



CONSULTATION CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

January 2005

MINIMUM RULES FOR CONSULTATION

Develop clearly structured proposals

- State all possible options to be considered in respect of the proposal
- Be specific about issue/s to be addressed
- Provide supporting information
- List persons/groups consulted
- Provide contact details and relevant information

Make consultation material concise, easily understandable, and widely accessible

- Use plain language
- Make proposals concise and to the point
- Use all available and relevant media for dissemination and distribution

Facilitate the ability of stakeholders to participate in consultations

- Conduct stakeholder analyses
- Provide adequate time for responses to proposals
- Hold informal consultations

Give feedback on responses and the consultation process

- Acknowledge all feedback
- Carefully analyse responses
- Provide a summary of all feedback
- Advise on how feedback information will be used

Monitor effectiveness of consultations

- Reproduce minimum rules in all consultation documents
- Identify a consultation liaison officer within the Ministry
- Evaluate all consultation exercises
- Record all consultation activities

Follow policy-making best practice guidelines in the development of proposals

- Reduce red-tape and bureaucracy
- Assess proposals for cost, benefits and risks

Consultation Code of Practice for the Public Sector

21st Century Government Service

Decade of Excellence

JANUARY 2005

This Publication was developed within the Cabinet Office, requests for copies of this document should be made to:

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Government at your Service
Public Sector Modernisation Vision and Strategy 2002-2012

FOREWORD



Over the last two decades, there has been a strategic focus on redefining the role of Government and redrawing the lines of the state. This has been a universal preoccupation of Governments worldwide. In Jamaica, we have undertaken the biggest, most expensive and far-reaching change to the bureaucracy in the last ten years than has ever been attempted in the country. Government will never be the same again.

Globalisation, advances in information technologies and the increased awareness of our citizens and their demand for a more open, transparent and accountable Government

are some of the fundamental underpinnings of the New Governance Order.

Our Public Service Reform is succeeding in repositioning the Jamaican people from the periphery to the center of the policy-making process; from passive observers to active participants.

This Consultation Code demonstrates the commitment of Government to good governance, development and participatory democracy. It is a strategic tool that will push the public service away from the tradition of top-down solutions and more toward creating a community of participation and a new culture of governance that embraces differentiated polity.

I have always been convinced that a strong and prosperous Jamaica must be built on a resurgence of meaningful participation, sincere dialogue and a

sense of shared destiny.

I urge all public sector entities and workers to accept as a personal mantra the goal of achieving the standards that are set out in this Code. In doing so, you will be contributing to the overarching strategy for development, the development of the democratic process and the building of a more inclusive society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Patterson'.

THE MOST HONOURABLE
PERCIVAL J PATTERSON,
ON, PC, QC, MP
PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE

FROM THE CABINET OFFICE



This Consultation Code is one of a number of initiatives that are designed to make Government more open and transparent. The extent to which Government and its institutions achieve this is the extent to which they increase their legitimacy.

The modernisation of the public sector is a critical linchpin in the quest for prosperity and a better quality of life for the Jamaican people. Some gains have been made in putting our customers at the centre of our operations and in responding to their reasonable expectations. It is obvious that an old order is giving way to a new order which recog-

nises the indispensable role of the stakeholder in all aspects of government's operations from policy formulation to the evaluation of policies.

The Citizen's Charter Programme, Jamaica Social Policy and Evaluation (JASPEV) and the Access to Information (ATI) Act are some of the more important interventions that are changing the face of Government and ushering in a new era in governance that places a higher value on the principles of openness, transparency and accountability.

The Consultation Code will effectively rewrite the rules of engagement between the Government, its techno-bureaucrats and the Jamaican people. Its standards should be included in the performance criteria of all state entities to ensure that it becomes one of the tools that defines the relationship between Govern-

ment and citizenry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlton E. Davis'.

DR. THE HONOURABLE

CARLTON E DAVIS,

OJ, CD

CABINET SECRETARY & HEAD
OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

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INTRODUCTION

The development of this Consultation Code of Practice for the Jamaican Public Sector has occurred as a result of the Government's objective to become more service oriented and citizen-centred in our activities. The reform of our public sector demands that we become more open, transparent and accountable to the people of Jamaica.

Our vision, as indicated in *Government at your Service: Public Sector Modernisation Vision and Strategy 2002-2012*¹, is of a Jamaica in which all citizens enjoy a quality life in a society that is just, inclusive and open and in which authorities are accountable.

Consultation is not new to Government ministries and agencies, however, standards must be established to better manage the practice of consultation within the public sector. This code does this by providing the level of guidance necessary for improving the quality of consultations and preventing possible consultation fatigue or frustration among stakeholders.

The Government in issuing this Consultation Code reasserts its commitment to applying the principles of participation, justice, openness and accountability to all aspects of Government business.

The code will apply to all consultations carried out by Government Ministries², their departments and agencies, as well as Executive Agencies, Statutory Bodies, Government companies and local authorities in their development or revision of major policies, programmes, plans and services.

While the code does not carry with it the force of law, it should be generally regarded as binding on all Government ministries. Under exceptional circumstances a Minister will be allowed to depart from the minimum rules of the Code, where appropriate justification is provided and accepted by Cabinet. In such circumstances, the minimum rules of the code should still be followed as far as possible. The public must be made aware of the policy, programme, plan or service through a press notice, radio/television advertisement or other means, and should be advised of the Minister's reason for deciding not to fully apply the minimum rules of the Code.

During the consultation process care must be taken to comply with all legal duties, such as those that arise under the Access to Information Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Copyright Act and laws against discrimination and defamation.

The Cabinet Office is committed to regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the code and revising its content as necessary.

Feedback is welcome to:
Principal Director, Policy Development
Public Sector Reform Unit, Cabinet Office
1 Devon Road, Kingston 10
Tel: 929-8880-5
E-mail: policy.psrucabinet.gov.jm
Web address: www.cabinet.gov.jm/psru

¹ Ministry Paper No.56: Government at Your Service– Public Sector Modernisation Vision Strategy 2002-2012. Cabinet Office, September 2002, p.17

² Throughout the document references to Ministry/Ministries should be understood to include the agencies and departments that fall under that Ministry, including executive agencies and local authorities

WHAT IS

CONSULTATION

Consultation is a process which provides an opportunity for groups and individuals to make input into decisions. As such, consultation needs to begin at the earliest possible time when policies, plans, programmes or services are being developed.

Very often the terms **consultation** and **participation** are used interchangeably in relation to the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process. However, there is a distinct difference between consultation and participation, as participation in the development context refers to a long term activity, within which individuals and communities are fully involved in decision making, take ownership and are actively involved in the identification of problems, formulation of plans and the implementation of decisions.

Consultation on the other hand refers to a process for seeking the views of individuals, groups and communities on specific issues. More specifically, for the purpose's of this code, consultation is defined as an exchange of information and ideas between affected and interested people and decision-makers before a decision has been reached.

The primary goal of consultation is to encourage and promote participation and the involvement in the policy making process of those affected by policy—the citizens of the country.

Consultation allows the Government to obtain feedback from and work directly with members of the wider society throughout the policy making process to ensure that their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.

Wide consultation supplements the procedures and decisions of the Government and legislature and especially at the identification and conceptualising stage of policy development, helps to improve the quality of policy outcomes and enhances the involvement of interested parties and the public at large. In this way consultation helps policy makers in developing proposals that are technically viable and practical.

Government sponsored consultations may, among others, take the form of public meetings, community workshops, focus groups and surveys as well as interactive websites and citizen's juries.

NOTE:

While there is no single correct methodology for ensuring public involvement in the process of consultation, the Code establishes the minimum required of public sector professionals in conducting consultation exercises.

WHY

CONSULT

There have been growing demands from the citizenry for greater involvement and a bigger say in government decisions that affect their lives, business and well-being...

Ministry Paper No. 56/02, the Government's policy on public sector reform, states that the public sector's role in the achievement of sustainable national development will be among others, ensuring that people are placed at the centre of decision-making. The public sector will become more of a facilitator and an enabler by fostering increased collaboration and challenging ourselves and others within society to find innovative approaches to resolving national issues.

Collaboration within government and with the wider society will allow the nation as a whole to combine competencies, resources and capabilities in tackling our many development challenges.

The development of a code of consultation will require Government bodies to engage meaningfully with stakeholders when developing policies that may affect the national or local populace. This reinforces the new framework of governance for the management of the modern

Consultations are used to:

- gather and disseminate information
- identify needs
- initiate or explore evidence
- narrow the range of options available
- evaluate or review policies or programs
- decide on future strategies to achieve

Jamaican society as it is in keeping with the principle of Ministry Paper No. 7/03 on Local Government Reform which states that a primary feature of the new framework of governance is the "... [creation of] space for our citizens to become involved in the affairs of their communities as a right".

Consultations allow stakeholders to discuss and debate major policy decisions that affect them, and enable interested parties to suggest alternative proposals. At the same time participating in consultations gives those involved the chance to have a better understanding of the likely impact of proposals on individuals, families, communities and businesses.

Consultations inform Government activities by providing opportunities for valuable input and feedback from representatives of local authorities, civil society organisations, individual citizens, academics and technical experts.

Consultations are a critical element in the initiation or revision of policies, services, programmes or plans and should be considered in assessing the impact of Government activities and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Government policies and programmes.

Stakeholder analyses provide the basis for identifying those persons, groups and organisations that have significant and legitimate interests in a specific issue or policy area. While Government remains the key decision maker, there are many other stakeholders that influence, and should be facilitated to influence the decision making process. These include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), interest groups, private sector groups, academia, community-based organisations and individual citizens.

Stakeholder analysis is therefore a critical component of the consultation process as it allows for the building of stakeholder involvement, where needed, in order to achieve ownership and buy-in.

In addition to Government, NGOs, CBOs, and academia, key stakeholder groups will include:

- Parish Development Committees
- Trade Unions
- Political Parties
- Professional and service organisations
- Associations for persons with special needs such as:
 - Persons with Disabilities
 - Children
 - The Elderly

To the extent possible, key stakeholders should be involved in preliminary/informal discussions and should be facilitated to make input into planning wider consultation.

Public servants conducting consultations for the Government of Jamaica should do so in the spirit of the following general principles:

Stakeholders are those persons who:

- are to benefit from a proposed policy, plan or programme
- will be directly or indirectly affected by a proposed policy, plan or programme
- have interests that may be negatively affected by a particular policy, plan, or programme
- possess information, resources and expertise needed for strategy formulation and implementation related to a policy programme or plan

NOTE:

Ministries should develop registers of key stakeholders within policy areas, and should update these lists on a regular basis.

Inclusiveness and Equity

All members of society should be allowed to participate in the country's policy making process. Stakeholder groups will be encouraged and facilitated to contribute to government decisions which may affect them. Access to consultation processes and ability to participate is ensured despite race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, sex, disability status, sexual orientation or any other possible basis for discrimination. The involvement of different perspectives, voices, and needs within the decision-making process will support the creation of policies, plans, programmes, and services that respond to all and promote greater equity across the society.

Local Ownership

In cases where matters will specifically affect local communities, the public sector will support structured participation of residents and local stakeholder groups through local authorities and parish development committees. Where the capacities of these authorities and committees are in need of strengthening, ministries and agencies will work with available local mechanisms to ensure that communities are represented in the development of policies that may affect them.

Openness and Accountability

All public servants are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions where these impact on the administration of Government, and should provide reasons for such decisions and actions when they are taken.

Collaboration

The public sector will foster collaboration within government and with the wider society, building capacities and maximising the use of valuable resources.

Mutual Respect

There will be recognition of diversity among and between all sectors of society with the willingness to discuss and deliberate towards agreement. This will mean giving regard for differences of perspectives, objectives, values and needs among groups and individuals.

The minimum rules for consultation which form the essence of this code are underlined by these fundamental principles. The principles engender the spirit of the Code, and are themselves the basis upon which the rules should be applied.

It is expected that consultations conducted at all levels of the Government service are also underlined by the principles of **customer service** and **partnership**, wherein the aim is to design services, policies, and programmes around the needs of customers/beneficiaries, making sure to find out:

- what is important to them,
- what they need from us, and
- how all involved can best work together to resolve issues.

1 Develop clearly structured proposals

- State all possible options to be considered in respect of the proposal
- Be specific about issue/s to be addressed
- Provide supporting information
- List persons/groups consulted
- Provide contact details and relevant information

2 Make consultation material concise, easily understandable, and widely accessible

- Use plain language
- Make proposals concise and to the point
- Use all available and relevant media for dissemination and distribution

3 Facilitate the ability of stakeholders to participate in consultations

- Conduct stakeholder analyses
- Provide adequate time for responses to proposals
- Hold informal consultations

4 Give feedback on responses and the consultation process

- Acknowledge all feedback
- Carefully analyse responses
- Provide a summary of all feedback
- Advise on how feedback information will be used

5 Monitor the effectiveness of consultations within your Ministry

- Reproduce minimum rules in all consultation documents
- Identify a consultation liaison officer within the Ministry
- Evaluate all consultation exercises
- Record all consultation activities

6 Follow policy-making best practice guidelines in the development of proposals

- Reduce red-tape and bureaucracy
- Assess proposals for cost, benefits and risks

RULE

ONE

DEVELOP CLEAR PROPOSALS

State All Possible Options

As far as possible, consultations should allow all possible options to be considered in respect of proposals. Ministries should state all other possible options, in addition to the option being proposed for consultation. Where there are things that have already been decided because, for example, they are part of a Cabinet Directive or due to prior Ministerial commitments, then this should be clearly stated to stakeholders. Constraints linked to the proposal should be identified and the consequences and possible risks of action or inaction should be clearly stated.

Be Specific

With regards to the proposal on which consultation is being carried out, clearly articulate all assumptions. These will include:

- the issues to be addressed;
- those to be most likely affected;
- who is to be consulted
- the specific questions which need to be answered; and
- what the consultation is expected to accomplish.

However, respondents should be invited to offer their views on these assumptions, and suggest alternatives where these views may differ.

Provide Supporting Information

Advise participants of existing or potential linkages with other policy initiatives, issues or other public consultation activities. Attach, or refer stakeholders to relevant data, studies and position papers wherever these may exist.

Identify Persons/Groups Consulted

A list of stakeholders should be included as an appendix to the consultation document, and suggestions should be invited of other persons/organisations who should be consulted. Reference should be made to any prior consultations on the proposal.

When submitting responses, umbrella organisations or representative groups should be required to provide specifications of the people and organisations they represent.

Provide Contact Details and Other Relevant Information

The proposal being submitted for consultation should include:

- the minimum rules for consultation
- deadlines for submission of responses
- alternative means of participating in the consultation exercise
- Contact details for the person to whom stakeholders should submit responses, and
- Contact details for the person to whom queries should be directed

Contact details should include name, postal address, telephone number, fax, and e-mail

RULE

TWO

MAKE CONSULTATION MATERIAL EASILY UNDERSTANDABLE, CONCISE AND WIDELY ACCESSIBLE

Use Plain Language

Avoid jargon and use technical terms only where absolutely necessary. A consultation should be as accessible as possible. Explain complicated concepts as clearly as possible and, where there are technical terms, provide a glossary.

Make Proposals Concise

Provide an executive summary to the written consultation document that covers the main points of the proposal, preferably no longer than two pages. Even if the document is technical, ensure that the executive summary is accessible to all. Having read the executive summary stakeholders should be in a position to decide whether the consultation is relevant to them, and whether they need to read further.

Use All Available and Relevant Media

Ensure that the consultation material is available in paper format and with the fullest use of electronic means. They should be available and easily found on the internet from the day that the consultation is launched.

Efforts should be made to bring the consultation to the attention of all interested parties. As well as using the internet, consider publicising the consultation in ways most appropriate for target groups, such as in Braille for persons with visual disabilities.

The Jamaica Information Service, post offices, parish libraries and regional/parish offices of Government institutions should be used as much as possible as mediums through which information is disseminated.

Respondents should be able to respond electronically if they choose. Produce documents in electronic formats appropriate to achieve wide accessibility. Consider the range of electronic response methods to ensure that providing a response is simple, engages a broad range of people and encourages deliberation. Costs to users should never be such that it creates an obstacle to effective consultation.

Consider groups who cannot access traditional written consultations or the online versions of these. There may be some circumstances in which written consultation is not the best way to reach the target audience therefore different formats should be developed to reach different target groups.

With regard to equality issues, ensure that the consultation process engages with the whole community. Consider the format of the consultation to achieve this and consider how to reach groups which could be overlooked. These groups could include inner-city youth, women, rural or disabled people.

Ensure that the consultation exercise is suitable for the topic and groups involved. Certain issues may demand particular approaches to consultation: for example, discussion groups or meetings may be appropriate, especially where representative groups' capacity to respond to formal consultation is limited and many bodies are seeking to consult with them.

RULE

THREE

FACILITATE THE ABILITY OF STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSULTATIONS

Conduct Stakeholder Analyses

Consultations should be broad-based and involve the many stakeholder groups affected. This allows consultation exercises to be truly meaningful as a wide-cross section of stakeholders deepen the process and make information from the exercise richer and more valuable to the policy development process.

Registers should be developed by ministries and agencies, listing stakeholder groups for certain policy areas. These registers should be continuously reviewed and updated.

Provide Adequate Time For Responses

Allow a **minimum of 8 weeks** for consultation processes – from the presentation of the proposal, to the close of the consultation period. Stakeholders and interested parties must be advised of the relevant timeframes associated with the consultation process. In cases where the timeframes for consultation do not meet the minimum, the Minister responsible must provide to Cabinet reasons for deviation.

There will be cases where timetables are established or unavoidably dictated through:

- international processes, such as CARICOM, WTO, FTAA;
- measures where there is a health and safety or security dimension; or
- some other urgent requirement for the introduction of new measures.

In cases where further consultation is required based on changes made to an earlier proposal, a shortened period would be considered appropriate for such re-consultation.

Remember:

The consultation process should be open and inclusive, with wide stakeholder involvement. The issuance of documents on which stakeholders may provide feedback (written consultations) should be the formal method of consultation used. In addition, however, other methods of consultation should be considered with regards to such factors as:

- the sensitivity of the issue;
- the urgency of the issue;
- the composition of the groups to be consulted (e.g. persons with disabilities); and
- the literacy level of stakeholders.

Consideration must be given to the planning of all consultations. Extra effort should be taken to ensure that consultations that extend over holiday periods, in particular, Easter, Emancipation/Independence and Christmas, are effective.

Hold Informal Consultations

Informal consultations with relevant interested parties are essential. Preliminary discussions with colleagues within your Ministry and other related Ministries/ Departments, and with those whom the policy will most likely affect should be used to inform the development of the proposal supporting the policy, programme, plan or service. Stakeholder groups should be contacted and engaged in discussion as early as possible in the earliest stages of the development process to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of the relevant issues.

Informal meetings and conversations can assist in obtaining advice about the most appropriate consultation methods to employ and ways of improving communication with specific groups.

Some stakeholders, may be particularly difficult to engage. In such cases written consultation may not be the only effective means, other methods of consultation that may help in this process include:

- stakeholder meetings;
- public meetings;
- web forums;
- one-to-one interviews;
- public surveys;
- focus groups;
- citizens juries;
- deliberative forums;
- regional events; and
- targeted leaflet campaigns

RULE

FOUR

GIVE FEEDBACK ON RESPONSES AND THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Acknowledge All Feedback

All responses should be acknowledged, even if they do not directly relate to the specific consultation objective. Respondents should be encouraged to provide evidence, where appropriate, in support of their responses.

Carefully Analyse Responses

Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed. Do not simply count votes when analysing responses. Particular attention may need to be given to representative bodies, such as business associations, trade unions, voluntary and consumer groups and other organisations representing groups especially affected. In order to ensure that responses are analysed correctly, it is important to understand whom different bodies represent, and the methodology used to gain members' input into the response.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- possible new approaches to the question consulted on;
- further evidence of the impact of the proposals; and
- strength of feeling among particular groups.

The consultation process should give opportunity for stakeholders to review available documentation related to the issue, make enquiries, submit responses/comments, and attend presentations or workshops conducted. At the close of the consultation period, a summary of the consultation exercises, the responses/comments as well as a list of those who participated in the consultation process should be made publicly available.

Provide Feedback Summary

The consultation document should state the date when, and the web address where, the summary of responses will be published.

As far as possible this should be within three months of the closing

date of the consultation. Those without web access should be able to request a paper copy of this summary. Feedback should also be available in formats which are appropriate to the audience.

The summary should give an analysis of the responses to questions asked: for each question there should be a summary of responses to that question and then an explanation of how it is proposed to change the proposal in light of the responses received. There should also be information provided on themes that came out of the consultation which were not covered by the questions.

Wherever possible the summary of responses should also include a summary of the next steps for the policy, including reasons for decisions taken.

Advise on How Feedback Information Will be Used

Explain who will use the responses and for what purpose, and make it clear that responses, including the names and addresses of respondents, may be made public unless confidentiality is specifically requested. In accordance with freedom of information legislation, individual responses should be made available to anyone who asks for them, unless one of the exceptions in the legislation applies, for example the information was provided in confidence, or its disclosure would prejudice third parties.

When providing copies of responses, it is legitimate to make a reasonable charge for copying and postage.

RULE

FIVE

EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSULTATIONS

Reproduce the Minimum Rules in all Consultation Documents

The six minimum rules for consultation should be reproduced in all documents submitted for consultation.

Talk to the Consultation Liaison Officer within Your Ministry

Each Permanent Secretary should nominate an officer to report on consultation exercises taking place within the Ministry and its agencies and who is to be responsible for ensuring that the code of consultation is adhered to by the Ministry's officers. The consultation liaison officer will act as an adviser to those conducting consultation exercises and be a point of contact for the public on consultation practices within the Ministry.

This officer will not be directly responsible for carrying out consultations but will instead provide guidance where necessary, collate information regarding how many national consultations the Ministry has carried out and identify any deviations from the code, with the reasons given for these.

This data should be available for the Cabinet Office to collate annually, and will be made available to the public.

The consultation liaison officer will be expected to assist in the coordination of consultations across the government service. In coordinating consultations within their ministry, liaison officers will work with persons responsible for leading consultation exercises to increase instances of joined-up government where possible, and reduce the potential for consultation fatigue.

Evaluate All Consultation Exercises

Consultations should be evaluated for effectiveness. Information produced from such evaluations will guide future consultations within the ministry and provide lessons to be disseminated government-wide. Criteria to be evaluated will include:

- Numbers and types of responses,
- Number of different groups and interests, which participated,
- The extent to which stated objectives of consultation exercises are achieved,
- The extent to which consultation responses clarify policy options and affect the final decision.

The officer nominated to monitor the Ministry's consultation exercises should be the first point of contact in the planning of a consultation process. If you do not know the consultation liaison officer for your Ministry please contact your Permanent Secretary or Head of Department.

The Cabinet Office has developed guidelines for policy-making reflected in requirements established by Cabinet. Additionally, policy professionals within the Public Service are expected to work in support of the fulfilment of the sustainable development and good governance policy objectives highlighted in Ministry Paper No. 56/02, *Government at Your Service, Public Sector Modernisation Vision and Strategy, 2002-2012*.

Reduce Red Tape and Bureaucracy

When consulting on a review of a policy area, consideration should be given to exploring opportunities for **reducing** bureaucracy and regulatory burdens, for example simplification or repeal of existing regulations.

As appropriate, proposals should consider **alternatives** to legislations and regulations, such as voluntary codes, incentives and disincentives. Respondents should be encouraged to suggest alternatives when submitting feedback on the policy proposal.

Assess Proposals

Where possible an assessment of the proposal should be done highlighting the costs, benefits and risks attached to the implementation of the policy or programme proposal. Respondents should be encouraged to comment on and challenge the assumptions of such assessments where they are included.

When consulting, ensure that you ask about the practical enforcement and implementation issues of your policy, including asking respondents for alternative approaches to implementation.

For more guidance on policy assessments please contact the Policy Analysis and Review Unit of the Cabinet Office, paru@cabinet.gov.jm.

GLOSSARY

OF KEY TERMS

Accessibility	Accessibility can mean the ease with which a location is reached or building is entered. For those with disabilities it also means providing equal access to information. For Internet environments it will also mean designing sites for the way that websites are designed—, choosing contrasting colours for readability, and providing alternative tags for graphics are examples of making Web sites more accessible.
Consultation	The process which Governments and organisations use to seek the views of individuals, groups and communities on specific issues, and give these actors an opportunity to make input into decision-making.
Consultation Liaison Officer	The person within each Ministry with responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> coordinate consultations among the divisions, departments and agencies of their Ministry; <input type="checkbox"/> provide advice and support to those facilitating consultation exercises within their Ministry; <input type="checkbox"/> analyse information related to consultations conducted within their Ministry.
Facilitator	Person(s) responsible for leading consultative exercises.
Feedback	Responses and comments by stakeholders made on proposals submitted for consultation. Feedback can be formal or informal, written or spoken. Formal feedback will usually take to form of direct responses to feedback/response forms provided in consultation documents. Informal feedback will usually take the form of comments made in conversations on the topic of the proposal.
Inclusion	Ensuring that all persons are given equal opportunity to participate in the country's democratic processes.
Informal consultation	Discussions around the issue for consultation before the consultation document is completed and submitted for public feedback.
Participation	An interactive relationship based on partnership which allows the public to be involved in the design, development and implementation of policies, programmes or plans.
People with Disabilities	Term used to refer to persons affected by any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in thE manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.
Plain English	Writing with the reader in mind,, using clear and concise language
Policy development process	The policy development process is presently being revised within the Cabinet Office . Please contact the Policy Analysis and Review Unit to obtain the most recent guidelines for developing Government policy.
Proposals	Draft policies or plans being submitted for consultation.
Stakeholder	An individual, organisation or institution with a stake in the issue under consultation and in the actions of other affected actors.
Stakeholder register	A list of stakeholders who represent the minimum for consultation around a particular issue or policy area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Cabinet Office wishes to thank members of the Steering Committee which was asked to guide the process for the development of the draft submitted for Consultation. These individuals were:

- Onika Campbell/ Coleen White – Ministry of Local Government, Community Development & Sport
- Richard Billings – Social Development Commission
- Mary Clarke - Planning Institute of Jamaica
- Robert Chung – Jamaica Civil Service Association
- Aldrie Henry-Lee– University of the West Indies
- Sheila Nicholson – People’s Action for Community Transformation
- Winsome Wilkins – CVSS/ United Way
- John Campbell - Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica

Where the Steering Committee provided direction and guidance, the Code was drafted by a small team within the Cabinet Office. This team comprised, SueAnn Waite-Chung, Audrey Thomas and Brigette Levy. The document finalised as the Code of Consultation for the Public Sector has benefited from the general feedback and individual responses received during the consultation process. Thank you to all who provided comments and suggestions that allowed for the finalisation of the document.

A number of codes of consultation in use internationally were reviewed in the development of this document. The UK Code of Practice on Consultation among those reviewed was considered the most reflective of what we wanted to produce. As a result we have drawn heavily on the style, layout and very spirit of the UK document.

However, while the influence of the UK Code is very dominant in this document, the drafting team also wishes to acknowledge the use of the following documents:

- A Draft Consultation Code for Jamaica. A-Z Information Jamaica (Consultants) Limited. Cabinet Office Copyright 2003
- Consultation Document: Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue—Proposal for general principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission. Commission of the European Communities 2002.
- National Policy for Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2000.
- North Shore City Council Consultation Policy and Guidelines. North Shore City, New Zealand 2001.
- Public Consultation Policy, Standards and Guidelines. Copyright Queensland Government 1997.
- Viewfinder: A Policy Maker’s Guide to Public Involvement. UK Cabinet Office. Crown Copyright 2002.

The drafting team has made every effort to list all documents reviewed and apologises if any document used has been overlooked in the preparation of the above list.

NOTES