

# Right2Know policy statement on institutional structure, capacities, and coordination

As of July 2013,

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# 1. Preamble

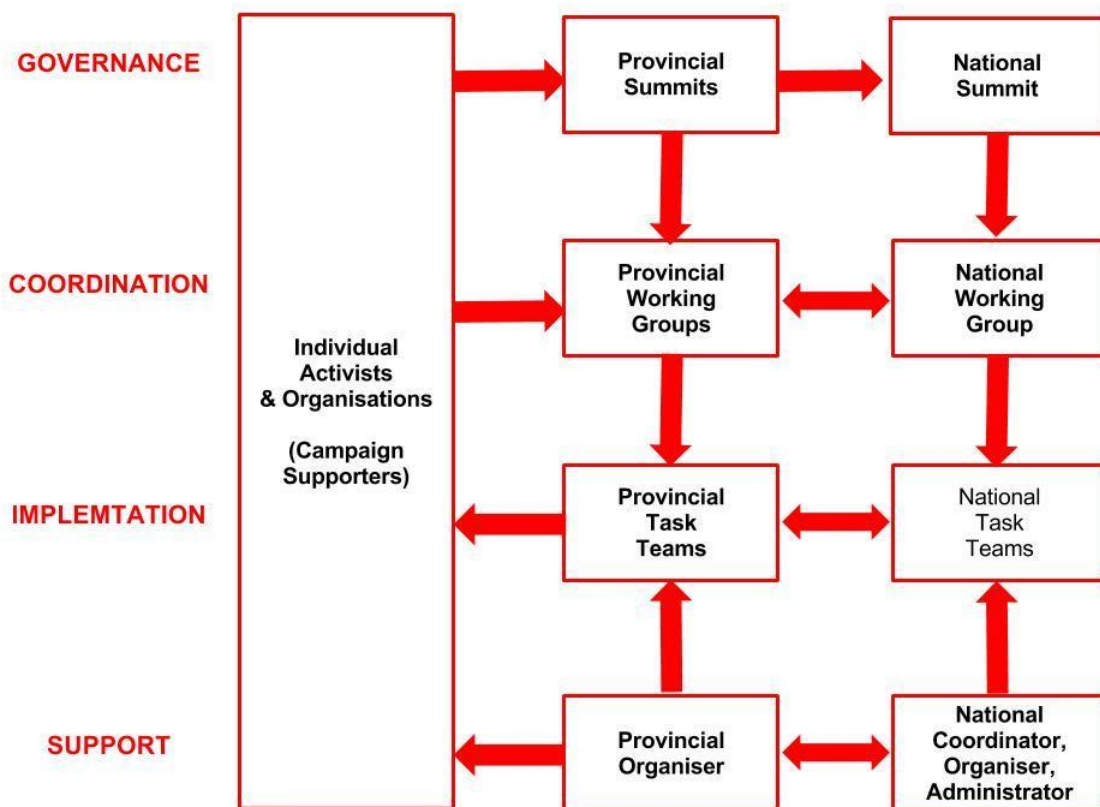
The Right2Know is an activist driven campaign with a small support staff and various structures and processes that enable democratic decision-making, accountability, participation, and implementation of our programme.

The campaign is a living evolving organisation. It was launched in September 2010 and formally constituted at our first National Summit in February 2011<sup>1</sup>. Since then the campaign has held our annual National Summits, adopted a Constitution<sup>2</sup>, and adopted a number of other policy positions relating to the working of the Campaign in the meetings of different structures. In addition to these various written policies the Campaign has also developed various standard practices as we have evolved over the years.

The purpose of this document is to consolidate our institutional memory by pulling relevant policies and practices together to provide a detailed overview of how our campaign works in order to induct new activists and give clarity to everyone that enlivens the Campaign. It is a living policy document of the campaign that will be reviewed and amended from time to time by the National Working Group (NWG).

# 2. Structure and Capacities

The following diagram presents the different structures of the Right2Know Campaign. The section below explains how they are constituted, their roles and functions, and their modes of implementation.



<sup>1</sup> Find the 1<sup>st</sup> National summit Report here: [http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/R2K\\_2011NationalSummitReportSmall.pdf](http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/R2K_2011NationalSummitReportSmall.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Find our constitution adopted in 2013 here: [http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/RIGHT2KNOW\\_Constitutionfinal2013.pdf](http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/RIGHT2KNOW_Constitutionfinal2013.pdf)

## 2.1 Provincial Summit

Annual Provincial Summits are called by Provincial Working Groups (PWG) in Gauteng, KZN and Western Cape between December and February each year. They are open to all supporters of the campaign.

The Provincial Summit takes stock of the work of the campaign in the province and identifies areas of priority for the coming year - as well as national priorities that should be tabled at the National Summit.

The Summit in GP elects 2 Provincial Coordinators. In the WC and KZN it elects the Provincial working Group.

The Summit also elects delegates to attend the National Summit. These delegates become National Members of the R2K for the year<sup>3</sup>.

PWGs send Summit announcements out through all relevant email lists. The Summit receives a narrative and final report from the PWG, delegates deliberate on these reports and the PWG prepares a Summit Report with resolutions from the Summit.

## 2.2 National Summit

The National Summit<sup>4</sup> is constituted by R2K delegations elected at Provincial Summits and the outgoing National Working Group (NWG). It is called by the NWG in the first quarter of each year.

The National Summit is the highest decision making structure of the Campaign with the powers to amend the Constitution and adopt policy and resolutions binding on the Campaign. The National Summit takes stock of the work of the campaign (adopting financial and narrative reports) deliberates on these reports. The summit breaks into commissions and discuss the work of the campaign and plan a way forward which is captured in an adopted set of Resolutions. The Summit also elects a National Working Group for the coming year.

## 2.3 Provincial Working Groups (PWG), Provincial Coordinators, Treasurers & Task Teams

In WC and KZN Provincial Working Groups<sup>5</sup> (PWG) are elected at an annual Provincial Summit. In GP the PWG is more fluid - any interested supports can participate fully in PWGs. In KZN and WC Working Groups are open to all Campaign supporters as observers to ensure transparency, exclusivity, and to enable participation and activism.

The task of the PWG is to ensure the implementation of Campaign strategy in the province and surrounding provinces that do not have R2K structures. The Campaign programme derives from National Summit Resolutions and priorities identified by the National Working Group and its Focus Groups. Within this framework the PWG identifies strategic priorities for the Province's programme.

The PWG meet at least monthly to assess the activities and financial reports of the province (presented in a monthly written reports prepared by the Provincial Organizers) and adopt plans for the coming month. Minutes of these meetings are circulated and adopted. PWG meetings are convened by the Provincial Coordinator with support of the Provincial Organiser. Each province also has an email group that is used for consultation and decision-making between meetings.

Each province also has a volunteer Provincial Coordinator who ensures overall leadership in the province, manages the Provincial Organiser day-to-day, and takes critical decisions in between PWG meetings. In addition each provinces has a Provincial Treasurer that oversees the province's finances, developing budgets and ensure funds are

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<sup>3</sup> Section 5 of Constitution on Membership

<sup>4</sup> Section 10 of the Constitution on National Summit

<sup>5</sup> Section 9 of Constitution on PWGs

accounted for. In Gauteng two Provincial Coordinators are elected at Provincial Summits and one Coordinator serves as Treasurer as well, in KZN and WC both posts are elected at PWG meetings.

Because R2K is an activist lead campaign the PWG is a “working group” and all participants are expected to implement tasks between PWG meetings. To this end the PWG also sets up standing or ad-hoc task teams to oversee and implement aspects of their programme.

## **2.3 National Working Group (NWG) & Focus Groups**

The National Working Group (NWG) is elected at the National Summit and oversees the implementation of National Summit resolutions. It is the highest decision making body between National Summit and takes legal and financial responsibility for the Campaign this includes power to determine policy, values, and strategy; and for authorising and mandating the establishment (or dis-establishment) of Provincial Working Groups, and for determining their operating conditions. The NWG does this directly or indirectly by delegation to PWGs, Focus Groups, or staff<sup>6</sup>.

All staff and Provincial Coordinators participate in NWG meeting without voting rights to enhance consultation, communication, and coordination across the campaign.

The NWG meet monthly (via teleconference) to assess the activities and financial reports (an overall written report prepared by the National Coordinator, provincial reports are also presented and considered) and adopt plans for the coming month. NWG meetings are convened by the National Coordinator and chaired by a member of the NWG. Minutes of these meetings are circulated and adopted. The NWG also has an email group that is used for consultation and decision-making between meetings. In addition the NWG and undertake an annual Mid Term Review meeting.

Because R2K is an activist lead campaign the NWG is a “working group” and all participants are expected to implement tasks between NWG meetings. To this end the NWG also sets up standing or ad-hoc task teams (or Focus Groups) to oversee and implement aspects of their programme. The NWG aims to have functioning Focus Groups on each campaign area. A National Finance and Fundraising Team oversees prudent management of our finances and fundraising efforts.

## **2.4 Campaign Staff**

As an activist lead campaign the Right2Know employ a minimum of staff to support activists and maintain key systems. We employ a Provincial Organiser in each provincial node and a National Coordinator, Organiser, and Administrator in our National Office.

Provincial Organisers support the work of PWGs and their task teams. They share relevant information, organize and mobilize organizations and movements to participate in the campaign and facilitate popular education programmes. Provincial Organisers work with the Provincial Coordinator and Treasurer to produce a monthly narrative and financial report to the monthly PWG meeting and support PWGs to develop and implement plans for the coming period.

In addition, all staff participate in the NWG meetings & email lists and communicate all relevant information and NWG decisions to their PWGs.

In between PWGs the Organiser reports to the Provincial Coordinator and supports the Provincial Treasurer to ensure R2K funds are well managed and accounted for.

Provincial Organisers work closely with the national office - in particular the National Organiser - to ensure provincial programmes are unfolding optimally and in line with R2K strategic framework and available resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Section 6 of the Constitution

Based on the activities plan and agreed in the PWG the Provincial Organizer works with the Provincial Coordinator/Treasurer to prepare the budget of the province and submit it to the national office. The National Coordinator confirms that proposed activities are in line with overall strategic framework and that necessary funds are available before approving the processing the advance. After activities are undertaken the Provincial Organizer works with the Provincial Coordinator/Treasurer to prepare a financial report with supporting documentation to reconcile the advance received.

The National Coordinator ensures national strategic development & oversight, national advocacy, media & communications, financial planning, management ,fundraising, accountability, and supports the NWG and NWG Focus Groups. The National Coordinator is also responsible for maintaining Human Resources systems of the Campaign as well as National staff. The National Coordinator reports to the NWG.

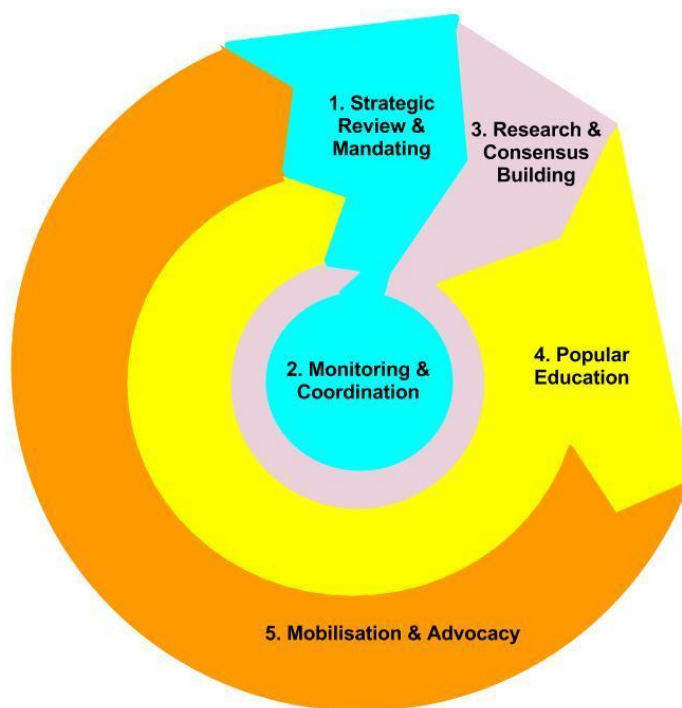
The National Organiser ensures provincial strategic and financial development, planning, & reporting, popular education & mobilisation, supports Provincial Organisers and Working Groups to undertake provincial education, advocacy, media & communications. The National Organiser reports to the National Coordinator.

The National Administrator provides administrative support to the National Coordinator, Organiser, & NWG, process payments with all necessary supporting documentation, maintain the financial records and records of campaign supporters, and ensure PWGs receive and account for required resources. S/he is responsible for General office maintenance and correspondence, making logistical arrangements for national meetings, updating the website and social media. The National Administrator reports to the National Coordinator.

In addition to these full time staff the Campaign does - from time to time - contract individuals and organisations to undertake paid work.

### 3. On operational strategy

Our operational strategy is presented in the following diagram and unpacked below.



### **3.1. Strategic Review and Planning**

The Campaign draws its mandate for our constitution and a series of annual Provincial Summits that lead to an annual National Summit. Summit Delegates assess the context, review the Campaign's progress, and develop various resolutions to guide the Campaign in the coming year.

Currently Right2Know holds Provincial Summits in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

### **3.2. Monitoring and Coordination.**

The Summits also constitute Provincial Working Groups (PWG) and a National Working Group (NWG) to coordinate and monitor implementation of the Campaign's programme for the year. These Working Groups meet at least once a month. Provincial Summits and Working Groups are open to all Campaign supporters to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and to enable participation and activism.

The NWG serves as the legal governing structure of the organisation and employs a small staff to support campaign activists.

### **3.3. Research and Consensus Building**

All campaign focuses are underpinned by ongoing research and debate about appropriate campaign positions, strategic 'points of entry' and appropriate response to developments.

To this end the Campaign's NWG has established a number of subcommittees (Focus Groups) where activists with specific interests and expertise work together to draft Campaign positions, support consensus building in our Work Groups and Summits and prepare technical statements or submissions to various policy or legal processes.

### **3.4. Popular Education**

The Right2Know undertakes popular education on the basis of the research and consensus emerging within the Campaign. The purpose of our popular education is to deepen the understanding of issues amongst campaign activists and to raise awareness of various issues and Campaign positions within communities and across society.

Our popular education takes the form of workshops, public meetings, as well as producing educational material and engaging the mass media.

### **3.5. Mobilisation & Advocacy**

Our research, consensus building and popular education lay the basis for advocacy campaigns targeted at shaping critical policy and governance processes in the public and private sectors, as well as shaping public perceptions. We deploy a full range of advocacy tactics from making policy submissions, media liaison and alliance building to marches, pickets, and mass meetings. We maintain an emphasis on mass mobilisation to strengthen the base of the Campaign and demonstrate that our positions have popular support.

## **APPENDIX 1: Campaign Vision, Mission, Principles**

### **Our Vision**

“We seek a country and a world where we all have the right to know – that is to be free to access and to share information. This right is fundamental to any democracy that is open, accountable, participatory and responsive; able to deliver the social, economic and environmental justice we need. On this foundation a society and an international community can be built in which we all live free from want, in equality and in dignity.”

### **Our Mission**

- To co-ordinate, unify, organise and activate those who share our principles to defend and advance the right to know.
- To struggle both for the widest possible recognition in law and policy of the right to know and for its implementation and practice in daily life.
- To root the struggle for the right to know in the struggles of communities demanding political, social, economic and environmental justice.
- To propagate our vision throughout society.
- To engage those with political and economic power where necessary.
- To act in concert and solidarity with like-minded people and organisations locally and internationally.

## **R2K Principles (“The Shalimar Principles”)**

### **Preamble**

We subscribe to the right to know, which is founded in the right to dignity and is realised through rights freely to access and share information.

We shall defend and advance the right to know, encouraged that it and its constituent rights were won through peoples’ struggles in South Africa and internationally, and are affirmed in the Constitution of South Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We commit to the following principles, both in our own policies and practices and in the vision we propagate throughout society:

### **Principle 1: Access to Information**

All people have the right to access information, and have it equally. This right has inherent value and enables many other democratic rights.

The right to access information must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 32 of the Constitution of South Africa.

### **Principle 2: Free Flow of Information**

All people have the right to express themselves – that is to share information, including opinion – freely and equally. This right has inherent value and enables many other democratic rights.

The right to free expression must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa.

### **Principle 3: Free and Diverse Media**

The media have rights and corresponding duties to access and disseminate information, including opinion, freely and fairly, without fear or favour. These rights and duties are vital to the public's exercise of many other democratic rights.

Media freedom must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa.

Media diversity must be extended so that everyone, in particular the socially and economically marginalised, shall have a voice.

#### **Principle 4: Accountability and Transparency**

Transparency, achieved through the right to know, holds power to account so that political, social, economic and environmental justice is realised.

#### **Principle 5: Informed Public Participation**

The right to know empowers all people to participate in democracy actively and effectively so that they can defend and advance their political, social, economic and environmental rights.

#### **Principle 6: Truth and Quality of Information**

The rights to access information must be served through the provision of information that is reliable, verifiable and representative of the data from which it is derived, and must include the right to access source data itself. Information must be provided transparently and equally, untainted by partisan interests.

#### **Principle 7: Proactive Dissemination of Information**

Public and private bodies must disseminate information proactively. Laws providing for access to information must not be used as a shield to obstruct its release.

#### **Principle 8: Equality**

All rights, including the rights here demanded like any other right, are equal to all people regardless of any human or social characteristic including class, race, gender, language or sexual orientation.

#### **Principle 9: Community Involvement**

The right to know is vital to the struggles of communities demanding political, social, economic and environmental justice. Campaign efforts rooted in communities and their needs are vital to the campaign's success and the realisation of a responsive and accountable democracy that can meet the basic needs of our people.

#### **Principle 10: Solidarity**

The full realisation of the right to know cannot be defined by individuals, organisations or borders. Our campaign is best served where we act in concert and solidarity with like-minded people and organisations locally and internationally.