

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLICY MANAGEMENT

Integral to any strategy to strengthen the policy process is a clear understanding of the organisational and institutional structures through which policy initiatives are generated and processed.

Perhaps one should consider here how the policy process actually operates. Policy proposals may emanate from different sources (including the majority party, the public, Parliament, the Cabinet, the bureaucracy, pressure groups and the international arena), formulated and refined by ministers and their senior officials, deliberated upon and approved by Parliament and implemented by the civil service or another appropriate arm of the state. The role of the civil service in this process may vary with the type of policy being formulated. Thus, some policies such as those involving constitutional change, are formulated through referenda or electoral politics. The part played by the civil service here may be fairly limited. Others, including the most highly sensitive foreign and defence policies, are produced in private, within the government machine, and here the role of the civil service is likely to be greater. Finally, policies which take the form of party commitments or have a strongly ideological flavour may have been formulated in the policy-making machinery of the governing party, or through the work of special political advisers and think-tanks, before being presented at the highest levels of government in a largely non-negotiable form.

The role of the official machine has always been, and remains significant. Officials operating from the Cabinet Office and from the Prime Minister's Office continue to serve the core of the central executive in an important fashion.

The cabinet form of government in Commonwealth countries provides for a unique mechanism for integrated policy development, policy co-ordination and monitoring of policy implementation. Many governments have the office of Cabinet Secretary headed by the Civil Service to strengthen the above processes.

THE CABINET OFFICE SYSTEM

All governments face the issue of how best to co-ordinate their business. A system of central co-ordination facilitates the identification and monitoring of policy developments across government ministries and departments. One particular mechanism for enhancing policy co-ordination found in many Commonwealth governments is the Cabinet Office System.

THE NEW ZAMBIAN POLICY PROCESS



Ministry

- (1) Identifies problem
- (2) Consults Cabinet Liaison Officer
- (3) Contacts PAC
- (4) After conferring with IMCO, drafts Cabinet Memorandum



POLICY ANALYSIS



Inter-Ministerial Committee of Officials

- (1) Representatives of Ministries affected by proposed new policy meet to discuss interests
- (2) Representatives provide information relevant to policy issues and/or required to make informed policy recommendations
- (3) Develops recommendation on policy direction
- (4) Reviews first draft of Cabinet memorandum



Relevant Ministers

Review and comment on early draft Cabinet memorandum



Policy Analysis and Co-ordination Division (PAC)

Routes Cabinet memorandum to appropriate Cabinet committee or to Cabinet for consideration



Cabinet Committee

Debate and Recommendation



POLICY DECISION-MAKING/ADOPTION



Cabinet

- (1) Decides on policy proposals
- (2) Ratifies Cabinet Committee recommendations



PAC

Prepares and conveys Record of Cabinet decision



IMPLEMENTATION

(Inter-ministerial Committee of Officials

If necessary co-ordinates implementation of decision)



Ministry(ies)

- (1) Implement decision
- (2) Monitors implementation and evaluates impact



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Cabinet Office serves Cabinet and the network of cabinet committees which between them consider and endorse government policies. Departments with significant policy initiatives are required to clear them through the appropriate

committee. The secretariat support is provided by the Cabinet Office. There is generally also a network of official committees serviced by the Cabinet Office, dealing with day-to-day cross-departmental co-ordination of policy.

The Cabinet Office and similar systems are designed to ensure that all policies are carefully examined for possible cross-departmental implications before they are endorsed. Committee membership is drawn from a wide range of departments, including all those with a direct interest in the area of policy in question.

The number of ministers attending cabinet meetings may vary, but the choice is always a balance between size and representativeness. Cabinet should be of a sufficient size to allow for proper and full discussion of those politically-sensitive issues that require discussion. For example, among Commonwealth countries, the number of cabinet ministers varies from 14 in Singapore; 17 in Botswana, and 26 in Britain, although the numbers of ministers may be much larger. Australia has about 25 ministers, of whom 16 will be in cabinet. In Canada, the Mulroney Cabinet had almost 40 ministers, reduced to 23 when re-structuring took place in 1993.

As part of the civil service reforms in Zambia, in July 1993 the restructuring of Cabinet Office was undertaken in order to:

- enable the Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet to perform its role as "nerve centre" of Government more effectively, particularly in co-ordinating the formulation, monitoring and implementation of Government policies;
- attain a better understanding of the implications of ministerial proposals made to Cabinet; and
- act as an analytical screen for material coming from the line ministries to Cabinet.

Cabinet ministers attend cabinet meetings and as elected members have the final word. The officials who attend can be put in two categories:

(i) Those who assist primarily in ensuring the smooth running of cabinet

In addition to the Secretary to the Cabinet, there are officials in attendance who facilitate the meeting by keeping a record of debate and decisions reached, and who are responsible for the distribution of documents and manuscripts during the meeting, e.g. in Australia, the Cabinet Secretary and two note-takers are in the Cabinet room; other officials are rarely called into Cabinet meetings.

Countries have specific rules on the attendance of other officials and hence some cabinets are more closed than others. For example, in Malaysia, only Ministers and the Secretary to the Cabinet attend Cabinet meetings.

In some other countries, Cabinet meetings are attended by a wider group of officials, as in Botswana where the full Cabinet includes Assistant Ministers, as well as the Secretary and Clerk to the Cabinet and the Attorney General.

Representatives from the PAC attend cabinet meetings in Zambia, usually the Permanent Secretary, two Chief Policy Analysts, two Principal Policy Analysts and a member of the administrative staff, although there are plans to reduce that number.

(ii) Those who provide technical or detailed advice on the topics under discussion

Given the complex nature of government business, subjects under discussion often have technical aspects of which ministers have no detailed knowledge. As it is important that they should be able to reach informed decisions on such topics, a method of providing specific information should be provided. Technical advisers may be brought into the meeting to provide information and answer any questions, however, ensuring that policy decision-making is left to the elected ministers.

The decision on official attendance will depend on the skills available among ministers. The crucial point is to ensure that all decisions are made with the best information available to Cabinet ministers. If Cabinet ministers have a range of technical skills that allows informed discussion of issues – as the highly-educated Singaporean cabinets have – then official attendance to provide that detail may be unnecessary.

In Malaysia, during Cabinet meetings, a ‘beehive’ of civil servants is on call in the next room, prepared to provide information and copies of documents to their respective ministers as the need arises. However, it is rare for ministers presenting cabinet papers to send out a note asking for assistance.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

Committees vary in their status, composition and purpose. Commonwealth countries each operate individual systems which combine standing and *ad hoc* committees of Cabinet members, non-Cabinet members or a combination of both. Committees may either develop policy or be functional or co-ordinating. However, in broad terms, Cabinet committees can serve one of two very different functions:

(i) They may be used to open up the Cabinet system to permit the involvement of civil servants and outsiders

The Economic Committee of the Cabinet in Botswana is a broad, inclusive body comprising the Cabinet, the Governor of the Central Bank, all the Principal Secretaries, and outside (often expatriate) advisers, rather than a sub-set of Cabinet officers, like the Economic Committee of the Cabinet in Britain or Canada. The President chairs Committee meetings. This Committee meets annually to decide on the year's development as it fits into the current five-year plan. Economic Committee meetings are called 'talking shops', because they involve lengthy explanation and discussion of policy questions. These four-hour sessions cover the most important issues.

In Singapore, *ad hoc* technical committees, appointed by the Prime Minister to study the most important policy issues of the day, also provide data, analysis, and policy recommendations to line ministries for use in drafting Cabinet memoranda. For example, when Singapore experienced recession in 1985, the Prime Minister appointed an *ad hoc* Economic Committee (EC) to study the reasons for the nation's first economic downturn since 1963. The powerful committee comprised 1,000 members of the strategic elite from both the public and private sectors.

(ii) They are a means of organising the cabinet workload; in those countries in which committees play a substantial role, often making final decisions on issues of the moment

The establishment of Cabinet committees as a means of reducing the workload is basic to the structures in Britain, Australia and Canada. In Canada, in 1972, Cabinet was restructured and Cabinet committees (sub-committees) formed when it became clear that the growing volume and complexity of policy issues were unmanageable for any single body of Ministers. The new system transferred the focus of policy development in Canada to a number of powerful cabinet committees. Formally, Cabinet committees do not make final decisions on policy issues. Instead, they make recommendations to the full Cabinet. Nonetheless, the role of the full Cabinet has become, essentially, one of ratification of these recommendations with a minimum of debate, and with the occasional need to resolve disputes that cannot be settled at committee level.

Following elections in 1993, the new Canadian Government streamlined the Cabinet to reduce its cost and increase its efficiency. First, the Cabinet was reduced in size from 40 to 23. Second, the number of major Cabinet Committees was reduced from five to four. With a smaller Cabinet, it was possible to eliminate the powerful Policy and Priorities Committee (P&P), which was originally set up when it became difficult to deal with issues at meetings of such a large Cabinet. P&P served as a powerful 'inner-Cabinet', with the authority to ratify policy

decisions. Chaired by the Prime Minister, it had included the Deputy Prime Minister, the Chairman of Management Board of Cabinet, the Treasurer, and four or five other influential ministers. The four main Cabinet committees in the new government are Social Policy, Economic Policy, Treasury Board, and Special Counsel (which is responsible for nominations and treaties). There are two major policy committees, Economic Policy and Social Development Policy. With the most recent changes in the Cabinet, the Justice Committee was combined with Social Policy. One of the most successful features of this system is the fact that the Economic and Social Policy Secretariats assist the policy committees with policy formulation and co-ordination. Their principal responsibilities include:

In Zimbabwe, the system of Cabinet committees serves to co-ordinate government policy. The Cabinet Office serves a network of Cabinet committees which consider and authorise government policies. Ministers with policy initiatives present them to Cabinet but they may be referred to the relevant Cabinet committees for detailed examination. Each has a shadowing official's committee consisting of public servants who give expert advice. The main ones are the Legislation, Economic and Finance Committees. The Legislation Committee, for example, will consider all draft legislation proposed by ministries and outlined at the Opening of each Parliamentary Session by the President. It ensures all legislation conforms to government policy, assigns priorities and monitors progress through Parliament.

- acting as an early liaison with line ministries in the policy formulation process;
- checking that other ministries are consulted, as appropriate; and
- making sure that policies are consistent with the overall direction of the government.

The professional staff of the Secretariats are small.

In Australia, the structure of Cabinet committees will change from government to government. In theory, issues must be discussed at Cabinet committee before going to full Cabinet. However, in practice, routine matters are dealt with in committees and go to Cabinet for endorsement, while the more interesting items go directly to Cabinet.

This pattern reflects how areas for priority attention by any government have changed over time. However, the five functional and co-ordinating committees which operate in the mid-1990s in one form or another, are from the previous 20 years for instance. In October 1993, there were eleven Cabinet committees. Six of these committees are considered functional or co-ordinating committees: General Administrative Committee; Security Committee; Expenditure Review Committee;

Parliamentary Business Committee; Legislation Committee; and Revenue Committee. There are also five policy development committees: Structural Adjustment and Trade; Republic; Native Title; Employment; and Social Policy.

The decisions of these committees go to Cabinet for endorsement or result in the preparation of a submission which is then considered and settled by Cabinet. Policy committees decide on their own work programme after considering a memorandum which the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet co-ordinates, proposing issues which the committee may wish to consider together with a timetable for development of the resulting papers. A great deal of inter-departmental consultation and ministerial involvement contributes to the settlement of a work programme.

While the Prime Minister is nominally the chair of all of the committees, except for Legislation, he may not always attend meetings. In the Prime Minister's absence, the Deputy Chair runs most of the committee meetings.

A particular initiative in improving policy analysis and co-ordination in Trinidad and Tobago was the establishment of four standing committees for Energy, Agriculture, Tourism/Industry and Services. Energy was the first to be established (others followed similarly). The terms of reference were:

1. to review status of designated projects in the area and advise Cabinet on appropriate action;
2. to advise on new investments and review need for incentives that could further develop approved projects;
3. to advise on harmonisation of major projects in sphere and monitor the development of approved projects;
4. to advise Cabinet on strategies and measures to bring greater co-ordination and cohesion in area;
5. to advise governments on matters referred to it that relate to policy direction, management and operations of energy companies;
6. to monitor the implementation of such measures as are included in the National Energy Policy and decisions taken by Cabinet.

The relevant ministries function as the Secretariat for these committees. All these committees were chaired by the Prime Minister, and included relevant line ministries, senior public officers and private sector managers.

Another committee established to enhance policy analysis and co-ordination was the Public Sector Negotiating Committee, which oversees public sector negotiations. The Chief Personnel Officer provides technical advice to the Committee and personnel support services.

In Britain, Cabinet committees meet in several forms: the principal distinctions concern composition, whether they comprise of ministers, officials, or a combination of the two; and whether they are standing or *ad hoc*. The four principal cabinet committees – the only standing committees whose existence

were officially admitted – were Home and Social Affairs (H), Economic Affairs (EA), Overseas and Defence (OD), and Legislation. The first three are especially important. Under Mrs. Thatcher, Ministers were particularly keen to sit on Economic Affairs or its principal sub-committees; they feared that if they did not, then they might not be considered to be in the mainstream of political life. At times during the Thatcher era, EA, which met at No. 10, became so large and unwieldy that the principal focus of action shifted to its sub-committees, e.g. on privatisation, as EA grew too large to take effective decisions itself.

The number of *ad hoc* committees, called miscellaneous (MISC) committees, had, by June 1987, reached a total of about 200. Only about ten to fifteen MISCs, however, were active at any one time. As of December 1993, Cabinet had 26 committees. The rationale which explained why some tasks were given to sub-committees of standing committees, and others to *ad hoc* committees, was based on the likelihood of a need for continuing attention. If a matter was considered essentially ‘one-off’ and transient, it was given an *ad hoc* committee.

In Britain, the Cabinet Office serves both Cabinet and the network of Cabinet Committees which jointly consider and endorse government policies. It is a long-established system designed to ensure that all policies are carefully examined for possible cross-departmental implications. Committee membership is drawn from a wide range of departments, including all those with a direct interest in the area of the policy in question.

Departments with significant policy initiatives are required to clear them through the appropriate committee. Usually the minister concerned writes to the Chairman of the appropriate committee with copies to members and the Cabinet secretariat. Members respond by giving their views. When all members have commented or indicated that they are content, the Chairman writes to the originating minister and signifies the Committee’s approval of the policy, subject to points made.

When it is a very important subject, it may be considered at the meeting of the Committee. In this case, the minister seeking approval circulates a Memorandum to the Committee for discussion. The Chairman sums up the discussion and either signifies the Committee’s approval or suggests further work. Subjects of even greater importance may have to be decided by Cabinet itself. In all cases, secretariat support is provided by the Cabinet Office. There is also a network of official committees serviced by the Cabinet Office, dealing with the day-to-day cross-departmental co-ordination of policy.

When policy is approved, its translation into legislation also involves two special Cabinet committees: the Ministerial Committee on Legislation (LG) and on the Queen’s Speeches and Future Legislation (FLG). Bids for bills are sought annually from departments and a Legislative Programme is recommended to

Cabinet by the FLG Committee. Once approval has been given to a Bill, it is drafted and examined by LG before it is introduced to Parliament. LG is not a policy committee, but ensures that all the necessary policy approvals have been given the provisions of the Bill as drafted, before agreeing to its introduction.

Zambia is adopting similar procedures. After a thorough examination of the Committee System, it was decided to re-structure and separate committees into two categories. Cabinet Committees are created in accordance with Section 50(1) of the Constitution which provides for the establishment of Cabinet and its functions. It is, therefore, necessary that only Committees which operate on behalf of Cabinet should report to Cabinet. Other committees are not designated as Cabinet Committees because they are advisory to the President. Instead, they are designated as 'Special Committees'.

In January 1995, it was decided by the Cabinet that the 17 committees inherited from the previous government and drawn mostly along ministerial responsibilities did not reflect the priorities of the current government. As a result, these committees did not operate as expected and, in fact, some of them never met.

The Cabinet system was revived in order to:

- reduce the workload of the full Cabinet and the length of Cabinet meetings;
- enhance the quality of decisions through specialisation; and
- enhance the concept of collective responsibility.

In tailoring the committees in accordance with the priority areas of government, special attention is devoted to economic recovery through the Structural Adjustment Programme. In order to monitor effectively, not only the economic recovery programme but also its social consequences, three Cabinet committees have been established with responsibility for the economic and social restructuring and development concerns and government efforts to rehabilitate the run-down economic and social infrastructure. Since the present government came to power, the country has been experiencing sporadic droughts resulting in the need to mobilise emergency food to distribute to deserving areas. In order to undertake this responsibility and to monitor the effects of general disasters and mount other emergency operations, it has become necessary for the Government to classify this as another priority area. Other important areas in which it has been found necessary to have Cabinet committees include Defence and Security, Foreign Affairs, International Relations and Legislation. The Cabinet committees dealing with these matters have been maintained. In addition, it has been found necessary to formalise the operations of the Parliamentary Planning Committee under the

Chairmanship of the Vice-President as a 'Special' Committee. This committee will be responsible for planning government business in Parliament.

In order to improve the management of the business of committees, it was decided to centralise both the servicing of committees and the hosting of their meetings. In this connection, the Policy Analysis and Co-ordination Division is responsible for servicing all Cabinet committees except the Legislation Committee which will be serviced by the Attorney-General's Chambers. Similarly, the Administration Division of Cabinet Office will service all the 'Special' committees except the Parliamentary Planning Committee which will be serviced by the Office of the Vice-President.

CABINET SECRETARIAT

To provide smoothly-functioning support for the operations of Cabinet, most Commonwealth countries establish a Cabinet Secretariat to ensure submissions are reviewed in proper form and after required consultations.

Malaysia has a system of Cabinet committees headed by the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister. They deal with various matters, for example, investment, land, salaries and service conditions. The Secretariat to these committees is the ministry responsible for the portfolio for which the Cabinet Committee is set up.

It is usually made up of civil servants, but prime ministers have a series of choices:

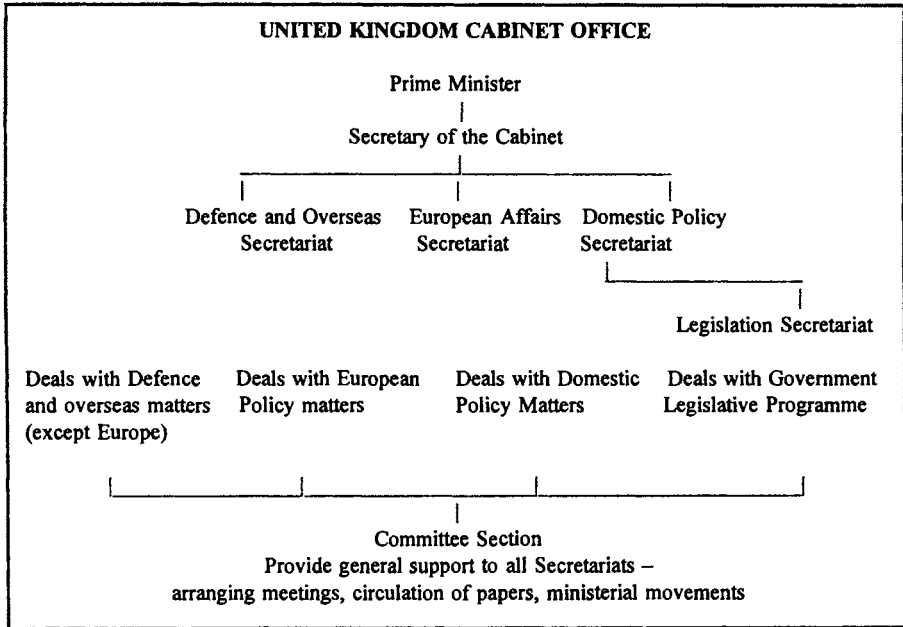
- Should it be partisan or non-partisan, or some combination of both?
- Should it serve the prime minister as an individual or the cabinet as a collectivity?
- How should the Cabinet Secretariat relate to the Treasury/Finance Department and other central agencies?

In most cases, Cabinet Secretariats are part of the civil service. The most extensive structures are in Britain, Canada and Australia, as described below.

In Britain, in 1979, the work of the Cabinet Secretariat was divided into four main secretariats: Economic, Home, Overseas and Defence, and European. Science and Technology was added in 1983. Economic, Home, and Overseas and Defence corresponded to the principal standing committees of Cabinet.

The Economic Secretariat was responsible for economic, industrial and energy policy, and, after the Central Policy Review Staff was abolished in 1983, took over the production of the *ad hoc* studies and analysis that it had previously undertaken. The Home Secretariat oversaw social policy, education, law and order and

environmental matters, and co-ordinated the government's legislative programme. The Overseas and Defence Secretariat oversaw developments in the foreign and defence policy area. Each Secretariat had a deputy secretary in charge. However, later in view of the overlap between both economic and 'home' areas, Prime Minister Major's government consolidated the two secretariats into one Domestic Policy Secretariat.



In Canada, the Privy Council Office has 300 staff, including 50 to 60 professionals. It not only provides the operational support for cabinet and cabinet committee meetings, it also analyses submissions, briefs cabinet chairpersons, co-ordinates the government's policy priorities process and the development of large cross-cabinet issues and provides staff for the policy committees.

In Australia, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which includes the Cabinet Office, supports the Prime Minister in all his areas of responsibility. In 1995, there were 12 divisions in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), in addition to the Central Office and Cabinet Office, including the Economic Division, the Government Division, the Industries, Resources and Environment Division, and the Social Policy Division.

The Cabinet Office provides advice to departments on the process of handling Cabinet matters, but *does not advise them on policy*. The Cabinet Office, also called the Cabinet Secretariat, comprises five senior civil servants, as well as

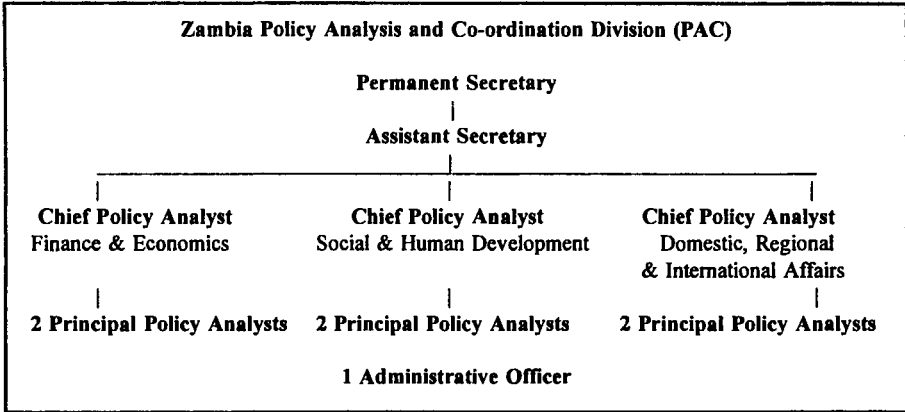
support staff. The Cabinet Office is responsible for drawing together proposed business and seeking the prime minister's approval of cabinet programmes and agendas on a regular basis. In that process, the Cabinet Office tries to ensure that ministers with an interest in the issue are proposed for 'co-option', the term used for calling non-Cabinet ministers into Cabinet meetings. It is also responsible for ensuring that the circulation of Cabinet documents is in accordance with the procedures laid down, and thus consistent with the principle of collective responsibility. Cabinet staff seek to ensure that appropriate consultation has taken place before a submission is lodged by distributing drafts to the relevant departments for comment. In this way, the Prime Minister can be more confident that the relevant ministers have been briefed on the issues, and have been given the chance to raise any substantial concerns before the proposal is submitted to the Cabinet Office.

In Zambia, the functions of Cabinet Office are derived from the Constitution of Zambia Act No. 1, 1991, which stipulates that the Cabinet shall formulate the policy of government and shall be responsible for advising the President with respect to the policy of government, and with respect to such other matters as may be referred to it by the President.

Singapore does not have a separate Cabinet Office. The Prime Minister's Office handles all Cabinet matters. It is small, with 43 members, and is headed by a senior civil servant, who is Secretary to the Prime Minister and personal secretary to the Prime Minister.

Following the re-structuring in 1993, the two existing Cabinet Office streams – Economic and Finance and Cabinet Affairs – were merged to form a new Policy Analysis and Co-ordination Division (PAC). This performs many of the same functions as the Economic and Social Policy Secretariat's supporting Cabinet Offices in other Commonwealth countries. PAC's mission is to improve the effectiveness of government by providing Cabinet with high quality advice and assisting it to co-ordinate and implement policies. PAC's four principal tasks are to:

- ensure the quality of proposals presented to the Cabinet by its members;
- serve as a secretariat to the Cabinet;
- co-ordinate the preparation of proposals to the Cabinet and the implementation of Cabinet decisions; and
- monitor and report on the implementation of Cabinet decisions.



STAFFING NEEDS TO BE FLEXIBLE AND OF HIGH QUALITY

The British Cabinet Secretariat has 70 staff members. One of the most successful features is that all its officials are on loan from other departments. Efforts are made to achieve a balance of secondments from a range of Whitehall departments. Most officials stay in the Cabinet Office for two years, with the exception of deputy secretaries who stay for three years. This ‘loan system’ and relatively brief duration of Cabinet posts has two great advantages:

- it enables a wide number of promising officials to gain experience at the centre; and
- it ensures a steady supply of appointees with fresh experience of the workings of the departments which helps keep the Cabinet Office fully in touch with, and in the confidence of, the rest of Whitehall.

The Secretariat has flexibility in its staffing. The Secretary to the Cabinet can arrange cross-overs between secretariats either in crisis periods or in the seasonal peak periods to ensure flexibility. This flexibility also helps to ensure that the Cabinet Office is adequately staffed to maintain the flow of work.

In Botswana, the Finance Ministry recruited the most talented young people in the first generation of citizens. Since then, the Ministry has been a career path for elite civil servants, who are often sent abroad for training in the course of their tenure in the Treasury. Planning officers are often seconded from Finance to other line ministries, where they assist with developing Cabinet papers.

As part of the process of change in the public service, the Government of Jamaica had to strengthen its Cabinet Office. The new version Cabinet Office, was implemented following a UNDP-sponsored report which stated,

"The first priority is to get the machinery at the centre right, i.e. to fill the void, by establishing a capability under the Prime Minister's personal authority to command and control the determination of strategy, and the development of resources – money and people – to implement it."

"The Prime Minister's Office should therefore house a strengthened Cabinet Secretariat enhanced so as to take over:

- full responsibility for bringing together issues which bear on the Government's strategy and presenting them to Ministers, via the Prime Minister, for collective decision;
- the lead role in corporate planning for the Government as a whole; and
- monitor and as necessary direct the implementation of policy.

These recommendations were supported by a committee of prominent Jamaicans. The report went on,

"New approaches and tasks must be assumed by the Secretaries' Board in a restructured Government machinery. This Management Board must work in tandem with Cabinet, meeting weekly; its agenda reflecting Cabinet's, providing regular follow-up reports to Cabinet and chaired by the Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet."

SECRETARY TO THE CABINET AS HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE

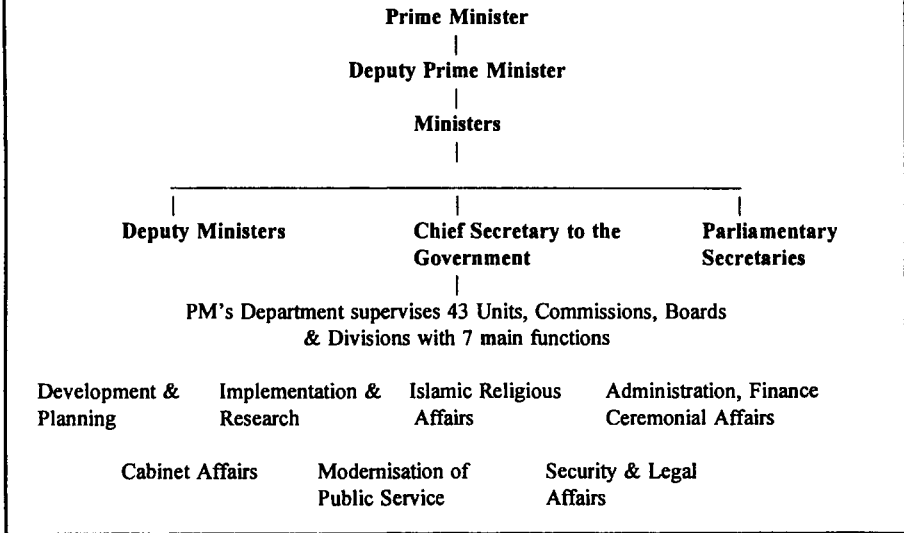
In most Commonwealth countries, the Secretary to the Cabinet is a commanding figure who usually serves as the Head of the Civil Service and is often the senior adviser to the Prime Minister or President, as well.

As Head of the Civil Service, the Cabinet Secretary oversees the implementation of policy decisions agreed by the Cabinet. He/she chairs the Committee of Permanent Secretaries. He/she also is the focal point for directing administrative reforms within the public service.

The current British Secretary to the Cabinet is also the Prime Minister's principal official adviser. The abolition of the Civil Service Department (CSD) in 1981 greatly increased the work and responsibilities of the Secretary to the Cabinet. The

The Prime Minister's Department in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the Cabinet Office is placed under the Chief Secretary to the Government who is also Secretary to the Cabinet and head of the civil service. As head of the Cabinet Office he/she is responsible for summoning meetings of the Cabinet, arranging the agenda, distributing papers for discussion, passing on the decisions of the Cabinet to government bodies required to implement them, and keeping minutes.



CSD's functions were divided between the Treasury and the Cabinet Office. The Treasury took over the pay and numbers functions of the CSD; the Cabinet Office took over responsibility for senior appointments along with the NEXT STEPS Programme of Managerial Reform.

In Botswana, the current Secretary to the Cabinet is called the Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP). Up until three years ago, the Secretary to the Cabinet had very little back-up in the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration. At that time, three Permanent Secretaries were added to his staff: a Permanent Secretary for Economic, Political, and Administrative Affairs. Each Permanent Secretary and his staff – a deputy and about four other officers – advise their Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration on the Cabinet memoranda falling under their domain. They sit down with their Minister before Cabinet meetings and decide how to approach the issues on the agenda.

Other offices in the Presidency include the Directorate of Public Service Management (Personnel), Foreign Affairs, the Police, and the Army. The top leadership in the Presidency, including the PSP, his three Permanent Secretaries, the Secretary for Employment, and the Commissioner of Police meet the day before

the Cabinet meeting to share their views with the President and advise him on the issues up for discussion.

This practice has been a useful way to prepare the President for Cabinet meetings.

The Treasury plays the role of "first among equals" in the Botswana Government, as it does in Britain. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning, who is also the Vice-President, is enormously powerful and is the most senior Minister in Cabinet.

The Zambian Secretary to the Cabinet is appointed by the President, subject to ratification by the National Assembly. He is Head of the Public Service and is responsible for serving the general efficiency of the Public Service. He is in charge of the Cabinet Office and is responsible, in accordance with the instructions given to him by the President, for arranging the business of Cabinet, for keeping the Minutes of Cabinet and for conveying decisions made in Cabinet to the appropriate authorities.

As in many other Commonwealth countries, the Zambian Secretary to the Cabinet serves as Head of the Civil Service and Principal Adviser to the President. In 1993, as a first step in the Public Service Reform Programme, the Government of Zambia decided to restructure the Cabinet Office. This was done in order to enable the Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet to perform its role of "nerve centre" of government more effectively, particularly in co-ordinating the formulation, monitoring and implementation of government policies.

Following the restructuring, the Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet now has:

- (a) One Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet instead of three; and
- (b) Three Permanent Secretaries, each heading a Division as follows:
 - Policy Analysis and Co-ordination Division;
 - Management Development Division; and
 - Administration Division.

In Canada, the Privy Council Office is headed by the Clerk of the Privy Council who is Head of the Civil Service and is the Prime Minister's main adviser. In contrast, Australia's Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is also the Secretary to the Cabinet; he is not Head of the Civil Service in the formal sense, but he is the highest ranking civil servant. There is a close link between the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Cabinet Secretary. In Canada and Australia, those officials often change when the Prime Minister changes, even

though their replacements have usually been career civil servants. Prime Ministers like to have chief advisers whom they regard as compatible.

CONSULTATION

Cabinet is too busy to argue about facts and too important to be surprised with proposals whose implications have not been considered. Therefore, all relevant facts need to be agreed by official consultations, particularly to establish the financial costs and implications of a proposal for all ministries. Consultation can either be a requirement for the acceptance of a Cabinet submission by the cabinet office, or the submissions can be monitored by a committee of permanent secretaries. Thereafter, the papers should be circulated in advance to allow ministers to absorb and be briefed on the issues. Further information on the management of Cabinet agenda items and the preparation of Cabinet memoranda and submissions is given in the annexes.

The Australian Cabinet Handbook emphasises the importance of inter-departmental consultation in the development of proposals to Cabinet. The objective of consultation is to try to either resolve differences in advance of Cabinet consideration or identify them in a way that will facilitate decision-making. Ministers are responsible for ensuring that consultation takes place at ministerial and official levels on all matters where more than one portfolio interest is involved. Memoranda involving matters of joint responsibility are supposed to be presented jointly by the ministers concerned.

Consultation entails more than mere circulation of a draft Cabinet proposal for information or an already finalised submission for the addition of a "consultation comment". Rather, consultation is supposed to be an integral part of the development of a policy proposal from the outset through to clearance of a final draft. Ministers, and officers in departments with an interest, should have ample opportunity to contribute to the development of the proposal and resolve any differences before its submission.

Initiating departments should build adequate time for other departments to express their views into the overall timetable for developing a proposal. The general rule is that departments which are involved should be allowed at least two full working days to comment on the final draft of a submission. On the instruction of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Office returns memoranda submitted before adequate time has been allowed for the receipt of consultation comments. If the draft memorandum is changed significantly after departments have been given an opportunity to comment, the revised document is again circulated for comment.

When the department being consulted agrees with all the points in the Cabinet memorandum, they simply type 'Yes' in the appropriate place on the first *pro forma* page of the document. Where agreement has not been reached or there are qualifications or complications, the position is outlined in the body of the submission under the heading "consultation".

Initiating ministers must amend their drafts to adequately reflect the suggestions of the department consulted; to simply record a difference of view as a 'Consultation Comment' should be the last resort. However, it is appropriate to use the 'Consultation Section' to record concisely the recommendations when they do not represent a consensus of the views of those consulted.

The requirement that the Department of the Prime Minister and all relevant departments, such as the Treasury, provide a Co-ordination Comment ensures automatic consultation on each Cabinet submission before it is lodged. The Prime Minister and Cabinet Office which deals with the issue in question, such as the Economic or Social Policy Division, writes the analytical comment after the submission has been finalised by the department. The Co-ordination Comment points out issues that may have been overlooked or inconsistencies with other recently approved initiatives, explains inter-departmental differences of opinion on the question, and suggests further analysis or action which should take place. If the analysts writing the comment anticipate that the issue will be contentious, they will consult with the department in question beforehand. Usually, the initiating department does not make major changes, unless they receive a very negative co-ordination Comment from PMAC or the Treasury. In Zambia, co-ordination in the preparation of memoranda submitted to Cabinet and in the implementation of the decisions made by Cabinet, is now the responsibility of Interministerial Committees of Officials (IMCOs). IMCCOs are set up by PAC when a ministry advised PAC that a Cabinet memorandum that it plans to prepare will involve the interests of other ministries. These IMCOs are ad hoc, chaired by PAC, and attended by officials. IMCOs aim to iron out contentious issues at the official level long before the matter is brought to Cabinet or its Committees.

Co-ordination between PAC and the Ministries has been improved by the appointment of Cabinet Liaison Officers (CLOs) in each Ministry. CLOs work together with PAC in the preparation of Cabinet memoranda and participate in IMCOs.

In 1994, New Zealand began a decade of economic and public sector reform where a significant number of machinery changes occurred, with departments abolished, merged or created. An effort to improve on the complex co-ordinating policy was to clarify, emphasise and more strictly enforce the Cabinet Office procedures for consultation. The *Cabinet Office Manual*, which was revised in 1991, sets out specific requirements for consultation expected of departments.

Consultation is necessary to ensure that ministers receive properly co-ordinated policy advice. The purpose of revision to avoid situations in which departments were not given an opportunity to comment on issues in which they had a legitimate interest, before the proposal was submitted to Cabinet or Committee. Badly co-ordinated policy leads to conflicting and inconsistent policy, abrupt reversals or changes in policy and wasted resources.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was created in 1990 to improve policy co-ordination. It combines the policy advice role of the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet-serving role of Cabinet Office. Requirements for consultation expected by government in respect of policy are set out in the New Zealand Cabinet Office Manual. The key points of the Manual are:

- Primary responsibility for good consultation lies with the department initiating a Cabinet paper. Departments must ensure they consider all the implications for other government agencies and consult them at the earliest opportunity when preparing a Cabinet submission.
- Actual process of consultation needs to be tailored to the issue, the resources and the deadline.
- Accurate summaries of views of other departments.
- Departments to certify – using a set form – to the satisfaction of their minister that they have consulted all interested government agencies and their views are reflected properly in the paper.
- Departments should endeavour to produce a single joint submission rather than attaching separate reports.
- Cabinet Office staff are authorised to refer back to the Minister who signed it, any submission where consultation appears to be inadequate.
- All submissions that contain recommendations on expenditures and revenue or have financial/fiscal/economic implications must be referred to the Treasury for comment.

In Malaysia, the Secretaries General (Permanent Secretaries) would already have sorted out any wrangling between ministries with differing points of view on a Cabinet paper before the Cabinet meeting takes place. There is a weekly meeting of the Secretaries General (or Permanent Secretaries) of each ministry. This core of civil servants controls the administrative machinery of the government and thus plays a critical role in policy analysis and co-ordination. At these meetings, cabinet memos are debated and differences resolved. The decisions taken are then filtered

back to the ministries. The Secretary to the Cabinet, who is the most senior civil servant, chairs the meetings and thereby tracks the progress of Cabinet papers.

CABINET SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

It is important to ensure that action is taken on policy decisions. Cabinets can either establish a process for monitoring the progress of decisions, including perhaps a 'report-back' mechanism, or they can rely on ministers. In a few countries there are detailed monitoring systems; however, monitoring is usually the responsibility of departments especially in more complex governments where there is little formal central capacity.

Ministers and Departments responsible for implementation

In Canada, there is no formal mechanism in the Privy Council Office (PCO) for facilitating implementation or monitoring of decisions taken by the Cabinet. At the political level, ministers are accountable for implementation, and at the technical level, the department which submitted the Cabinet memorandum is responsible for implementation. Inter-departmental co-ordination on policy implementation is done on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, an inter-departmental committee was set up to monitor implementation of the Canadian environmental policy decisions which originated at the Rio Conference. However, the PCO may ask the technical department to report back on how the policy is being implemented, especially when the policy is particularly innovative. In Britain, the Policy Unit may chase up progress on issues of particular interest, but ministers are primarily held accountable.

Part of the Government of Jamaica reforms for the strengthening of Cabinet Office has been the introduction of regular meetings with Permanent Secretaries. This move to improve consultation is to confirm that important programmes are being implemented. Also, a committee of this board now deals with important issues of governance.

This is one example of how Cabinet Office is fulfilling its mandate to be the focal point for change.

In Singapore, responsibility for implementation lies with the Ministry or Statutory Board that formulated the proposal. Formal mechanisms for co-ordinating policies, facilitating implementation or monitoring decisions are not necessary in Singapore for several reasons. First, Singapore's small size enhances administrative co-ordination and integration and promotes responsiveness on the part of public officials. Second, a concern with policy implementation is built in to the ruling party's way of governing. When a policy is raised in Cabinet, Singapore's leaders will automatically ask whether or not it is realistic. Political scholars argue that this

explains Singapore's efficiency. In the last analysis, however, Singapore's efficiency is rooted in the PAP's (the ruling party's) appreciation of the importance of implementation (a rarity in a developing country) and in the PAP's determination to achieve it.

One significant development in the process of strengthening of the Cabinet Office in Jamaica has been the follow-up action on Cabinet decisions. Since 1993 the fate of Cabinet decisions are being tracked by assigned project officers in the Cabinet Office to ensure they are being implemented on a timely, efficient and effective basis.

Consequently, the decision-making and problem-solving approach of Singapore's leaders was to set out goals and priorities, plan strategies, chart and evaluate alternatives, and anticipate problems. They also appreciated the role of fate in sometimes confounding the best-laid plans, and so an important guiding principle was policy flexibility.

A "Feedback Paper" in Malaysia

In Malaysia, after Cabinet meetings, ministers debrief their senior officers on what transpired and instruct them to take the appropriate action. Once a policy proposed in a Cabinet paper has been implemented, the initiating minister must inform the Cabinet in another formal memo to Cabinet, called a "Feedback Paper". All ministers must report back on action taken within two months. The Cabinet divisions take primary responsibility for monitoring feedback: they chase ministries with outstanding feedback, using a computerised monitoring system, and they summarise the feedback for the Cabinet. Relevant ministries are then told of the Cabinet view of their follow-up action. The Cabinet Division also monitors at an aggregate level and reports to the Chief Secretary on the overall performance of each ministry concerning their speed of implementation of Cabinet decisions.

Integrated Project Monitoring System

Malaysia's success with its Integrated Project Monitoring System (SETIA) has attracted attention from a variety of developing countries as a potential model. This innovative system co-ordinates the Monitoring System of the Implementation and Co-ordination Unit with the computerised information systems of three other central agencies: the Project Planning System of the Economic Planning Unit, the Computerised Information System of the Treasury, and the Federal Accounting System of the Accountant General's office. By consolidating the information for planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects, the system has proven to be of vital importance to decisions relating to the budgetary allocations for projects. It also eliminates the problem of overlap in the information needs of operating departments of central agencies.

In the late 1970s, the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Manpower Planning Unit (MAMPU), located in the Prime Minister's Office, replaced the

Operation Room Red Book System

The institutional mechanism for implementation and co-ordination that received the greatest acclaim and publicity in Malaysia is the Operation Room Red Book System of project planning, scheduling, and monitoring. Much has been written on the success of this system in galvanising the entire bureaucracy towards a common development goal. Under this system, an operations room was installed at each level of government – district, state and federal – where a development committee met regularly to plan and review the progress of development projects. These projects were charted in large red books and on maps so that members of the committee could determine whether a project was on schedule or was lagging and should be corrected. This system served as a yardstick for monitoring and comparing progress.

Implementation, Co-ordination and Development Administration Unit (ICDAU) as the responsible agency for the co-ordination and implementation functions of all departments and agencies. When it was created, MAMPU was given responsibility for studying and proposing measures on major problems in administrative development. Today, MAMPU continues to spearhead administrative improvements and modernisation efforts in the government service.

In Kenya, the Government has set up an 'Efficiency Monitoring Unit' in the Cabinet Office with a mandate of continuously studying and advising the government on problems encountered during the implementation of development policies, programmes and projects, and suggests remedial measures and necessary follow up. It recommends to the implementing ministries/departments, and ultimately to the government, the use of the most cost-effective methods of implementing development programmes and projects, and suggest improvements in the existing methods of monitoring their implementation.

The Unit also studies a selected number of implemented projects with a view to drawing practical experience for use by designers and planners of similar projects. The members of the Unit also participate in public policy analysis committees and task forces.

In Zimbabwe, the Monitoring and Implementation Unit was established in the Office of the President to track implementation of Cabinet decisions, government programmes and projects, including the implementation of the Reform Programme.

CABINET SECRETARIAT RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

In Zambia, monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of Cabinet decisions is one of PAC's most important – and challenging – new tasks. The Cabinet's interest in monitoring the implementation of its decisions increased when a PAC study showed that only a small proportion of decisions were actually implemented. The responsibility for implementation lies with the ministries, but they have to report to the Cabinet through PAC on any difficulties in meeting the

targets set forth in the Cabinet memoranda monitoring plan. PAC now prepares for the Cabinet quarterly reports on the implementation of Cabinet decisions.

Policy Committee responsible for monitoring implementation

In Botswana, the Economic Committee uses its January meetings act as a mechanism for monitoring implementation of the previous year's policies. When ministries have failed to carry out the planned policy programme, they are expected to explain the reasons to this large audience. If they have failed to carry out the last year's programme, they are given a deadline by which they must implement the policy, otherwise they will not receive any additional resources from the next year's budget.

POLICY UNITS NEAR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

Specialised strategic units are often found near heads of governments. Such specialists are often multi-disciplinary and are responsible for establishing networks with other players and monitor environment on an on-going basis. It is often argued that such a capacity, also because of its political ownership and authority, is best placed centrally to advise government and to monitor and evaluate performance. The aim of such centralised policy units is to build up islands of professional excellence near main decision *loci* to provide analysis as an aid to top level decision-making.

Central capacities, close to government, have, *inter alia*, the responsibility to collect and interpret information and policy options relevant to the business of government at that level. This includes macro-perspective as well as sectoral specific advice (as often managed within government departments). A variety of government-related organisations are usually active in different policy arenas and government often sees this as important. There is a need to provide government access to debate and the exploration of data, issues, options and priorities.

Co-ordination of such initiatives by the various players as discussed above is an obvious concern. In such conditions, central policy units are often tasked with facilitating compatible agendas amongst such players. The advantage of such a unit is that specialist tasks, such as policy analysis, information generation and evaluation capacity, can be contracted out.

Both political ownership and professional ownership are key requirements for such a central policy unit. While professional excellence is essential, in many countries where policy capacities are often placed near the heads of government, sufficient excellence to effectively drive policy through is simply not in place or of a

sufficient standard. On the other hand, there are many examples of the meaningful role that such units can play.

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Do prime ministers and cabinets need additional partisan advice from political advisers, working within policy units or in their individual capacities, or can it be fully realised within a cabinet office staffed by civil servants?

In Australia and Canada, there are substantial Prime Minister's Offices that not only service the routine organisation of the Prime Minister, but will also provide substantive political advice. The principal officers there may take the lead in developing solutions to pressing problems, or may provide continuing links with the party organisation or external groups. They serve the leader as an individual. The distinction between the official and the partisan components is that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) in Australia and the Privy Council Office (PCO) in Canada are non-partisan, operationally active and politically sensitive, while the Prime Minister's Offices are partisan, operationally sensitive and politically active.

PM&C and the PCO both service Cabinet and provide briefs to the chair of committees. But they do not provide advice to the ministers as a group.

In Tanzania, a policy unit has been established within the Cabinet Secretariat of the President's Office, and Policy Analysis and Review Units (PARU) have been established in the Prime Minister's Office and Civil Service Department. All other ministries and offices are responsible for policy management on an *ad hoc* basis. The overall aim of the PARUs is to create a responsive and supportive system for those involved in policy initiation and policy-making.

In Britain, one attempt to provide such a body was the Central Policy Review Unit (CPRS), that existed from 1970 to 1983. Consisting of both civil servants and outsiders, it was designed to provide a central capability that gave strategic direction to the government. It held "strategy review" meetings with ministers, undertook research projects and provided collective briefs to ministers on issues on which they may otherwise have been uninformed. The CPRS was abolished in 1983 as it became detached from the day-to-day problems of government and was unpopular with departments and ministers whose policy initiatives it challenged. Most importantly, it lost the support of the Prime Minister. It has been supplanted by the Policy Unit in No. 10. Where the CPRS sought to chart strategy, the Policy Unit fights fires – for the Prime Minister.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE NO. 10 POLICY UNIT IN BRITAIN

The Prime Minister's Office has, in addition to the usual private office and the press office staff, a small group of staff known as the *No. 10 Policy Unit*. This Unit or "think-tank" is headed by an officer of Deputy Secretary-level who is in charge of a small team of eight people directly responsible to the Prime Minister and tied to his/her agenda. It provides the Prime Minister with:

- a unit which recruits from outside the civil service;
- advice across the board on issues of the moment for the prime minister;
- is avowedly partisan; and
- can offer alternatives to the issues that come to Cabinet or the Prime Minister for decision.

The quality of the Unit's staff is superb: all of its members have excelled in their professions, inside or outside of government. The range of experience and skills of its members is crucial to the unit's success. (A lawyer, an economist, a management consultant, an industrialist can all give their angle on a problem.) In direct contrast to the civil service, the distinction between members is not vertical but horizontal – one individual may have the small businessman's perspective while another may take the "Treasury view".

Members of the Unit are encouraged to stay in touch with valuable outside experience by visiting factories, hospitals, schools etc. It is very useful for the Prime Minister to have a direct report from someone visiting the real world, so that the Unit can help to give a non-Whitehall perspective, drawn on outside visits or contacts with outsiders.

The Unit aims to cover most areas of domestic, economic and foreign policy. Its style is open and informal with the entire team discussing major issues before advice is presented to the Prime Minister. Peer review assists in keeping the Unit's output sharp and productive.

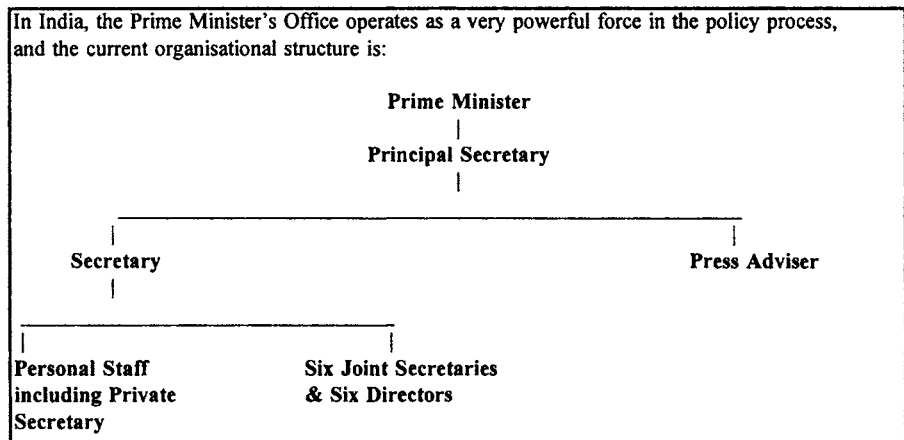
Proposals produced by the group are naturally available direct to the Prime Minister, who has the opportunity to discuss the topics at a regular weekly meeting – and at other times as necessary, for instance at Cabinet Committees or bilateral meetings with other ministers. The Unit serves the Prime Minister alone, and as with special advisers, the team lasts just as long as the Prime Minister. Consequently, the style, aims and modes of operation vary.

The relationship between the Head of the Unit and the Prime Minister is crucial. They meet weekly, and the Unit team meets twice a week to review the Prime Minister's diary, discuss upcoming business, and allocate staff. Members occasionally brief the Prime Minister personally before major meetings. The Private Office forwards to the Unit all papers covering domestic policy except those dealing with appointments and security matters, and this ensures that the Unit sends the Prime Minister work that is relevant to immediate preoccupations.

The Unit's work takes two forms:

- Most effort is spent responding to submissions from departments, which are copied to the Unit for comment, preferably before the Prime Minister sees them so that the Unit can attach a covering comment. (After analysing the proposal, the Unit offers advice which may question the proposal's premises, the consistency of its arguments, or its failure to consider broader implications.)
- Less common, but equally important, is the Unit's proactive role in putting up its own initiatives which may have been developed, for example, with academia. However, launching a new idea may be difficult as the Prime Minister must be persuaded that the problem exists. If convinced, the Unit then provides arguments to make the departmental minister take the problem seriously and produces a detailed answer to be discussed between the department, Policy Unit and the Prime Minister.

The No. 10 Policy Unit does not have the resources to carry through its own research programme. It can only develop an idea a little and move it onto the Prime Minister, but ultimately the department responsible must do the hard work.



There is a distinction between providing *operational* support for ministers in ensuring that Cabinet runs smoothly and offering *policy* advice on either individual policy or broad strategic directions. Serving the collectivity of Cabinet by trying to define strategic direction is difficult because of the diverse interest of government and departmental empires. A short-lived attempt to recreate the CPRS in Australia in 1973-74 quickly failed. There are few examples of success; yet the ideal remains attractive.

POLICY UNITS WITHIN DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Whereas central policy units have multi-sectoral integrative and co-ordinating responsibilities, government departments mostly feel a need for internal sectorally-focused policy capacity. Thus, in Britain, for example, each department has some such capacity which is supposed to link with the multi-sectorally focused unit in the Prime Minister's Office. In both Western and developing countries, the finance and economic affairs departments often operate with the support of such specialised capacities. In many developing countries, however, skills are so thinly spread that it is difficult to equip the various departments in this manner.

Botswana would appear to be a particularly noteworthy case in Africa where systematic steps were taken to engage a number of experts, especially economists, in policy analysis within government departments. A programme was embarked upon to recruit more economists and to introduce short- and long-term planning in government departments. This deployment of technical skills in the budgetary process and the making of broader economic policy seems to underpin one of Africa's relative success stories.

There is also a danger that sectoral capacities within various government departments may pull in different directions resulting in unco-ordinated, fragmented policies.

POLICY CAPACITIES AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM GOVERNMENT

Think-tanks or policy capacities which are somewhat removed from government could contribute greatly to the quality of policy-making. This enables the policy analysts to identify issues independently and conduct important on-going research and analysis which might not be immediately politically expedient. In this manner a long-term approach, based on systematic and more rational analysis, might prevail.

An example of a think-tank fairly close to government is the Australian Industry Commission. It has no formal political powers, but is tasked by government to

investigate a range of policy issues, such as the impact of the petroleum process on the economy; transport and taxation possibilities; environmental waste management; intra-state aviation; mineral and mining processing in Australia; taxation and financial policy impacts on urbanisation and many other socio-economic policy matters. It performs many of its tasks on commission, but also undertakes on-going work to underpin its more specific research.

Many think-tanks are almost fully independent from government. Such institutions exist in many countries, but have come to play a particularly prominent role in Western societies. It is notable that that governments which operate in such pluralistic policy environments with a multiplicity of think-tanks, are likely to experience high-quality technical support in the policy-making process. Relatively independent capacities could make politicians less vulnerable to receiving unchallenged and inappropriate advice from insulated policy advisers.

Support services are often rendered by agencies such as the British Information Service and the Civil Service College. The agencies operate on a semi-autonomous basis, after performing policy analysis, information, and training services on behalf of government. The relationship between government and agencies is typically formalised in terms of a charter document; addressing roles; key performance areas; delegation; accountability and other issues. The agencies report to Parliament annually in the context of the relevant ministry, board and chief executive.

The most difficult problem of policy research and development organisations is that on the one hand they need independence in thinking, while on the other hand, they need to be acceptable to top decision-makers and have access to them. This is a difficult demand in many countries and particularly in developing countries.

AD HOC USE OF SPECIFIC CAPACITIES

Since a government may not have all the technical policy capacity that may be required, it needs to ensure that it can access different capacities.

One means used by many governments world-wide are commissions of inquiry. However, some commissions merely legitimate positions decided on by governments even before the commissions were appointed, which may not be a cost-effective approach.

Some government leaders appoint specific experts to undertake particular assignments within or outside the administration.

Universities, independent policy think-tanks and governmental science as well as research agencies are also generally mobilised to provide *ad hoc* advice. In Britain,

widespread use is made of such capacities. There have been some successes in Tanzania where the government actively embarked upon efforts to build such capacities at university level, in particular the University of Dar es Salaam.

The *ad hoc* usage of such informal capacities may provide flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to gain access to expertise. However, it has weaknesses and may lead to a patchwork approach to policy as no issues are dealt with comprehensively because advisers focus on immediate tasks. Moreover, it may lead to political favouritism and tend to elevate individual leaders. Thus, while "*adhocracy*" could stimulate creativity, it could also work against coherence and consistency.