



ESAAMLG Communication Rules and Procedures

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ESAAMLG COMMUNICATION RULES AND PROCEDURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- **ESAAMLG** – Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group
- **AML** – Anti-Money Laundering
- **CFT** – Counter-Financing of Terrorism
- **CoSUNs** – Cooperating and Supporting Nations
- **MoU** – Memorandum of Understanding
- **CPF** – Counter-Proliferation Financing

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Accredited Media:** Accredited media refers to journalists, reporters, photographers, and other media representatives who have been formally approved by the ESAAMLG Secretariat in consultation with the host country or a host country in consultation with the Secretariat to attend specific parts of ESAAMLG meetings. Accreditation is granted to ensure professional, accurate, and responsible coverage of ESAAMLG events while safeguarding the confidentiality of sensitive proceedings.
- **AML/CFT/CPF Global Network:** The international network of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs), including ESAAMLG, that work collaboratively to implement and promote global standards on Anti-Money Laundering (AML), Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), and Counter-Proliferation Financing (CPF). The Global Network ensures coordination, mutual evaluations, information sharing, and joint action to protect the integrity of the international financial system.
- **Confidential Information:** Any non-public information related to ESAAMLG meetings, discussions, reports, or documents that must be safeguarded. Confidential Information includes but is not limited to:

- Documents, reports, working papers, and memoranda classified as "Confidential" or "Restricted."
- Deliberations, discussions, and conclusions of ESAAMLG meetings.
- Any communication, whether verbal, written, or electronic, that is not publicly available.
- Information shared during Task Force and Council meetings.
- ***Council of Ministers:*** The decision-making body of ESAAMLG that provides strategic direction.
- ***CoSUN:*** Cooperating and Supporting Nation, a non-member country that collaborates with ESAAMLG to support its mission and objectives as per Article III of the ESAAMLG MoU.
- ***ESAAMLG:*** Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group.
- ***ESAAMLG-approved channel:*** for sharing official documents would be any communication or distribution mechanism that has been formally authorised by the ESAAMLG Secretariat and complies with its MoU provisions. These channels ensure that any official document of ESAAMLG, including those marked "Confidential" or "Restricted," is only accessible to persons or entities with proper clearance. Examples of ESAAMLG-approved channels could include:
 - The secure ESAAMLG Member Portal or intranet.
 - Password-protected document repositories operated by the Secretariat.
 - Encrypted email communication between designated focal points in member states.
 - Physical delivery via secure courier to authorised offices, if digital sharing is not suitable.
- ***Information:*** refers to any data, communication, document, record, or material (in written, oral, electronic, or any other form) generated, received, transmitted, or stored in connection with ESAAMLG, FATF and AML/CFT/CPF Global Network activities. This includes both public and non-public materials. "Confidential Information" is a subset of Information that is specifically classified as confidential or restricted under these Rules.
- ***MoU:*** [ESAAMLG MoU](#)
- ***Observers:*** Entities or individuals granted access to ESAAMLG meetings without full membership status as per Article IV of the ESAAMLG MoU.

- **Partners:** Organisations or stakeholders cooperating with ESAAMLG including by signing MoU but not holding membership or observer status.
- **Recipient:** Any ESAAMLG member, observer, cooperating and supporting nation (CoSUN), or partner who has access to ESAAMLG meetings, documents, or communications and is subject to these communication rules and procedures.
- **Secretariat:** ESAAMLG Secretariat, the administrative body of ESAAMLG responsible for coordinating activities, supporting member states, managing communication, and ensuring compliance with ESAAMLG policies and procedures.
- **Task Force:** The ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials, the operational body of ESAAMLG responsible for technical and policy discussions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, integrity, and responsible dissemination of its communications. To uphold trust and credibility and as a member of the AML/CFT/CPF Global Network, ESAAMLG ensures that information is managed in alignment with global communication standards. These Rules and Procedures establish clear protocols to prevent unauthorised disclosure of ESAAMLG information, including the outcomes of its meetings and events.

The ESAAMLG has noted an increasing risk of information leakage by representatives of its observers, cooperating and supporting nations (CoSUNs), members, and partners attending its meetings. These leaks include premature disclosure of meeting deliberations and decisions before official publication. To mitigate this risk, the Council of Ministers, at its meeting in September 2024, authorised the issuance of these Rules and Procedures to ensure strict confidentiality and responsible communication practices in terms of Article XIX of the ESAAMLG MoU (as amended in September 2021).

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

These Rules and Procedures apply to all ESAAMLG members, cooperating and supporting nations (CoSUNs), observers, and partners and their individual recipients who participate in ESAAMLG meetings or have access to information (including ESAAMLG, FATF official and confidential information) documents and communications combinedly know as 'Recipients'. Compliance with these Rules and Procedures is essential to maintaining the integrity of ESAAMLG's operations by safeguarding and protecting confidential information.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF ESAAMLG MEETINGS AND EVENTS

3.1 The outcomes of ESAAMLG meetings and events are strictly confidential. The Recipients must not disclose, discuss, or share any information regarding meeting and event deliberations, conclusions, or decisions before official publication. Premature disclosure of meeting or event outcomes is prohibited and may result in disciplinary measures, including formal warnings, suspension of participation in ESAAMLG activities, revocation of access to confidential documents, exclusion from future meetings and events, and legal or administrative actions as deemed necessary by the ESAAMLG Secretariat based on the decisions to be made by the Task Force or Council.'

3.2 To ensure confidentiality, the Recipients must:

- Maintain the confidentiality of all information received.
- Not disclose, share, or distribute confidential information to unauthorised individuals or entities.
- Use confidential information solely for the purpose of fulfilling their designated role within ESAAMLG.
- Take all necessary precautions to prevent unauthorised access, use, or distribution of confidential information.
- Report any suspected or actual breaches of confidentiality to the ESAAMLG Secretariat immediately.

3.3 All heads of delegation of the recipients should ensure that attendees are fit and proper persons and should in addition require each delegate to sign confidential form as a pre-requisite for registration to attend ESAAMLG events and for receiving ESAAMLG documents.

3.4 Heads of delegation must require domestic institutions whose personnel participate in ESAAMLG meetings to implement adequate information protection systems.

4. PROHIBITION OF INFORMATION LEAKS

Any form of information leakage, whether deliberate or accidental, is strictly prohibited. This includes verbal, written, electronic, or any other means of communication to unauthorised individuals or entities including through social media. The Recipients must take necessary precautions to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information. Any misleading or inaccurate representation of ESAAMLG's processes and decisions is unacceptable and may damage ESAAMLG's reputation.

5. RESTRICTIONS ON SHARING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND SECURE COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

5.1 ESAAMLG official documents, including reports, memoranda, and working papers, must not be shared with any unauthorised party, individuals or organisations. Documents classified as "Confidential" or "Restricted" must only be accessed and used by designated officials within ESAAMLG-approved channels. Physical documents containing sensitive information must be securely stored and

properly disposed of when no longer needed. Any external engagements or communications concerning ESAAMLG matters must be properly authorised. Distribution of such documents must follow ESAAMLG's internal approval processes as set out in the MoU. Improper use of non-approved channels such as personal cloud storage, or unsecured messaging apps would breach the restrictions and could lead to measures under these rules and procedures.

5.2 Emails, messages, or any digital transmission containing confidential information must be encrypted or protected.

5.3 The Recipients shall not:

- Copy, reproduce, or disseminate confidential information without prior written consent from ESAAMLG Secretariat.
- Use confidential information for personal, commercial, or political purposes.
- Discuss ESAAMLG matters with media representatives, external parties, or post such matters on social media unless explicitly authorised by ESAAMLG Secretariat.

5.4 All delegates and representatives of Members, Observers, CoSUNs, and Partners shall exclusively use their official institutional addresses (including official email domains and other authorised communication accounts) for any ESAAMLG-related communication. The use of personal or unofficial addresses for ESAAMLG matters is strictly prohibited.

6. MEDIA ATTENDANCE AND COVERAGE OF MEETINGS

Accredited media representatives may attend some parts of the plenary sessions of ESAAMLG meetings where permitted. To ensure a balanced approach between transparency and confidentiality, media reports must accurately reflect discussions and outcomes without misrepresentation. Statements may be quoted; however, individual speakers must not be named without their prior consent. Media representatives must not record, film, or photograph meeting proceedings without prior permission from the ESAAMLG Secretariat. Meetings of working groups and drafting groups will not be open to the media. ESAAMLG reserves the right to withdraw media accreditation if terms of attendance are violated or if conduct is inconsistent with professional standards.

7. MANAGEMENT OF LEAKAGE CRISIS

In the event of an information leak, the ESAAMLG Task Force Chairperson will initiate an immediate assessment to determine the scope and impact of the breach. A crisis management team constituted from member countries and the Secretariat or any other interested party nominated by the Chairperson will be assembled to contain the situation and mitigate further dissemination of confidential information. The Secretariat will coordinate with relevant stakeholders to identify the source of the leak and implement corrective actions, including retracting unauthorised statements. Internal and external communications will be carefully managed to ensure transparency while protecting ESAAMLG's reputation.

Additional security measures will be introduced to prevent future breaches.

8. COMPLIANCE, DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All Recipients must acknowledge and adhere to these Rules and Procedures. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary measures in terms of the following rules and procedures:

8.1 Principles

All compliance and disciplinary actions shall be guided by the following principles:

- a) parties shall be given notice and an opportunity to respond;
- b) decisions shall be free from bias;
- c) sanctions shall match the seriousness of the breach;
- d) outcomes and reasons shall be documented.

8.2 Investigation

- a) Alleged breaches shall be reported in writing to the ESAAMLG Secretariat.
- b) The Secretariat shall conduct a preliminary assessment to determine if formal investigation is warranted.
- c) Where warranted, the alleged party shall be notified in writing of the allegations, evidence, and response timelines.
- d) Findings shall be compiled in a written report for review by the *Compliance Review Panel*.

8.3 Compliance Review Panel

- a) The Panel shall comprise:
 - i. The Chairperson of the Task Force of Senior Officials (or his/her representative);
 - ii. One senior official from a non-involved Member State;

- iii. The Executive Secretary of the ESAAMLG Secretariat supported by the staff of the Secretariat (and/or his/her representative).
- b) The Panel shall determine whether a breach occurred and recommend sanctions.

8.4 Disciplinary Measures

Possible sanctions include:

- a) Applicable to all parties – formal warning; revocation of document access; temporary or permanent exclusion from meetings, events, and activities; legal proceedings where applicable.
- b) Specific to Observers and Partners – suspension or termination of status.
- c) Specific to delegates from Member States – suspension of voting rights; suspension from participation in decision-making bodies; public censure; recommendation for removal from the delegation (subject to Council decision).

8.5 Dispute Resolution

- a) Affected parties may appeal a disciplinary decision within 30 days of written notice.
- b) Appeals shall be referred to the ESAAMLG Steering Committee members with no vested interest on the case.
- c) The Steering Committee shall decide to uphold, amend, or overturn the decision within 60 days of appointment.
- d) The Steering Committee's decisions shall be final and binding.

8.6 Records and Reporting

The Secretariat shall keep records of all proceedings for at least five years and provide annual summaries of disciplinary actions (excluding confidential details) to the Task Force and Council of Ministers.

8.7 Domestic Action Against Information Leaks

In addition to sanctions under these Rules and Procedures, Members shall take appropriate measures, consistent with their domestic laws and institutional frameworks, against any delegate or representative found to have caused or facilitated an information leak relating to ESAAMLG communications or documents.

8.8 Notification of Changes in Delegations

Members shall immediately notify the ESAAMLG Secretariat in writing of any changes to their official delegation, particularly when a delegate ceases to be part of the delegation. Until such notification is received, the Secretariat will continue to recognise the last formally communicated delegation.

8.9 Consequences of Failure to Notify

Failure by a Member to notify the Secretariat of changes in its delegation as required under Rule 8.8 shall have the following consequences:

- a) Any communication, access to confidential information, or participation by a person who has ceased to be part of the delegation but has not been formally withdrawn shall be deemed unauthorised and treated as a breach of these Rules and Procedures.
- b) The Member concerned may be held accountable for any unauthorised access, disclosure, or misuse of ESAAMLG information resulting from such failure to notify.
- c) The Secretariat may suspend access to ESAAMLG documents, communications, or meetings for individuals whose delegation status is unclear until official notification is received.
- d) Repeated or deliberate failure to notify may result in formal warnings to the Member, escalation to the Task Force of Senior Officials, and possible disciplinary measures under Rule 8.4.

9. DURATION AND TERMINATION

These Rules and Procedures shall remain in effect for the duration of a Recipient's engagement with ESAAMLG and shall continue to apply even after their participation has ended. ESAAMLG reserves the right to take appropriate legal or disciplinary action in the event of a breach of these Rules and Procedures as per Section 8 of these Rules and Procedures.