSSA 2007:51).

There are three phases that records go through in their life cycle: (i) records creation (active phase); (ii) records use and maintenance (semi-active phase); and (iii) records destruction (inactive phase) (Ngoepe 2008:8). During the active phase, records are recalled regularly and used to conduct current organisational business activities. In the semi-active phase, records are required infrequently and may be transferred to an offsite storage facility, and in the inactive phase, records are no longer required for the conduct of current business and may be disposed of (Chaterera 2013:18).

#### **2.4.3.3 Continuum model**

The continuum model was created in the 1990s by Frank Upward from Monash University, with input from his colleagues, Sue McKemmish and Livia Iacovino (Kemoni 2007:66; Ngoepe 2008:36; Schellnack-Kelly 2013:47). The model is widely accepted for managing records and archives in paper and electronic mediums. The purpose of the model is to broaden the interpretation of records and record-keeping systems offered by the lifecycle (Kemoni 2007:66; Ngoepe 2008:36; Schellnack-Kelly 2013:47).



The continuum model was adopted for use by South African government bodies in 1962, when the State Archives Act (No. 6 of 1962) was passed into law (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:47). While the life-cycle concept recognises that records are created, used, maintained and then disposed of when no longer needed, the continuum concept suggests that four actions continue to reoccur, including the identification of records, intellectual control, provision of access to records, and physical control (IRMT 1999:20). Ngoepe (2008:11) suggests that, even in an electronic environment, paper-based records are still created, which means that the continuum model should be regarded as an additional tool for managing records – not as a replacement of the records lifecycle concept.

#### **2.4.4 Records management best practice**

As indicated in Chapter 1, the principles of Batho Pele (1997) guide government bodies in South Africa in their service delivery endeavours and, therefore, records management best practice is a necessity. Conditions constituting best practice in record-keeping are well-known and easily accessible through various platforms, such as NARSSA *Records Management Policy Manual* (Marutha 2018). Therefore, compliance with records management requirements should not be complex. However, this is not the case, because government bodies treat records management as an afterthought, rather than an intrinsic part of everyday operations (Ngoepe 2008). If records management best practices guide government bodies operations, numerous challenges in these organisations – not initially linked to poor records management – can be addressed (Schellnack-Kelly 2013).

Besides the Batho Pele principles, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) also guides government bodies operations. The Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, provides the legal foundation for the existence of other laws; sets out the rights and duties of all citizens' and defines the structure of government (Republic of South Africa 1996a). Sections 141 and 195(1)(f) of the Constitution (1996) specify that governance should be accountable and transparent (Republic of South Africa 1996a).

As established from various sources, accountability and transparency are achievable, provided that records management processes are on par. In the case of government bodies, this means that, if information underpinning decision-making processes is readily available, services will be rendered to the public promptly – irrespective of the mandate of the government body.

Several scholars, including Schellnack-Kelly (2013), have demonstrated that good record-keeping is fundamental for good governance and effective and efficient administration. Good record-keeping forms the basis for formulating policy, managing resources and delivering services to the public. When performed correctly, records management also provides organisations with the foundation for accountability. However, accountability and transparency remain significant challenges facing most government bodies (South African Government 2019).

Records should ideally be managed according to a systematic programme, known as a *records management programme*, which consists of various elements that constitute best practices. Figure 2.1 illustrates what a sound records management programme entails.

*Figure 2.1: Elements of the records management programme*



*Source: NARSSA (2007)*

Several scholars, including Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010), argue that records management business units are undervalued in most government bodies and they do not receive the necessary attention. Subsequently, records are not managed appropriately, because record-keeping business units lack the necessary resources to develop and implement a records management programme.

Records management should be a strategic objective in governmental organisations to ensure that it receives the attention it deserves (Ngoepe and Van der Walt 2010).

A records management programme enables an organisation to observe and adhere to record-keeping conditions stipulated by NARSSA (2007) and the NARSSA Act (No 43 of 1996). When government institutions have established a records management programme:

- Information will be found quickly and flow in an orderly and efficient manner that will enable the organisations to perform their functions successfully and efficiently;
- Authoritative and reliable records will be created and maintained;
- The duplication of unnecessary records will be eliminated;
- Retention and disposal programmes will ensure that only records required for functional purposes are stored;
- Control measures will be put into place to prevent unauthorised access; and
- The implementation of an approved file plan will facilitate transparency, accountability and good governance.

Although implementing a records management programme can be highly beneficial, various studies reveal that government bodies continue to manage their records without it, sometimes with dire consequences (Ngoepe 2008). Marutha (2018) opines that organisations do not continue to manage their records without the appropriate programme by choice, but rather due to a lack of the skills required to design a programme of such nature.

Regardless of whether records are paper-based or electronic, a records management programme is a worthwhile endeavour. NARSSA (2007:8) requires organisations to put the necessary infrastructure, policies, strategies, procedures and systems into place to ensure the management of both paper-based and electronic records in an integrated manner.

Should government bodies choose to manage their records electronically, NARSSA will require those institutions to implement and maintain the Integrated Document and Records Management System, which meets the minimum requirements of records management functionality, which include:

- Using the approved file plan,
- Identifying records due for disposal and managing the disposal process,
- Constructing and managing audit trails,
- Managing record version control, and
- Managing paper-based and electronic records in an integrated manner.

## **2.5 Summary**

In this chapter the conceptual framework for the study was presented and explained. In Chapter 3, the literature review is presented.

## **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Biggam (2017:104) opines that reviewing existing literature before undertaking a research project assists the researcher to remain relevant in their argument; pay sufficient attention to pertinent issues; and focus on the research aims and objectives. According to Biggam (2017:106), researchers need to ensure that the literature sought and reviewed aligns with their research objectives, so as to ensure that the discussion remains succinct and that the researcher has reference points to assist them to focus on the research questions.

The purpose of conducting the literature review for this study is to identify previous research on the topic and an appropriate methodology for determining what has already been established, including current records management practices in government bodies, as well as the creation of a platform for building a case for a new study by gaining an understanding of what is yet to be studied or improved in the field. Finally, the literature review establishes the recommended areas for further research are.

Based on the foregoing information, this chapter presents the critically reviewed literature on the management of records. Relevant sources of information that discuss correct record-keeping conditions applicable to the management of public records are identified and examined. The literature review examines the main issues surrounding the need for information management within government bodies through adequate record-keeping to ensure that the study addresses its research objectives adequately. The strategic forces propelling these organisations to record their business activities adequately and the benefits associated with good records management to external stakeholders are evaluated. Similarly, barriers to effective information management that hinder government bodies from successfully managing their records are examined, based on the research findings of studies in existing literature.

### **3.2 Records management in South African government bodies**

Based on the critical analysis of the literature, it was possible to conclude that poor records management practices are common in South African government bodies. The challenges that these institutions face – as identified by Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) – are similar to those reported by NARSSA (2007). According to NARSSA (2007:i), the lack of senior management support for records management functions and government institutions' lack of approved record-keeping policies and procedures are at the root of the challenges that these bodies face in managing their records. These challenges obstruct the process of good governance.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA) of 20 June 2019, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, set out specific priorities on which government should focus (South African Government 2019). The President acknowledged that most government bodies face challenges, such as poor governance, inefficiency and financial sustainability, which prevent them from delivering effective services to the public (South African Government 2019). NARSSA (2007:1) suggests that good governance is achievable through effective records management and that good record-keeping processes enable government bodies to deliver improved services to the public. President Ramaphosa emphasised that, under his Administration, government bodies would be expected to contribute to the economic and social development of the country, as per their respective mandates (South African Government 2019). The President also mentioned that his Administration is committed to building a better country for all, guided by the National Development Plan (NDP) (South African Government 2019).

When President Ramaphosa was sworn in as South Africa's sixth democratically-elected president, he introduced the "Thuma Mina" ("Send Me") movement, in which he pledged to serve South Africa and to work with South Africans to build a better country (South African Government 2019). The President also posed the "Thuma Mina" challenge to all governmental institutions, requesting their cooperation in realising this pledge (South African Government 2019). Therefore, poor records management no longer has a place in South Africa, and services must be delivered to build the envisaged country.

The literature review revealed that records management best practice comprises the following six components: policy, procedures, records classification systems, record control mechanisms, a disposal programme, and training (Chaterera 2013; Kalusopa 2011; Kemoni 2007; Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). In order to manage records effectively, government bodies must have an implemented records management policy that entails established procedures designed within the policy principles, developed by these bodies and approved by NARSSA (Marutha 2011:41; Ngoepe 2008:127). The organisations must implement and continue to maintain records classification systems, such as a file plan, and these organisations must have record control mechanisms in place for both paper-based and electronic records (Kalusopa 2011:233; Schellnack-Kelly 2013:88). Records management best practice also requires government bodies to establish a disposal programme to ensure the proper disposal of records (Kalusopa 2011:111; Marutha 2011:16; Ngoepe 2008:19). Lastly, record-keeping employees need training to ensure that they are adequately skilled to perform their tasks (Kalusopa 2011:93; Ngoepe 2008:13). Despite numerous studies on the records management process of government bodies (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013), the situation has not improved much. President Ramaphosa's SONA speech also illustrated that records are still not appropriately managed – despite the availability of information (South African Government 2019).

In order address the research objectives of this investigation adequately, the literature review is arranged according to the following five themes: (i) established records management practices in government bodies; (ii) managing electronic records; (iii) common records management problems; (iv) challenges associated with automation; and (v) readiness for electronic records.

### **3.3      Established records management practices in government bodies**

In the preliminary literature review for this study, the researcher mainly focused on determining the state of records management practices in South Africa. The work of researchers, such as Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), reveal that record-keeping in South African government bodies is inadequate.

Ngoepe (2008) examined record-keeping processes at a national level by scrutinising Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in 2008. Marutha (2011) investigated the public sector and the Limpopo Department of Health in particular, whereas Schellnack-Kelly (2013) examined the role of records management in local government efforts to reduce poverty. All three scholars found that the government bodies they had investigated no longer managed their records in line with NARSSA conditions (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). Therefore, it can be deduced that record-keeping processes of government bodies in South Africa do not reflect best practice.

Good record-keeping was common in South African government bodies before 1994, when the democratic government took over from the apartheid government (Ngoepe 2008). According to Ngoepe (2008:85), from 1994, the standard of managing records began to drop, as formal record-keeping processes were replaced by informal and inconsistent record management, which resulted in the practice devaluing and senior managers withdrawing their support for records management functions. Schellnack-Kelly (2013) also determined that post-1994, records of government bodies lacked authenticity and proper management.

Marutha (2011) reveals the dire effects of poor records management processes on service delivery by specific public health institutions. Due to paper-based record-keeping, patients queued longer than necessary to receive their medical records before consulting with medical practitioners (Marutha 2011). Personnel could not always trace medical records, which meant that doctors had to treat patients without having access to their complete medical history. Therefore, a lack of access to records affected the quality of service rendered to patients and violated their fundamental right to health care.

The above-mentioned studies are relevant to this investigation because the institutions examined must account to government, as should the RAF, and most of the laws governing these organisations also apply to the RAF, which is the focus on this study. Furthermore, drawing from the work of Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), it was observed that government bodies overlook the importance of records.



As a result, the role of good records management is underrated. Numerous organisations do not recognise the value of adequate record keeping, or the highly significant role of records management in the ability of government bodies to perform their functions. Adequate or inadequate records management practices affect the overall performance of these institutions, thereby affecting the ability of these bodies to contribute effectively to the National Development Plan (NDP), 2030.

Researchers agree that, placing records management employees in committees that develop and implement policies, systems and procedures to manage information throughout its lifecycle, could positively contribute to forming the foundation that supports governance within organisations (Ngoepe 2008). However, these committees still exclude records management employees and take decisions that affect record-keeping processes on their behalf, without their input. For government bodies to participate actively in the government's initiative of creating a better South Africa for all, these bodies must, first and foremost, manage their records appropriately to ensure that timely services are rendered to the public.

Apart from poor records management practices having dire effects on business activities, they also prevent government bodies from rendering effective services to the public. The research of Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) reveals that government bodies face numerous challenges in managing their records, including: non-compliance with record-keeping regulations; lack of skilled employees and the lack of support for records management functions from senior management. As observed by Marutha (2018:11), legislative frameworks governing records management practices are available and known to employees dealing with records. However, these employees do not know how to apply or implement these legislations in practical situations. Based on Ngoepe's (2008) findings, it can be concluded that records management as a practice has become valueless. Most of the current record-keeping problems faced by government bodies began when formal practices were replaced by informal ways of managing records, leading to senior management withdrawing their support for records management functions.

The South African public continues to receive sub-standard services from government bodies, which results in violent service delivery protests in the country. Schellnack-Kelly (2013:10) describes the state of records management in government bodies as shameful. This description demonstrates that, although the records management processes of government bodies have been subjected to extensive examinations through academic research, records management has not improved much and still does not reflect best practices.

Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) give accounts of their practical experiences in the implementation of record-keeping mechanisms and the need to do so. They also investigated the records management practices of government bodies at national, provincial and local levels, including specific areas, such as the effects of records and record-keeping practices on the quality of services rendered to stakeholders (Ngoepe 2008; Marutha 2011; Schellnack-Kelly 2013).

Since the reviewed literature was inclusive of different levels in government, the researcher could construct an image of the state of record-keeping practices in South African government bodies. Most of the arguments deal with government bodies' failure to develop and implement essential tools for managing records, including policies to guide the record-keeping processes. Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) emphasise that these bodies must establish records management policies and procedures to guide and control the creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records.

In order to understand whether the problem of poor records management is a problem unique to South Africa, the research of Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011) and Kemoni (2007), who conducted their investigations in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Kenya, was examined. According to these researchers, all three countries are affected by similar records management problems. Chaterera (2013) researched the management of Zimbabwe's public records; Kalusopa (2011) examined the preparedness of labour organisations in Botswana to move from a paper-based to an electronic environment; and Kemoni (2007) scrutinised the records management practices of government bodies in Kenya and the impact of poor practices on service delivery.

The studies conducted by Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011), Kemoni (2007), Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) were valuable and relevant to this study, because they facilitated the narrowing down of the research to particular record-keeping aspects that directly addressed the research purpose and the identification of themes in line with the research objectives of the study.

The research of Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011), Kemoni (2007), Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) established that, in government bodies, different business units deal with information and information management – i.e. besides a records management unit. Therefore, the importance of records management units may be overlooked and considered less valuable when compared to other functions, such as Information Communication Technology (ICT). However, researchers, including Ngoepe (2014), argue that records should be viewed as vital corporate assets and not merely as tools needed to get the administrative job done. Ngoepe (2014:6) advocates for incorporating records management employees into committees concerned with managing information and assessing organisational risk. Apart from legal, risk and compliance elements information governance affects all business units and lines of business within an organisation, including records management.

### **3.4 Common records management problems**

When records are not managed according to legislation, they become prone to human intervention, which results in inconsistent processes that lack authenticity and credibility (Kalusopa & Ngulube 2012). Subsequently, numerous problems arise that hinder governmental organisations from delivering timely services to the public. Kalusopa and Ngulube (2012:5–9) argue that organisations with poor record-keeping processes face challenges that affect the organisation and the classification of records. As a result, organisations fail to provide timely access to records and they have questionable security measures.

Mismanagement of records is often not due to a lack of established policies and procedures, but rather a lack of implementation of these tools. According to Chachage and Ngulube (2006), the challenges associated with managing records emanate from

the lack of policy implementation, which, in turn, results in inconsistent record-keeping processes. Non-compliance with record-keeping regulations and records management employees' lack of skills to devise and enforce tools for guiding the process are the most common challenges affecting the practice.

#### **3.4.1 Non-compliance with record-keeping regulations**

As much as there are known policies and procedures for managing records in government bodies, these mechanisms are not practically applied (NARSSA 2007:i–ii). Non-compliance with governing legislation is the root cause of poor records management practices. Marutha (2018) agrees that a lack of compliance with records management laws and statutes is a persisting problem. Chachage and Ngulube (2006) observe that, although institutions are aware that their record-keeping processes should be in line with the regulations and ethical requirements of the country to avoid legal consequences, records are still not managed according to relevant legislation. Instead, policies and procedures only exist on paper, but they are often not enforced in practice. Chachage and Ngulube (2006) opine that the challenges associated with records management originate from the failure to implement policies and the absence of standard processes.

The research of Chachage and Ngulube (2006), Katuu (2015) and Marutha (2018), it makes it clear that records management officials are aware of the laws regulating the practice, but they disregard them, because there are no consequences or punishment for not complying with record-keeping legislation. Compliance is not a challenge faced by South African government bodies only. – In Botswana, conformance is a persisting problem in managing records (Kalusopa & Ngulube 2012). Legislation governing the management of records in Botswana's labour organisations is weak because there is limited guidance regarding required specifications and tools (Kalusopa & Ngulube 2012).

In the absence of clearly defined record-keeping legislation, the processes are inconsistent and records are mismanaged, because employees do not have to adhere to statutory obligations (Kalusopa & Ngulube 2012:12). Failure to apply governing legislation to record-keeping processes results in poor records management practices

(Chachage & Ngulube 2006; Katuu 2015; Kalusopa & Ngulube 2012, Marutha 2018). Marutha (2018:11) argues that, although record-keeping tools, such as policies and filing systems, are available and known, they are not implemented in practice, because of a lack of adequate record-keeping skills among employees. The next section addresses records management employees' lack of skills.

### **3.4.2 Lack of skills among records management employees**

In spite of record-keeping being an essential component in numerous organisations, this function is often poorly managed and overlooked. Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:86) established that records management business units in government bodies are often misplaced units that are considered to be of little value to the overall organisational operational success, so much so that "... people who were deemed ineffective or disruptive in other units were relegated to the registry as a form of punishment" at CoGTA. In 2003, when CoGTA was restructuring, one security officer and two cleaners, who could not be placed anywhere else, were relegated to the registry (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:86). Record-keeping business units are perceived as only being useful for the receipt, maintenance and disposal of records and, therefore, these units are not adequately capacitated with skilled employees. However, similar to any profession, record-keeping requires employees with appropriate skills, training and qualifications to develop and implement adequate mechanisms for managing records (Marutha 2018).

Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:83) indicate that records management best practice requires suitably skilled employees, who understand the significance of records and the necessity for records management mechanisms, such as policies, strategies, procedures and filing systems. However, not all organisations share this sentiment. Employees working in records management units lack the necessary records management skills, often with little training and record-keeping experience (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:86).

Numerous government bodies have found a way around employees' lack of skills that would result in the failure to formulate and implement records management mechanisms by using external service providers. It makes up for internal record-

keeping employees, who are not qualified to develop or implement necessary management tools. However, as efficient as external service providers may be, government bodies incur increased costs, because they also rely on these providers to guide the use and maintenance of the developed tools. The service providers develop and implement records management mechanisms to be used by these bodies without transferring skills to operate these mechanisms to the internal employees (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:100).

Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:100) confirm that, when organisations have to meet targets, they often appoint service providers to develop and implement records management mechanisms such as classification systems (file plans). However, the scholars are of the opinion that the use of external service providers causes more harm than good. While appointed service providers may be able to deliver the desired results within the organisation's stringent time frames, there is no proper skills transfer between the government bodies' records management employees and the service provider, because the service provider may be in a hurry to complete the project and to move on to the next one (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:100). Although the organisation has the required tools to manage their records adequately, their records management practice will remain below par, because once the service provider has completed the development and implementation, the internal employees still do not have the appropriate expertise and skills to maintain and use the implemented mechanisms continuously (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010).

Lack of properly skilled records management employees is not a uniquely South African problem. According to Kalusopa and Ngulube (2012:3), who investigated the state of records management practices of labour organisations in Botswana, that country also lacks sufficient professionally skilled employees in records management. Similarly, Chaterera (2013:2) identifies a lack of employees with appropriate records management training as a contributing factor to poor records management practices in Zimbabwe.

Moving to an electronic environment is supposed to simplify record-keeping processes and to make information easily accessible and retrievable. However, from personal experience working in a government body, this transition is often confronted with

negativity from people, who are not used to working with electronic records in an electronic environment. In his study conducted at the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Munetsi (2011) found that automation does not always yield the envisaged results. Although it is convenient to manage records electronically, the introduction of technologies does involve disadvantages. Marutha and Ngulube (2012:56) attest that moving from a paper-based to an electronic environment is a daunting exercise for most employees, who have been operating in a manual environment. Therefore, organisations that swiftly change from one environment to another may experience challenges, because the introduction of technology may cause employees to fear losing their jobs to that same technology.

According to Kwatsha (2010:36), the successful implementation of electronic systems relies on the ability to inform employees, who have been working with paper-based records, that the new technology will make their work more manageable and not replace them. Failure to prepare employees properly for the electronic environment results in employees negatively reacting to the change, which affects the introduction and implementation of electronic systems.

Government bodies often have paper-based records containing complete information that would enable them to perform their functions and electronic records that have some of the information taken from the paper-based records. Marutha and Ngulube (2012:57) confirm that this practice is not unusual and that, even in the public health sector, records are managed simultaneously. Despite government bodies investing in expensive software systems, these systems are not always used to their full capacity, because employees are more comfortable with paper-based methods (Marutha & Ngulube 2012:57). Munetsi (2011) reveals that, although the Premier's Office had implemented an electronic system, the electronic records management system (ERMS) could not fulfil its intended purpose, due to lack of skills by those entrusted with record-keeping.

Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa and Ngulube (2012) and Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010) argue that the lack of suitably skilled records management employees contributes to poor records management practices. Whether the records exist in paper or electronic form, the management of the records requires employees dealing with records to possess to have specific records management skills. However, the lack of adequately skilled records management employees remains one of the top three recurring records management challenges faced by various organisations.

### **3.4.3 Lack of senior management support**

One of the main challenges that face records management employees is the lack of senior management support (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010; Ngoepe & Ngulube 2013a). If records managers do not have the necessary support from senior management to develop and enforce proper record-keeping processes, nothing can be implemented (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:103). To date, record-keeping units are still considered as non-essential. Apart from these units not receiving the necessary support from senior management, committees dealing with corporate governance issues also exclude them (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2013a:3).

## **3.5 Managing electronic records**

Electronic records are subject to the same requirements provided in the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996, as amended) (see Appendix A) that apply to other records (NARSSA 2007:8). Sections 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act provide for the National Archivist to determine the conditions for the electronic reproduction of records and the conditions for the management of electronic records systems. As with paper-based records, NARSSA provides government bodies with acceptable conditions for records classification/filing, retrieval, access to, disposal of and long-term preservation (NARSSA 2007:8–9).

Marutha (2011:ii) recommends introducing systems for managing electronic records to enhance existing record-keeping tools. However, this change often involves various challenges that hinder organisations from rapidly moving to the new environment (Katu 2015; Kwatsha 2010; Munetsi 2011). The digital age has shifted the way in which government bodies conduct their business.



Advances in technology have compelled these bodies to move from paper-based ways of conducting business to managing records electronically to ensure that services reach citizens, regardless of their geographic location. Computers and associated technologies are necessary to access electronic records. A significant challenge associated with these records is that they are dependent on accessible and useable hardware and software. Williams and Sawyer (2011:27) define *hardware* as all the machinery and equipment involved in a computer system, and *software* as the programmes that instruct the computer to perform tasks.

According to Keakopa (2016:37), novice researchers can draw valuable lessons from observing the experiences of established researchers from government bodies that operate within an electronic environment. Therefore, literature on the experiences of other government bodies operating in an electronic environment was reviewed. According to Katuu (2015), Kwatsha (2010) and Munetsi (2011), government bodies can adopt various types of systems for managing their electronic records, including electronic document management systems (EDMS), electronic records management systems (ERMS), integrated documents and records management systems (IDRMS), electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) and enterprise content management (ECM) systems. The choice of the government bodies' system would, however, depend on the institution's current records management practices (i.e. whether the organisation is paper-based, electronic, or managing both paper-based and electronic records in an integrated manner).

### **3.6 Challenges associated with automation**

Although automation will enable government bodies to have effective electronic records management systems and improve internal efficiency and overall business competitiveness, various challenges are associated with automation. According to Marutha and Ngulube (2012), challenges associated with managing electronic records include increased costs, loss of security and privacy, risks to the trustworthiness of records, technological obsolescence, and lack of skills. These challenges are discussed in the following sections.

### **3.6.1 Increased costs**

Automation is an expensive task and automating record-keeping processes is not exempted from incurring costs. Costs associated with automation include the initial acquisition of hardware such as computers, installation and customisation according to government bodies' requirements, and maintenance to ensure that the systems work after installation. In addition to these costs, government bodies also need to consider training costs, since employees will require the necessary training to ensure that they are competent in operating the system (Nkala, Ngulube & Mangena 2012:114).

### **3.6.2 Loss of security and privacy**

*Security* refers to protecting electronic records from unauthorised access, system failures and disasters that may cause damage or result in the complete loss of these records (Williams & Sawyer 2011:343). *Privacy* protects the identity of those whose information is held in electronic records (Williams & Sawyer 2011:343). The use of ICTs is beneficial because information becomes easily accessible to the intended audience. However, an electronic environment is prone to cyber-crimes and records in the custody of an organisation may now also be accessible to hackers. The content and original medium of these records can be altered by transferring them to other mediums. However, records managers are still expected to ensure that these records remain reliable and that security and privacy elements are intact (Katuu 2015; Kwatsha 2010; Munetsi 2011).

Managing records in an electronic environment makes them vulnerable to loss if there are no protection measures in place. Nkala, Ngulube and Mangena (2012:114) argue that, in order to protect electronic records from losing security and privacy elements, government bodies need to develop and implement legislative and policy frameworks before adopting electronic records. These protection measures should be in place from the commencement of automation, so as to guide the process. This means that government bodies should only consider changing from a paper-based to an electronic environment once they have developed appropriate policies and procedures to facilitate the automation process, so as to prevent the risk of losing valuable information contained in electronic records.

### **3.6.3 Risks to the trustworthiness of records**

Records generated and held by government bodies should remain trustworthy. Because records are created as evidence of business transactions, they should remain authentic and reliable. In this context, *authentic* means that the records should be free from tampering and reliable, implying that they should be complete and contain facts as they were received or created (IRMT 1999:9).

### **3.6.4 Technological obsolescence**

According to the *Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science*, hardware and software programmes are obsolete when they are no longer accessible, because they have been replaced or enhanced by newer versions (Reitz 2011). This happens because technologies are constantly changing to ensure that programmes are relevant, meet business requirements, and keep up with the fast-paced changing needs of businesses. The following three types of technological obsolescence may occur: hardware, software and physical media obsolescence (Williams & Sawyer 2011). Government bodies need to ensure that they continually use newer versions of systems to avoid losing information due to hardware and software obsolescence.

### **3.6.5 Lack of technical skills**

Several studies illustrate that, although institutions may have procured state of the art technology for managing records, if the employees who are supposed to be working on those systems, are not adequately skilled, then the undertaken initiatives will be fruitless (Komba & Ngulube 2012; Nkala, Ngulube & Mangena 2012; Munetsi 2011). Munetsi (2011) found that, although the Premier's Office had implemented a system for managing electronic records, the system was not effectively used due to the employees' lack of technical skills required to administer electronic records. Komba and Ngulube (2012:26) also found that the lack of appropriate technical skills is one of the main challenges involved in government bodies face managing their records electronically.

According to Komba and Ngulube (2012:26), the lack of technical skills to administer electronic records may prevent organisations from taking advantage of electronic records. It means that, even if government bodies invest in world-class systems for managing records electronically, these systems will not be used effectively, if the employees working on them are not adequately skilled. Nkala, Ngulube and Mangena (2012:114) emphasise the importance of ensuring that employees working with electronic records are adequately trained and that they have the necessary information technology (IT) capabilities. Being computer literate is insufficient, as records management employees require specific technical training in the use of relevant software systems.

### **3.7 Readiness for electronic records**

In 2004, the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) designed an electronic-records (e-records) readiness tool. The aim of the tool was to enable governments and government bodies to conduct high-level assessments of key areas of e-records readiness in relation to the aspects of electronic-government (e-government) and to determine whether the records and information management infrastructure are capable of supporting e-government initiatives. The e-readiness tool is to be used in conjunction with existing e-government readiness tools by these bodies. NARSSA (2007:12) articulates that technology is a tool used to automate the creation, processing and management of records. Because government bodies rely on technology to enhance the efficiency and accountability of the public administration and strengthen economic performance (IRMT 2004), the IRMT e-records readiness tool is relevant to this study.

There is consensus between IRMT (2004) and NARSSA (2007) that electronic records are strategic and operational assets that are vital to the operation of government bodies. This means that electronic records need to be protected and used for the benefit of the public. Similar to paper-based records, electronic-records support the day-to-day operations of government bodies. Therefore, as government bodies adopt the use of electronic records and their services move online, electronic-records will be the basis for all business processes.

Hence, electronic records held by these bodies should conform with the IRMT e-records readiness tool to ensure that they can provide truthful evidence of, amongst others, business transactions.

As pointed out by the IRMT (2004), electronic records must be protected, managed and preserved, which means that, when government bodies resort to delivering services by using new ICT technologies, an adequate infrastructure for managing electronic records should be created. Paper-based records and information management tools, such as classification schemes and disposal schedules, are still necessary to ensure that electronic records are protected as reliable evidence. The IRMT (2004) warns that failure to address electronic records issues early in the transition will reduce the effectiveness of government bodies, mainly due to poor records and information management.

The IRMT (2004) e-readiness tool is a template consisting of twelve questions that assess government bodies' readiness for electronic records. This tool is relevant to this study because it provides a risk assessment of electronic records readiness in government bodies in terms of the organisations' legislative compliance and ICT infrastructure. According to the IRMT (2004), the tool is reliable, because each e-record readiness component is described at three possible stages of capacity. The e-readiness assessment can be conducted as follows:

1. After reading the description of each of the components, decide whether the government body best fits the Stage 1, 2 or 3 description (see Appendix C: E-records readiness tool).
2. Choose the description that most closely matches the current scenario of the government body.
3. Score the government body according to the most appropriate stage description.
4. After assessing all the components, total the scores (by using Appendix D: E-records readiness score template).
5. Find the final score in the range of scores provided to determine the level of e-records readiness risk (low, moderate, or high), and review the guidance recommendation associated with that risk level (see Appendix E: e-records readiness risk template).

The IRMT (2004) asserts that, besides the ability of the tool to provide government bodies with a high-level risk assessment of e-records readiness, the assessment process creates an awareness of issues that may have been overlooked or underestimated in the records management strategy of a particular government body. Hence, this tool was reviewed in this study.

Dada investigated e-readiness for developing countries, when the focus was on moving from the paper environment to users (Dada 2006). In 2012, Asogwa explored the challenge of managing electronic records in developing countries (Asogwa 2012) and Alaaraj and Ibrahim presented an overview and classification of e-readiness assessment models (Alaaraj & Ibrahim 2014). A framework for e-records in support of e-government implementation was scrutinised by Kamatula (2018). Malanga and Kamanga (2018) assessed the application of IRMT e-records readiness tool in 2018. The literature on these studies was reviewed because part of the purpose of this exploration is to determine the readiness of the RAF for electronic records.

Dada (2006), who critically reviewed the concept of e-readiness, paying special attention to developing countries, argues that the achievement of high levels of e-readiness is being increasingly considered as one of the top priorities for developing countries. This scholar revealed that measures used by developing countries when moving the focus from the environment to users often do not help in terms of development, as they tend to focus on the wider environment, while ignoring the level of the organisation (Dada 2006). To ensure that the transition is approached with caution, Dada (2006) proposes a new model that recognises the significance of both e-readiness (the environment) and technology acceptance (the organisation), so as to ensure that the transition is approached with a richer understanding of the situation (current and envisaged).

In his study, Asogwa (2012) established that the major problems of e-records management in Africa were administrative and technically induced challenges that resulted from inadequate infrastructures, legislation and regulatory frameworks, and lack of competency in terms of ICT personnel.

Asogwa (2012) argues that electronic records management is new to most Records Officers and Archivists in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa, while pointing out that technology has transformed the traditional mode of recordkeeping and has introduced constraints with which records managers have to contend if they are to remain relevant in the information society (Asogwa 2012). To gain a better understanding of the challenges associated with managing records in developing countries such as South Africa, Asogwa (2012) examined the challenge of managing electronic records in developing countries and the implications for records managers in sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim of understanding the background of these problems and the strategies for e-records management in Africa.

Alaaraj and Ibrahim (2014) argue that e-readiness in government bodies has become a vital policy tool for all countries, since it enhances trust of the public by applying the principles of good governance. These scholars explored different international organisations that had developed a variety of e-readiness models. Alaaraj and Ibrahim (2014) provide classifications of the assessment models in terms of e-readiness that government bodies can adopt in their transition to electronic records.

Kamatula (2018) reveals that e-records readiness and efficiency levels were low in Tanzania. Although Kamatula (2018) found evidence suggesting that e-records were in use across government institutions in Tanzania, he also found that the management of e-records was not yet streamlined to the majority registries, thereby rendering the implementation maturity level low. Furthermore, Kamatula (2018) found that the existing legislation, policies and regulations were inadequate and ineffective – particularly in terms of matters relating to e-records management – revealing that records personnel, action officers and IT staff were not conversant with procedures and practices of e-records management. As a result, there was poor staff involvement, which slowed down the implementation of electronic records. Kamatula (2018) concluded the study with revelations that the current practices for managing electronic records in Tanzania were inadequate, as the existing strategy did not incorporate the management of electronic records as an important aspect in government bodies.

Malanga and Kamanga (2018) assessed e-records readiness at the Karonga District Council (KDC), which is one of the local government authorities in Malawi. The scholars determined that e-records readiness at KDC was low (Malanga & Kamanga 2018). Although e-records and technologies were in use at KDC, the findings of Malanga and Kamanga (2018) revealed that they were inadequate and obsolete. Furthermore, these scholars established that there was inadequate and poor adherence to policies, standards and procedures for e-records management practices, and no established records management programme (Malanga & Kamanga 2018).

The evidence obtained by reviewing the literature on readiness for electronic records demonstrated that electronic-records contain the same recorded information as paper-based records, although they are created or received, used and maintained electronically. These records are still documents or data providing evidence of policies, transactions and activities performed by government bodies and, therefore, they should remain authentic, reliable, usable and have integrity. IRMT (1999:7) argues that, regardless of the number of times that records may be recalled for use, they must retain their characteristics. Therefore, even in the electronic environment, records management exists to maintain these characteristics.

However, the reviewed literature indicated that government bodies often fail to prepare for electronic records management adequately. Similar to paper-based records, electronic records are managed without a records management programme (Malanga & Kamanga 2018). The reviewed literature also revealed that there are no policies in place for electronic records; available policies are inadequate; government bodies do not adhere to established policies at all; and/or there is poor adherence to policies in these bodies (Asogwa 2012; Kamatula 2018).

### **3.8 Summary**

Record-keeping in government bodies is a necessary, yet challenging, task. Although there are several strategic drivers and countless benefits associated with effective records management, there are also barriers that continue to have a negative effect on the ability of organisations to deliver services to their stakeholders (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013).



Organisations need to put tools – particularly continuous training – into place to support records management employees (Katuu 2015; Kwatsha 2010).

The guidelines provided by NARSSA alone are not enough to provide the skills and competencies required to develop and implement sustainable record-keeping mechanisms. Therefore, the guidelines provided by NARSSA should be used as basis for preparing the employees of government bodies to manage records adequately. However, although practical, these guidelines are not exhaustive. NARSSA guidelines provides government bodies with a framework that they should customise according to their business needs. Considering that several government bodies are phasing out paper-based processes and moving to modernised, reinvented and automated models to operate in a world without borders, records management employees need to upskill themselves to adapt to these new business models (Alaaraj & Ibrahim 2014; Asogwa 2012; Dada 2006; Kamatula 2018; Malanga & Kamanga 2018).

Empirical research shows that government bodies are not sufficiently preparing employees for automation (Kwatsha 2010). However, organisations need to do this to meet their record-keeping obligations in terms of records management regulations. Organisations should assist employees in understanding that technology will assist them and not replace them (Kwatsha 2010:36). In Chapter 4, the research methodology is presented.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 presented the literature review on the management of records in government bodies. The literature was conducted to reach a deeper understanding of the state of record-keeping in South Africa and further afield. The literature review also assisted in identifying an appropriate research methodology for the study. Silverman (2013:446) defines *research methodology* as the choices made about appropriate models, cases to study, methods of data collection and forms of data analysis in planning and execution of a study. The choice of research methodology does not involve preference, but rather the selection of the methodology that would be the most appropriate to address the research objectives and answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell 2018:40). This chapter details the research methodology involved in the study and it includes the following topics: the research paradigm, research approach, design, data collection method/s, population, sampling techniques, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **4.2 Research paradigm**

Research paradigms are referred to as *research traditions, worldviews, or theoretical frameworks* (Babbie 2014:32; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009:84). Paradigms are informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of the social reality (ontology); ways of knowing (epistemology); and appropriate methods of enquiry (methodology) (Creswell & Creswell 2018:44).

#### **4.2.1 Major research paradigms**

There are four main research paradigms, namely positivism (and post-positivism), interpretivism, critical realism (transformative paradigm) and pragmatism (Babbie 2014; Creswell & Creswell 2018; Neuman 2014; Yin 2011). For the purposes of this study, the interpretivism research paradigm will be addressed.

#### **4.2.2 Interpretivism**

This study sought to investigate the current (paper-based) records management processes of the RAF and determine the RAF's readiness to reduce their dependency on paper by moving from a paper-based environment to managing records electronically (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017:124–127). Therefore, positivism, critical realism and pragmatism were unsuitable as paradigms for this research and an alternative research paradigm had to be considered. The interpretivist research paradigm was adopted as the most suitable paradigm for this research.

As already established, as a research paradigm, interpretivism involves the researcher constructing meaning of situations under investigation by engaging with people who work or live in the research setting (Babbie 2014; Yin 2011). Interpretivist researchers engage with participants to make sense of their setting, based on their historical and social perspectives (Creswell & Creswell 2018). After employing different methods to collect primary data (i.e. interviews, document analysis and observation), the researcher generates meaning from the data by analysing and interpreting the collected data.

Silverman (2013:443) is of the view that interpretivism encourages the researcher to focus on the origin and nature of a phenomenon. Interpretivism was selected as the most suitable paradigm for this study because it enabled the researcher to understand how the RAF manages its records by interacting with the RAF employees, who create, use and manage these records (Silverman 2013:443). Interpretivism was also deemed appropriate, because it emphasises the importance of participants' viewpoints in understanding the social reality (Kumar 2014). The researcher established the RAF's readiness for the electronic environment and understood how records were managed in the paper-based environment, based on the participants' views.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), interpretivist researchers seek an understanding of the world in which they live or work to resolve a social issue. Poor records management by government bodies is an issue that affects most constituents in the country, as it hinders these organisations from delivering appropriate services to the public (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013).

This research aimed at identifying possible solutions to address this issue. The goal of this study could only be realised through the participation of RAF employees – i.e. because the outcome of this study mainly relied on the participants' views of the situation under investigation, interpretivism was appropriate. Interpretivism was also applicable to this exploration, because the researcher sought to understand the RAF's paper-based records management processes and establish the institution's readiness for the proposed automation. Interpretivism granted the researcher the platform to construct meaning from multiple participants' descriptions, based on their historical and current accounts of the record-keeping processes of the RAF (Creswell & Creswell 2018:45). Apart from allowing the researcher to focus on specific contexts in which the RAF's records were created, used and stored, interpretivism also enabled the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the historical record-keeping culture and the current processes. The researcher's role was to interpret participants' views and to construct the meaning of the situation under investigation.

The interpretivist paradigm was aligned with the qualitative research approach (Creswell & Creswell 2018:45). Both Silverman (2013) and Yin (2011) agree that interpretivism is ideal for a qualitative study, in that it seeks to understand specific contexts of how a phenomenon came to be.

### **4.3 Research approach**

Creswell and Creswell (2018:40) define a *research approach* as "... plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation". Examples of research approaches are qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approaches (Creswell & Creswell 2018:41).

According to Neuman (2014:8), qualitative studies involve collecting textual information and evidence through defined rules or procedures, while quantitative studies involve collecting numerical data for conducting research. Creswell and Creswell (2018:41) define the *mixed-methods research approach* as an approach to enquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in one study.

Based on the foregoing information, the researcher concluded that *what* questions are usually dealt with using by using a quantitative research approach, since the aim is often to generalise (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Kumar 2014; Neuman 2014). However, the qualitative approach can also be used, depending on the phrasing of the research questions. The qualitative approach is used for *how* and *why* questions, since the aim is to obtain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon in its natural setting, e.g. the records management practices at the RAF Pretoria Regional Office (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Kumar 2014; Neuman 2014). The quantitative approach was not suitable for this exploration, because it deals with trends or patterns, which require statistical information, comparison of variables and testing of theories.

The records management processes of the RAF are mainly manual (paper-based) (RAF 2019:146) and, therefore, subject to human behaviour. Therefore, the qualitative research approach was relevant and it enabled the researcher to address the research objectives and answer the research questions. Several researchers who investigated similar topics– including Kwatsha (2010:16) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013:72–73) – utilised the qualitative approach in their research.

According to Babbie (2014), Creswell and Creswell (2018), Kumar (2014) and Silverman (2013), a qualitative approach is appropriate for studies investigating the *what*, *why* and *how* questions, which require an in-depth understanding. In contrast, a quantitative approach is more appropriate in studies about trends or patterns that require statistical information, a comparison of variables, or testing of theories. This study sought to understand the state of paper-based records management processes at the RAF and the organisation's readiness for the electronic environment. Hence, a qualitative approach was the most suitable to enable the researcher to establish whether the RAF is ready for the transition or not, based on the participants' responses.

In order for a study to be classified as qualitative, it must consist of specific characteristics, including: the research occurring in natural settings, where human behaviour and activities occur; and a descriptive collection of data that concentrates on the research participants' perceptions, based on their experiences (Creswell & Creswell 2018:257–258; Yin 2011:7–8). These characteristics were present in this

study, which was conducted in a natural setting – i.e. the RAF Regional Office in Pretoria) –in which human behaviour (i.e. the management of records) and events (i.e. different records management processes) occurred. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to understand the state of the organisation's records management from its employees' viewpoints and to collect valuable data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:257–258).

Babbie (2015), Creswell and Creswell (2018), Kumar (2014), Silverman (2013), Neuman (2014) and Yin (2011) argue that the adoption of a qualitative approach presents researchers with the opportunity to design their studies in a manner that enables them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation of interest. As such, this approach enabled contextualisation of the RAF's records management situation, as the study was conducted in a natural setting within which individuals of interest operated (Kumar 2014).

#### **4.4 Research design**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:40), a research design is a type of examination that offers a comprehensive route for research procedures. Neuman (2014:42) regards a research design as enabling the researcher to plan specific structures of action to collect, analyse and report on collected data to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions. Different designs can be applied to research, based on the methodology applied (Creswell & Creswell 2018:40). Scholars such as Babbie (2015), Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Kumar (2014) identify case studies, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory as qualitative research designs. Quantitative designs include experimental and survey designs (Babbie 2015:224–246; Creswell & Creswell 2018:49–50), while mixed-method approaches employ explanatory, exploratory, transformative, embedded and convergent research designs (Creswell & Creswell 2018:51–52).

##### **4.4.1 Case study research design**

This study had to follow a qualitative research design that would enable the researcher to answer the research questions on the state of the records management processes at the RAF objectively (Kumar 2014:365). Therefore, it was decided to employ the case

study. According to Biggam (2017:156), a case study can be used to observe the record-keeping culture of an organisation (such as the RAF), because the design gives the researcher a platform to probe deeply into the situation and intensely analyse the diverse occurrences of certain practices of an organisation.

A case study entails an in-depth observation of the characteristics of an institution, in order to reach an understanding of the reasons for certain things are being done and the way in which they are done (Biggam 2017:156). Therefore, a case study was deemed appropriate, as this research sought to understand the records management processes of the RAF and the rationale for the established practices. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) observe that a case study is a qualitative design in which a single organisation is studied in-depth for a defined period. A case study informed this study, because only the RAF was studied.

The case study research design also presented the researcher with the opportunity to identify various factors that produce the RAF's unique quality of information management, including record-keeping processes. Kumar (2014:365) argues that, if an element of uniqueness among, group, organisation, or an event can be assumed, then the case study becomes relevant and suitable for depicting that uniqueness. It means that, although there are RAF offices across the country, it could be assumed that exploring only the records management practices of the Pretoria Regional Office would provide an insight into how records are managed in all other RAF regional offices.

Case studies are qualitative research designs, and as such, the design was deemed appropriate for this study. This research examined the current records management practices of the RAF Pretoria Regional Office. Creswell and Creswell (2018) support the idea that qualitative studies can be conducted by identifying a group and studying the way in which the group develops shared patterns of behaviour over time.

Silverman (2013:104) indicates that qualitative researchers should conduct their studies in group settings in which the processes under investigation are likely to occur. Through a case study, it was possible to answer the research questions and understand the status of records management at the RAF.

## **4.5 Population**

A population is the total number of people in which the researcher is interested in research purposes (Babbie 2014:193; Neuman 2014:252). According to NARSSA (2007:45), records management is a shared responsibility between all record creators in organisations, including the Records Manager, all other managers, senior management and various other employees, such as personal assistants and administrative staff. At the time of the research, the RAF had 2 776 permanent employees (RAF 2019:4).

The Regional General Manager (RGM) at the Pretoria Regional Office indicated that it was the largest region, with a staff component of 766 personnel, including a management team of 17 managers (RAF 2020a). Therefore, the population involved in this study comprised the 766 permanent employees in the RAF Pretoria Regional Office. The target population for this study was the 69 employees in the Correspondence and Document Management Services at the Pretoria Regional Office and the sample consisted of the management team of 17 managers.

## **4.6 Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting a few participants (i.e. a sample) from a more comprehensive group (i.e. the sampling population or the target population), which becomes the basis for estimating the prevalence of information that is of interest to the researcher (Kumar 2014:379). As such, the sample for this study was the RAF's management team in the Pretoria regional office.

According to Babbie (2014:186–188), the qualitative research approach employs non-probability sampling techniques, while the quantitative approach employs probability sampling. Non-probability sampling techniques are defined as sampling methods that do not follow the theory of probability in selecting elements from the sampling population (Kumar 2014:376). Examples of non-probability sampling techniques include convenience sampling, snowballing, purposive/judgmental sampling and quota sampling (Babbie 2014:186–188; Neuman 2014:250).



Probability sampling is known for creating a representative sample (Neuman 2014:250). Examples of probability sampling techniques are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling (Babbie 2014:205–209). The mixed-method research approach combines both probability and non-probability sampling techniques.

As is the norm, the sampling technique must be aligned with the research approach in a study. Since this exploration is qualitative, probability sampling techniques (random, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling) were unsuitable. Based on the research purpose of this study, the above-mentioned non-probability techniques (convenience, snowballing and quota sampling) were also not suitable for this research.

A non-probability sampling technique called *purposive sampling* is used to adhere to the research approach (Creswell & Creswell 2018:262; Yin 2011:88). In purposive sampling, the selection of participants or data sources to be used in a study is based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the research questions. The elementary units are selected judgementally when the population is highly heterogeneous, when the sample is relatively small, or when particular skills are required to ensure a representative collection of observations.

#### **4.6.1 Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling was the most applicable method for this study. NARSSA (2007:45) revealed that good records management is a product of a collaborative effort between all employees of an organisation and, consequently, the focus was on the management team as record creators in the RAF. The sample comprised of managers from different business units, including senior managers. The sample was heterogeneous, so as to avoid bias findings. This study was particularly interested in the senior managers' views because they form part of a team that signs off on the new organisational processes and systems (as established in Chapter 3).

In this study, the researcher assumed that, selecting various record creators as the sample would enable an understanding of the state of the RAF's readiness to move

from a paper-based to an electronic environment, based on these record creators' experiences. Managers' inputs were also crucial to this study, since they were involved in the decision-making processes at a higher level, before communicating changes to other employees. Silverman (2013:104) also supports the use of purposive sampling by qualitative researchers.

The purposive sampling technique aligned with the research approach for this study, as the chosen target population was relevant for achieving the research objectives of this study. The reason for sampling based on the researcher's discretion was based on the researcher's first-hand knowledge of employees at different levels creating records for different purposes, based on their levels of authority.

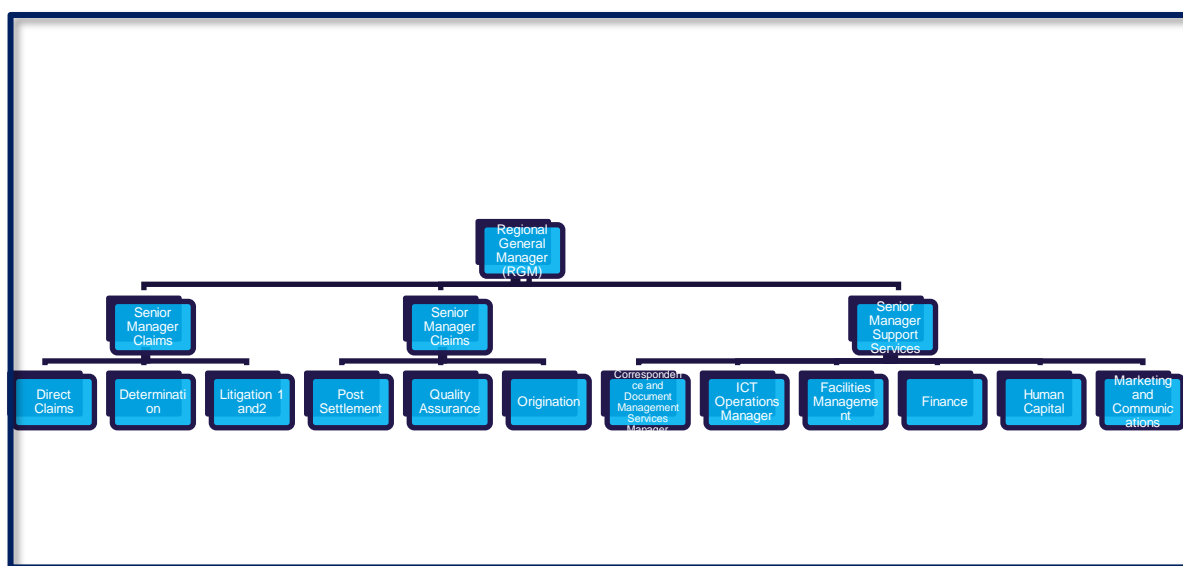
The researcher gathered observations from different records creators about the RAF's readiness to move to electronic records management processes, including the introduction of electronic forms and the envisaged improvement of the organisation's records management practices with the introduction of electronic records. This technique enabled the researcher to collect credible data to conduct the exploration successfully.

As demonstrated by Keakopa (2016), the support and approval of records management tools and processes lie in the hands of management and organisational transformation depends entirely on management's buy-in and approval. Similarly, Ngoepe (2008) emphasises the critical role of management's participation in implementing records management mechanisms. Therefore, it was necessary to engage with willing RAF managers in the study, so as to understand their perceptions of the RAF's readiness to automate paper-based processes and why it was important for the organisation to automate these processes.

Selecting the management team at the Pretoria Regional Office to participate in this study enabled the researcher to understand the position of Correspondence and Document Management Services in the RAF, as well as the reasons for records management scholars, including Keakopa (2016), continuing to stress the need for senior management support and the impact of the lack of such support. Hence, the sample for this study was the RAF's management team at the Pretoria Regional Office.

A *sampling frame* refers to following a rigorous procedure when selecting the units of analysis or target population (Babbie 2014:201; Creswell & Creswell 2018:212). Listing every element in the target population allows the researcher to draw a sampling frame that includes most participants (Babbie 2014:201). In conducting this research, the Human Capital Manager provided the researcher with the Regional General Manager's (RGM's) structure, which indicated the management team's reporting levels. This list was used as the sampling frame for this exploration (see Figure 4.1).

*Figure 4.1: Structure of the RAF Pretoria Regional Office management team*



*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

The Human Capital Manager indicated that the Pretoria Regional Office employed 14 managers, three senior managers and a Regional General Manager (RGM). The contact details for three of these managers could, however, not be traced. The request to participate in the study was subsequently sent to eleven managers whose contact details were available. Two of these managers refused to participate in the study and two others did not respond to the request. Consequently, the total number of sampled managers was seven. Requests were also sent to three senior managers. One could not participate in the study, due to time constraints, another did not respond to the request, while one agreed to a telephonic interview.

## **4.7 Data collection**

Data collection, which is essentially the systematic process of collecting measurements of observations, allows the research to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights into the research problem. The main purpose of data collection is to capture quality evidence to answer the research questions and to meet the research objectives. Before collecting primary data, the researcher should consider the research purpose and objectives, the type of primary data to be collected, and the methods and procedures that will be used to collect, store and process the collected data.

In the next section, the data collection instruments used in this study are explained.

### **4.7.1 Data collection instruments**

Data collection instruments – which are essentially specific means of collecting data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:53; Yin 2011:129) from the sampled participants – vary, based on the research approach. Therefore, a qualitative study uses different data collection instruments than a quantitative study and mixed-method research (Creswell & Creswell 2018:59; Yin 2011:129). For example, qualitative data collection tools are document analysis, interviews and observation (Yin 2011:129). A questionnaire is often used in the quantitative research approach (Creswell & Creswell 2018:53). The mixed-methods research approach makes use of more than one tool to collect data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:53).

Both Silverman (2013) and Yin (2011) argue that interpretivism aligns with qualitative approaches, because these approaches are social methods of inquiry that rely on naturalistic methods, such as document analysis, interviews and observation. Silverman (2013:98) proposes that qualitative case studies combine observation with interviews to ensure that all research questions in the study are addressed. Based on these arguments, different methods were employed in this research to corroborate each other through methodological triangulation (Silverman 2013:98). For this reason, multiple methods (document analysis, interviews and observation) were utilised in this study to seek convergence and corroboration. These data collection methods were aligned with the research objectives of the study and the methods were triangulated to produce an understanding of the records management practices of the RAF.

*Triangulation* is defined as the use of two or more data sources, methods, investigators, theoretical perspectives and approaches to analysis of a single phenomenon. The purpose of triangulation is to check for inconsistency, rather than to achieve the same results by using different data sources. According to Kumar (2014:386), there are different types of triangulations, namely data, investigator, theory and methodology.

Triangulation was adopted in this study, because this technique ensured that the collected primary data was comprehensive and well-developed. The researcher gained an in-depth understanding of the record-keeping processes at the RAF through document analysis, while interviews provided explanations of occurrences observed. As only a small amount of information on the RAF's record-keeping processes was available in the organisational annual reports, other sources of information, such as NARSSA inspection reports, were utilised. In this study, triangulating methods enriched, deepened and widened the understanding of the RAF's record-keeping processes. Document analysis, interviews and observation are discussed in detail in the following sections.

#### **4.7.1.1 Document analysis**

Document analysis is a process of examining and explaining documents to understand a situation and to assess the extent of the situation in question (Bowen 2009:27). Petty, Thomson and Stew (2012:381) describe document analysis as analysing written documents, such as articles, minutes of meetings and televised programs. For this exploration, annual reports, annual performance plan (APP), a vacancy advertisement (see Appendix F: Records Manager's vacancy advertisement), newspaper articles about the RAF and NARSSA inspection reports (see Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template) were used to understand the operations and current records management processes at the RAF Pretoria Regional Office.

Both printed and electronic documents were analysed and interpreted to:

- Establish whether the RAF's paper-based records conformed with the requirements of NARSSA (2007:231–232) and ISO 15489-1:2016 (SIO 2016);

- Identify shortcomings in the processes of managing the RAF's paper-based records when compared to the criteria above;
- Examine the effects of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public; and
- Determine the RAF's readiness for electronic records.

The researcher employed document analysis, because the RAF annual reports, annual performance plan (APP), NARSSA reports and the Records Manager vacancy advertisement were good sources of background information necessary to support the research problem (Bowen 2009:31). This method was not obstructive and the information provided was confirmable, because it was repetitive. Document analysis is considered more reliable than other methods, such as interviews, where participants attempt to provide answers that are perceived as correct. Document analysis also supports the identification of issues that may be overlooked by other data collection methods, such as observation (Bowen 2009:31).

Although the use of document analysis does have advantages, there are also disadvantages associated with this method. In this research, a disadvantage of document analysis was that the method, which entailed collecting, reviewing and analysing documents, including annual reports spanning close to 20 years, was highly time-consuming (Bowen 2009:28–29). Furthermore, despite gaining access to the RAF's annual reports from the organisation's special library and on the Internet, a great deal of information remained unavailable or was out of date. For example, not all NARSSA inspection reports from 2002 to 2019 could be obtained. However, the advantages of document analysis outweighed the disadvantages, and it was supplemented with other methods such as interviews and observation.

#### **4.7.1.2 Interviews**

According to Babbie (2015:557), interviews usually require the researcher to pose questions to individuals, who verbally respond to the questions. However, interviews are not only limited to conversations: they can also be conducted in written format, with the researcher sending typed questions via email (Thomas 2003:63; Creswell & Creswell 2018:41). For the purpose of this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the management team of the Pretoria regional office. The purpose of

these interviews was to obtain participants' views on how paper-based records affect the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public; determine the organisation's readiness for electronic records; and to check the accuracy, consistency and truthfulness of the research results of document analysis and observation. Creswell and Creswell (2018:262) assert that semi-structured interviews are ideal in qualitative studies.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to clarify issues that the researcher observed in the RAF annual reports and the NARSSA reports on records management or the lack of records management. Semi-structured interviews adopt a general interview guide approach, which is intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. This provides more focus than the conventional approach, because standardised questions are asked to all participants (see Appendix G: Interview guide). Semi-structured interviews were ideal for this study because they supplemented the information collected from other sources (Kumar 2014:182). In other words, the semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to check for consensus.

Creswell and Creswell (2018:333) opine that the researcher can conduct face-to-face interviews with participants, or the participants can be interviewed by telephone. In order to adhere to established COVID-19 protocols to avoid or reduce the spread of the virus, not all interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis. Some managers were interviewed face-to-face, while others were interviewed telephonically. Interviews gave participants the platform to describe the current state of the RAF's records management practices openly and to offer their perception of the RAF's state of readiness for automation.

These interviews were conducted to provide participants with the opportunity to describe the relationship of each business with Correspondence and Document Management Services. Consequently, it assisted the researcher in understanding each unit's dependency on this record-keeping business unit. This qualitative data collection method enabled swift communication to occur between the researcher and participants.

Kumar (2014:182) identifies the following benefits to using interviews as a data collection method:

- Interviews help to collect deeper meaningful information;
- Interviews enable the researcher to address complex situations with ease;
- The researcher can supplement information collected through interviews with other sources, such as document analysis, observation and check consensus;
- The researcher can clarify questions to the participants and confirm whether they questions are understood; and
- Interviews have a broader application and, in this study, the method was used with employees of different rankings.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that, similar to any other data collection method, interviews do have distinct disadvantages, including being prone to bias (Kumar 2014:182). The researcher avoided this by focusing the interview questions on problem areas identified in previous research, including the research conducted by Ngoepe (2008) and Marutha (2011). In conducting the interviews, some participants were reluctant to disclose information out of fear of being misquoted. As Kumar (2014:182–183) argues, data collected depends on how well the researcher interacts with the participants during the interview. A list of questions was developed for the interview, based on the issues that NARSSA officials had identified as problematic during their inspection and issues that the researcher picked up during observation.

Interviews allow the opportunity to align the content and the wording of questions with the research objectives. In this study, the questions were asked in a specific manner and sequence to avoid intimidating participants.

Interviews also afforded the researcher the space to ask questions necessary to contextualise the research problem. In this study, interviews were used in conjunction with the NARSSA inspection reports to ensure balance and corroboration (see Appendix G: Interview guide).

#### **4.7.1.3 Observation**

*Observation* can be defined as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or a phenomenon as it is occurring (Kumar 2015:376).



Observation is an ideal data collection method, because the researcher does not have to rely on people's willingness to provide information – i.e. the researcher can directly see what people do, rather than to rely on what they say they do (Kumar 2014; Salkind 2018). However, one of the main disadvantages of observation is the so-called Hawthorne effect, which entails that people behave differently as soon as they realise they are being observed (Silverman 2013). Observation also does not increase the understanding of why people behave the way they do.

In this study, participant observation was employed for a period of three months, from July to September 2020. Participant observation is a mode of field-based research that involves researchers locating themselves in the real-world field setting that is being studied, participating in and observing the setting, while collecting data and taking notes on the field setting, its participants and its events (Creswell & Creswell 2018:262–263, Yin 2011:311). The purpose of observation was to observe the RAF's current records management process to confirm whether control measures had been established to facilitate effective records-keeping and retrieval according to the advice of NARSSA officials, following their 2016 inspection, and to assess the storage facility and records movement control measures against ISO 15489-1:2016.

For this research, data was collected as and when activities occurred (see Appendix H: Observation checklist). For example, the researcher observed that the doors leading into the mailroom and the storage area in the basement were biometrically controlled and that each person walking in or out of these areas was supposed to be authenticated. However, these doors were left open and Correspondence and RAF employees were going in and out of these areas without authentication.

The researcher could not understand occurrence by observation only and had to ask the relevant participants who were close to the situation for clarity during engagements.

Data collected through observation was verified by engaging with key participants in Correspondence and Document Management Services (i.e. the Manager, Senior Administrative Officer and Officer) to clarify the directly observable things that could not be understood. In order to avoid observation bias, comments derived from the

NARSSA inspection report were used as guidelines for developing the observation checklist (see Appendix H: Observation checklist).

#### **4.7.2 Data collection procedures**

The RAF requires all researchers to request permission to study the organisation, which means that permission must be sought and granted prior to performing data collection procedures.

Therefore, the researcher completed a research application form, which was submitted to the RAF Learning and Development business unit for approval. The RAF has a Research Committee that conducts a Research Ethics Risk Assessment prior to permitting the study. The research application was approved by the RAF Research Ethics Committee and on 6 July 2020, the researcher was granted permission to conduct the research.

The Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA) conducts a Research Ethics Risk Assessment before permission is granted to the researcher to conduct a study. On 17 June 2020, the departmental Information Science Research Ethics Committee reviewed the application for ethical clearance and classified the study as low risk, in compliance with the *Policy on Research Ethics* (University of South Africa 2016) and granted permission to conduct the study.

##### **4.7.2.1 Interview procedure**

Prior to conducting interviews with participants, a request to participate in the study was sent to the participants' electronic mails. The following information was attached in the emails:

- Background on the researcher, a brief introduction to the research purpose, and an explanation of why participants were selected for the study;
- Informed consent (see Appendix K);
- Permission document from the RAF's Learning and Development business unit (see Appendix J);
- Ethical clearance certificate from UNISA (see Appendix I); and

- Interview guide (see Appendix G).

Interested participants responded to the researcher's request, after which the date and time for the interviews were confirmed through electronic mails.

Creswell and Creswell (2018:266) point out that researchers should plan, develop and use an interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers during a qualitative interview. As such, the researcher developed an interview guide (see Appendix G), comprising nine questions that were relevant to the research purpose of the study. Researchers record information from interviews by making handwritten notes, by audiotaping, or by videotaping (Creswell & Creswell 2018:226). Furthermore, Creswell and Creswell (2018:226) argue that, even if an interview is recorded, it is recommended to take notes, in the event of the recording equipment failing. Participants were uncomfortable with the researcher's request to record the interviews and, as a result, the researcher was compelled to make handwritten notes while conducting the interviews.

#### **4.7.2.2 Observation procedures**

The researcher engaged in multiple observations in the course of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), engaging in multiple observations during a qualitative study is ideal. However, to ensure that the findings are accurate, the researcher is encouraged to use only one observational protocol (see Appendix H: Observation checklist) while conducting the study (Creswell and Creswell 2018).

As such, the observation checklist (see Appendix H) was used to explore the current records management practices at the RAF. Although the observation checklist was a single page, it was used to observe:

- Records management process;
- Control measures;
- Assessment of the storage facility;
- Record keeping and retrieval; and
- Records movement control measures.

The researcher observed one process at a time to ensure that the process was adequate and to take descriptive notes. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:266), notes that are made during observation should portray the participants, a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting, and accounts of particular events, or activities.

Therefore, only one process was observed at a time, in order to ensure that the observations enabled the researcher to address the research objectives and to answer research questions. As and when the researcher was observing a process, information about the time, place and date of the field setting in which the observation occurred were captured on the observation checklist (Creswell & Creswell 2018:266).

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

The process of data analysis involves describing the type of collected data; identifying the appropriate data analysis method; and providing an overview of the steps used to analyse the collected primary data (Babbie 2018:10). Creswell and Creswell (2018:29) describe data analysis and interpretation as the procedures that the researcher follows to present, analyse and interpret the research findings. The methods, techniques and instruments chosen to analyse collected data are determined by the nature of the collected data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:53). Therefore, different methods, techniques and instruments are used to analyse qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research data.

In quantitative data analysis, the researcher is expected to turn raw numbers into meaningful data by applying rational and critical thinking (Neuman 2014:477). Quantitative data analysis may include calculating frequencies of variables and differences between variables (Neuman 2014:478). A quantitative approach is usually associated with finding evidence to either support or reject hypotheses that have been formulated at the earlier stages of the research process (Neuman 2014:478). Quantitative data analysis was only discussed briefly, as this study adopted a qualitative approach.

Qualitative data analysis involves non-numeric data, such as transcripts, notes, video and audio recordings, images and text documents (Creswell & Creswell 2018:267). In this way, qualitative data analysis consists of the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations and interviews conducted to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. Creswell and Creswell (2018:269) observe that analysing qualitative data is eclectic, in that there is no “right way” to do it.

However, because the researcher was working with textual, non-numeric and semi-structured data, a step-wise method was adopted – as suggested by Biggam (2017:120) and Creswell and Creswell (2018:269) – comprising of the following steps:

1. Preparation of data for analysis;
2. Reading;
3. Coding;
4. Description and themes;
5. Interrelated descriptions gathered from the case study; and
6. Data interpretation.

Raw data was collected by analysing various documents, including the RAF’s annual reports, NARSSA inspection reports and newspaper articles, interviews with employees and observations. The researcher developed research objectives and questions to guide the exploration and to determine the current state of RAF’s records management practices.

The collected primary data was supposed to enable the researcher to establish the state of the RAF’s records management practices, based on the evidence gathered by analysing documents, observations and the participants’ reasoning.

The qualitative data analysis process that was followed, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018:268–272), is discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.8.1 Step 1: Preparing for data analysis**

The researcher organised the data collected by means of different data collection methods – i.e. document analysis, interviews and observations – and prepared it for analysis. This included transcribing of the interview responses and typing the

handwritten observation notes, followed by sorting and arranging the data into different types, according to the sources of information (Creswell & Creswell 2018:268).

#### **4.8.2 Step 2: Reading**

The second step was mostly covered in Chapter 3. Several relevant studies, including those conducted by Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), who had conducted investigations into the records management practices of other government bodies in the country, were reviewed in the literature review. These studies clarified what constitutes records management best practice and identified common records management issues that governmental institutions face. From reading these sources, the researcher gathered that record-keeping processes of South African government bodies were inadequate. The studies conducted by Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011) and Kemoni (2007) confirmed that poor records management practice was not a problem unique to South Africa, as poor records management in government bodies is also common in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Kenya. NARSSA (2007:i) suggests that records management can help organisations achieve good governance. Although the literature review was conducted from a broader perspective, the discussion was narrowed down to align with the topic of the exploration by identifying common issues.

#### **4.8.3 Step 3: Coding**

The following process, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018:272), was followed to code data:

- The researcher started by making sense of the collected data by reading the interview transcripts attentively and writing down ideas as they came to mind.
- The researcher selected one document from the interview responses; read through it; and moved on to the next one.
- Once all the interview transcripts had been read, the researcher made a list of the topics covered in the interview guide and grouped similar responses (e.g. participants who opined that the RAF was ready for automation *versus* those who felt that it was not).

- Once the interview responses had been arranged accordingly, the researcher returned to the information collected through the document analysis and observation to incorporate the findings.
- The researcher established suitable words to describe the topic and categorised them to address the research objectives and answer the research questions. The purpose of arranging data into categories was to reduce the number of issues emerging during the exploration. Some issues were interrelated and could be placed under the same discussion, based on their interrelationships.
- The researcher assembled the data by placing information according to established categories.
- The researcher used coding to generate a description of RAF employees' perception of record-keeping and themes for analysis.

#### **4.8.4 Step 4: Description and themes**

Description involves a detailed rendering of information on people, places, or events in a particular setting (Creswell & Creswell 2018:269). The researcher searched for patterns by observing repeated behaviour by RAF employees, analysing interview responses and interpreting the descriptions and the setting in which the records were being managed (Leedy & Ormrod 2015:96).

#### **4.8.5 Step 5: Interrelated descriptions collected from the case study**

During this step, the researcher compared the Mailroom's record-keeping processes and the Storage Area to the criteria found in the NARSSA policy manual (2007), which outlines records management best practices, and drew inferences. Interrelated descriptions were gathered from various information sources used in this exploration (Creswell & Creswell 2018:270).

#### **4.8.6 Step 6: Data interpretation**

In the final step in the data analysis process, the researcher presented the research findings and drew conclusions (see Chapters 4 and 5). The researcher interpreted the data to determine the state of the RAF's records management practices; identify the shortcomings in the organisation's paper-based record-keeping processes and to establish the institution's compliance with NARSSA's conditions.

## 4.9 Validity, reliability and credibility

The literature reviewed (Chapter 3) demonstrated that qualitative researchers have to be sensitive to the issues of validity and reliability, because their subjectivity may easily cloud the data interpretation and produce questionable findings (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). The concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative studies differ from those in qualitative studies (Babbie 2014; Creswell & Creswell 2018). In quantitative studies, the researcher must explain how the core elements of the research methodology are validated (Neuman 2014:524). In a qualitative approach, on the other hand, the researcher must explain the concepts of validity and reliability in terms of the way in which the trustworthiness of study was ensured by explaining how they validated elements of trustworthiness in the research (Babbie 2014:146; Creswell & Creswell 2018:274–276).

During this research, multiple factors that could pose risks to the validity of the findings – such as the researcher, the participants, data collection methods and data analysis – had to be kept in mind. The researcher was mindful of these sources of error and adopted various strategies in each stage of the research process to guard against producing questionable results.

Validity and reliability are critical aspects of all research (Babbie 2014; Creswell & Creswell 2018). In a qualitative study, *validity* refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings, while reliability speaks to the consistency and repeatability of the participants' and researcher's ability to collect and record information accurately. In a qualitative study, *reliability* indicates that a particular approach is consistent across different research and projects (Creswell & Creswell 2018:274–276). Babbie (2014:146) agrees with the statement and points out that reliability is concerned with whether a particular technique repeatedly applies to the same object yields the same results each time. Records management scholars, such as Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), also adopted a qualitative approach in their studies (which are similar to this research). Therefore, it can be concluded that the research findings involved in this study are consistent and repeatable.



According to Babbie (2014:148), *validity* means that the researcher investigates what they said they would. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of this exploration was to establish whether the RAF complies with NARSSA (2007:231–232) conditions for managing paper-based records, such as access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training, as stipulated in Records Management Performance Criteria, and to determine the organisation's readiness for electronic records. The results of this exploration were drawn from a comparison of the RAF's current record-keeping processes to criteria found in NARSSA (2007:231–232) and the ISO 15489-1:2016, which NARSSA endorses. This study was accurate and truthful, in that it explored what it aimed to explore, because appropriate sources were used to determine the RAF's records management practices.

Creswell and Creswell (2018:334) define *credibility* as the means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing specific procedures. Data collection methods enabled the researcher to address the objective of the exploration and answer the questions that were under investigation. The findings of this exploration were drawn from reliable information sources, such as annual reports, which contain audited results.

Therefore, it could be confidently assumed that this study was credible because the data collection instruments yielded the same results, as revealed by a comprehensive inspection conducted by NARSSA officials on the RAF records management processes.

These research findings also aligned with the Auditor-General's report on the RAF's record-keeping weaknesses and the Audit Committee's findings on the organisation's inability to develop, implement or maintain policies (RAF 2019:192–196). Various RAF annual reports also supported the research findings of the study. This means that the research findings of this study were credible, trustworthy, applicable, consistent and confirmable.

#### **4.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are an essential part of any research – particularly if the research involves human participants. When making direct, formal contact with the people whom the researcher wants to study, the researcher will be required to give participants some explanation of the research purpose of your study (Babbie 2014:310). Explaining the entire purpose of the research puts the participants at ease, as they agree to participate, knowing what the expected contribution to the study is. Creswell and Creswell (2018:125) emphasise the importance of observing ethical practices applying to a particular study, which involves the researcher identifying specific ethical elements that apply to the study – such as confidentiality, informed consent and privacy – and explain how these may cause ethical dilemmas and how they can be resolved.

In order to comply with the *Policy on research ethics* of the University of South Africa (UNISA) (2016), the researcher remained aware of maintaining ethical conduct throughout the research process. According to this policy, the rights and interests of participants and institutions (i.e. the RAF and UNISA) must be always protected (University of South Africa 2016).

Before research commenced (i.e. the data collection process), the researcher applied to the Departmental Ethics Review Committee via her supervisor. The application outlined the methodology, any potential harms that may result, and the procedures that have been determined to alleviate the harms. UNISA requires that any research that involves human subjects must receive ethical clearance. Approval was granted on 17 June 2020 by the Departmental Ethics Review Committee to proceed with the study. UNISA granted ethical clearance, permitting the researcher to commence the study (see Appendix I: UNISA Ethics clearance). The researcher requested permission from the RAF through the Learning and Development (L and D) business unit to conduct this exploration (see Appendix J: RAF permission).

The study was guided by the ethical principles for using human subjects, as explained in the following sections.

#### **4.10.1 Respect**

According to the principle of respect, the researcher is responsible for ensuring that participants are well-informed about the purpose of the research in which they participate (University of South Africa 2016:14). Additionally, the researcher has to ensure that participants understand that participation in the study is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the research at any point, should they wish to do so (Creswell & Creswell 2018: 149; University of South Africa 2016:14). This is usually achieved by providing the participants with informed consent forms (Creswell & Creswell 2018:147). The informed consent form also affords research participants the right to refuse participation and/ or to withdraw from the study without prejudice. Informed consent is a written agreement between participants and the researcher, which outlines each party's expectations. In an informed consent form, the researcher vows to protect and respect the participants' rights (Creswell & Creswell 2018:147).

The participants involved in this research signed the informed consent form (see Appendix K: Informed consent) before participating in the research before taking part in this study, according to the UNISA *Policy on research ethics*.

The adoption of an informed consent form in this study ensured that participants were made adequately and accurately aware of the type of information required from them, the reasons for seeking the information, and how they were expected to participate in the study (Kumar 2014:373). In this way, the informed consent provided full disclosure about the research (Creswell & Creswell 2018:147).

The principles of respect also requires the researcher to show the same respect to participants during data analysis and the presentation of research findings (Creswell & Creswell 2018:287). The management of information collected and included in the research report was handled with caution to protect the rights of research participants and organisations affected by this study (University of South Africa 2016:12). The researcher remained fair and reasonable throughout this investigation and the procedures that were followed consistently in this research were carefully considered.

#### **4.10.2 Anonymity**

The principle of anonymity requires participants' identity to be kept secret and will remain as such, even after the study has been completed; and the participants' right to privacy to be respected by not revealing their names and personal details (Creswell & Creswell 2018:152).

The identity of the individuals participating in this study remained anonymous, as per the requirements of the UNISA ethics policy (University of South Africa 2016:17). The researcher maintained the highest standard of professionalism throughout the research and employed the necessary precautions to ensure participants' anonymity (Yin 2011:244). The privacy of the participants and the confidentiality of data collected was safeguarded by coding the participants' responses and presenting them according to themes in Chapter 5.

#### **4.10.3 Beneficence**

*Beneficence* – also known as the “do no harm” philosophy – refers to the researcher's duty to conduct studies that are beneficial to the participants and institutions being investigated (Babbie 2014:64), which means that the research should offer solutions to an existing problem.

The *UNISA Policy on Research Ethics* (University of South Africa 2016:11) emphasises that a study should only be undertaken if a positive contribution will be gained. Participants who were partaking in this study were not exposed to any harm: on the contrary, they may gain a great deal of knowledge about records management.

*Beneficence* also refers to the ethical obligation of maximising the benefit and minimising the potential of harm. It requires that the risks of harm posed by the research must be reasonable considering anticipated benefits (University of South Africa 2016:11). According to this principle, participants must be informed of any risks they may be exposed to by participating in the study (Babbie 2014:64). Although the interviews involved direct human participation, the only risk of harm to which participants were exposed was the minor discomfort of talking about the organisation that employed them.

However, the research did not pose a risk that was above the everyday norm. In line with UNISA's *Policy on research ethics* (University of South Africa 2016:11), the RAF stands to gain from the research conducted. It is envisaged that the study will create records management awareness among the RAF employees, which includes the idea that record-keeping is a shared responsibility and that good practice is achievable, if everyone contributes to the overall effort.

#### **4.10.4 Autonomy**

The principle of autonomy promotes respect for persons participating in research and those affected by the study (Babbie 2014:64). According to this principle, when a study involves human research subjects, participants should be truthfully informed of their expected contribution to the study by using an informed consent form (Babbie 2014:64; University of South Africa 2016:11). In this research, the rights and dignity of participants were shown the utmost respect, as prescribed by the UNISA *Policy on research ethics* (University of South Africa 2016:11). Before participating in this research, all participants received an informed consent form (see Appendix K) outlining each party's expected contribution to the study (University of South Africa 2016:11).

#### **4.10.5 Nonmaleficence**

The research ethics policy of UNISA requires information collected from the research subjects is to remain confidential (University of South Africa 2016:11) – a requirement to which the researcher adhered by observing the principle of non-maleficence. The researcher ensured that the data collected from respondents could not be traced back to the source, so as to safeguard the participants and to ensure that the study did not cause any harm to the participants of the study or any other people involved (Babbie 2014:65). On completion of the research, only the researcher knew the names and responses of the participants. Themes represented the findings to protect participants' identities (Biggam 2017:120; Creswell & Creswell 2018:269). – Coding participants' responses into themes ensured that the responses could not be traced to the original participants and, in this way, participants' personal information remains protected by

the researcher. Any other communications were also afforded the same level of confidentiality.

#### **4.10.6 Justice**

According to Babbie (2014:63), "... the burdens and benefits of research should be shared fairly within the society". Researchers must, therefore, neither exploit the vulnerable, nor exclude without good reason, those who stand to benefit from participants in a study.

Ngoepe and Ngulube (2013) remark that records management personnel are often excluded from round table discussions about the things that affect their work. The researcher experienced this practice first-hand. Instead of making Correspondence and Document Management employees (i.e. the Manager, Senior Administrative Officer and Officer) spectators in this study, the researcher communicated with them throughout the exploration. Therefore, the study did not exploit nor exclude any participants from participating. Furthermore, key staff members in the Correspondence and Document Management Services business unit were given a platform to express their views on the current records management practices of the RAF.

UNISA's *Policy on research ethics* specifies that research information must be handled with caution to protect the rights of participants and organisations affected by the study (University of South Africa 2016:11). This study carefully managed information and adhered to the ethical principle of justice. According to this principle, when humans are research subjects, the research processes should remain fair and reasonable throughout the study (Babbie 2014:64). Procedures used in this exploration were well-thought-through and consistent.

#### **4.11 Summary**

In this chapter, the research approach, design, methods, population, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis and relevant ethical considerations were discussed. The researcher collected data by examining and analysing documents, observing the conduct of RAF employees, and conducting interviews. The study was conducted in a natural setting at the RAF Pretoria Regional Office, and multiple data

collection methods were used to ensure that the findings of this investigation were confirmable.

The research focused on understanding the position, role and contribution of the Correspondence and Document Management Services business unit in the context of records management, from the perspective of RAF employees. In Chapter 2, an understanding of what records management best practice entails was derived from previous research conducted by several researchers, including Ngoepe (2008), Keakopa (2016) and Kemoni (2007). However, the state of the RAF record-keeping processes was not derived from pre-existing ideas or the literature review, but from the participants' views, descriptions and explanations. The main impetus of this qualitative study was to gain a deep understanding of the RAF's records management processes, based on the responses and opinions of the organisation's employees.

Furthermore, the researcher developed a clear picture of the research problem by identifying challenges in the records management situation at the RAF. The adopted research methodology enabled the researcher to establish the current state of the RAF's records management processes and the organisation's readiness for automation. The research results and findings of the study are presented in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the research results, which are based on the collected primary data, which was collected by means of document analysis, interviews and observations. The research results and findings are presented according to the research objectives of the study, which were to:

1. Establish the RAF's paper-based records compliance in terms of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training against the conditions and requirements of the *Records Management Policy* of NARSSA (NARSSA 2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016).
2. Identify shortcomings in the processes of managing the RAF's paper-based records, such as access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training.
3. Examine the influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public.
4. Determine the RAF's readiness for electronic records.

The response rate of the study is presented in the next section.

### **5.2 Response rate**

There are 12 business units in the RAF Pretoria Regional Office, classified under two pillars – Claims Operations and Support Services (RAF 2020a). The Claims Operations unit consists of Origination, Direct Claims, Determination, Litigation, Post Claims Settlement and Quality Assurance. The Support Services unit consists of Marketing and Communication, Human Capital, Facilities Management, Finance, Correspondence and Document Management Services and ICT Operations (RAF 2020a). Each business unit has a manager and Litigation has two managers.

The Human Capital Manager confirmed that the Pretoria Regional Office employed 14 Managers, three Senior Managers and a Regional General Manager (RGM). The contact details for three of these managers could, however, not be traced and, subsequently, the request to participate in the study was sent to 11 managers whose



contact details were available. Two of these managers refused to participate in the study and two others did not respond to the request. Therefore, the total number of sampled managers was seven. Requests were also sent to three Senior Managers. One could not participate in the study, due to time constraints, another did not respond to the request; and one agreed to a telephonic interview. The research results and findings, based on the research objectives are presented in the following sections.

### **5.3 Research results and findings**

NARSSA (2007:1) requires the RAF to manage its business activities adequately and in a manner that facilitates accountability, transparency, sound corporate governance, efficiency and effectiveness. In terms of the NARSSA Act (see Appendix A), the RAF needs to control and manage its records according to South African laws, supporting policies and directives. In other words, records should be retained safely from the time that the RAF receives them, until their disposal or destruction. NARSSA (2007:199–201) requires the protection of records from any threats, including unauthorised access, exposure to fire, water damage, pests, or any other damage. In order to meet the records protection requirements, records should also be stored in facilities designed to provide adequate air conditioning and the correct amount of light. Control measures should also be implemented for moving records from one location to another.

The research results and findings involved in the first research objective (RO) are presented in the next section.

#### **5.3.1 Compliance of RAF's paper-based records management processes to requirements**

This section reports on the research findings involved in Research Objective 1 (RO1): *Establish the RAF's paper-based records compliance in terms of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training against the conditions and requirements of the Records Management Policy of NARSSA (NARSSA 2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 (International Organization for Standardization 2016).*

As indicated by NARSSA (2007: 232–233), the purpose of a comprehensive inspection is to conduct an in-depth assessment of all aspects of records management practices in a government institution. NARSSA (2007) argues that there should be a follow-up response to the inspection report. Since the RAF was only inspected once by NARSSA in 2016, the researcher deemed it necessary to monitor the RAF records management compliance against NARSSA Records Management Performance Criteria (NARSSA 2007:223–229). Below are the results of the researcher’s on-site inspection using the NARSSA comprehensive inspection template (see Appendix B).

#### **5.3.1.1 Results of the researcher’s on-site inspection**

This study sought to establish the RAF’s compliance in terms of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training. The NARSSA inspection template was a relevant tool for the exploration, in that it enabled the researcher to cover wide-ranging record-keeping challenges.

During March 2021, the researcher conducted an on-site inspection using the NARSSA comprehensive inspection template, which produced the following results:

*Question 1.1.1 Does your organisation have a filled position for a records manager on a senior level?*

Yes. At the time of the study, the RAF did have a Records Manager, which complied with Section 13(5)(a) of the NARSSA Act.

*Question 1.1.2 Is the records manager suitably qualified to do his/her job?*

Yes. Based on the advertisement for the position, the appointed candidate was suitably qualified for the requirements and demands of the position.

*Question 1.2.1 Has the records management programme/function in your organisation been allocated the appropriate resources (facilities, finance, staff, equipment, etc.) to enable it to be maintained?*

No: at the time of the study, the RAF did not have a records management programme.

*Question 1.3.1 Does your organisation have a records management policy?*

Yes. The RAF developed, approved and implemented a records management policy to comply with NARSSA Regulation 10(3).

*Question 1.3.2 If yes, is the policy endorsed by the head of the government body and his/her senior managers?*

On 9 February 2021, the RAF issued a Management Directive entitled *Records Management Policy*. The policy was endorsed by the head of the government body and members of senior management.

*Question 1.3.3 Is the records management policy known to all employees?*

Yes. – On 9 February 2021, the RAF emailed a Management Directive, entitled *Records Management Policy*, to all employees, informing them about the existence and implementation of the policy (RAF 2021).

*Question 1.6.1 Has your organisation been issued with a disposal authority on your approved file plan?*

Yes. According to an IT Management Directive, management directive, entitled *Disposal or destruction of duplicate or multiple copies of records and shredding of records*, which was issued on numerous occasions, the RAF has a standing disposal authority (RAF 2017b). The organisation has a disposal authority that permits the shredding of duplicate copies, which is performed quarterly by using an external service provider. This process entails the business unit requesting disposal writing an Executive Summary, requesting permission for shredding from the Senior Manager of the unit. If permission is granted, the business unit cooperates with employees in the Mailroom to create disposal lists of the duplicate copies that will be shredded and pack the documents due for disposal in boxes for collection by the service provider. On the day of shredding, an official from the Mailroom is assigned to oversee the process to ensure that only prepared documents are shredded. On completion, the RAF is issued with the destruction certificate.

This means that the RAF partially conforms to NARSSA conditions in terms of Regulation 10(8), which stipulates that, whenever records are destroyed, the head of

a government body should submit a certificate of destruction to the National Archivist, unless an exemption from this obligation has been received.

*Question 1.7.3 Are all records protected against the following: careless and rough handling; fire damage; water damage; mould; pests; excessive light; unauthorized removal; and dust?*

No. At the time of this study, the RAF's records were not protected against careless and rough handling, fire damage, water damage, mould, pests, excessive light, unauthorised removal. In this way, the organisation did not comply with Section 13(1) of the NARSSA Act.

*Question 1.7.4 Does your organisation have a destruction register and is it maintained?*

No. The RAF did not have a register which was divided into different years to ensure that a closed item is entered under the year it qualified for destruction.

*Question 1.7.6 Does your office have a registry procedure manual, and is it implemented?*

No. In terms of Paragraph 6.2, the organisation should have a registry procedure manual to facilitate the training of registry employees. However, at the time of the research, the RAF did not have a registry procedure manual.

*Question 1.7.7 Are all registry staff conversant with the registry procedures?*

Yes. When the Management Directive was issued on 9 February 2021, all RAF employees were informed of the Records Management Policy to be used when creating, managing, storing and disposing records. The Records Management Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was attached to the issued Management Directive. Therefore, all registry staff should be conversant with the registry procedures.

*Question 1.8.3 Are all e-mails created or received by your organisation, in pursuance of its activities, regarded as official records and filed according to the approved file plan?*

No. The RAF was found to be in transgression of Section 13(1) of the NARSSA Act, because emails created or received by the organisation in pursuance of its activities were not regarded as official records or filed according to the approved file plan.

*Question 1.8.4 Does your organisation have a migration strategy for its archival electronic records?*

No. The RAF was found to be in transgression of Section 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act, because it did not have a migration strategy for archiving electronic records.

*Question 1.9.1 Are all electronic records systems protected against tampering, unauthorized alteration, accidental damage or destruction, intended damage or destruction?*

No. Electronic records systems were not protected against tampering, unauthorised alteration, accidental damage or destruction, intended damage or destruction. The RAF was hacked in 2021 and most of the records that were stored electronically were lost.

*Question 2.1 Can your organisation readily provide evidence of its transactions on request of AGSA in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (No 1 of 1999)?*

No. According to the AGSA's findings in 2019 and 2020, the RAF did not comply with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (No 1 of 1999), because it was unable to provide evidence of its transactions at the request of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA). Hence, the organisation did not receive clean audits in three consecutive years.

*Question 2.3 Can your organisation provide records about requests for information, in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame?*

No. The RAF did not comply with the prescribed time frames of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) (No 2 of 2000), as addressed by Versluis (2019).

*Question 2.4 Can your organisation provide written reasons for administrative action, in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No 3 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame?*

No. The RAF did not comply with the prescribed time frames of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) (No 3 of 2000).

*Question 2.5 Can your organisation provide authoritative and reliable records on any requests for evidence in terms of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (No. 25 of 2002)?*

No. The RAF did not comply with the requirements and conditions of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECTA) (No 25 of 2005).

The researcher also visited the storage facility at the Pretoria Regional Office during the study, so as to examine its suitability. At the time of the study, the researcher found the same storage facility still in use. However, conditions had worsened since the NARSSA inspection in 2016. The findings of this inspection are captured in the following sections.

### **1. Construction of a storage area**

The storeroom in the Pretoria Regional Office was in a basement near cars and generators. At the time of the study, the storeroom was full. Extensions were made with cupboards on the parking area and steel containers were used as additional storage.

### **2. Climate control**

At the time of the study, the storeroom was still not air-conditioned and electrical fans were still used to cool the air. However, at the time of the inspection, the fans were not operational.

### **3. Shelving and cabinets**

Shelving was made of steel racks. The racks were too high and ended too close to the roof, making it difficult to file and retrieve records. The parking storage made a bad situation worse and shelving and cabinets in this area look untidy. Records were retained in worn out, torned file covers.

#### **4. Dust**

There were visible signs of papers on the floors and slightly dusty conditions, which suggested that the storage area was not regularly cleaned.

#### **5. Water**

Although the researcher could also hear running water, due to pipes installed in the storage room, there was no visible sign of water leakage.

#### **6. Pests**

There were no visible signs of pests during the inspection.

#### **7. Light**

There were no visible signs of direct sunlight on the records and no excessive electrical light that could damage the durability of the records. However, this only applied to the records in the storeroom – not those stored in the parking area or the steel container, which was often left open.

##### **5.3.1.3 Findings of inspections involved in Research Objective 1**

The most important observation of the exploration involved in the inspections was that two RAF business units having similar record-keeping mandates, which was confusing. Although both Correspondence and Document Management Services in the regional offices and Records Management at Head Office dealt with records, the latter was considered more authoritative than the other. At the same time, they were supposed to be cooperating to ensure the adequate management of RAF records. During NARSSA's comprehensive inspection conducted in 2016, the RAF received negative feedback, because the position of Records Manager was vacant. Once the records manager had been appointed, it was expected that the issues raised during the inspection would be addressed.

Ideally, the office where the Records Manager is based should introduce and instil the discipline of managing records in line with statutes, regulations and best practice (NARSSA 2007), while Correspondence and Document Management Services should implement and maintain record-keeping mechanisms developed and communicated

by the Records Manager, who is regarded as the custodian of records in the regional offices.

The advertisement for the position of Records Manager (see Appendix F: Records manager's vacancy advertisement) also stated that the candidate would be responsible for managing Correspondence and Document Management Services nationally. This would imply that the Manager of the Correspondence and Document Management Services does not have the authority to develop and implement record-keeping mechanisms.

According to the Correspondence and Document Management Services Manager, the business unit was faced with numerous challenges when managing records because of indistinct responsibilities. This participant also informed the researcher that the unit often submitted a business plan that, among other things, communicated the challenges of the unit. However, the submitted plan was usually not given due consideration, and the unit was forced to continue with whichever functions it could perform with the available resources.

Based on the result of the NARSSA inspection report and the researcher's assessment, the RAF's paper-based records management processes did not comply with the guidelines outlined by the Records Management Performance Criteria (NARSSA 2007:223–229).

The results of this exploration were also drawn by comparing the current RAF record-keeping processes to criteria in the International Standard ISO 15489-1:2016, which NARSSA endorses. The researcher considered this comparison ideal, because ISO 15489-1:2016 provides a framework for planning and implementing a records management programme. The results were grouped according to six themes, as outlined in Table 5.1.

*Table 5.1: Compliance of RAF's paper-based records management to ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements*



Process	ISO 15489-1:2016
Access	The RAF did not fully comply with Clauses 8.4, 9.5 and 9.7, because the organisation still used paper-based records and all employees required access to the entire document to complete their tasks. Ideally, every employee should have access to only those parts of the records on which they need to work. For example, an employee in merits should only have access to parts of the record dealing with merits assessment. However, due to the use of paper-based records, this was not possible and, as a result, the provision and restriction of employee access to records could be appropriately managed.
Classification	Although the organisation had an approved file plan, it was not in use and, therefore, the RAF did not fully comply with Clause 9.4 of ISO 15489-1:2016.
Retention and disposal	Based on the directive <i>Disposal or destruction of duplicate or multiple copies of records</i> issued in 2016 and 2021 respectively, the organisation did not adequately dispose of records (RAF 2017b). Therefore, the RAF did not comply with Clause 7 and Sub-clause 9.9 of ISO 15489-1:2016.
Storage and handling	The RAF did not comply with Clause 9.6, because its records were stored in the basement, which was not custom-built for records storage.
Policies and procedures	The RAF did not comply with Clause 6, because it did not have a records management policy or standard procedures that provided more specific instructions on creating, capturing and managing records.
Tracking	The RAF did not fully comply with Clause 8.1, because it had not developed records controls, such as metadata schemas for records, business classification schemes, access and permissions rules and disposition authorities to meet records requirements.
Training	The RAF did not fully comply with Clause 6.5, because not all Correspondence and Document Management Services employees had received records management training at the time of this exploration.

*Source: Researcher's own Compilation*

The results of this exploration were compared to the criteria captured in *Records Management Performance Criteria* (NARSSA 2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016. Based on the foregoing information, it was possible to conclude that the current records management practices of the RAF in the Pretoria Regional Office did not comply with the NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements for managing records in terms of access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking, and training. The findings based on the second research objective of the study are presented in the following section.

### **5.3.2 Shortcomings in the process of managing RAF's paper-based records**

This section reports of the research findings involved in Research Objective 2 (RO2):  
*To identify shortcomings in the process of managing the RAF's paper-based records*

This section reports on the outcome of an assessment conducted on the RAF's records management processes in the Pretoria Regional Office. The purpose of the exploration was to determine whether RAF's record-keeping practices complied with NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016 conditions for records access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training.

#### **5.3.2.1 Access**

The RAF had achieved an average level of compliance to the criteria relating to access of records, as outlined in Sections 13(1), 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clauses 8.4, 9.5 and 9.7 of ISO 15489-1:2016. An access status was assigned to both records and individuals through a Metrofile system facilitated by the Central Archives Filing System (CAFS) as a measure of controlling access to claims records. In most business units, only individuals with the necessary authorisation were allowed to access and process records. Although the Mailroom had started scanning some paper documents to create electronic copies, most records were still paper-based. Consequently, employees needed to access a complete record to perform their duties. As a result, access could not be monitored adequately and in accordance to NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016.

### **5.3.2.2 Classification**

The classification of records involves applying standardised categories to enable people and systems not involved in the initial creation of the records to understand their context, content and structure. The RAF achieved a low level of compliance with the criteria for classification of records into records systems, as outlined in Section 13(2)(b)(i) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clause 9.4 of ISO 15489-1:2016. Although the RAF did have an approved file plan, the organisation had not implemented it. As a result, there was no correct arrangement and storage of and access to records.

This meant that the RAF needed to: (i) improve its efforts significantly by implementing a predetermined filing system, based on its approved file plan; and (ii) apply records management processes systematically, so as to enable records relating to the same business activity – irrespective of format, location, or custodian of those records – to be identified and classified accordingly.

### **5.3.2.3 Retention and disposal**

The RAF achieved a low level of compliance with the criteria related to the management of retention and disposal of records, as outlined in Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clause 7 and Sub-clause 9.9 of ISO 15489-1:2016. Due to a lack of records management awareness among RAF employees, records were destroyed without disposal authorities being issued. On 3 May 2016, an internal directive, entitled *Disposal or Destruction of Duplicate or Multiple Copies of Records*, requested employees to refrain from inappropriately disposing of records in bins (RAF 2017b). At the time of this research, the retention and disposal issue had not been resolved, because the same directive was sent out again on 7 July 2021.

The successful management of records retention and disposal will result in records only being kept for as long as they are in use or for compliance reasons. In such a case, records are appropriately destroyed, transferred, preserved, or migrated to new systems. However, this did not occur at the RAF, where active records were sent to an offsite storage facility, because there was no space on site.

Although the RAF had a standing disposal authority to dispose of duplicate copies only, records were inappropriately disposed of by employees – without the necessary authorisation. The destruction or transfer of records to other parties impacted on the corporate memory of the RAF, as documentary evidence used to support legal, regulatory and accountability requirements, was crucial.

#### **5.3.2.4 Storage and handling**

The RAF achieved an average level of compliance with the criteria related to the maintenance, storage and handling of records, as required by NARSSA (2007:33; 2007:199–201) and Clause 9.6 of ISO 15489-1:2016. The RAF storage area was not custom-built for records storage. The records were stored in a basement near the parking area. Fire detection, prevention and suppression systems were inadequate. The records were stored on shelves of inferior quality, some of which were overloaded, while some were collapsing. Apart from the records being damaged by poor storage and inadequate ventilation, files were not acid-free and of poor archival quality. As a result, most of the file covers were worn out and torn due to regular handling.

#### **5.3.2.5 Policies and procedures**

Records management policies and procedures ensure that the need for evidence, accountability and information about the organisational activities is met. The RAF achieved an average level of compliance with the criteria related to policies and procedures, as outlined in Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clause 6 of ISO 15489-1:2016.

At the time of this research, the RAF did have a records management policy and a standard operating procedure (SOP) on paper. However, the policy and the SOP only existed in principle. In practice, most employees (including those in Correspondence and Document Management Services) were unaware of the existence of the policy and the SOP – despite the Management Directive issued on 9 February 2021. Even after the Directive had been issued, each regional office continued to manage its records in a manner that worked for them.

#### 5.3.2.6 Tracking

The RAF achieved a high level of compliance with the criteria related to tracking the movement of records, as outlined in Clause 8.1 of ISO 15489-1:2016. The organisation used a Metrofile tracking system facilitated by CAFS. This system manages files from intake to storage to ensure that the records are easily identified, located and retrieved (including the tracking of files). However, these records do not have a file control sheet/index sheet inserted inside the files. A file control/index sheet provides an index of the content, controls the content, and keeps track of all the documents inside the file.

When applied properly, this system could yield positive results. However, since this system does not track the movement of paper-based records appropriately, numerous challenges were encountered, the most significant of which was the fact that the RAF created large volumes of paper-based records daily it was becoming difficult for CAFS to keep up with the numbers.

Interviewed participants also mentioned that a high volume of temporary files (known as *dummy files*) were created and, as a result, it was becoming difficult to trace and merge them with the original records. For example, an attorney would send incomplete claim documents to the RAF to ensure that the claim did not expire and continued to send bits and pieces of information as they became available. This may lead to one record containing a claim form and a copy of an identity document, but no affidavit, and another record containing all the documents. Both records would, however, involve the same person.

In terms of this criterion, the RAF should implement record tracking systems to:

- Identify outstanding action required;
- Enable retrieval of records;
- Prevent loss of records; and
- Monitor usage for system maintenance and security and maintain an auditable trail of transactions, such as capturing, registration, classification, indexing, storage, access, use, migration and disposal.

### **5.3.2.7 Training**

The RAF achieved a low level of compliance with the criteria related to training requirements for records management and specific practices, as outlined in NARSSA (2007:45), and Clause 6.5 of ISO 15489-1:2016. According to NARSSA (2007:46), records management is a shared responsibility between users, Records Managers and Senior Managers. All creators of records should be equipped with the necessary skills to capture and manage reliable and authentic records. The findings of this investigation indicated that only a few Correspondence and Document Management Services employees in the Pretoria Regional Office had received formal records management training offered by external service providers, such as the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Based on the foregoing information, the current records management practices of the RAF did not reflect best practice, because they did not fully comply with NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016 conditions. The research findings involved in the third objective of the study are presented in the next section.

### **5.3.3 Influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide services to the public**

The research findings in this section are based on Research Objective 3 (RO3):

*To examine the influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public*

In Chapter 1, NARSSA theory was explored, which alleged that "The quality of the services which government bodies deliver to their clients and stakeholders depends on how well they create, store, retrieve, use and manage relevant information to make decisions to act in pursuit of their business objectives" (NARSSA 2007:i). Katuu (2015), Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) made similar observations, in that they also established that institutions with poor record-keeping processes rendered poor services to their stakeholders.

The researcher interviewed the management team (one Senior Manager and seven Managers), including the Correspondence and Document Management Services

Manager, to investigate how the use of paper-based records affected the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public. The findings based on the third objective of the study are as reported in the following sections:

*Question 1: The business unit that you lead/work in, does it have any relationship with Correspondence and Document Management Services?*

The results indicated that all business units (Origination, Direct Claims, Determination, Litigation, Post Settlement, Quality Assurance, Marketing and Communication, Human Capital, Facilities Management, Finance and ICT Operations) in the Pretoria Regional Office had a relationship with Correspondence and Document Management Services.

*Question 2: What is the nature of the relationship?*

The nature of the relationships varied according to the mandate of each business unit. However, each unit had a relationship of some sort with Correspondence and Document Management Services.

*Question 3: What is the role of Correspondence and Document Management Services in the entire operations of the RAF?*

All participants revealed that Correspondence and Document Management Services was responsible for receiving documents from the RAF stakeholders through document reception (hand deliveries), the post office and other regional offices. The employees of this unit opened the received mail, acknowledged receipt by date stamping the documents, and creating spreadsheets as proof of receipt. Once the documents had been stamped, they were sorted according to various categories (i.e. new claims or existing claims). The records are then dispatched to designated business units. New claims were delivered to the business unit for registration, while other documents were delivered to relevant business units.

Correspondence and Document Management Services was also responsible for facilitating courier services in the office. However, this business unit was not only responsible for the receipt, opening, sorting, and dispatching of mail: it also oversaw

the regional switchboard and receptions (visitors were received and provided with a waiting area and documents were exchanged in document reception).

The business unit also took care of the RAF's storage needs on and off-site. CAFS was responsible for providing means of tracing and locating records in the organisation. This section of Correspondence and Document Management Services barcodes claimed files and captured the details of records in the used tracking system. CAFS facilitated the movements of records in the RAF and stored business records internally and externally with an external service provider.

*Question 4: Do you feel that Correspondence and Document Management Services is providing the office with a strategic plan which provides the office with an organisation-wide approach of managing records?*

Only participants were of the opinion that Correspondence and Document Management Services provided the Regional Office with essential record-keeping tools. In comparison, three participants opined that Correspondence and Document Management Services did not provide the Regional Office with a strategic plan providing an organisation-wide approach to managing the records of the institution. Three participants argued that the role of this business unit was not to provide regional offices with a strategic plan, but rather to provide strategic support, because it was maintaining the records.

*If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?*

Participants who answered "no" indicated that Correspondence and Document Management Services processes were mainly paper-based and subject to human intervention. Furthermore, this business unit did not have a registry policy manual to guide processes. The unit had not received a systematic or planned approach from the office of the Records Manager covering records management processes from the creation to the disposal of records.

Participants indicated that the organisation had not established a strategy to identify or explain the significance of records to the RAF's overall business operations. Simply



put, the RAF did not have a records management programme to facilitate record-keeping processes. Furthermore, participants indicated that the systems used were primitive and that there was room for improvement. Participants also highlighted that there was no strategic document providing a holistic strategic, outline or awareness of the work and the significance of Correspondence and Document Management Services in the RAF.

*Question 5: According to the RAF's annual reports (RAF 2019:143-149; 2018:123-128; 2017:124-127), the organisation is currently operating in a highly paper-based environment. How do paper-based operations affect the RAF's ability to deliver timely services to their stakeholders?*

The results indicated that the RAF's paper-based operations negatively affected its ability to deliver timely services to its stakeholders. All eight participants revealed that numerous inefficiencies emanated from the use of paper-based records, such as lost claims records. Participants explained that moving correspondence in a paper-based operation was slow, and there was always the possibility of records getting lost, which contributed to the delay in service delivery to the stakeholders.

High storage cost was another issue raised. A great deal of money was spent on storing active records at an off-site facility, due to the lack of space in the Pretoria Regional Office. Participants also revealed that turnaround times of this off-site storage facility is not always favour them – particularly when records were required immediately. Participants also pointed out that paper records were prone to damage, if not handled correctly; that they took up a great deal of storage space; that there were increased costs associated with the process.

Various business units needed access to the paper-based claims documents to perform functions in line with their mandate, e.g. Originations registered, verified and validated a claim before Determination assessed its merits.

Paper-based operations were reported as having dire consequences for the turnaround times of various business units, because paper records did not allow employees to work on the same claims' documents simultaneously, thereby slowing

down the entire claims process. Subsequently, business units were becoming intra-dependent on one another. Subsequently, a business unit could not start working on a claim, until the hard copy had been received from the business unit using it before them.

Participants summarised the challenges involved in the use of paper-based records as follows:

- Reduced productivity slowing down processes;
- Reputational damage when a delay in service provision occurred; and
- Non-compliance with document management associated risks, as filing of documents became a challenge.

*Question 6: The above-mentioned annual reports also indicated the organisation's plans to automate some business processes (for example introduction of electronic forms). Do you feel that the RAF is ready for automation?*

Six of the eight participants indicated that the RAF was not yet ready for automation, whereas two participants argued that the organisation was ready. The two participants who answered “yes”, indicated that declining service delivery levels and increasing volumes of claims indicated that the organisation needed to take the paperless route. However, six participants felt that the institution was not ready for automation, because employees were too comfortable with paper-based methods. For example, although people could send their claims electronically to the e-mail address ([externalptacorrespondence@raf.co.za](mailto:externalptacorrespondence@raf.co.za)), employees still printed electronically sent documents to work on the hard copies.

*Question 7: How long have you been with the organisation?*

This question was asked to establish whether participants were already with the RAF when the organisation attempted to automate its process through Fineos. Results indicated that most participants had been working for the RAF for longer than five years. Out of the eight Managers interviewed, one had been with the RAF for 24 years;

one Manager had been employed by the RAF for 23 years; two for 20 years; two for 19 years; and the other Manager had been working at the RAF two for six years.

*Question 8: Based on your experience, do you feel the RAF can exist solely in an electronic environment?*

*If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?*

The results indicated that six participants believed that the RAF could not exist solely in an electronic environment. These participants had already been working for the RAF when the organisation attempted automation by implementing Fineos. It could be argued that the participants' resistance to automation might have been based on their experience with the failed implementation of Fineos, which crashed during the testing phase, due to the high number of claims that the system had to process and store. Participants felt that Fineos failed because it was incorrectly executed.

Participants raised the issue that, if an electronic claims record without a hardcopy could not be traced, the organisation might face challenges when attempting to settle claims. Participants said the organisation was not ready to deal solely with electronic documents, because it was relying heavily on external stakeholders, such as South African Police Services (SAPS), the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and other government departments, as well as law firms and individual claimants, who were also not operating in an electronic environment. Therefore, the organisation needed to continue with paper-based correspondence. Participants felt that moving to a paperless environment must commence with legislation (an RAF Act) to prescribe the process of claiming.

Another issue that was raised involved the RAF not existing in isolation, but among communities and the government, which were heavily dependent on paper. Data costs incurred by claimants and other parties should also be considered.

The two participants, who argued that the RAF could exist in an electronic environment, opined that the organisation had to classify the documentation that would be compatible with the business processes and determine which format and which

information should be stored. These participants felt that, once records were correctly classified, the RAF would be able to work on one file, from the acknowledgement stage until the closing of a file, regardless of whether the record was paper-based or electronic.

*Question 9: Do you feel that the RAF has the necessary resources to operate in an electronic environment successfully?*

*If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?*

Five participants felt that the RAF had the necessary resources to operate in an electronic environment because of existing investments in ICT infrastructure. Participants also reported that the organisation had a strong drive for training. According to the participants who answered “yes” to this question, training could be provided to upskill employees to function in an electronic environment. Participants revealed that the RAF had acquired more human resources to fulfil its obligations toward its stakeholders and that, due to the use of paper-based records, the organisation required even more human resources. According to these participants, the RAF was adequately capacitated in terms of human resources.

However, two participants felt that the current systems were primitive. Participants were of the view that the RAF’s ICT infrastructure was not strong enough to cater for full automation. These participants also revealed that the organisation was currently experiencing a problem with overloading and operating in an electronic environment within its ICT infrastructure. Therefore, there was a feeling that automation would make a bad situation worse.

The remaining participant was undecided, based on various reasons that could not be disclosed. However, while he felt that electronic records could reduce the time to process claims, he also lacked confidence in the organisation’s ability to find a system that worked, based on their experience with Fineos.

Based on the interviews, it can be deduced that paper-based records negatively affect the RAF’s ability to provide timely services to the public. The findings drawn from the interviews confirmed the findings made through document analysis. It was established

that, in 2019 the Auditor-General revealed that the RAF did not implement proper record-keeping in a timely manner to ensure that complete, relevant and accurate information was accessible and available to support performance reporting (RAF 2019:192). In other words, the records management practices of the organisation were poor. Participants' responses to the interview questions corroborated this finding.

This study is in agreement with the service delivery theory (NARSSA 2007: i) and the scholars who found that institutions with poor record-keeping processes rendered poor services to their stakeholders (Katu 2015; Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). Based on the interviews conducted with management, this study established that paper-based records delayed the claim process. In Chapter 1, it was established that the administration of the RAF was fault-based, which meant that, before accepting liability for the claim, the organisation needed to investigate who had been at fault for the accident and determine the fault by examining records submitted by claimants or their representatives (RAF 2019:33).

According to the findings of the interviews findings, each business unit had a time frame to complete its tasks to ensure that the RAF settled the claim within 120 days. However, the interviews' responses indicated that it had not been possible to settle claims within 120 days, as required. The participants revealed that it often happened that, by the time the paper-based documents reached Determination for merit assessment, the 120 days had already lapsed.

On 6 August 2020, the RAF appointed a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (RAF 2020a:12), who also confirmed the foregoing information. After the appointment, the CEO conducted several media briefings and interviews with news channels, such as Newsroom Afrika and eNCA. The CEO confirmed that, once the RAF accepted a validly lodged claim, the institution had 120 days to settle the matter (RAF 2019:33). However, in interviews with Newsroom Afrika and eNCA on 15 September 2020 and 13 October 2020, the CEO admitted that the RAF had not settled claims within the stipulated 120 days, thereby corroborating the information collected through interviews with the management team of the Pretoria Regional Office.

Current (paper-based) records management practices of the RAF made it impossible for the organisation to comply with its own acts, which went against the Batho Pele Principles mentioned in Chapter 1. According to the CEO, not enough information was provided by the claimants or their representatives when applying for compensation to enable the RAF to make an assessment and to settle claims in line with the organisation's acts.

Instead, claims processing sometimes continued for well over five years, while the RAF tried to source outstanding information from various parties to enable the organisation to establish fault prior to accepting liability for the claim accurately. The lack of sufficient information was a significant challenge for the RAF, because Section 24(6) the RAF Act also communicates that, if the claim is not settled after 120 days, the claimant or their representative may proceed to serve a summons on the organisation, which results in expensive legal costs. The CEO also explained that, once a summons had been issued, the RAF lost at least a quarter of its budget to legal fees, which did not align with the NDP (2030) pledge of creating a better country for all. If the organisation receives billion of rands annually to compensate MVA victims' but spends a large portion of the budget on administrative costs and legal fees, then the organisation is not actively participating in the NDP (2030) initiative.

During both interviews, the CEO emphasised that the main issue was that claims did not have enough information to enable the organisation to investigate fault, accept or reject liability, or even settle claims within the prescribed time frame of 120 days. NARSSA (2007:7) communicates that good governance depends on an institution's ability to function efficiently and effectively. This means that the RAF needs readily available access to information to perform their services to the public in an accountable manner. In this case, records management should provide the RAF with a basis for accountability and protection of rights by developing necessary compliance requirements for accepting claim records (NARSSA 2007:1). However, this may be difficult to achieve, while the RAF is still using paper-based records.

The CEO's revelations showed that RAF needed to stop accepting incomplete claims that could not be investigated to determine fault. If the RAF was using electronic records, the organisation might be able to develop a system that verifies whether all

required documents are submitted at the beginning of the process. For example, the system could operate in such a way that claimants or their representatives are required to upload documents at the time of application and that the claim should only be accepted once all documents are submitted. Subsequently, the RAF will be able to assess and settle claims within the prescribed 120 days.

Not only will the use of electronic records enable speedy access to records; it should also ensure adequately managed access. Based on this information, this study found that the use of paper-based records was hindering the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public, as it slowed down the process. The findings based on the fourth research objective of the study are presented in the next section.

#### **5.3.4 RAF's readiness for electronic records**

This section reports on the research results and findings involved in Research Objective 4 (RO4):

*To determine the RAF's readiness for electronic records*

Part of the purpose of this exploration was to determine the RAF's readiness to operate in a paper-less (electronic) environment. As established from the annual reports, the RAF had been trying to automate its processes since 2002 with the sole purpose of finding a single system to adopt for processing claims. Up until this point, a few areas have commenced with automation, including Correspondence and Documents Management Services, through imaging or scanning (RAF 2019:146). Records will be managed electronically once the automation process has been completed.

As established in the literature review in Chapter 3, electronic records are subject to the same requirements provided in the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) that apply to paper-based records management.

Based on Sections 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of this Act, conditions for the electronic reproduction of records and the management of RAF electronic records are determined by the National Archivist (NARSSA 2007:8). In other words, the RAF needs

to have a strategy for the effective management of electronic records in place before commencing with automation plans. The literature reviewed also showed that no records management programme can be developed, maintained, or improved without understanding the RAF's existing records management system. Whether the RAF is embarking on developing a new records management programme or simply intends to improve the existing one, the starting point is to understand this organisational adequacy of resources. By analysing the RAF's annual reports and the responses in the interviews with the management team, the RAF did not have adequate resources (skills and systems) for administering electronic records.

In Chapter 3, it was established that there were various systems available for managing electronic records. Furthermore, the RAF (2019:146) confirmed that the organisation had adopted the ECM system, which incorporated Document Management (DM), Records Management (RM), Business Process Management (BPM) and Knowledge Management (KM) portals. However, throughout the examined annual reports, it became clear that the RAF sought a *single* platform for claims management (RAF 2010:70). In other words, one system must be used by all business units in the organisation involved in the process of claims administration, as outlined in Chapter 1. Based on this information, the ECM system was not adequate. The Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) confirms that ECM is not a single technology or process, but a combination of strategies, methods and tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver content and documents (AIIM 2010). Therefore, the ECM is merely another system that would be added to the other unintegrated systems already used by the RAF.

At the time of the research, each business unit had its own systems that were not linked. Correspondence and Document Management Services used various unintegrated technologies, while the Mailroom employees used the "Claims View" system to verify documents upon receipt – whether they were new or existing claims – to ensure that documents were delivered to the correct business units.

The Mailroom employees used the KOFAX system to convert paper-based documents to electronic records by scanning them, while CAFS employees used the Metrofile system for tracking, tracing and retrieving claims records. In Origination, the



registration team used a different system from the verification and validation team, although they were within the same business unit. Therefore, it was clear that, although the RAF was seeking an integrated claims management system (RAF 2005:5), it had not been found or developed yet.

As already established throughout this exploration, NARSSA requires the adequate management of electronic records. Consequently, when the RAF automates Correspondence and Document Management Services processes, the organisation would be required to develop and implement an Integrated Document and Records Management System that meets the following minimum records management functionality:

- Managing a functional subject file plan according to which records are filed;
- Managing emails as records;
- Maintaining the relationships between records and files and between file series and the file plan;
- Identifying records that are due for disposal and managing the disposal process;
- Constructing and managing audit trails;
- Managing record version control;
- Managing the integrity and reliability of records once they have been declared as such; and
- Enabling the RAF to manage records in all formats in an integrated manner.

The ECM adopted by the RAF was not linked to any of the systems that were used by Correspondence and Document Management Services. In other words, this system did not comply with the NARSSA requirement (NARSSA 2007:10) of any adopted system meeting at least the above-mentioned minimum records management functionalities.

The systems in use at the time of the research did not enable the RAF to:

- Manage a functional subject file plan according to which records were filed;
- Manage emails as records;
- Maintain the relationships between records and files and between file series and the file plan;
- Identify records that were due for disposal or manage the disposal process;

- Construct and manage audit trails;
- Manage record version control;
- Manage the integrity and reliability of records, resulting in the creation of numerous duplicate records (dummy files); and
- Manage records in all formats in an integrated manner.

In addition to the admission of Information and Communication Technology (ICT') that they did not have an adequate infrastructure to provide the organisation with the necessary support to pursue its business (RAF 2019:143), this study also determined that those entrusted with managing records lacked the necessary records management skills. It was established that, in 2006, the RAF CEO at the time emphasised the importance of “putting the right people in the right places” for the organisation to develop and implement effective processes and procedures that would move the institution forward (RAF 2006:19). The CEO pointed out that the RAF had previously focused on enhancing employees’ skills towards the legal profession, while neglecting other essential skills critical to the organisation (RAF 2006:20). According to the RAF (2017:134), this was followed by various training initiatives, which included Archives and Records Management, Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies (COBIT), Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and the Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF). The RAF undertook these initiatives to ensure that employees were adequately skilled and prepared for the envisaged paperless organisation.

However, in spite of this issue being raised previously, it appeared that it had not been addressed, because the Board made the same observation 12 years later. In the 2019/2020 annual performance plan (APP), the lack of skills was identified as a strategic risk threatening the RAF’s ability to automate its business processes (RAF 2020b:20–21). During the Board’s Risk Assessment Workshop, held on 23 and 24 November 2018, a lack of specialised IT skills was identified as a strategic risk that the RAF faced (RAF 2020b:20–21). The RAF’s Board doubted whether the organisation had sufficient skills and competencies to automate the organisational processes (RAF APP 2020b:20). It appeared as if the Board believed that there was a risk of the RAF not being able to adopt new technologies to support business operations, due to this

lack of specialised ICT skills and failure to implement the RAF ICT strategic objectives and e-enablement initiatives (RAF 2020b:20). Furthermore, the researcher's engagements with key participants in Correspondence and Document Management Services (Manager, Senior Administrative Officer and Officer) revealed that only a few employees in the Pretoria Regional Office had received formal records management training.

Schellnack-Kelly (2016) is of the opinion that record-keeping employees in post-apartheid South Africa are vital, because they provide organisations, such as the RAF, with tools for managing records that may help to achieve their organisational goals. Therefore, Correspondence and Document Management Services employees should be adequately skilled to operate electronic records and to participate in meaningful discussions with ICT employees responsible for providing them with ICT infrastructure for record-keeping, such as the Integrated Document and Records Management System. Based on the research of Katuu (2015), Kwatsha (2010) and Munetsi (2011), the RAF will not enjoy the full benefits of using electronic records – such as multiple access, economic benefits, auditing capabilities, efficiency and effectiveness – if the people administering these electronic records were not adequately skilled.

As much as ICT support services provide the RAF with technological infrastructure, technical advice and controlling and safekeeping the organisation's most vital assets, records management exists within a legislative framework.

The requirements of an effective record-keeping system, such as compliance with the legal and administrative conditions in which government organisations operate, should be clearly communicated when seeking an Integrated Document and Records Management System. In other words, Correspondence and Document Management Services employees should be adequately skilled and conversant with the legislative framework governing the practice to communicate their needs and expectations to the ICT team before developing and implementing the technological infrastructure for record-keeping.

Once the RAF starts making use of electronic records, the institution will have to ensure that electronic records systems, including electronic mail, electronic

correspondence systems and electronic records systems, are developed and managed according to the guidelines stipulated in the NARSSA (2007) policy manual.

The NARSSA inspection template completed in September 2016 indicated that the RAF did not comply with Questions 1.8.3, 1.8.4, 1.9.1 and 2.5 of NARSSA's conditions for electronic records keeping (see Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template), because:

- E-mails created or received by the organisation in pursuance of its activities were not regarded as official records, nor filed according to the approved file plan;
- The organisation did not have a migration strategy for its archival electronic records;
- Electronic records systems were not protected against tampering, unauthorised alteration, accidental damage, or destruction, intended damage, or destruction; and
- The organisation could not provide authoritative and reliable records on request for evidence in terms of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (No. 25 of 2002).

Furthermore, because the organisation is creating electronic copies of paper-based records through scanning in Correspondence and Document Management Services, the RAF will also need to observe SANS 15801: *Electronic imaging. Information stored electronically. Recommendations for trustworthiness and reliability* (SABS 2004). As established in Chapter 3, managing electronic records involves additional requirements to which the RAF must adhere. Similar to paper-based records, NARSSA (2007:8) requires the organisation to have a strategy for managing electronic records. In other words, before adopting electronic records at the RAF, certain elements (as established in Section 3.5) constituting best practice will have to be implemented.

According to ISO 15489-1:2016, which framed this study, the RAF needs to implement an electronic record-keeping system in the following eight phases:

1. Conduct a preliminary investigation to understand all the records created during business operations and to gain an overview of the role of the various record-keeping business units, their purpose and their relationship to particular operations.

2. Analyse business activities to determine and document each business unit's functions, activities and transactions, so as to develop an effective classification system.
3. Identify requirements for records by analysing the organisational regulatory environment and determining how each requirement can be satisfied through records management processes.
4. Assess existing systems to develop a conceptual model of the organisation's functions and operations and how they are performed, in order to understand how records relate to its business and processes. The disruptions caused by the lack of integration between the systems, which hinder business units from sharing electronic records concurrently, must also be established.
5. Identify strategies for satisfying records requirements, such as the electronic records management policy and procedures for administering electronic records.
6. Design a records management programme, which will also entail changing the existing systems, processes and practices by adopting or integrating technological solutions.
7. Design and implement documented policies, procedures and training materials necessary for electronic record-keeping, which is crucial during the implementation of the records management programme.
8. Conduct a post-implementation review to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented electronic record-keeping system(s) and the records management programme to identify and correct deficiencies in the processes.

Based on the GIGO philosophy discussed in Chapter 1, the RAF was not yet ready for electronic records, because paper-based records management was not on par with NARSSA's Records Management Performance Criteria and ISO 15489 1:2016. Therefore, even if the organisation did manage to automate its records management processes, these would still be below par, due to the following reasons:

- The analysis of the examined annual reports (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017:124–127) revealed that the RAF had not conducted a preliminary investigation to understand the different records created during its business operations. Therefore, the role and purpose of the business units and their relationship to operations or to one another were still being misunderstood.

- Although the RAF had an approved file plan (RAF 2016a:125), it was seemingly implemented without analysing business activities to determine and document the functions, activities and transactions of each business unit and to develop an effective classification system (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017:124–127). Hence, there was resistance to the use of the file plan.
- Upon approval of the ECM implementation, the user requirements for all business units (including Correspondence and Document Management Services) were gathered (RAF 2016a:125). However, the key participants of Correspondence and Document Management Services (Manager, Senior Administrative Officer and Officer), who were interviewed, disagreed with this statement. According to these participants, Correspondence and Document Management Services seldom participated in any of these activities; instead, they were told what would or not work.
- According to RAF (2019:143), existing systems had been assessed and, therefore, there was a need to re-examine the current ICT strategic plan. As established, ICT identified a need to invest in a new business-enabled ICT strategy and an integrated approach to transform and modernise the organisational business to meet the medium-term strategic framework and the five-year strategic plan (RAF 2019:143).
- As established, a revised *Records Management Strategy* was presented to the ICT Steering Committee for approval in the 2017/2018 financial year (RAF 2018:125). A *Records Management Policy Action Plan* was also adopted in preparation of electronic documents and records management to ensure that, when records are stored electronically, they will still adhere to record-keeping principles and standards (RAF 2018:125). However, there have not been any more details on this information in recent annual reports.
- In this way, it was unclear whether the RAF had identified strategies for satisfying records requirements, such as the electronic records management policy and procedures for administering electronic records.
- As established in the interviews conducted with the management team, the RAF did not have a records management programme for paper-based or electronic records. In other words, there was no process outlining how the adoption or

integration of technological solutions would change the existing systems, processes and practices.

- Based on the RAF annual reports (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2017a:124–127), the organisation did not have documented policies, procedures and training materials necessary for electronic record-keeping.
- Since the RAF did not have a records management programme, the post-implementation review could not be conducted, as it involved evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented electronic record-keeping system/s and the records management programme.

As indicated in the NARSSA inspection template that was completed in September 2016, the RAF did not comply with the NARSSA conditions involved in Questions 1.8.3, 1.8.4, 1.9.1 and 2.5 (see Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template). This study supports the inspection findings, which revealed that the RAF was not ready for electronic record-keeping. Based on the foregoing information, it could be concluded that the RAF was still not ready for electronic record-keeping.

## **5.4 Interpretation of research findings**

In order to address the objectives of this investigation adequately, the literature review was arranged according to the following five themes: (i) established records management practices in government bodies; (ii) the management of electronic records; (iii) common records management problems; (iv) challenges associated with automation; and (v) readiness for electronic records. This section presents the interpretation of the findings. The researcher compares the findings of the current study with other studies; particularly those covered in the literature review. The purpose of this section is to highlight that records management in government bodies is a universal construct.

In the literature review, the researcher observed that the research on records management in government bodies produced similar findings, with the only difference from other studies in the same field was the extent. However, the questions and answers were the same for all government bodies. In the next section, the interpretation of the findings involved in the first theme are presented.

#### **5.4.1 Theme 1: Established records management practices in government bodies**

In the preliminary literature review, the researcher focused on determining the state of records management practices in South Africa. The work of researchers, such as Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013), revealed that record-keeping in South African government bodies was very poor. In order to understand whether poor records management was a problem that was unique to South Africa, the research of Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011) and Kemoni (2007), who conducted their investigations in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Kenya respectively, was examined. The analysis of the research findings of these studies showed that poor records management practices were common in South African governmental institutions and those in other countries. The studies conducted by Chaterera (2013), Kalusopa (2011), Kemoni (2007), Marutha (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) reveal that record-keeping processes of government bodies do not reflect best practice. As such, current records management practices of the RAF, a South African government body, did not reflect best practice.

According to NARSSA (2007:1), records management is essential for good governance and effective and efficient administration and, in this way, records management is the foundation of all business processes. However, several studies reveal that numerous government bodies do not consider records management an essential component (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008), which is also the case in the RAF. Records not only provide evidence of business activities; they also play a vital role in business processes, such as auditing and enabling government bodies to deliver timely services to the public (Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013). A similar notion was expressed by the AGSA in the RAF 2019 and 2020 annual reports (RAF 2019:192; 2020:168)

Ngoepe (2014) argues that records management is vital to identify risks in government bodies: a healthy record-keeping culture can be used as an organisation's primary tool for identifying risks and implementing proper risk management. The issues of the role of records management in identifying risks and the risks that emanate from poor records management or a lack of records management in organisations – as examined



by Ngoepe (2014:3–6) – are highly significant to this study, because the relationship between good record-keeping and risk management is not articulated in the RAF. Furthermore, Ngoepe (2014:3) argues that good record-keeping ensures the availability of complete and accurate records when required for consultation by the authorities and the success of risk management was dependent on the accuracy of records available. As reflected by the RAF's audit announcement on LinkedIn, the organisation's records management was poor and, therefore, the organisation had not received clean audits in three years (RAF 2020d).

Ngoepe (2014:6) reveals that, in most government bodies, risk management comprises the internal audit business unit, compliance and legal services and that records management does not fall under the business units addressing governance issues. Correspondence and Document Management Services in the RAF is a stand-alone business unit, while Records Management resides within ICT at Head Office. In the annual reports, record-keeping was briefly mentioned under ICT, while there was no mention of Correspondence and Document Management Services. Although various committees had been established in the RAF to address governance issues, Correspondence and Document Management Services employees did not form part of any of these committees – despite the unit performing record-keeping functions in the regional offices. Interpretation of the research findings involved in the second theme are presented in the next section.

#### **5.4.2 Theme 2: Managing electronic records**

Electronic records are subject to the same requirements provided in the NARSSA Act (No 43 of 1996, as amended) that apply to other records (NARSSA 2007:8). Sections 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act (No 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) provide for the National Archivist to determine the conditions for the electronic reproduction on records and the conditions for the management of these electronic records systems. This means that, similar to paper-based records, NARSSA provides government bodies with acceptable conditions for access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training (NARSSA 2007). However, the reviewed literature demonstrated that, as with paper-based records, electronic records were managed just as poorly in government bodies.

The RAF also appeared to have adopted the use of electronic records and electronic forms (e-forms), including a complaint form accessible on the organisational website, had been introduced in certain aspects of the business (RAF 2018:124). The RAF's ability to access and use electronic records depends entirely on the hardware and software utilised. It is necessary to investigate the software systems recommended by records management scholars and the reasons for understanding electronic records management. According to the RAF annual reports for 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2018/2019 financial years, the organisation has been seeking ways to transform and modernise its business processes to operate in a world without borders (automation). The RAF's Information Communications and Technology (ICT) business unit endeavoured to provide Correspondence and Document Management Service with the necessary record-keeping tools to enable the organisation to access, organise, store and deliver required records for effective claims processing.

According to Katuu (2015), Kwatsha (2010), and Munetsi (2011), government bodies can adopt various types of systems for managing their electronic records, including EDMS, ERMS, IDRMS, EDRMS and ECM systems. The RAF adopted the ECM system, which incorporates Document Management (DM), Records Management (RM), Business Process Management (BPM) and Knowledge Management (KM) portals (RAF 2019:146). However, ECM is not a single technology or process; in fact, the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) describes it as "... the combination of strategies, methods, and tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver content and documents related to key organisational processes" (AIIM 2010).

The RAF's ICT unit embarked on a five-year ICT strategy known as the *RAF e-Enablement Plan*, aimed at implementing a system to ease the challenges involved in the RAF processing claims resulting from the paper-based environment in which the institution operates (RAF 2016a:124). The RAF has always sought a system that could incorporate all business processes (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2016a:124–127).

The purpose of ECM, as defined by the AIIM (2010), is to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver information in a manner that does not compromise the authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of records held by an institution. By adopting the ECM system, the RAF might eliminate their dependency on paper, streamline its business processes, reduce organisational risk, optimise productivity, and improve service delivery (RAF 2019:143–149; 2018:123–128; 2016a:124–127). However, ECM is not a single solution, as envisaged by the RAF. The major components of an ECM are outlined in the sections below AIIM 2010).

#### **5.4.2.1 Capturing**

The capturing component of an ECM deals with creating information that is converted from paper-based to electronic formats, which involves obtaining and collecting electronic files into a cohesive structure and organising information (AIIM:2010). In the first year of the five-year project to eliminate the RAF's dependency on paper, the use of ECM was approved and user requirements for all business units were gathered, including Correspondence and Document Management Services (RAF 2016a:124). This business unit was tasked with converting received paper-based claim documents into electronic copies through scanning, and the scanning solution was enhanced to align with the approved file plan (RAF 2016a:125).

#### **5.4.2.2 Managing**

The managing component links, modifies and employs information by means of document management, collaborative software, web content management and records management (AIIM:2010). In order to reduce the RAF's dependence on paper-based records, ECM was introduced in Correspondence and Document Management Services in a pilot project, which was limited to scanning and indexing documents for storing (RAF 2019:146).

#### **5.4.2.3 Storing**

The RAF has an approved file plan that, if fully implemented, will provide the organisation with means of efficiently storing records, regardless of whether they are in paper-based or electronic format. According to the AIIM (2010), the storing component is concerned with storing information; temporarily backing up information as changes are frequently made; and allowing employees to view and/or edit

documents. The ICT team of the RAF is responsible for enabling the organisation to pursue its objectives by providing effective services and making available tools to process claims and protect information (RAF 2018:123). Subsequently, in the 2017/2018 financial year (i.e. the third year of the RAF *e-Enablement Plan*), the revised *Records Management Strategy* was presented to the ICT Steering Committee for approval. The *Records Management Policy Action Plan* was also adopted in preparation for electronic document and records management to ensure that, when records are stored electronically, they will still adhere to record-keeping principles and standards (RAF 2018:125).

#### **5.4.2.4 Preserving**

Because of the legal environment in it operated, it took the RAF longer to finalise and settle claims (RAF 2019:13) and, consequently, claim records had to be preserved for a prolonged period. Therefore, ICT needed to provide the means to enable Correspondence and Document Management Services to protect electronic records for as long as they were required (AIIM 2010). The “preserve” component of ECM was ideal for assisting the RAF to conform with the records management legal and regulatory requirements of records management, including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the NARSSA Act (RAF 2019:34–35), as these acts deal with the backup of information that does not change frequently and is usually accomplished via records management features (AIIM 2010).

#### **5.4.2.5 Delivering**

The main reason for the RAF existing is to deliver a service to MVA victims and, in this process, ICT’s role is to enable and support the organisation in ensuring that records are adequately managed, as it pursues the payment of compensation (RAF 2019:143). The “deliver” component promptly provides stakeholders – including RAF employees, claimants and suppliers – with requested information in support of the organisational mission statement, which reads: “To provide appropriate cover to all road users within the borders of South Africa; to rehabilitate person injured, compensate for injuries or death and indemnify wrongdoers as a result of motor vehicle accidents in a timely, caring and sustainable manner; to support the safe use of our roads” (RAF 2019:31).

The ECM system, which resonates with the RAF values of “Ubuntu, Efficiency, Excellence, Solution-focused and Pride in what we do” (RAF 2019:31), makes it easy for Correspondence and Document Management Services to perform its record-keeping functions, including converting paper-based documents into electronic records and providing the means for easily sharing, storing and managing records.

Based on the RAF annual reports, the ICT business unit was aware that the institution’s paper-based operations were ineffective and that they prevented the organisation from fulfilling the promise articulated in its mission statement. Hence, for the past five years (2015–2020), the focus has been on RAF e-Enablement initiatives, which seek to “... stabilise, optimise, re-invent and digitise” the current processes (RAF 2019:144). However, unlike other business units, the annual reports do not document any record-keeping challenges or achievements (RAF 2019; 2018; 2017a; 2017b). Under the discussion of ICT, only two sentences mention records management, which is alarming, as it suggests that the record-keeping business units are not actively participating in automation issues.

The ICT *e-Enablement Plan* should co-exist with a records management plan and ICT should work with Correspondence and Document Management Services to ensure that the system aligns with record-keeping processes; improve the records management team collaboration; optimise document security; and enhance productivity by providing immediate access to required records.

Automation can only become a reality in the RAF, if there is full cooperation between the two business units (i.e. Correspondence and Document Management Services and ICT). Interpretation of the findings based on the third theme are presented below.

#### **5.4.3 Theme 3: Common records management problems**

The literature reviewed in Chapter 4 demonstrates that records management problems experienced by government bodies include the absence of:

- Top management support for records management or registry functions; and
- Approved records management policies and controls, which compel officials to apply sound record keeping and records management practices.

Regardless of whether the studies were conducted in Botswana, Kenya, South Africa or Zimbabwe (Kalusopa 2011; Kemoni 2007; Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013; Kemoni 2007), all the research findings pointed to government bodies lacking senior management support for records management functions, as well as lacking approved record-keeping policies and procedures. These two issues are at the root of numerous challenges that government bodies face in managing their records, thereby hindering good governance. The RAF is no exception and the organisation also face records management challenges affecting other government bodies.

One of the main challenges faced by records management employees is the lack of senior management support (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010; Ngoepe & Ngulube 2013a). If records managers do not have the necessary support from senior management to develop and enforce proper record-keeping processes, nothing can be implemented (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:103).

In the absence of approved records management policies and procedures, officials do not use the approved file plans and/or registries, but keep records in their own offices instead (Chaterera 2013; Kalusopa 2011; Kemoni 2007; Marutha 2011; Ngoepe 2008; Schellnack-Kelly 2013), which leads to the records piling up in employees' offices. At the RAF Pretoria Regional Office, which has an open office plan, this results in records being observable from the moment one sets foot on the premises.

Additionally, employees request and keep more records with them than necessary. In other words, the foregoing information makes the following clear: (i) because there is no central control over the records, it is difficult to determine if records of transactions have been created in the first place; (ii) it is difficult to identify the authentic official records; and (iii) the non-use of approved file plans lead to information not being readily available at a central point, thereby preventing sound management decisions based on authentic, reliable and relevant information.

Due to the lack of central control over the records and the lack of records management awareness among employees, records were destroyed without disposal authorities

being issued for employees in the RAF. Based on the internal communique, entitled *Disposal or destruction of duplicate or multiple copies of records and shredding of records*, first issued on 3 May 2016 and every other year since then, the organisation did not adequately dispose of records (RAF 2017b). The communique requested employees to refrain from inappropriately disposing of records in bins. The RAF continued to achieve a low level of compliance with the criteria for the management of records retention and disposal, as outlined in Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A). At the time of this study, the issue had still not been resolved, as reflected by the same directive being sent again on 16 February 2017, 30 June 2021, 7 July 2021, and 16 September 2021.

These problems also extend to the electronic environment. – Marutha and Ngulube (2012:57) confirm that it is not unusual for government bodies to manage paper-based and electronic records simultaneously. However, despite government bodies investing in expensive software systems, these systems are not always used to their full capacity (Marutha & Ngulube 2012:57). Based on the researcher's experience as a government employee, this could be confirmed as true. Although the RAF did invest in technologies and both paper-based and electronic records are in use, employees were more comfortable with paper-based records management methods (Marutha & Ngulube 2012:57).

Munetsi (2011) indicates that, although the Office of the Premier had implemented an electronic system, the EDRM could not fulfil its intended purpose – mainly because of the lack of skills by those entrusted with record-keeping. The literature review also revealed that users in government bodies are creating and deleting records – particularly e-mails – at their own discretion, without giving thought to creating and keeping records of official transactions conducted in this manner. This is also the case at the RAF. Unless electronic records are created and managed according to sound records management principles, the efficiency, service delivery, accountability and legal interests of government are adversely effected.

In spite of NARSSA (2007:12) declaring that “Technology is only a tool used to automate the creation, processing and management of records”, and that “... registry controls the formal channels of communication and enables an organisation to perform

its functions (NARSSA 2007:203), the literature review revealed that government bodies appear to believe that, once records are electronic, they no longer belong to the registry. These bodies often do not know what information is contained in the records; neither do they have lists of the records available for retrieval purposes. This practice adversely affects service provision to the public and, thereby it affects citizens' basic human rights. The interpretation of the findings based on the fourth theme are presented in the next section.

#### **5.4.4 Theme 4: Challenges associated with automation**

Although automation will enable the RAF to have an effective electronic records management system and to improve internal efficiency and overall business competitiveness, various challenges are associated with automation. According to Marutha and Ngulube (2012), challenges associated with managing electronic records include increased costs, loss of security and privacy, risks to the trustworthiness of records, technological obsolescence, and lack of skills.

Although the operations of the RAF are still primarily paper-based, efforts have been made to automate some business processes, including records management (RAF 2019; 2018; 2017).

The automation process of the RAF was scrutinised by examining the annual reports, from 2002 to 2019, so as to understand where the automation journey began; what inspired the proposed change; the challenges faced along the way; and the progress recorded up to this point. In spite of the automation journey of the RAF being in progress for 20, the organisational processes are still mainly paper-based to date.

During the 2001/2002 financial year, the RAF Internal Audit business unit – which was operating as the risk management team that assessed the RAF's exposure to risks and advised on mitigating identified risks – performed risk-focused reviews of the systems and processes (RAF 2002:24). Internal Audit identified the management of information as a significant risk that was threatening the existence of the RAF, and advised the organisation to develop and implement tools for addressing the information management issue (RAF 2002:24).



One of the requirements set out by the RAF risk assessment team was the development of a clear plan of action describing how to manage information. The organisation had to establish business processes and systems to comply with the internal audit findings and, subsequently, the RAF sought pro-active measures to deal with the identified risk by procuring and implementing new computer systems to manage information better (RAF 2002:6). The RAF's efforts to automate processes were set in motion. The recommendations of Internal Audit adopted to minimise the institution's exposure to the identified information management risk (RAF 2002:24).

In 2004, the RAF realised it was also facing difficulties in processing claims. The organisation's inability to process claims effectively, which resulted in growing backlogs, was identified as one of the challenges that affected the RAF's ability to deliver timely services to the public (RAF 2005:4). In September 2005, the CEO of the RAF also reported the development of a rescue plan to address the issue mentioned above.

This plan encouraged the RAF to review and redefine its internal processes for investments into modernising the paper-based operations (RAF 2005:5). During this period, one of the RAF's strategic objectives was to promote good governance and to manage operational risks effectively (RAF 2005:5). The institution sought to implement an integrated claims management system, and investments were made in pursuit of a single Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solution for effective claims processing (RAF 2005:5). An integrated claims management system was sought, based on the assumption that it would increase the RAF's effectiveness. Unfortunately, the RAF could not implement the system by the end of the financial year on 31 March 2005 (RAF 2005:21).

In the 2006 annual report, the CEO acknowledged that the RAF had underinvested in information technology (IT) tools that could have assisted the organisation to process claims better in future. The institution set aside R200 million to improve its IT and related business systems to ensure that technologies required to enhance claims processing were in place RAF (2006:21),

In 2007, the investment into new systems and processes gained momentum, as a tender for Enterprise Resource Planning solution, and decisions about an appropriate claims management solution were finalised (RAF 2007:21). Solutions sought aimed at replacing the systems used by the RAF, known as the Legacy Systems (RAF 2007:21). The RAF wanted to replace its current system because of its alleged continuous failure to offer the organisation adequate support in processing MVA claims. The legacy systems were blamed for the institution's inability to process claims timely (RAF 2007:21). It was also reported that, even though the RAF wanted to make use of ICTs to administer claims, the organisation was against developing custom-made solutions from scratch, but wanted to adopt proven solutions that were already in use by other insurance organisations like the RAF. The organisation employed consultants to seek solutions appropriate for the RAF (RAF 2007:21).

After thorough investigations, the organisation selected a solution that was perceived suitable, followed by a tendering process. The RAF envisaged the chosen solution improving information sharing and enhancing efficiencies in claims processing (RAF 2007:21). However, the solution that was adopted did not produce the expected results because the search continued.

According to the RAF (2008:33), stakeholder dissatisfaction towards the organisation's operations increased in 2007/2008. In the words of the CEO at the time: "It is quite a revelation to consider that no one is happy with the current third-party compensation system that is in operation in the country" (RAF 2008:33). As far as automation was concerned, the organisation continued with its efforts of modernising its processes through automation in the hope of delivering better services to the public (RAF 2008:35).

During this year 2008, the RAF procured an IT infrastructure worth R24.5 million; sourced an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution of R43 million; and spent R22 million on a claims management system known as Fineos (RAF 2008:35–36). The organisation directed its efforts towards creating a paperless environment by substantially investing in the procurement and installation of an IT infrastructure (RAF 2008:35). The RAF invested R24.5 million to replace old computers with new IT infrastructure, such as software and hardware , including servers (RAF 2008:35). The

procurement of this infrastructure was done in conjunction with sourcing skills from an expert external service provider to manage and monitor the IT platforms implemented by the RAF (RAF 2008:35).

The ERP solution was meant to replace the legacy systems (RAF 2008:35). The ERP system comprised "... financial accounting, cost management, human resources management, procurement and materials management, plant and work-flow approvals of purchases" (RAF 2008:35–36). According to the RAF (2008:36), the configuration of the system, testing and staff training were completed five months before the system went live in December 2007. The RAF envisaged the new system making the operations of the organisation run more swiftly.

The adoption of the ERP solution was also supposed to tighten controls for the RAF and mark the beginning of the paperless era by providing a seamless transfer of information and a single coordinated view of activities). The RAF anticipated that, once all the elements were in place, the claimants would easily track the progress on their claims, without being sent from pillar to post (RAF 2008:36).

A Claims Management Solution, Fineos, which is used by other organisations performing similar functions as the RAF, was implemented this financial year 2008. Fineos, which was supposed to drive the core business of claims administration, was adopted, because the RAF was operating similarly to paper-based law firms with manual files containing evidence of accident injuries deemed ineffective, given the number of claims that the institution processed annually (RAF 2008:36). Additionally, Fineos was also already in use by the RAF's counterparts in Australia (Transport Accident Corporation) and New Zealand (Accident Compensation Commissioners) (RAF 2008:37). The RAF spent an initial R22 million on Fineos license fees (RAF 2008:37).

When the RAF was preparing to do away with paper-based claims administration methods and to move to a paperless environment in 2009, it spent R57 million on improving computer equipment and software (RAF 2009:27). According to RAF (2009:26), the IT infrastructure would be tested by rolling out the procured solutions that were being customised to fit the unique features of the organisation. The RAF

estimated that it would take 18 months to test and implement this new system, where after the old claims system would be shut down (RAF 2009:26).

The 2009/2010 Annual Report states that the launch of the “state of the art” Fineos system was a success (RAF 2010:24–25). This launch concluded implementing the paperless claims administration system that initially commenced in 2007 – a significant milestone for the RAF. The organisation had also successfully designed and was implementing paperless business rules driven by a more effective IT infrastructure (RAF 2010:25).

The RAF had high expectations for Fineos – i.e. the system was supposed to change the way claims were processed for the better, but it seems that this solution did not produce the anticipated results. Despite successful implementation at the RAF’s counterparts in other countries, the system did not work for the RAF. The organisation was supposed to be operating in a completely paperless environment after the adoption of Fineos, but this was not the case.

According to the annual report (RAF 2011:13), management took steps to modernise the RAF systems to enable the organisation to deliver timely services to all road users in the country (RAF 2011:13). The Board identified eight key strategic risks, which included “business re-engineering” as the number one risk and “systems and processes to support business” at number six (RAF 2011:12–13). After the failure of Fineos, the RAF still tried to automate and modernise its business processes by implementing a fully electronic integrated claims management system (RAF 2011:12).

The system changes were intended to ensure that the RAF was accessible to the public and to improve the services rendered to the claimants and other stakeholders to nurture the valued relationships with the various stakeholders. Automating business processes to increase the claim administration speed, accuracy and efficiency were of utmost importance (RAF 2011:12–13).

The RAF reports that it sent ICT employees working in support services to attend a formal international programme to provide them with the relevant skills that would enable them to provide the organisation with enhanced technological support (RAF

2012:100). Sixteen (16) employees from the ICT business unit in the organisation attended the International ICT Best Practices training in the 2011/2012 financial year (RAF 2012:100).

In 2012, the strategic focus was on creating a customer-centric RAF by 2017 and ensuring that the organisational operations were effective and efficient (RAF 2013:34). The organisation went on to declare 2012 as “The Year of the Customer” and 2013 as “Our Year to Shine” in demonstration of the organisation’s intentions to improve their service delivery efforts (RAF 2013:31).

A plan of action, which was developed internally and approved by the Board, drove the organisational strategic focus. The plan aimed at transforming and capacitating the RAF with appropriately skilled employees. At this point, the RAF was still seeking measures to improve the organisation’s claims administration processes (RAF 2013:34).

The ICT business unit established a committee to develop and implement a governance structure to control the RAF processes and operations (RAF 2013:102). During this year 2013, the ICT business unit was scrutinised to assess its capability in terms of processes, equipment and human resources to support the organisational operations (RAF 2013:102). According to the RAF (2013:102), the ICT business unit lacked the necessary capacity to support the organisation's technological needs adequately, such as appropriately skilled technicians, ICT infrastructure and established processes. Therefore, the business unit was required to develop a plan of action communicating the unit’s efforts to address identified issues (RAF 2013:102). This plan, known as the *Business Continuity Plan*, was presented to the RAF and informed the organisation of the infrastructure and other resources that the unit needed to support the institution in achieving its objectives (RAF 2013:102).

In the following year (2013/2014), the RAF reported that ICT had evolved from being a business enabler to becoming an essential component in implementing the organisational plan of action, and various systems were in use for registering, processing and the payment of claims (RAF 2014:108). One year later, the ICT business unit developed and implemented a five-year plan of action, known as the

RAF *e-Enablement Plan*, to improve the organisational business processes by introducing ways of reducing reliance on paper. This plan was supposed to be executed over five years, from 2015 to 2020 (RAF 2015:109).

The 2015/2016 financial year marked the end of the first year of the *e-Enablement Plan*. The RAF recorded numerous achievements in various ICT areas during this period, including in ICT Governance Maturity, Infrastructure and Network Optimisation and the sourcing of an Integrated Claims Management System (RAF 2016a:124). It was the first time that the RAF annual report included information relating to records management.

According to the report, the RAF adopted the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system in the Correspondence and Document Management Services business unit (RAF 2016a:125). During the year under review, the RAF approved ECM implementation, and the user requirements for all business units (including Correspondence and Document Management Services) were gathered (RAF 2016a:125). Correspondence and Document Management Services also completed the back-scanning project (electronic records were created by converting paper-based active claims documents into electronic copies through imaging/scanning), and the organisation's approved file plan was evaluated (RAF 2016a:125). Subsequently, the scanning solution used by Correspondence and Document Management Services was enhanced to align with the RAF file plan (RAF 2016a:125).

At the same time, the ICT business unit was still seeking measures to ensure that this unit's efforts to support the institution in achieving their mandate were aligned with the RAF's objectives and the efforts of other business units (RAF 2016a:127). The ICT business unit introduced the *Information Security and Risk Management Strategy* and a *Records Management Strategy* to ensure alignment (RAF 2016a:127). In its business report, ICT announced that the file plan of the unit, which developed internally and approved by NARSSA, was praised as the "best written" in the National Archivist's review (RAF 2016a:127).

The 2016/2017 financial year marked the second year of implementing the RAF's *e-Enablement Plan*. The organisation recorded notable achievements during that period,

e.g. the development of the records management strategy and several training initiatives (RAF 2017a:134). These training initiatives included Archives and Records Management, Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies (COBIT), Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) – all attended by relevant employees (RAF 2017a:134). The organisation undertook these initiatives to ensure that employees were adequately skilled and prepared for the envisaged paperless RAF.

During the 2017/2018 financial year, the Risk Management business unit identified automation of processes as a risk, due to the ever-changing nature of ICTs (RAF 2018:104). Although the operations of the RAF were still paper-based at this time, the organisation relied on the use of technologies to process, store and protect large amounts of claims information. The Risk Management unit felt that this exposed the institution to new risks and recommended the development of tools by the ICT team that can be adopted to address the identified risk proactively and attempt to manage it properly (RAF 2018:104). ICT responded to the identified risk by implementing the third year of the RAF's *e-Enablement Plan* initiative (RAF 2018:104). However, the RAF did not meet all its targets during this period (RAF 2018:104).

Furthermore, the Integrated Claims Management System tender was cancelled and the organisation was unable to test the system, as planned (RAF 2018:104). However, the organisation piloted the ECM system in the East London Regional Office and made plans to roll it out to other offices the following year (RAF 2018:104). According to the RAF (2018:125), the revised *Records Management Strategy* together with the *Records Management Policy Action Plan* were presented to the ICT steering committee for approval.

During the 2018/2019 financial year, the ICT business unit was expected to have made significant progress with their five-year RAF *e-Enablement Plan* and, therefore, it could safely be envisaged that a progress report would be issued in the annual report for that period. However, the ICT report for the financial year began with the following words: "Over the years RAF ICT provisioning has fallen behind ..." (RAF 2019:143). The report did not contain a progress report, even though the five-year term was nearing its end. The ICT business unit acknowledged that it had not offered the

organisation the technological support necessary to compensate and rehabilitate MVA victims promptly (RAF 2019:143). Instead of a progress report on the execution of the *e-Enablement Plan*, from 2015 to 2020, the unit realised the need to re-examine their current ICT Strategic Plan (RAF 2019:143). This realisation resulted in identifying a need to invest in a new “business-enabled” ICT strategy and to continue seeking an integrated approach that would transform and modernise the RAF’s business in such a way that it was going to meet the medium-term strategic framework and the five-year strategic plan (RAF 2019:143).

The new ICT strategy was supposedly aimed at focusing efforts towards “re-inventing and digitising” the organisation's business operations (RAF 2019:144). The objectives of the *e-Enablement Plan* would be integrated into the newly developed strategy. It was also stated that the ICT business unit was driven by the need to stabilise and optimise business processes and technologies when the new strategy was developed (RAF 2019:144).

During this eventful period, the ICT business unit achieved a few milestones, including enhancing the Integrated Claims Management System, piloting the ECM system, testing the scope, planning and sourcing Enterprise Architecture (AE) services, and procuring and deploying information security solutions (RAF 2019:147). However, of particular interest is the piloting of the ECM system, because this study focused in part on the automation of records management processes. It was reported that the RAF procured ECM to address one of the significant challenges that were faced by the organisation, which was operating in a highly paper-based environment (RAF 2019:146).

During the 2018/2019 financial year, East London regional office was chosen and the ECM pilot project was executed in the Correspondence and Document Management Services (RAF 2019:146) of the office. According to the RAF (2019:146), the pilot phase of the project focused on the business processes and scope of Correspondence and Document Management Services, which included scanning and indexing documents (RAF 2019:146). The ability to store, view and retrieve records of the system was tested through the organisation’s Document Management System during the pilot phase (RAF 2019:146). It was also reported that the requirements and



specifications were gathered during the pilot phase and that solution design, testing and user training were completed. The pilot solution was rolled out and technical problems were identified, which had to be addressed During the pilot phase, before further rollouts (RAF 2019:146).

The 2019/2020 annual report reads, “The journey that commenced in the 2017/18 financial year to acquire and deploy an ECMS to address one of the major business challenges facing the RAF; i.e. being highly paper-based, gained significant momentum during the year under review.” The report continued by stating, “Initiatives to deploy these technologies were successfully completed” (RAF 2020b:127). However, on 9 November 2020, the RAF announced via its various social media platforms that the institution had received a clean audit outcome. Part of the media statement read as follows: “The RAF welcomes the Auditor General’s audit outcome for the 2019/2020 financial year. The AG issued an unqualified audit opinion with no material findings to the organisation. It is the first clean audit for the RAF in over three financial years. While the organisation maintained the unqualified audit opinion over the past financial year, the AG still found concerning material findings. The AG audit focused on the quality of financial statements, performance information, and compliance with laws and regulations” (RAF 2020d). The issued media statement showed that the RAF was still struggling to comply with laws and regulations that are the pillars of good corporate governance. Regardless of initiatives to deploy technologies “being successfully completed” (RAF 2020d:127).

As pointed out by the foregoing information, in the past 20 years, the RAF has experienced all the challenges associated with managing electronic records, such as increased costs, loss of security and privacy, risks to the trustworthiness of records, technological obsolescence and lack of skills. The interpretation of the findings based on the fifth theme are presented in the next section.

### **5.3.5 Theme 5: Readiness for electronic records**

In order to assess the RAF’s readiness for electronic records, the organisation’s records management practices were compared to the criteria found in the IRMT E-readiness tool (see Appendix C: E-records readiness tool, Appendix D: E-records

readiness score template and Appendix E: E-records readiness risk template). The tool is reliable, because each e-records readiness component is described at three possible stages of capacity (IRMT 2004).

The e-readiness assessment was conducted as follows:

1. The researcher read the description of each component (see Appendix C: E-records readiness tool), after which a description was chosen that best fit Stage 1, 2 or 3.
2. The selected description had to match the RAF's current scenario most closely.
3. The RAF was scored according to the most appropriate stage description.
4. After assessing all the components, the scores were totalled (using Appendix D: E-records readiness score template)
5. The final score in the range of scores provided was used to establish the level of e-Records readiness risk in terms of low, moderate and high. The researcher reviewed the guidance recommendation associated with that risk level (see Appendix E: E-Records Readiness risk template). In terms of the risk template, a score of 30 to 60 demonstrated high risk. According to this criterion, if the organisation was assessed and scores were between 30 and 60, then the organisation needed to acknowledge that automation funds and efforts would likely be wasted. Furthermore, as observed by the IRMT (2004), unless e-readiness initiatives are supported by a solid records and information management programme, it is unlikely that they would produce positive results. Therefore, the IRMT encourages organisations with scores between 30 and 60 to take immediate steps to building infrastructure required to manage both paper and electronic records (IRMT 2004).

The risk assessment scores of between 65 and 90 demonstrated a moderate risk. Organisations scoring within this range are encouraged to proceed with caution, while addressing the records and information management risks that have been identified. While institutions that score between 95 and 120 demonstrate a low risk, organisations that score within this range are encouraged to proceed with e-government initiatives and to monitor records and information management risks during and after implementation.

In terms of this tool, the RAF was not ready for electronic records because the organisation did not have:

- Policies and responsibilities for records and information management;
- Tools and procedures for records and information management;
- E-records management products and technologies;
- Resources and training for records and information management personnel;
- Internal and public awareness of records and information management; and
- Compliance with records and information management policies and procedures.

In terms of this tool (see Appendix E: E-records readiness risk template) the RAF scores demonstrated moderate risk, which meant that the organisation may proceed with automation and adopt the use of electronic records. However, automation must be approached with caution, while addressing the records and information management risks that had been identified.

## **5.4 Summary**

By analysing documents and conducting interviews and observations, the researcher established that high volumes of paper-based records characterised the RAF operations. Various stakeholders submitted these records as proof of loss of life or bodily injuries sustained from motor vehicle accidents. To determine whether claimants were eligible for compensation from the RAF, claim forms, medical reports, Officer Accident Reports (OAR), proof of income and numerous other records were submitted to the organisation for assessment. Correspondence and Document Management Services managed, preserved and secured recorded information for use by the RAF, stakeholders and the public.

In terms of the four research objectives that guided this research, this study established the following:

- **RO1:** The records management practices of the RAF were poor and did not reflect best practice in terms of records access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training, compared to the NARSSA Records Management Performance Criteria NARSSA (2007:223–229) and ISO 15489-1:2016. Both the findings of the Auditor-General and the Audit Committee

(RAF 2019:192) support these research findings, in that the records management practices of the RAF were not at the level that they were supposed to be in terms of the NARSSA Act and ISO 15489-1:2016.

- **RO2:** There were gaps in the record-keeping processes of the RAF in terms of records access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training, compared to the criteria mentioned above.
- **RO3:** In Chapter 1, it was established that the RAF was guided by the Batho Pele (“People First”) principle, which compelled the organisation to deliver better services to the public. Therefore, the organisation needed to ensure that the quality of its service improved. As established throughout this study, the use of paper-based records in the RAF went against the organisational vision of “... providing the highest standard of service to road accident victims and restoring balance in the social system” (RAF 2019:31). Instead, services were delayed and the RAF failed to settle claims within the allocated 120 days. As a result, the RAF wasted funds intended for compensation and rehabilitation on legal fees.
- **RO4:** Finally, this study established that the RAF was not adequately prepared for electronic record-keeping. Based on these findings, the organisational processes did not conform with the NARSSA Records Management Performance Criteria (2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016.

Although the records management processes of the RAF were poor at the time of the research, there were pockets of excellence, which could still be celebrated, for example:

- The organisation had an approved file plan;
- The organisation had an approved records management policy;
- The organisation had a standing disposal authority for duplicate copies;
- The organisation offered its employees opportunities to further their studies through bursaries for formal qualifications and funding for short courses. Therefore, employees could undergo required records management training.

In the next and final chapter, the research findings will be summarised, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the findings and draws conclusions, based on the research objectives. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the study; makes recommendations for improving the records management processes at the RAF; and identifies areas of future research, constructed from the research results and findings of this study.

### **6.2 Conclusions**

This study established that record creation was a fundamental part of conducting business at the RAF. The organisational business processes rely heavily on the exchange of records between stakeholders and the institution, as proof of injuries or death arising from motor vehicle accidents (RAF 2019:33). Therefore, several business processes leading to compensation or rehabilitation for MVA victims involve the routine creation and transmission of documents, which necessitates the creation of records as evidence of the occurring processes. The RAF consistently creates records to document the decisions – regardless of whether it rejects or accepts liability for a claim (RAF 2019:33). In this way, records become a means of accounting to the authorities how funds were spent and provide evidence of business activities during each financial year. Therefore, there are legal and regulatory requirements for creating and retaining records.

However, as established in Chapter 5, the RAF does not manage its records adequately. Despite creating and retaining records to conduct its business in support of service delivery, this study found that the current RAF records management practices do not enable the organisation to deliver timely services to the public. The use of paper-based records makes it impossible for the organisation to assess and settle claims within 120 days, as prescribed by Section 24 of the Road Accident Fund Act, No 56 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996c).

Records are also created, preserved and retained for accountability purposes and to ensure availability to the relevant stakeholders upon request. However, this study revealed that the record-keeping function in the RAF is grossly underestimated. According to the Auditor General's findings, audit records could not be provided timeously to them during two successive audits (RAF 2019:192; 2020a:168).

These research results were compared to NARSSA's Records Management Performance Criteria (NARSSA )2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016. After exploring the current records management practices of the RAF, this study concludes that paper-based record-keeping processes in the RAF Pretoria Regional Office do not conform with NARSSA and ISO 15489-1:2016 requirements for managing records in terms of access, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training.

#### **6.2.1 Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 1**

The first conclusion is based on RO1:

*To establish the RAF's paper-based records compliance in terms of access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training against the conditions and requirements of the Records Management Policy of NARSSA (NARSSA 2007) and ISO 15489-1:2016 ISO 2016).*

During the 2016 inspection, the RAF did not comply with most of NARSSA's conditions, because the organisation did not have a Records Manager at the time of the inspection. Although the RAF had filled the position of Records Manager at the time of this research, several issues of the issues raised by NARRSA officials in 2016 were still unresolved, including the use of the same storage facility. Furthermore, the organisation's practices did not fully comply with ISO 15489-1:2016 conditions for adequate record-keeping, as per Clause 6; 6.5; 7; 8.1; 8.4; 9.4; 9.5; 9.6; 9.7 and Sub-clause 9.9.

### **6.2.2 Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 2**

The second conclusion is based on RO2:

*To identify shortcomings in the processes of managing the RAF's paper-based records, such as access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking and training.*

The RAF achieved a low level of compliance with the criteria related to policies and procedures, as outlined in Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clause 6 of ISO 15489-1:2016. Due to the lack of records management policy implementation, there are no existing controls that compel employees to apply sound record-keeping and records management practices. Because the approved file plan is not in use, there is no central control over the records, and there is a considerable lack of records management awareness among employees.

### **6.2.3 Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 3**

The third conclusion is based on RO3:

*To examine the influence of using paper-based records on the RAF's ability to provide timely services to the public.*

The use of paper-based records at the RAF makes it impossible for the organisation to assess and settle claims within the 120 days promulgated in its acts. As a result, the RAF renders poor services to the public, which does not comply with the ideals of President Ramaphosa's "Thuma Mina" ("Send Me") movement.

### **6.2.4 Conclusions based on Research Objective (RO) 4**

The fourth conclusion is based on RO4:

*To determine the RAF's readiness for electronic records.*

The RAF is not ready for electronic records, because electronic records management policies or procedures have not been developed. Therefore, the organisation does not have a migration strategy.



The recommendations of the study are presented in the next section.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

First and foremost, the RAF needs to decide which of the two business units – Records Management or Correspondence and Document Management Services – is to be responsible for which record-keeping function. Once it is clear which business unit is more authoritative, the roles must also be redefined and allocated the two teams. This study proposes that the RAF should incorporate records management into its strategic objectives to ensure that the function receives the attention it deserves.

NARSSA (2007:45) observes that records management is a shared responsibility that requires numerous business units to work together to produce desired results. Therefore, employees from Records Management and/or Correspondence and Document Management Services must receive adequate training in record-keeping to perform their functions successfully and to educate employees from other business units about the importance of records and the benefits of reliable records management.

As soon as the responsibilities have been defined clearly, the relevant business unit(s) should develop and implement a records management programme consisting of all elements of best practice.

This study proposes the implementation of a records management programme to facilitate the implementation of the records management policy, the development of records management procedures, the implementation and maintenance of the records classification system (approved file plan), the implementation of record control mechanisms, the development of a systematic disposal programme and continuous training in records management.

Ideally, the organisation should have a records management policy, which is revised and communicated to all employees to create employee awareness of the significance of records management and to ensure compliance with the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996). The policy should not only exist in principle: it must be fully implemented in

practice. The policy should be supported by records management procedures and a records classification system should be implemented and maintained. The organisation should also have record control mechanisms and a disposal programme and ensure that record-keeping employees are trained to perform their functions properly. However, at the time of the research, this was not the case with the RAF's records management processes. Instead, records were managed without a systematic management programme. Furthermore, the relevant business unit(s) should ensure that the records management policy is revised to include electronic records; that the policy is communicated to all employees; that the policy is implemented at all levels.

Through workshops, regular communications and training, all RAF employees should be made aware of their responsibilities and records management obligations in terms of the NARSSA Act. The RAF includes the organisational values in performance appraisal contracts to ensure compliance with these values and, therefore, it is recommended that the organisation considers applying the same principle to records management. Based on the literature review and the research findings, the researcher is of the view that records management should form part of the conditions against which employees' performance is measured, so as to encourage employees to practice sound record-keeping. Additionally, once the records management programme has been fully implemented and everyone understands the importance of records and good record-keeping practices, sound records management should form part of the induction programme offered to new and promoted employees during their orientation.

According to the RAF's Strategic Plan, 2015–2020, the organisation was guided by the following seven objectives: efficient claims processing, accessible services, effective financial management, optimal ICT services, improved people management, RAF transformation and assured control environment (RAF 2019:68-69). This study recommends that the RAF adds effective records management to its next strategic plan to ensure that the organisation aligns itself with the President Ramaphosa's efforts to restore good governance. NARSSA (2007), Apart from the President's SONA speech (South African Government 2019), Ngoepe (2008) and Schellnack-Kelly (2013) demonstrate the importance of good records management in achieving good

governance and delivering better services to the public. Hence, records management must form part of the strategic objectives driving the RAF.

This study recommends that the RAF manages its records according to NARSSA's conditions to ensure that both paper-based and electronic records are adequately maintained, easily accessed and correctly documented – from their creation to their ultimate disposal, imaging, or destruction.

The next sections present the detailed recommendations, based on the research findings made through document analysis, interviews and observation of the current records management processes.

### **6.3.1 Access**

This study established that Correspondence and Document Management Services provided access to records in the Pretoria Regional Office. However, the RAF did not fully comply with Sections 13(1); 13(2)(b)(ii) and 13(2)(b)(iii) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clauses 8.4, 9.5 and 9.7 of the ISO 15489-1:2016, because the organisation still used paper-based records and all employees required access to the entire document to complete their tasks. Although the Mailroom had already commenced with the imaging of documents by converting some hardcopy documents into electronic records, paper-based records were still created and used in large volumes.

CAFS, which facilitated the movement of paper-based records at the office, ensured that appropriate access controls were in place by assigning access status to employees through the system in use. Records were primarily accessible to employees requesting them. When someone requested a particular claim record, CAFS scanned that record in the requester's name. Ideally, the record should remain with that employee until it is scanned to another employee's name, but this did not always happen. Employees tended to move records without following the above-mentioned procedure, which often resulted in missing records.

This study recommends ensuring that records are only accessible to employees who have initially been authorised to have them and to ensure that records processes and

transactions are only undertaken by those authorised to do so. Formal guidelines to regulate access permission and the circumstances surrounding the permission must be developed and implemented.

### **6.3.2 Classification**

According to Section 13(2)(b)(i) of the NARRSA Act, the National Archivist determines the records classification systems to be applied by organisations such as the RAF. NARSSA (2007:15) and Clause 9.4 of the ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016) propose that, when records are correctly classified, arranged and stored, they become easily accessible and facilitate transparency and accountability, which are the cornerstones of democracy. Therefore, it is imperative that the RAF records are classified correctly.

In order to achieve compliance, this study recommends that the RAF:

- Implements the approved file plan, which will assist the organisation in directly relating records to their related business activities, and training employees in the use of the file plan;
- Informs employees of the purpose and use of the file plan and explains the benefits of using the file plan; and
- Monitors and updates the file plan continually to ensure relevance, usability and alignment with the regulatory environment and the organisation's preferred ways of working.

### **5.3.3 Retention and disposal**

According to NARSSA (2007:21) and Clause 7 and Sub-clause of 9.9 of ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016), implementing an effective disposal programme enables a government body like the RAF to dispose of non-archival records regularly when they are no longer required for administrative, legal, or other functional reasons. To achieve compliance, the RAF needs to improve efforts relating to the retention and disposal of records significantly. Employees need to be made aware of the legal and operational impact of making disposal decisions. Only employees who understand the internal and external records management requirements should make disposal decisions that can be recorded in the retention schedule. In order to meet compliance and accountability

requirements, disposal decisions need to be informed; aligned with the relevant legislation; and be systematic and approved.

This study recommends the RAF to:

- Establish a disposal programme to enable the consistent and systematic application of record retention and disposal per the requirements identified by the retention and disposal authority;
- Document and improve disposal actions before implementation by using registers, such as destruction, transfer and archives accession registers;
- Create awareness among the employees in the relevant business units of their responsibilities in terms of applying retention and disposal requirements on a daily basis; and
- Train employees in the regulatory requirements and procedures involved in proper records management.

If implemented, the foregoing recommendations should assist the RAF in complying with Section 13(2)(a) of the NARSSA Act (see Appendix A), which specifies that no records held by government bodies should be destroyed or disposed without a written disposal authority issued by the National Archivist.

#### **6.3.4 Storage and handling**

According to NARSSA (2007:33) and Clause 9.6 of the ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016), the RAF's records require storage conditions and handling processes that consider the specific physical and chemical properties of the records. The organisation's storage conditions and handling processes should be designed to protect the records from unauthorised access, loss, damage, destruction, theft and disaster (NARSSA 2007:33).

This research established that the storage facility (storeroom) in which the RAF records were stored was not custom-built for this purpose. The basement was not suitable for storing records – particularly because the fire detection, prevention and suppression systems were inadequate – and the records were not stored on proper quality racking. Because the racks were overloaded, some racks were collapsing.

These conditions, in addition to inadequate ventilation, were significant problems causing damage to the records. The facility in which all active records were stored was full, despite several extensions. File covers were not acid-free or of good archival quality, and most files were worn out and torn, due to regular handling.

This study recommends the following in terms of storage and handling:

- Ideally, Correspondence and Document Management Services should be allocated another area to use as a storage facility. At the time of the research, the records were stored in the basement of the Pretoria Regional Office, which put the records at risk of flooding, due to leaks and rain. However, if another storage facility is out of the question, improvements can be made to the current facility, until such time that a suitable facility can be made available.
- The floors should be solid concrete, covered with a washable, non-toxic, dust coating, such as thermoplastic or ceramic tiles. Glass slab floors may be used, provided they are fireproof.
- The shelves should be raised to 150 mm above floor level and at least 150 mm from the ceiling. This is recommended because, in the case of a fire, flames would spread faster, if there were large volumes of air above the shelves.
- There should be a passageway at a right angle to the run of shelves. Aisles and passages should be wide enough to allow trolleys to pass through easily. Shelves should be approximately 1 m in length; the maximum run for a row of shelves should be approximately 10 m; and the depth should be approximately 300–400 mm.
- Fire is the main enemy of paper and, therefore, the RAF should install an HFC-227 fire suppression system, which is ozone friendly, safe for humans and leaves no residue after discharge. Hand-held fire extinguishers are also recommended to extinguish small fires.
- Good quality archival - file covers with one standardised colour should be procured and used.

This study also recommends that Correspondence and Document Management Services should serve as a central registry for storing administrative support records in the Pretoria Regional Office with the following overall responsibilities:

- Registering incoming paper-based correspondence;
- Sending basic acknowledgements of receipt;
- Filing of records in appropriate locations;
- Maintaining a central filing system for paper records; and
- Retrieving documents from the central filing system when needed.

This study acknowledges that other business units, such as Human Capital and Finance, may need to create and receive their own records, and these units should be allowed to do so. However, this study recommends providing employees from these units with relevant record-keeping training to ensure that records are managed uniformly, regardless of the business unit.

### **6.3.5 Policies and procedures**

At the time of the study, the RAF did not comply with Section 13(2)(c) of the NARSSA Act (No. 43 of 1996) (see Appendix A) and Clause 6 of the ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016), because the organisation did have a records management policy (in principle) or standard procedures to provide more specific instructions on the creation, capturing and management of records.

The importance of developing and implementing policies and procedures in records management cannot be overemphasised. Policies and procedures are the drivers of the records management programme and without these, the system is likely to collapse. Throughout this research, the dire consequences resulting from a lack of policies and procedures were addressed. The study also demonstrated that policies, procedures and uniform practices were significant, because they would enable the RAF to produce authentic and reliable records.

This study recommends that the RAF should:

- Develop and implement a records management policy to facilitate record-keeping processes for both paper-based and electronic records; and
- Develop procedures to guide employees in the implementation of the required policies.

### **6.3.6 Tracking**

This study established that RAF records were tracked through a system that, when used correctly, yielded positive results, thereby enabling Correspondence and Document Management Services to track the movement of records. However, as mentioned earlier, records were not always accessed by the employees who requested them only. As a result, the RAF did not fully comply with Clause 8.1 of ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016). While a system was in place to manage the movement of records between employees to ensure that records easily identified, located and retrieved, it became difficult for Correspondence and Document Management Services to track or trace the correct locations of records – particularly when employees exchanged records among themselves, thereby leading to records sometimes becoming lost.

This study recommends the use of a file control sheet/index sheet to keep track of records; identify missing records; ascertain whether claims had been settled and whether a file could be closed. A file control sheet/index sheet aims at providing an index of the content and control the content by keeping track of all documents inside the record.

### **6.3.7 Training**

In accordance with NARSSA's conditions (2007:45) and Clause 6.5 of the ISO 15489-1:2016 (ISO 2016), the RAF needs to establish a records management programme. Hence, it is of utmost importance to offer continuous records management training. The records management programme should consist of appropriately skilled employees who know records management requirements and legislation governing the practice to ensure that the programme is effective, efficient, transparent and that it promotes accountability regarding managing records in the organisation. Training should include all employees responsible for making or capturing records, including management, personal assistants and administrative assistants (NARSSA 2007:45). Furthermore, the training programme can also be designed and coordinated with external organisations with adequate knowledge about records management best practices (NARSSA 2007:45).



This study recommends that the RAF establishes an ongoing training programme for records management – not only for Correspondence and Document Management Services employees, but also other employees who create records, such as personal assistants. Such training should raise awareness of records management and ensure that record-keeping responsibilities are shared among all business units.

## **6.4 Summary**

The information in this dissertation was gathered by conducting the following activities:

- RAF annual reports from 2002 to 2020 were examined to overview this organisation's automation effort over the years.
- NARSSA's *Comprehensive Inspection Report* (2016) was used to determine the RAF's compliance with NARSSA's conditions for the management of paper-based records.
- ISO 15489-1:2016 was used to determine the RAF's compliance against international record-keeping standards, as endorsed by NARSSA.
- Newspaper articles, written between 2017 and 2020, were collected to determine the RAF's service delivery position, based on constituents' views.
- Interviews were conducted with managers at the RAF Pretoria Regional Office to determine the position and role of Correspondence and Document Management Services in the region.
- The record-keeping processes of the Mailroom and storage area in the basement were observed.
- The 2019/2020 annual performance plan (APP)

By analysing documents, conducting interviews and observation, the researcher established that high volumes of paper-based records characterised the RAF's operations. These records were received from various stakeholders to prove loss of life or bodily injuries sustained from motor vehicle accidents. When determining whether claimants were eligible for compensation from the RAF, claim forms, medical reports, Officer Accident Reports (OAR), proof of income and numerous other records are submitted to the organisation. Correspondence and Document Management Services managed, preserved and secured recorded information for use by the RAF, stakeholders and the public.

Should the recommendations of this study be implemented, the records management practices of the RAF will improve. The development of a records management programme will assist the organisation to manage records systematically. In other words, only records that are still in use will be stored on site, whereas inactive records will be disposed of (i.e. destructed or transferred to an offsite facility).

This study involved a detailed exploration of the current (paper-based) records management practices of the RAF. From the data collected throughout this study it was notable that the organisation lacked an awareness of the importance of managing records adequately. Participants did not know the RAF's records management obligations in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act. Areas for further research should include investigating why records management practices of government bodies remain poor, regardless of several studies on the topic that have been conducted to date.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: NARSSA ACT

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE OF SOUTH AFRICA ACT (ACT NO. 43 OF 1996)

as amended by

Cultural Laws Amendment Act 36 of 2001

ACT

To provide for a National Archives and Record Service; the proper management and care of the records of government bodies; and the preservation and use of a national archival heritage; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

[Long title substituted by s. 20 of Act 36 of 2001.]

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[ASSENTED TO 27 SEPTEMBER 1996]

[DATE OF COMMENCEMENT: 1 JANUARY 1997]

(Afrikaans text signed by the President)  
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#### 1. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates-

'appraisal' means the archival function of determining the eventual disposal of records;

'archives' means records in the custody of an archives repository;

'archives repository' means any archives repository contemplated in section 11;

'Council' means the National Archives Advisory Council contemplated in section 6;

[Definition of 'Council', previously definition of 'Commission', substituted by s. 7 (a) of Act 36 of 2001.]

'custody' means the control of records based upon their physical possession;

'disposal authority' means a written authority issued in terms of section 13 (2) (a) specifying records to be transferred into the custody of the National Archives or specifying records to be otherwise disposed of;

'electronic records system' means any records system in which information is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology;

'government body' means any legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) at the national level of government;

'head of a government body' means the chief executive officer of a government body or the person who is acting as such;

'Minister' means the Minister responsible for the administration of this Act;

'National Archives' means the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa established by section 2;

[Definition of 'National Archives' substituted by s. 7 (b) of Act 36 of 2001.]

'non-public record' means a record created or received by a private individual or a body other than one defined as a government body in terms of this Act or a provincial law pertaining to records or archives;

'prescribe' means prescribe by regulation;

'public record' means a record created or received by a government body in pursuance of its activities;

'record' means recorded information regardless of form or medium;

'recording' means anything on which sounds or images or both are fixed or from which sounds or images or both are capable of being reproduced, regardless of form;

'records classification system' means a classification plan for the identification, arrangement, storage and retrieval of records;

'regulation' means any regulation made under this Act;

'this Act' includes the regulations.

## 2 Establishment of National Archives of South Africa

There is hereby established a branch of the public service of the Republic to be known as the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

[S. 2 substituted by s. 8 of Act 36 of 2001.]

## 3 Objects and functions of National Archives

The objects and functions of the National Archives shall be to-

- (a) preserve public and non-public records with enduring value for use by the public and the State;
- (b) make such records accessible and promote their use by the public;
- (c) ensure the proper management and care of all public records;
- (d) collect non-public records with enduring value of national significance which cannot be more appropriately preserved by another institution, with due regard to the need to document aspects of the nation's experience neglected by archives repositories in the past;
- (e) maintain a national automated archival information retrieval system, in which all provincial archives services shall participate;
- (f) maintain national registers of non-public records with enduring value, and promote co-operation and co-ordination between institutions having custody of such records;
- (g) assist, support, set standards for and provide professional guidelines to provincial archives services;
- (h) promote an awareness of archives and records management, and encourage archival and records management activities;
- (i) generally promote the preservation and use of a national archival heritage.

## 4 National Archivist and staff

- (1) (a) The Minister shall, after consultation with the Public Service Commission contemplated in section 196 of the Constitution, appoint an experienced and qualified person as National Archivist in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994), on such grade as the Minister may determine.
- (b) The National Archivist shall manage the National Archives under the direction of the Director-General: Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

[Sub-s. (1) substituted by s. 9 of Act 36 of 2001.]

- (2) The National Archivist shall in the performance of his or her functions be assisted by officers and employees appointed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994).

(3) (a) The National Archivist may, subject to any conditions, delegate a power or assign a duty to a member of the staff and may at any time cancel such delegation or assignment.

(b) A delegation or assignment shall not divest the National Archivist of the power delegated or duty assigned and he or she may at any time amend or set aside any decision made thereunder, or exercise the power or perform the duty concerned.

#### 5 Powers and duties of National Archivist

(1) The National Archivist shall-

(a) take such measures as are necessary to arrange, describe and retrieve records;

(b) provide information, consultation, research and other services related to records;

(c) with special emphasis on activities designed to reach out to less privileged sectors of society, make known information concerning

records by means such as publications, exhibitions and the lending of records;

(d) require of a person who has made use of records in the custody of the National Archives while researching a publication or dissertation to furnish a copy of the publication or dissertation to the National Archives;

(e) generally, take such other steps and perform such other acts as may be necessary for or conducive to the achievement of the objects of the National Archives.

(2) The National Archivist may-

(a) provide training in archival techniques and the management of records;

(b) co-operate with organisations interested in archival matters or the management of records;

(c) provide professional and technical support in aid of archival activities and the archival community;

(d) on the advice of the Council and with the concurrence of the Minister exempt a government body from any provision of this Act.

[Para. (d) substituted by s. 10 (a) of Act 36 of 2001.]

(e) publish the appraisal policy and lists of records that may be destroyed.

[Para. (e) added by s. 10 (b) of Act 36 of 2001.]

#### 6 Establishment, constitution and functions of National Archives Advisory Council

(1) The Minister shall by notice in the Gazette establish a council to be known as the National Archives Advisory Council.

(2) The Council shall consist of-

(a) not more than six members appointed by the Minister from among persons who are knowledgeable of or have an interest in archival matters; and

(b) every chairperson of the various provincial councils advising on archives or, in the absence of such a provincial council, a representative for the province in question elected through a public and transparent process which shall be determined and overseen by the responsible member of the Executive Council of that province.

(3) The procedures and other conditions for appointment as a member of the Council shall be as prescribed.

(3A) The Minister may dissolve the Council on any reasonable grounds.

(4) The functions of the Council shall be to-

- (a) advise the Minister and the Director-General: Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on any matter related to the operation of this Act;
  - (b) advise the National Archivist on furthering the objects and functions of the National Archives;
  - (c) advise and consult with the South African Heritage Resources Agency on the protection of records forming part of the National Estate;
  - (d) .....
  - (e) consult with the Public Protector on investigations into the unauthorised destruction of records otherwise protected under this Act; and
  - (f) annually submit a business plan to the Minister for approval.
- (5) The Council may appoint committees from amongst its members and may assign to any committee so appointed such of its functions as it may deem fit: Provided that the Council shall not be divested of any function which it has so assigned and may amend or revoke a decision of such a committee.
- (6) The procedure at meetings of the Council and of a committee shall be as prescribed.
- (7) The Council or any committee may, subject to the approval of the Minister, co-opt any person to serve on the Council or on a committee, as the case may be, in an advisory capacity, but such a co-opted member shall not have any voting rights.
- (8) (a) Subject to paragraph (b), a member of the Council who is not in the full-time service of the State, may receive in respect of his or her functions as a member of the Council such allowances as the Minister may determine with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance.
- (b) The Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, must determine criteria for payment of allowances contemplated in paragraph (a).

[S. 6 substituted by s. 11 of Act 36 of 2001.]

#### 7 Secretary and staff of Council

The administrative and secretarial functions of the Council must be performed by a section established by the Director-General in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994).

[S. 7 substituted by s. 12 of Act 36 of 2001.]

8 and 9 .....

[Ss. 8 and 9 repealed by s. 13 of Act 36 of 2001.]

#### 10 Annual reports

- (1) As soon as practicable after the end of each financial year the National Archivist shall compile a report on all the activities of the National Archives during that financial year, and the Council shall compile a report on all the activities of the Council during that financial year.
- (2) The report of the National Archivist shall include-
  - (a) details of income and expenditure;
  - (b) a complete list of disposal authorities issued;
  - (c) an account of all cases of unauthorised disposal of public records investigated by the National Archives; and
  - (d) an account of all government bodies which have failed to comply with this Act.
- (3) The report of the National Archivist and of the Council, together with the audited annual financial statements pertaining to the funds of the Council, shall be submitted to the Minister, and the Minister

shall table them in Parliament within 14 days after receipt thereof if Parliament is then sitting, or if Parliament is not then sitting, within 14 days of the commencement of the next sitting of Parliament.

(4) Within five months after the reports have been tabled, a delegation consisting of the National Archivist and at least two members of the Council must brief the Portfolio Committee on Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on the reports.

[S. 10 amended by s. 14 of Act 36 of 2001.]

#### 11 Custody and preservation of records

(1) The Minister may from time to time establish archives repositories under the control of the National Archivist for the custody of records.

(2) Public records identified in a disposal authority as having enduring value shall be transferred to an archives repository when they have been in existence for 20 years: Provided that-

(a) no other Act of Parliament requires such records to be kept in the custody of a particular government body or person;

(b) the National Archivist may, after consultation with the head of a government body, identify such records which-

(i) should remain in the custody of a government body; or

(ii) should be transferred to an archives repository before they have been in existence for 20 years;

(c) the National Archivist may defer the transfer of any public records; and

(d) the National Archivist may grant permission for any public records to an archives repository before they have been in existence for 20 years.

(3) The Minister may prescribe terms and conditions governing the transfer of records under subsection (2).

(4) The National Archivist shall take such measures as are necessary to preserve and restore records.

#### 12 Access and use

(1) Subject to any other Act of Parliament which deals with access to public records-

(a) a public record in the custody of the National Archives shall be available for public access if a period of 20 years has elapsed since the end of the year in which the record came into existence;

(b) access to a public record in respect of which a period of less than 20 years has elapsed since the end of the year in which the record came into existence may be given by the National Archivist upon request.

(2) A non-public record in the custody of the National Archives shall be available for public access subject to any conditions agreed upon at its acquisition in terms of section 14 (1) of this Act.

(3) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2), the National Archivist may refuse access to a record on the grounds of its fragile condition, provided that there shall be a right of appeal to the Director-General against the refusal.

[Sub-s. (3) substituted by s. 15 of Act 36 of 2001.]

(4) The Minister may make regulations as to the admission of the public to archives repositories, the making available of records for public access, and the use of equipment for the making of copies of or extracts from records in the custody of the National Archives.

### 13 Management of public records

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the National Archivist shall be charged with the proper management and care of public records in the custody of government bodies.

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1)-

(a) no public record under the control of a government body shall be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without the written authorisation of the National Archivist, issued subject to-

(i) section 6 (4) (e) of this Act; and

(ii) a final ruling by the Minister when unresolvable differences arise between the National Archivist and the Council;

[Sub-para. (ii) substituted by s. 16 of Act 36 of 2001.]

(b) the National Archivist shall-

(i) determine records classification systems to be applied by government bodies;

(ii) determine the conditions subject to which records may be microfilmed or electronically reproduced; and

(iii) determine the conditions subject to which electronic records systems should be managed;

(c) the National Archivist shall inspect public records in so far as such inspection may be necessary for the performance of his or her functions under this Act: Provided that the inspection of public records which contain information the disclosure of which is restricted by any other Act of Parliament shall be done only with the consent of the head of the government body concerned.

(3) The Minister may make regulations as to the management and care of public records in the custody of government bodies.

(4) The National Archivist may from time to time issue directives and instructions, which shall not be inconsistent with the regulations, as to the management and care of public records in the custody of government bodies.

(5) (a) The head of a government body shall, subject to any law governing the employment of personnel of the government body concerned and such requirements as may be prescribed, designate an official of the body to be the records manager of the body.

(b) The records manager shall be responsible to see to it that the government body complies with the requirements of this Act.

(c) Additional powers and functions may be prescribed to a records manager.

### 14 Acquisition and management of non-public records

(1) The National Archivist may on behalf of the State acquire by purchase or donation or on loan for a temporary period or in perpetuity, either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as may be agreed upon, non-public records which, in his or her opinion, have enduring value of national significance and which cannot be more appropriately preserved by another institution.

(2) Subject to any conditions as may be applicable, non-public records acquired under subsection (1) shall be deposited in the archives repository determined by the National Archivist.



(3) The producer or distributor of a recording which is a non-public record in terms of this Act shall, within six months after a request in writing is made by the National Archivist, provide the National Archivist with a copy of the recording in such form as may be specified in the request.

(4) Subsection (3) shall not apply in respect of a recording that is required to be deposited in a legal deposit library, defined in section 1 of the Legal Deposit of Publications Act, 1982 (Act 17 of 1982), or that has not been broadcast or made public in South Africa.

(5) The National Archivist shall maintain national registers of non-public records in South Africa which, in his or her opinion, have enduring value, in consultation with the institutions having custody of such records.

(6) .....

[Sub-s. (6) deleted by s. 17 of Act 36 of 2001.]

#### 15 Limitation of liability

No person, including the State, shall be liable in respect of anything done under this Act in good faith and without negligence.

#### 16 Offences and penalties

(1) Any person who-

- (a) wilfully damages any public or non-public record in the control of a government body; or
- (b) otherwise than in accordance with this Act or any other law, removes, destroys or erases such record,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) Any person who fails to comply with-

- (a) a request mentioned in section 14 (3); or
- (b) .....

[Para. (b) deleted by s. 18 of Act 36 of 2001.]

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction-

- (i) in the case of an offence contemplated in paragraph (a) of this subsection, to a fine not exceeding R5 000;
- (ii) in the case of an offence contemplated in paragraph (b) of this subsection, to a fine not exceeding R10 000.

(3) The National Archivist may refuse to allow any person convicted of an offence in terms of subsection (1) access to an archives repository for such period as he or she may deem fit, subject to an appeal to the Minister.

#### 17 Transitional provisions

(1) The person who, immediately prior to the commencement of this Act, performed the functions of the director of archives under the Archives Act, 1962 (Act 6 of 1962), shall continue in office as the National Archivist.

(2) Every public servant who, immediately prior to the commencement of this Act, performed functions as a member of the staff of the said director, shall be deemed to be a member of staff of the National Archives.

(3) Any records in the custody of the said director on the day immediately prior to the commencement of this Act are hereby transferred to the National Archivist subject to any terms and conditions that were applicable to such records on that day.

(4) Until such time as a provincial legislator promulgates provincial legislation in terms of which a provincial archives service is established for that province, every provision of this Act shall apply in that province, and-

(a) wherever the expression 'government body' occurs it shall mean a legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) in such province at the national, provincial or local level of government; and

(b) wherever the expression 'public record' occurs it shall mean a record created or received by any institution contemplated in paragraph (a) in pursuance of its activities.

#### 18 Regulations

The Minister may make regulations as to any matter which in terms of this Act is required or permitted to be prescribed or done by regulation, and, generally, with reference to any matter which is necessary or expedient to be prescribed in order to achieve or promote the objects of this Act.

#### 19 Repeal of laws

The following laws are hereby repealed:

(a) The Archives Act, 1962 (Act 6 of 1962);

(b) the Archives Amendment Act, 1964 (Act 12 of 1964);

(c) the Archives Amendment Act, 1969 (Act 63 of 1969);

(d) the Archives Amendment Act, 1977 (Act 54 of 1977); and

(e) the Archives Amendment Act, 1979 (Act 32 of 1979).

#### 20 Short title and commencement

This Act shall be called the National Archives and Record Service of South Africa Act, 1996, and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette.

[S. 20 substituted by s. 19 of Act 36 of 2001.]

## Appendix B: NARSSA comprehensive inspection template

	Yes	No
1.1.1 Does your organisation have a filled position for a records manager on senior level?	1.1.1 Does your organisation have a filled position for a records manager on senior level? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.1.1 Does your organisation have a filled position for a records manager on senior level? - No <input type="radio"/>
1.1.2 Is the records manager properly qualified to do his/her job?	1.1.2 Is the records manager properly qualified to do his/her job? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.1.2 Is the records manager properly qualified to do his/her job? - No <input type="radio"/>
1.2.1 Has the records management programme/function in your organisation been allocated the appropriate resources (facilities, finance, staff, equipment, etc.) to enable it to be maintained?	1.2.1 Has the records management programme/function in your organisation been allocated the appropriate resources (facilities, finance, staff, equipment, etc.) to enable it to be maintained? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.2.1 Has the records management programme/function in your organisation been allocated the appropriate resources (facilities, finance, staff, equipment, etc.) to enable it to be maintained? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.3.1 Does your organisation have a records management policy?	1.3.1 Does your organisation have a records management policy? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.3.1 Does your organisation have a records management policy? - No <input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
1.3.2 If yes, is the policy endorsed by the head of the government body and his/her senior managers?	1.3.2 If yes, is the policy endorsed by the head of the government body and his/her senior managers? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.3.2 If yes, is the policy endorsed by the head of the government body and his/her senior managers? - No <input type="radio"/>
1.3.3 Is the records management policy known to all employees?	1.3.3 Is the records management policy known to all employees? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.3.3 Is the records management policy known to all employees? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4.1 Are record-keeping responsibilities of individual employees documented and communicated to employees?	1.4.1 Are record-keeping responsibilities of individual employees documented and communicated to employees? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.4.1 Are record-keeping responsibilities of individual employees documented and communicated to employees? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4.2 Do all employees know how to identify, keep and use records?	1.4.2 Do all employees know how to identify, keep and use records? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.4.2 Do all employees know how to identify, keep and use records? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4.3 Are employees in your organisation able to retrieve the right information at the right time for the purpose of decision making?	1.4.3 Are employees in your organisation able to retrieve the right information at the right time for the purpose of decision making? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.4.3 Are employees in your organisation able to retrieve the right information at the right time for the purpose of decision making? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5.1 Does your organisation have a National Archives approved classification system (file plan)?	1.5.1 Does your organisation have a National Archives approved classification system (file plan)? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.5.1 Does your organisation have a National Archives approved classification system (file plan)? - No <input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
1.5.2 Are revisions and additions to the approved file plan regularly reported to the National Archivist for approval?	1.5.2 Are revisions and additions to the approved file plan regularly reported to the National Archivist for approval? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.5.2 Are revisions and additions to the approved file plan regularly reported to the National Archivist for approval? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5.3 Has the National Archives approved file plan been implemented for all records of the organisation?	1.5.3 Has the National Archives approved file plan been implemented for all records of the organisation? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.5.3 Has the National Archives approved file plan been implemented for all records of the organisation? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5.4 Do the employees of your organisation use the file plan to allocate reference numbers to all records created or received by the organisation?	1.5.4 Do the employees of your organisation use the file plan to allocate reference numbers to all records created or received by the organisation? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.5.4 Do the employees of your organisation use the file plan to allocate reference numbers to all records created or received by the organisation? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6.1 Has your organisation been issued with a disposal authority on your approved file plan	1.6.1 Has your organisation been issued with a disposal authority on your approved file plan - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.6.1 Has your organisation been issued with a disposal authority on your approved file plan - No <input type="radio"/>
1.6.2 Does your organisation have a retention schedule pertaining to ephemeral records and implemented a systematic disposal programme?	1.6.2 Does your organisation have a retention schedule pertaining to ephemeral records and implemented a systematic disposal programme? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.6.2 Does your organisation have a retention schedule pertaining to ephemeral records and implemented a systematic disposal programme? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6.3 Does your organisation destroy any records without the approval of the National Archivist?	1.6.3 Does your organisation destroy any records without the approval of the National Archivist? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.6.3 Does your organisation destroy any records without the approval of the National Archivist? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
1.6.4 Does your organisation regularly submit destruction certificates to the National Archives when records are destroyed in terms of a disposal authority issued by the National Archives?	1.6.4 Does your organisation regularly submit destruction certificates to the National Archives when records are destroyed in terms of a disposal authority issued by the National Archives? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.6.4 Does your organisation regularly submit destruction certificates to the National Archives when records are destroyed in terms of a disposal authority issued by the National Archives? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7.1 Are there storage areas dedicated to records storage and approved by the records manager?	1.7.1 Are there storage areas dedicated to records storage and approved by the records manager? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.7.1 Are there storage areas dedicated to records storage and approved by the records manager? - No <input type="radio"/>
1.7.2 Are your registry and storage areas retained neatly and the records in sequential or alphabetical order so that information can be retrieved immediately at any time of request?	1.7.2 Are your registry and storage areas retained neatly and the records in sequential or alphabetical order so that information can be retrieved immediately at any time of request? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.2 Are your registry and storage areas retained neatly and the records in sequential or alphabetical order so that information can be retrieved immediately at any time of request? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7.3 Are all records protected against the following: careless and rough handling; fire damage; water damage; mould; pests; excessive light; unauthorized removal; and dust?	1.7.3 Are all records protected against the following: careless and rough handling; fire damage; water damage; mould; pests; excessive light; unauthorized removal; and dust? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.3 Are all records protected against the following: careless and rough handling; fire damage; water damage; mould; pests; excessive light; unauthorized removal; and dust? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7.4 Does your organisation have a destruction register and is it maintained?	1.7.4 Does your organisation have a destruction register and is it maintained? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.4 Does your organisation have a destruction register and is it maintained? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
1.7.5 Does your organisation have a register of open files and is it maintained?	1.7.5 Does your organisation have a register of open files and is it maintained? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.5 Does your organisation have a register of open files and is it maintained? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7.6 Does your office have a registry procedure manual and is it implemented?	1.7.6 Does your office have a registry procedure manual and is it implemented? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.6 Does your office have a registry procedure manual and is it implemented? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7.7 Are all registry staff conversant with the registry procedures?	1.7.7 Are all registry staff conversant with the registry procedures? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.7.7 Are all registry staff conversant with the registry procedures? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8.1 Does your office have implemented an ECM system or an EDRMS?	1.8.1 Does your office have implemented an ECM system or an EDRMS? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1.8.1 Does your office have implemented an ECM system or an EDRMS? - No <input type="radio"/>
1.8.2 If yes, does the system in your office comply with the requirements of the National Archives stated in its Pamphlet No. 2?	1.8.2 If yes, does the system in your office comply with the requirements of the National Archives stated in its Pamphlet No. 2? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.8.2 If yes, does the system in your office comply with the requirements of the National Archives stated in its Pamphlet No. 2? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8.3 Are all e-mails created or received by your organisation in pursuance of its activities regarded as official records and filed according to the approved file plan?	1.8.3 Are all e-mails created or received by your organisation in pursuance of its activities regarded as official records and filed according to the approved file plan? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	1.8.3 Are all e-mails created or received by your organisation in pursuance of its activities regarded as official records and filed according to the approved file plan? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8.4 Does your organisation have a migration strategy for its archival electronic records?	1.8.4 Does your organisation have a migration strategy for its archival electronic records? -	1.8.4 Does your organisation have a migration strategy for its archival electronic records? -

	Yes	No
1.8.5 Are all electronic records systems protected against tampering, unauthorized alteration, accidental damage or destruction, intended damage or destruction?	<input type="radio"/> 1.8.5 Are all electronic records systems protected against tampering, unauthorized alteration, accidental damage or destruction, intended damage or destruction? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1.8.5 Are all electronic records systems protected against tampering, unauthorized alteration, accidental damage or destruction, intended damage or destruction? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.9.1 Are records on magnetic, optical, and audio-visual storage media stored in climatically controlled storage areas?	<input type="radio"/> 1.9.1 Are records on magnetic, optical, and audio-visual storage media stored in climatically controlled storage areas? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1.9.1 Are records on magnetic, optical, and audio-visual storage media stored in climatically controlled storage areas? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.1 Can your organisation readily provide evidence of its transactions on request of AGSA in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (Act No 1 of 1999)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2.1 Can your organisation readily provide evidence of its transactions on request of AGSA in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (Act No 1 of 1999)? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2.1 Can your organisation readily provide evidence of its transactions on request of AGSA in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (Act No 1 of 1999)? - No <input type="radio"/>
2.2 Does your organisation keep a Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) Manual?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2.2 Does your organisation keep a Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) Manual? - Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2.2 Does your organisation keep a Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) Manual? - No <input type="radio"/>
2.3 Can your organisation provide records pertaining to requests for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act	2.3 Can your organisation provide records pertaining to requests for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act	2.3 Can your organisation provide records pertaining to requests for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act



	Yes	No
No 2 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame?	No 2 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	No 2 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.4 Can your organisation provide written reasons for administrative action in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No 3 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame?	2.4 Can your organisation provide written reasons for administrative action in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No 3 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	2.4 Can your organisation provide written reasons for administrative action in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No 3 of 2000) within the prescribed time frame? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.5 Can your organisation provide authoritative and reliable records on any requests for evidence in terms of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act No. 25 of 2002)?	2.5 Can your organisation provide authoritative and reliable records on any requests for evidence in terms of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act No. 25 of 2002)? - Yes <input type="radio"/>	2.5 Can your organisation provide authoritative and reliable records on any requests for evidence in terms of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act No. 25 of 2002)? - No <input checked="" type="radio"/>

## Appendix C: E-records readiness tool

No.	Page	Component	Score
<b>National E-Records Readiness</b>			
1	p.2	Legal Mandate for the Government-Wide Management of Public Records and Information	
2	p.3	Legal Framework for E-Commerce Activities	
3	p.4	Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation	
4	p.5	Government-Wide ICT Infrastructure and Capacity	
5	p.6	Government-Wide E-Records Management Standards and Guidelines	
6	p.7	Government-Wide Digital Preservation Strategy	
<b>National E-Records Readiness Score</b>			
<b>Agency E-Records Readiness</b>			
7	p.8	Policies and Responsibilities for Records and Information Management	
8	p.9	Tools and Procedures for Records and Information Management	
9	p.10	E-Records Management Products and Technologies	
10	p.11	Resources and Training for Records and Information Management Personnel	
11	p.12	Internal and Public Awareness of Records and Information Management	
12	p.14	Compliance with Records and Information Management Policies and Procedures	
<b>Agency E-Records Readiness Score</b>			

## Appendix D: E-records readiness score template

National E-Records Readiness		
1. Legal Mandate for the Government-Wide Management of Public Records and Information		
<p>E-government services produce digital information, or 'e-records', that document government transactions and online activities. It is important that a central agency, such as the national archives, is designated to ensure that government-wide standards and practices are developed and implemented, that appropriate facilities are created and that adequate resources are invested in managing official records in digital and other formats.</p> <p>If this central agency is to fulfill its responsibility for government-wide records and information management, its role must be mandated and recognised in law such as a national archives act.</p> <p>Without such a legal mandate and formal authority, governments risk haphazard, inconsistent or negligent treatment of records. This, in turn, creates serious consequences for the accountability and trustworthiness of government actions as a whole.</p>	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no national archives law or equivalent legislation that assigns central responsibility for the creation, management and preservation of official records, paper or electronic.</li> <li>There is a lack of clarity within government about who has the authority to make decisions on the retention, destruction and accessibility of records and information, paper and electronic.</li> <li>Arrangements for managing records are informal, with government agencies making ad hoc provisions for the storage and retrieval of records, paper and electronic.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A central government agency monitors and supports the storage and retrieval of official records, paper and electronic, but it does not have a legal mandate for government-wide management of official records, paper and electronic from creation to destruction or permanent preservation.</li> <li>Decisions on the creation, retention, destruction and preservation of digital information in government computerised information systems are deferred to system administrators and other ICT personnel.</li> </ul>	10
	STAGE 3	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A central agency, such as the national archives, is legally responsible for providing expert guidance on and oversight of the creation, management and permanent preservation of all official records, paper and electronic, and for access to the records.</li> <li>• A central agency, such as the national archives, has legal responsibility for issuing and/or approving records retention and disposition schedules that indicate which categories of government records must be preserved permanently or, alternatively, how long specific types of public records must be retained before they may be destroyed.</li> <li>• There are formally recognised responsibilities for managing records from the point of creation to the point of destruction or permanent retention (eg by registries and file rooms, records centres and a national archives).</li> <li>• There are formally recognised records and information management 'champions' who</li> </ul>	20
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	actively promote the implementation of records management practices across government institutions and functions, including the area of e-government services.	
Assessed Score for 1. Legal Mandate for the Government-Wide Management of Public Records and Information:		
<b>2. Legal Framework for E-Commerce Activities</b>		
<p>As more and more private sector and government activities are carried out online in electronic format, it critical that evidence of these activities is available to protect the rights and responsibilities of all involved.</p> <p>Under existing legislation, courts around the world have struggled with applying the traditional rules of evidence to e-records, with inconsistent results. To facilitate dispute resolution and avoidance, governments need to adopt laws that establish ground rules for e-transactions, e-commerce and the use of signatures.</p> <p>E-commerce laws and regulations need to be modernised, clarified and harmonised so that public and private sectors alike can make the best possible technical decisions about how to produce and keep e-records across jurisdictions, with a minimum of uncertainty about how their legal rights will be affected.</p>	<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>Score</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no legislation that establishes ground rules for e-commerce transactions and admissibility of e-records in legal proceedings.</li> <li>There is confusion within the public and private sector about whether online transactions are valid legal agreements.</li> <li>There is significant corruption and fraud associated with online transactions.</li> </ul>	5
	<b>STAGE 2</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some form of legislation and or regulations address e-commerce transactions but apply only to certain types of activities or jurisdictions. In some cases, the rules contradict each other.</li> </ul>	10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De facto best practices, such as the use of e-signatures or online payment systems, are promoted by an influential organisation, such as a chartered bank or a revenue/taxation institution, and are used in the country.</li> <li>Government records managers, systems administrators or legal advisers are not certain whether current government computer systems are producing records suitable for use in court.</li> </ul>	
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A harmonised, nation-wide e-commerce law clearly establishes rules and guidelines for electronic transactions and record-keeping.</li> <li>An e-commerce law has created an atmosphere of confidence in the public and private sectors by providing clear, fair and workable rules for the admissibility of evidence in digital form.</li> </ul>	20
Assessed Score for 2. Legal Framework for E-Commerce Activities:		

### 3. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation

<p>Freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation supports accountability, transparency and anti-corruption measures and is an important aspect of modern democracies. It gives citizens a mechanism for holding their governments accountable by requesting information about official activities, and it provides assurance that personal information is only used for legitimate purposes.</p> <p>Without such legislation, digital information can be manipulated and misused for corrupt purposes by governments or bureaucrats.</p> <p>E-government can be introduced without implementing freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation, but the aim of empowering citizens will be undermined.</p>	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no freedom of information law and no plan to draft one.</li> <li>There is no public debate about the value of freedom of information and the protection of privacy.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no freedom of information law, but there has been active public debate about establishing one.</li> <li>There are plans to begin drafting such a law.</li> </ul>	10
	STAGE 3	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of information and privacy legislation are on the statute book.</li> <li>Citizens and government partners regularly request and receive public information in accord with the FOI legislation.</li> <li>Records are easily accessible so that citizens' requests for information can be served.</li> </ul>	20
Assessed Score for 3. <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation:</i>		

4. Government-Wide ICT Infrastructure and Capacity		
<p>ICT infrastructure and capacity is addressed in detail in traditional e-readiness assessments. These tools will provide a comprehensive evaluation of a government's ICT infrastructure. However, the issues involved are covered here also as they need to be factored into an overall score of e-records readiness.</p> <p>A reliable and secure ICT infrastructure is essential for e-government initiatives to avoid the loss or corruption of e-records due to</p>	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The country has an unreliable electrical power supply and a poor telecom infrastructure.</li> <li>It is difficult to determine whether government computer systems are secure and adequately backedup.</li> <li>There is no central agency responsible for defining and implementing government-wide ICT strategy.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The country has a fairly reliable electrical power grid and there are initiatives to upgrade the telecom physical infrastructure to support internet technologies.</li> <li>System administrators and technology support staff generally competent in using and maintaining the hardware and software for which they are responsible and recognise the need to manage system security and backup.</li> <li>There is a central government agency responsible for defining and implementing a government-wide ICT strategy, technology architecture and action plan.</li> </ul>	10
	STAGE 3	



<p>unstable electrical or telecommunications infrastructure, accidents, improper care and attention, or intentional damage.</p> <p>Employing competent and trained ICT staff as well as implementing good practices for network and system administration will provide the basic platform on which to build successful e-government and e-records programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The telecom physical infrastructure can support a growing volume of network traffic and the country has a reliable electrical power grid.</li> <li>• Government ICT staff are trained and competent in using and maintaining the hardware and software for which they are responsible. They are given the opportunity to maintain and upgrade their technical training as ICT changes.</li> <li>• There is a government agency responsible for defining and implementing a government-wide ICT strategy and technology architecture. The agency maintains guidelines and good practices for computer systems security, backup and business continuity planning. It is adequately resourced.</li> <li>• The government ICT strategy is driven by business requirements and operational plans which include records and information requirements.</li> <li>• The government has established documentation standards and system engineering procedures for ICT systems analysis, implementation and support.</li> </ul>	20
Assessed Score for 4. Government-Wide ICT Infrastructure and Capacity:		

5. Government-Wide E-Records Management Standards and Guidelines		
	STAGE 1	Score
<p>Governments that create e-records need to adopt or develop a government-wide standard setting out functional requirements for electronic records management. The European Commission's <i>Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records</i> or the US Department of Defence's <i>DoD 5015.2 Standard</i> and the United Kingdom National Archives' functional requirements are good examples.</p> <p>Such standards and functional requirements are essential to ensure that government ICT systems consistently create, capture, organise, store, search, retrieve and preserve e-records and to protect the integrity and trustworthiness of those e-records.</p> <p>It is important to adopt a national minimum standard so that government systems are interoperable and share a common baseline of e-records functionality.</p> <p>Unless government agencies can demonstrate compliance with such standards, requirements or guidelines, they will find it difficult prove the authenticity and reliability of their erecords when required to do so in relation to freedom of information laws, arbitration of disputes or legal proceedings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no government-wide standard for electronic records management.</li> <li>• There are no guidelines on the capture and management of email and electronic documents.</li> <li>• There is no government-wide core standard for records and e-content metadata.</li> <li>• Government ICT systems are</li> </ul>	5

	implemented without a formal requirements management process.	
	<b>STAGE 2</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no government-wide standard for electronic records management or metadata, but there are formal plans to adopt existing standards or to develop a national standard.</li> <li>There is a formal process for capturing and specifying system requirements that is followed during the implementation of government ICT systems that can be used to formally integrate e-records requirements into government's business information systems.</li> <li>Some general guidelines on the capture and management of email and electronic documents have been issued, but they are not applied consistently.</li> </ul>	10
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a government-wide standard for electronic records management and core record metadata.</li> <li>• There is a formal process for capturing and specifying system requirements that is followed during the implementation of government ICT systems that is consistently used to integrate e-records requirements into government's business information systems and to test for compliance with these requirements following implementations.</li> <li>• Requirements for electronic records management are integrated into government ICT system requirements during the system analysis and design process.</li> <li>• Detailed guidelines on the management of email and electronic records are integrated part of the day-to-day</li> </ul>	20
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	procedures of government employees.	
Assessed Score for 5. Government-Wide E-Records Management Standards and Guidelines:		

6. Government-Wide Digital Preservation Strategy		
<p>E-records created as a result of e-government activities must remain accessible and usable for as long as they are required for business or legal purposes or, in some cases, for historical purposes. Many e-records will need to be preserved long-term or even permanently.</p> <p>However, the long-term preservation of electronic records is threatened by issues such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 media instability and deterioration</li> <li>2 obsolescence and incompatibility of hardware, software, data formats or storage media</li> <li>3 lack of metadata, which makes it difficult to access the information or to use it meaningfully because of the lack of contextual information</li> <li>4 lack of clearly assigned responsibilities and resources for long-term preservation.</li> </ol> <p>To ensure the long-term preservation of erecords and to protect the digital memory of the nation, governments need to implement digital preservation strategies that anticipate ICT obsolescence and incompatibility.</p>	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no central agency or 'champion' within government that is addressing digital preservation issues and little or no recognition of the urgent requirement to take action.</li> <li>• Public servants generally do not consider digital preservation to be a critical issue. They assume that system administrators or new technologies will continue to make e-records and digital information accessible and usable indefinitely.</li> <li>• Decisions about suitable file formats and storage media for government computer</li> </ul>	5

<p>Typically this will involve planning for the migration of the digital information from one generation of technologies and formats to the next as well as implementing controls, procedures and responsibilities to monitor the accessibility, usability and authenticity of electronic records.</p> <p>Digital preservation requires dedicated expertise, funding and technologies. Therefore, digital preservation strategies typically involve a collaborative element that pools resources between institutions and government agencies. Ideally these collaborations are driven by a national digital preservation strategy, such as the US National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP).</p>	<p>systems are left to system administrators or product vendors.</p>	
	<p><b>STAGE 2</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is some discussion within government or among the public about technology obsolescence and current or future access to official records.</li> <li>• A central agency such as the national archives or national library recognises its responsibility for addressing issues related to the digital preservation of official e-records and digital information and is accepting e-records into its collections, although long term preservation strategies are not in place.</li> <li>• A central agency such as the national archives has issued informal guidelines for managing email and records generated in offices. Government agencies recognise the need to protect and</li> </ul>	<p>10</p>

	preserve digital records.	
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A central agency such as the national archives has been formally mandated with responsibility for preserving e-records and digital and assigned a budget to address issues related to preserving government e-records and digital information.</li> <li>• E-records created by government agencies are formally accessioned into a digital archive according to specific rules for media and file format.</li> <li>• There is a general public expectation that a central agency such as the national archives will preserve the government's e-records and digital information and make them available online for public access.</li> <li>• The agency responsible for digital preservation</li> </ul>	20

	maintains and regularly issues mandatory government-wide standards for file formats, storage media and preservation metadata to be used in government computer systems. It provides advice and assistance for government departments that wish to convert, migrate, copy, store or emulate e-records.	
Assessed Score for 7. Government-Wide Digital Preservation Strategy:		
<b>Agency E-Records Readiness</b>		
<b>7. Policies and Responsibilities for Records and Information Management</b>		
Within the wider context of public sector legislation and standards, each government agency that implements e-government services should establish internal policies and responsibilities for records and information management in a form appropriate to its internal organisational structure, culture and resources. This makes it easier for staff to apply external laws and standards to the institution's specific business functions and processes.	<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>Score</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government agency does not have a basic records and information management policy that establishes organisation-wide principles, guidelines and responsibilities for record creation, capture, management and preservation.</li> <li>The agency does not formally and specifically assign responsibilities for managing records and</li> </ul>	5

	information to specific managers and staff.	
	<b>STAGE 2</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agency has a records and information management policy but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it has not been reviewed within the past five years, or</li> <li>it is only applicable to some specific business processes, or</li> <li>it only addresses a limited type of media such as paper documents, or</li> <li>it is largely ignored by both management and staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The agency's records and information management policy assigns formal responsibility to staff for keeping accurate and complete records of their activities but this is not specified in job descriptions, enforced by supervisors or supported by senior management.</li> </ul>	10
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers are assigned high-level responsibility for records and information management to ensure organisation-wide compliance with policies and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that staff follow records management policies and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Records management professionals are responsible for drafting records management policies and are consulted by management and supervisors for advice on implementing the policies.</li> <li>• Records and information management policies are regularly reviewed and updated, following regular consultation with stakeholders, to reflect changing business and technology environments.</li> </ul>	20
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agency has records and information management policies that apply to paper and electronic records. Where necessary, the policies are supported by media specific procedures and guidelines (ie paper, email, web content, etc).</li> </ul>	
Assessed Score for 7. Policies and Responsibilities for Records and Information Management:		

8. Tools and Procedures for Records and Information Management		
	STAGE 1	Score
Records and information management policies must be supported by tools and procedures to ensure effective policy implementation. These include standard forms and templates, records classification schemes, records metadata and profile templates, records retention and disposition schedules, security and access classification schemes, search and retrieval indexes and taxonomies, repositories and equipment for the storage of physical and digital records (eg filing cabinets, file rooms, records centres and archives, digital storage media, digital storage systems and archives, etc), systems backup and recovery procedures, business continuity plans and vital records plans. The central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government agency does not have basic records classification schemes or records retention and disposition schedules for the records and information it creates.</li> <li>Each organisational unit has its own 'in-house system' for managing records and information.</li> <li>Records are frequently lost or 'misplaced'.</li> <li>Staff members manage digital records and information on their individual computer workstations. There are no central systems for storage or classification.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	

<p>agency, such as the national archives, with responsibility for setting standards for records management, should be in a position to provide support in developing and applying appropriate tools and procedures.</p> <p>These tools need to be accompanied by procedure manuals describing when and how staff should fulfill their responsibilities for creating, capturing, classifying, capturing, storing, retrieving, tracking, disposing and preserving records.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government agency has basic records classification schemes and records retention and disposition schedules but these are not kept up to date or used regularly by management and staff.</li> <li>• The agency uses central repositories, such as file rooms and or a records centre, for storing its paper records but the records are difficult to access due the lack of proper classification, indexes and finding aids.</li> <li>• The agency uses central file directories, storage management systems, or electronic document management systems for storing its digital records but the records are difficult to access due the lack of proper classification, metadata or effective search technology.</li> <li>• There are repositories for paper and electronic records, but the security measures and access protocols in use are not adequate to protect the records.</li> <li>• The agency has guidelines for managing paper and electronic records but staff have difficulty applying them.</li> </ul>	10
	<p><b>STAGE 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government agency has a complete and current set of records and information management tools and procedures that encompass the entire lifecycle management of records in both paper and digital formats.</li> <li>• The agency has media-specific procedures and guidelines for creating and capturing records in different formats (i.e. paper, email, web content, etc).</li> <li>• Records and information management procedures and tools have been integrated into the standard workflow, computer systems and staff operations manuals for all business processes.</li> <li>• The agency can demonstrate that records and information created, captured and preserved as part of standard business processes are secure, authentic, complete, accessible and useable.</li> </ul>	20

Assessed Score for 8. Tools and Procedures for Records and Information Management:

9. E-Records Management Products and Technologies		
	STAGE 1	Score
<p>Over the past decade a number of technologies and products for managing erecords and digital information have matured into a coherent industry and market. These may be called Records Management Application (RMA) software, Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) systems, Enterprise Content Management (ECM) systems or Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) systems.</p> <p>Vendors in this market usually provide erecords and e-content management solutions in collaboration with strategic partners. The technologies and products include scanning and imaging, forms management, document management, records management, webcontent management, email archiving, workflow and business process management, collaboration tools, compression, encryption, digital signature systems, data warehousing, backup and archiving systems, storage platform systems and storage media solutions.</p> <p>The technologies and product solutions in this market are intended to provide the enterprisewide capability to capture, classify, store, retrieve and track e-records, regardless of the format (paper, email, web pages, digital documents, database transactions, etc).</p> <p>It is important to be aware of the solutions available for integrating e-records management into e-government systems before an agency attempts to adapt unsuitable technologies for this purpose or to build new solutions from scratch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is little or no recognition of the need to integrate e-records requirements and product solutions into existing systems or into the functional requirements for future e-government systems.</li> <li>When systems are developed, purchased or implemented , there is little attention to the need to streamline and integrate workflow processes, file formats, metadata, storage platforms or search and retrieval mechanisms across the business function and organisational units that the system will support.</li> <li>Systems are developed, purchased or implemented without consideration being given to how the records created will be integrated with records created by other</li> </ul>	5

	government systems.	
	<b>STAGE 2</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some e-records and e-content products and technologies are being implemented .</li> <li>When new e-government systems are developed, purchased and implemented consideration is given to implementing e-records and e-content technologies.</li> <li>There is little standardisation on a particular e-records product or technology platform.</li> <li>E-records or e-content products and technologies are not included in the agency's ICT strategy or in system analysis and procurement procedures.</li> </ul>	10
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When e-government systems are designed, procured and implemented, e-records and e-content products are integrated and used to streamline workflow process, file formats, metadata, storage platforms and search and retrieval mechanisms across the e-government system and the business functions and organisational units that it supports.</li> <li>• The agency's ICT strategy is focused on eliminating system and data 'silos' and moving towards, component-based, open architectures to allow for the deployment of integrated e-record and econtent technologies across systems, business functions and organisational units.</li> <li>• E-government systems are developed, purchased and implemented in consultation with both records management</li> </ul>	20
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	and e-records technology experts.	
Assessed Score for 9. E-Records Management Products and Technologies:		

10. Resources and Training for Records and Information Management Personnel		
Although the agency may have established records and information management policies, tools and procedures, they will be ineffective unless they are supported by qualified records management staff with adequate and regular financial support to implement and maintain them.	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no designated records and information management unit within the government agency.</li> <li>The agency does not have a regular budget to support records and information management programmes, tools, equipment and staff.</li> <li>Basic records and information storage and retrieval tasks are assigned to junior staff, such as clerks, mailroom staff, or entry-level staff who are expected to move on to other positions.</li> <li>Decisions on the management of electronic records and information are deferred to the technical staff that implement and support the agency's ICT systems.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a designated records and management unit within the government agency but there is a high turnover of records management staff and frequent personnel shortages.</li> <li>The head of the records and information management unit is not senior enough to command the authority and respect needed to implement records and information policy, procedures and tools within the agency.</li> <li>Records management staff are poorly paid in comparison to other public servants.</li> </ul>	10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no ongoing training for records management and new records management staff are not expected to have records management education and credentials.</li> <li>• The records and information management unit has insufficient funds to operate records repositories and to develop and implement records and information management tools and procedures.</li> <li>• ICT staff sometimes consult the records management staff about e-records, the records staff do not have the education or experience to develop and implement tools and procedures for managing erecords records and information.</li> </ul>	
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers are assigned high-level responsibility and accountability for organisation-wide records and information management to ensure that sufficient resources to are allocated to support records and information management.</li> <li>• The agency's records and information programme is headed by a manager who commands authority and respect.</li> <li>• The agency assigns a sufficient budget to support the records and information management programme, including facilities, equipment and staff and training costs.</li> <li>• Records management staff are paid a salary that recognises their professional role and have opportunities for ongoing training and professional activities.</li> <li>• The agency has a human resource strategy that recognises the need to recruit staff capable of developing and implementing tools and procedures for managing electronic records and information.</li> </ul>	20
Assessed Score for 10. Resources and Training for Records and Information Personnel:		

## 11. Internal and Public Awareness of Records and Information Management



	STAGE 1	Score
<p>A government agency may have adequate records and information management policies, procedures, tools and resources but these will be ineffective unless there is a commitment to implementing them. Managers and staff need to be aware of the importance of trustworthy and well-managed records for delivering effective government services and for protecting institutional accountability and integrity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few senior managers, supervisors and staff recognise the significance of well-managed and trustworthy records for effective government service delivery and for reform initiatives.</li> <li>The public has come to expect that civil servants will alter procedures and records for their own benefit.</li> <li>Citizens don't really understand the process, forms and records that are required to initiate and complete a given government service (eg registering a land purchase, registering a birth, filing a police report). It is not made clear what records they are entitled access to, whether additional forms and records are required after a process has been started, whether a record is issued to them when the process is completed, etc.</li> <li>Staff do not know which organisational unit or staff to consult to clarify questions about records and information management policy, procedures or tools.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the government agency, job descriptions highlight responsibilities for records management, although not consistently.</li> <li>Some senior managers, supervisors and staff recognise the importance of well-managed and trustworthy records but others are unwilling to change existing records and information management practices which they can manipulate for their own benefit.</li> <li>Citizens expect that civil servants will document activities and decisions in well-managed and trustworthy records.</li> <li>There is a recognised records and information management unit, but the staff do not have the time or the resources necessary to respond consistently to requests for information and or for advice on policy, procedures and tools for managing records and information.</li> <li>Records and information management is not yet recognised as a critical component of the</li> </ul>	10

	institution's strategies and action plans.	
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers, supervisors and staff are aware of the role and importance that well-managed and trustworthy records play in supporting government service delivery and reform.</li> <li>• As part of their orientation, new employees, managers or staff, are introduced to records and information management responsibilities as outlined in their job descriptions and taught how to use records and information management procedures and tools.</li> <li>• The agency incorporates records and information management advice and awareness-raising as part of its internal communications programme, ensuring that the benefits of records management are widely understood and that staff appreciate why they are necessary.</li> <li>• The records and information management unit has the resources needed to meet requests for information and provide advice and feedback on the agency's records and information management policy, procedures and tools.</li> </ul>	20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens expect and assume that civil servants document their activities and decisions in wellmanaged and trustworthy records.</li> <li>• The agency publicises the rules and regulations for access and use of the records it creates in order to minimise subjective actions by officials and give citizens the ability to track the status of their applications, requests, etc.</li> <li>• Records and information management is recognised as a critical component of the institution's egovernment strategies and action plans.</li> </ul>	
Assessed Score for 11. Internal and Public Awareness of Records and Information Management:		

12. Monitoring for Compliance with Records and Information Management Policies and Procedures		
<p>As in any area of management, an agency's records and information management infrastructure (people, procedures, tools and technologies) must be regularly monitored and evaluated to determine whether it is meeting requirements and expectations. Where problems or new challenges are identified, action is required.</p>	STAGE 1	Score
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government agency does not have a means of auditing compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures or determining whether its records and information management programmes or initiatives are successful.</li> <li>Senior management does not support audits or evaluations in the area of records and information management.</li> </ul>	5
	STAGE 2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The institution regularly conducts formal audits of business functions and organisational units but these do not cover records and information management compliance.</li> <li>Some of the agency's business functions and organisational units have evaluated their records and information management infrastructure or have requested help from the national archives in doing so.</li> <li>Senior managers are sometimes reluctant to take corrective action when shortcomings in</li> </ul>	10

	<p>records and information management are identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual staff members normally are held accountable for non-compliance with records and information management policies and procedures.</li> </ul>	
	<b>STAGE 3</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agency's records and information management unit regularly evaluates compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures for records management in each of the agency's units.</li> <li>The agency monitors records and information management compliance as part of its standard efficiency evaluations.</li> <li>Senior managers take corrective action in a timely manner when problems are identified.</li> <li>Staff performance evaluations cover compliance with records and information management policy and procedures.</li> </ul>	20
Assessed Score for 12. Monitoring for Compliance with Records and Information Management Policies and Procedures:		

## Appendix E: E-records readiness risk template

RISK ASSESSMENT: National E-Records Readiness			RISK ASSESSMENT: Agency E-Records Readiness		
Score	Assessment	Recommendation	Score	Assessment	Recommendation
30 - 60	HIGH RISK	Recognise that government records and information produced in digital form will be at risk of misuse and loss without governmentwide strategies and standards for e-records and digital preservation. Give priority to establishing the basic legal framework and ICT infrastructure required for successful erecords management.	30 - 60	HIGH RISK	Recognise that funds and effort will likely be wasted unless e-government initiatives are supported by a solid records and information management programme within the agency. Take immediate steps to build the infrastructure required to manage both paper and electronic records.
65 - 90	MODERATE RISK	Proceed with caution while continuing to build consensus and collaboration amongst stakeholders to maintain and improve the legal framework and national e-records and digital preservation strategy.	65 - 90	MODERATE RISK	Proceed with caution while addressing the records and information management risks that have been identified.
95 - 120	LOW RISK	Proceed with e-government initiatives. Monitor legal framework and national erecords and digital preservation strategy during and after implementation.	95 - 120	LOW RISK	Proceed with e-government initiatives. Monitor records and information management risks during and after implementation.

## **Appendix F: Advertisement for Records Manager vacancy**



**The Road Accident Fund's mission is to provide appropriate cover to all road users within the borders of South Africa; to rehabilitate and compensate persons injured as a result of motor vehicle accidents in a timely and caring manner; and to actively promote safe use of our roads**

The Organisation requires the services of qualified individuals within its **Head Office** for the following position:

**THIS IS AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT**

**RECORDS MANAGER: T.A.S.K LEVEL 16**

**ICT DEPARTMENT**

**Advert ref no: 18082016RM**

**Purpose of the Job:** Reporting to the Senior Manager: Information Security, IT Risk and Governance Management, the successful incumbent's responsibility will be to create, implement and manage a records management program in line with legislative requirements.

### **Key Performance Areas**

- Develop record management policy.
- Develop information management strategy.
- Manages a computerized and manual records management system for the RAF's official documents, including the on-going design, implementation and management of a RAF-wide imaging system.
- Provide record classification system, record-keeping systems, records retention schedules and destruction of records schedules.
- Ensure that the disposals of records are done in compliance with relevant legislation.
- Ensure that the records are managed in accordance with applicable legislation and good governance.
- Manage Document services nationally.
- Design and implement performance monitoring scheme.
- Human Resources management.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

- Relevant National Diploma/ Degree in Records Management/ Information Management or equivalent.
- Relevant training presented by the National Archives and Records Service.
- Computer literacy especially (MS Office) and company related programmes.
- 5 years in similar environment.
- **Technical and behavioural competencies required**
- Ability to develop, implement and maintain a complex Document Management Program.
- Ability to work independently and under pressure.
- Good analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Be able to prioritize.
- Good business writing and reading skills (Be able to prepare policies and reports).
- Good communication skills.
- Able to teach and coach others and transfer skills.
- Management of People skills.
- Planning and organizing skills.
- Coaching and mentoring skills.

#### **Remuneration**

Total cost to company of the minimum remuneration package applicable to this position is **R674 012.00** per annum and will be negotiable commensurate with experience

**Closing date: 30 August 2016**

Applications can be forwarded to the Recruitment Officer at Eco Glades; email address is [Patience.recruitment@raf.co.za](mailto:Patience.recruitment@raf.co.za) OR hand delivered at 420 Witch-Hazel Avenue, Eco Glades 2, Centurion.

**INSTRUCTION TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS**

1. Indicate the name and the reference number for the position you are applying for on the subject line
2. Do not submit copies of qualifications and ID as these will be requested from shortlisted candidates on the interview date
3. Submit a short CV with a maximum of 5 pages
4. Please indicate your current salary and salary expectations if considered for the position.

*The Road Accident Fund subscribes to the principles of employment equity and preference will be given to groups who are underrepresented in terms of our Employment Equity Plan*

Please note that the prospective employees will be subjected to security vetting.

**NB: Applicants who have not received any correspondence from us within six weeks from the closing date can consider themselves unsuccessful**



## Appendix G: Interview guide

1. The business unit that you lead/work in, does it have any relationship with Correspondence and Document Management Services?

Yes		No	
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2. What is the nature of the relationship?

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3. What is the role of Correspondence and Document Management Services in the entire operations of the RAF?

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4. Do you feel that Correspondence and Document Management Services is providing the office with a strategic plan which provides the office with an organised-wide approach of managing records?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?

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5. According to the RAF's annual reports (RAF 2019:143-149; 2018:123-128; 2017:124-127), the organisation is currently operating in a highly paper-based

environment. How do the paper-based operations affect the RAF's ability to deliver timely services to their stakeholders?

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6. The above-mentioned annual reports also indicated the organisation's plans to automate some of the business processes (for example: introduction of electronic forms). Do you feel that the RAF is ready for automation?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

7. How long have you been with the organisation?

--

8. Based on your experience, do you feel it is possible for the RAF to exist solely in an electronic environment?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?

--

9. Do you feel that the RAF has the necessary resources to successfully operate in an electronic environment?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, please explain how? If no, please explain why?

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*Thank you for your participation.*

## Appendix H: Observation checklist

### 1. Observed records management process

Name of process observed .....

Date of observation .....

### 2. Control measures

Mailroom processes .....

Central Archiving Facility (CAF) processes .....

Unauthorised access .....

### 3. Assessment of the storage facility

Fire extinguishers .....

Exposure to water .....

Theft preventive measures .....

Air conditioning and temperature .....

### 4. Records keeping and retrieval

Filling shelves, covers and boxes .....

Records classification and filling system .....

Filling area .....

### 5. Records movement control measures

Use of file registers .....

Audit trail .....

## Appendix I: UNISA ethical clearance

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### DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

17 June 2020

Dear Ms Vanessa Neo Mathope

**Decision:**

**Ethics Approval from 17 June 2020 to 17 June 2024**

**DIS Registration #: Rec-20200617**

**References #: 2020-DIS-0017**

**Name: VN Mathope**

**Student #: 53301846**

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**Researcher(s): Ms Vanessa Neo Mathope**

[53301846@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:53301846@mylife.unisa.ac.za)  
0735780074

**Supervisor(s): Dr IS Schellnack-Kelly**

[schelis@unisa.ac.za](mailto:schelis@unisa.ac.za)  
012 429 6936

**Exploration into the current records management practices of the Road Accident Fund in South Africa**

**Qualifications: Masters Study**

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The **low risk application** was reviewed and expedited by the Department of Information Science Research Ethics Committee on 17 June 2020 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standards Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:


1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy of Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstances arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013; Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005, and the National Health Act, No. 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. Research must consider rules for engagement that are in line with observing COVID 19 regulations.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date of **17 June 2024**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Note:**

*The reference number **2020-DIS-0017** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as the Committee.*

## Appendix J: RAF's permission to conduct research



REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO BE GRANTED TO YOUR DEPARTMENT Privileged, Private and Confidential	
<b>Section A-Contact details of the requestor</b>	
External or Internal Candidate	Internal
Name and Surname	Vanessa Mathope
Date submitted	12/06/2020
Contact details	012 649 2188
<b>Section B- Request</b>	
Description :	Application Form together With Questionnaire Template
Reason For Research	An exploration into the current records management practices of the Road Accident Fund in South Africa
Qualification To which Research is Linked	Master of information Science
Supporting documents	Submitted Questionnaires
RAF Contact Person: Solomon Phage 012649 2074 <a href="mailto:solomonp@raf.co.za">solomonp@raf.co.za</a>	
<p>I hereby grant permission / decline permission to the above mentioned applicant to have access to my department for the purposes as set out in the attached approved application.</p> <p><b>DESIGNATION: SENIOR MANAGER CLAIMS</b></p> <p><b>DEPARTMENT: RGM OFFICE</b></p> <p><b>NAME AND SURNAME: OSCAR JS MOTHLE</b></p> <p><b>DATE: 06 JULY 2020</b></p> <p><b>SIGNATURE:</b> </p>	

## **Appendix K: Informed consent**

I, Vanessa Neo Mathope, a Master of Information Science student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) hereby request your participation in my research study titled: “An exploration into the current records management practices of the Road Accident Fund in South Africa”. The purpose of this exploration is to establish whether the RAF complies with NARSSA (2007:231–232) and ISO 15489-1:2016 conditions for managing paper-based records such as access to records, classification, retention, disposal, storage, handling, policies, procedures, tracking, and training as stipulated in Records Management Performance Criteria, and to determine the organisation’s readiness for electronic records. The information obtained and the recommendations could assist the RAF in its records management initiatives. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

The information gathered from these interviews will not be used for any purposes other than for this study. You are not required to provide your name and will therefore remain anonymous. This interview aims to gather your opinions, perceptions, and feelings about the current records management practices of the RAF and the organisation’s state of readiness for automation. The study’s results will be used to help answer unanswered questions as far as records management in the RAF is concerned.

It would be highly appreciated if you could answer all questions accurately. Please give your honest and sincere opinion. Your responses will help review the extent of the current record-keeping practices on service delivery and the RAF’s level of readiness for electronic records. The interview will only take 30 minutes at most.



## Appendix L: Confirmation of editing

10 Jack Nicklaus Drive

Pecanwood Golf Estate

Hartbeespoort 0216

4 June 2022

To whom it may concern

### CONFIRMATION OF EDITING

Please be advised that I, EM (Lucia) Geyer (ID Number 580425 0023 082), edited the Master's dissertation of Ms (Student Number 53301846) entitled

***An Exploration into the Current Records Management Practices of the Road Accident Fund in South Africa***

*The editing exercise included:*

- Language editing;
- Structuring;
- Formatting; and
- Bibliographic control: checking of text references and bibliographic entries.

I edited this dissertation to the best of my ability, based on my extensive experience as an academic and an academic editor.

I take no responsibility for the suggestions and changes that I made to the manuscript that the student has not accepted.

Sincerely



EM (Lucia) Geyer

[lgeyer@gmail.com](mailto:lgeyer@gmail.com)

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