



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING  
30 NATIONAL HEROES CIRCLE  
P.O. BOX 512  
KINGSTON  
JAMAICA

ANY REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE SHOULD BE  
ADDRESSED TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE  
FOLLOWING REFERENCE NUMBER QUOTED -  
NO. 922-8600-1 G

September 27, 2002

Circular No.. 8

File No.. 50/012

Public Expenditure Policy Coordination Division

Permanent Secretaries:

**RE: Guidelines for Cabinet Submissions**

It has come to this Ministry's attention that a practice is developing wherein Cabinet Submissions that have financial implications are either: (1) not forwarded to this Ministry for review and comments; (2) forwarded mere days prior to submission to the Cabinet; or (3) forwarded after Submissions to the Cabinet.

As you are aware, the issue of contingent liabilities is becoming increasingly critical and requires careful consideration particularly in light of the government's debt portfolio. The above-noted practice results in this Ministry having insufficient time to perform appropriate analysis and *to* provide the Cabinet with full information to inform the relevant decision-making processes. This, in turn, can result in unfavourable consequences for the Ministry of Finance and Planning and, by extension, the entire public sector.

Consequently, Permanent Secretaries are advised that this detrimental practice should be discontinued with immediate effect.

Further, please be reminded that Cabinet Submissions with financial implications must include the comments of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and that this Ministry must receive requests for review and comments no later than ten (10) days prior to the proposed date of submissions to the Cabinet. In this regard, your attention is directed *to* relevant guidelines, which are attached hereto for your reference.

Your co-operation is anticipated.

Shirley Tyndall (Miss)  
Financial Secretary

Attachment

## Guidelines for Cabinet Submission

### Preamble

Section 69 of the Jamaica Constitution states in part:

- (1 ) There shall be In and for Jamaica, a Cabinet which shall consist of the Prime Minister and such number of other Ministers (not being less than eleven) selected from among Ministers appointed In accordance with the provisions of section 70 of this Constitution as the Prime Minister may from time to time consider appropriate .
- (2) The Cabinet shall be the principal Instrument of policy and shall be charged with the general direction and control of the Government of Jamaica and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament.

Apart from the collective responsibility which members of the Cabinet bear, Ministers, on their appointment, take an oath of office In which, among other things, they pledge:

1. to give their counsel and advice to the Governor-General (or any other person for the time being lawfully performing the functions of that office) for the good management of the public affairs of Jamaica;
2. not on any account at any time whatsoever, to disclose the counsel, advice, opinion or vote of any particular Minister or Parliamentary Secretary;
5. not to, except with the authority of the Cabinet of Jamaica, directly or Indirectly reveal the business or proceedings of the Cabinet or the nature or content of any documents communicated to a Minister.

The Cabinet is supported by Cabinet Office, headed by a Secretary to the Cabinet under the provisions of section 92 of the Constitution, who is responsible for. Arranging the business, for keeping the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet, conveying the decisions of Cabinet to the appropriate person or authority as well as other functions which the Prime Minister may from time to time direct.

It is against this background that the following guidelines for Cabinet submissions are being presented .

#### 1. Criteria for Submissions

1. A Cabinet Submission is required where there is change or modification in policy, in particular major and/or policy-sensitive ones.
2. There is a request for new or amended legislation, including subordinate legislation.
3. A decision is required to enter into fresh obligations in respect of new or existing international memberships or treaties.
4. There are matters which have a significant impact on either public or private sector employment, fiscal, monetary and inflation and other exchange rate; welfare, public safety, industrial or agricultural activities; new programmes or projects or substantial modifications to existing projects.

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5. There are Issues likely to have a significant Impact on various groups such as the labour movement, employers, major NGOs.
6. Provisions are being sought for the main and supplementary Sud,et.
7. Responses are to be made to Parliamentary Committees, to questions by members of Parliament or Ministerial Statements of a policy nature •
8. Appointment of Boards to Statutory Corporations and Government companies, and of Executive Heads to these corporations or companies.
9. The acquisition or disposal of public property over and above certain valuations (to be defined from time to time).
10. The awarding of Public contracts (over and above certain levels to be defined from time to time).
11. Any other Issues of public Importance or concern in accordance with the principles of collective responsibility, or matters of public Interest as the Prime Minister may direct.

2. Presentation of Submissions

In order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Cabinet meetings, It is essential that submissions:

1. be presented in a format that facilitates proper consideration and enables Ministers to focus on the relevant points;
2. be forwarded on an agreed basis of focus with all relevant ministries and agencies upon which discussion *will* proceed;
3. succinctly and clearly identify the essential issues for consideration;
4. include realistic policy options and their implications;
5. make clear and specific recommendations setting out the decisions expected; and
6. require drafting instructions where necessary.

7. **Body of Submissions**

The body of a submission should comprise, as appropriate, the following, in order:

1. Background.
2. Issues
3. Optional considerations
4. Human resource considerations
5. Infrastructure considerations
6. Financial considerations
7. International, Regional, National or Local Community Implications

8. Consul~dons done
9. Recommendations

### 3.1. Jbdurround

This should comprfse:

1. A brfef outline of che events ludln, up to the submission and reference made to any previous consideration of the subject or decisions made by Cabinet, Cabinet Committees; Parliamentary Committees or others.
2. A synopsis of previous Cabinet Decisions should be Biven (with number and date). An Indication should be Biven of conformity wIth, or departure from, previous Clblnet Decisions.
3. Reference(s) to relev.1nt policy commitments liven by Government (IncJudlnB date and reference).

### 3.2. Issues

This pan of the Submission should Identffy, enmlne and analyse Issuu for conslderadon and detennlnatlon. The presen~don should be loglal, concise and contain sufficient Information to enable Ministers to focus Immediately upon the Issues they are to determine.

### 3.3. Options

The principal options for Government should be stated briefly and the preferred course of action stated precisely.

### 3.4. Human Resource Considerations

Given that there are often human resource limitations, the submission should state whether: (a) there are available personnel of the appropriate qualifications to do the *Job* and (b) whether their availability is at the expense of some other activity in Government, in particular priority ones.

In the broader context the submission should indicate whether there are employment Implications: additional or redundancies.

### 3.5. Infrastructure Considerations

As projects are very often adversely affected by the absence of one or more Important Infrastructure areas such as water, electric or roads, there should be a statement on this aspect, where appropriate.

### 3.6. Financial Considerations

All financial Implications, be they express or Implied, direct or Indirect, must be stated, including whether the proposed expenditure(s): (a) can be funded from

t1W!1nI ipprofrfitloni (b) will be derived from offsetdni ~vlnis or revenues; (c) require ~ fundlni or (d) will require fundlni In future nn~ncl~1 yurs.

### 3.7 Intel'IYdoIW, Redo«W, IUdorW or I.o<:aJ Community ImpnQdons

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### 3.8 ~IQdoas

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Where two or more Ministers share subs~ndal responsibility for a pan'cuwmatter It Is appropmte for a Jolne submission to be presented to Ciblnec ind slped by all the Kin.isters. concerned atld unresolved d~ffe-rences should be clearly· indicated ...



4.

Cabinet Process

1. All Cabinet submissions, except those specifically authorised by the Prime Minister, should be forwarded to the Cabinet Office by 12:00 noon on the Thursday week (i.e. 11 days) prior to the Cabinet meeting at which it is proposed they be considered.
  2. Submissions should be signed by the Minister, or Ministers, in the case of joint submissions.
- J.** Submissions are accepted for lodgement by the Director in charge of the Recording Secretariat in the Cabinet Office.
4. An Agenda of items and all Cabinet documents, including minutes of previous meetings are prepared and circulated to members of Cabinet on the Friday preceding the meeting of Cabinet.
- S.** Official Decisions of Cabinet will be communicated to the relevant Departments by the Cabinet Office as quickly as possible after they have been taken. In the event of changes made to the decisions, as originally recorded in the minutes, prior to their confirmation in a subsequent meeting, these changes will be immediately transmitted to the affected Ministries or Departments.
6. Ministers are themselves responsible to follow up on Cabinet requirements for further consideration and report.

S. Implementation of Cabinet Decisions

The Implementation of Cabinet Decisions, on a timely, efficient and effective basis is paramount if good governance is to be achieved.

Ministries and their Permanent Secretaries have the prime responsibility to see to the Implementation of Decisions in the respective Ministries.

The Cabinet Office will monitor the Implementation of Decisions across Ministries on behalf of the Prime Minister.

February 14, 1995