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Secretaries General of Ministries
Hon. State Secretaries
Heads of Federal Departments
Heads of Federal Statutory Bodies
Local Government Authorities

Campaign To Reduce The Backlog Of Work In Government Agencies

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to explain the need for the Campaign To Reduce The Backlog Of Work In Government Agencies. This directive also outlines the method of implementation of the campaign and steps that can be taken by Government agencies that face the problem of backlog of work.

B. BACKGROUND

2. Since the launching of the Excellent Work Culture Campaign by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister in 1989, steps have been taken to instill the culture in the Civil Service. Many efforts to improve and enhance quality have been introduced by Government agencies to provide services that satisfy their customers.

3. A number of Government agencies have succeeded in enhancing the quality of services provided to the public. Nevertheless there are still complaints from the public regarding the failure of some Government agencies to provide quality services. These complaints have been raised through the press, questions in Parliament, complaints to the Public Complaints Bureau and letters of complaints to the relevant Government agency.

C. BACKLOG OF WORK AND FACTORS THAT CAUSE IT

4. Backlog of work refers to work or tasks that cannot be completed within the stipulated time period. This stipulated time period is normally stated in the Client's Charter or in the time period established for each task. The processing capability which is not able to meet the demand for each service or product will result in the backlog of work. There are three main factors that weaken processing capability. They are increased demand for services, weaknesses in systems and work procedures and the problem of productivity among the staff. Backlog of work will occur in situations where the demand has increased and the production capacity remains unchanged. It is also caused by complex and time-consuming systems and procedures. An example which

can be cited is when excessive information has to be checked, even though not all the information is used for making decisions. Other examples are when too many levels of approvals are needed or when appropriate office equipment is not used. Besides that, backlog of work can also be caused by problems associated with personnel such as lack of skills or attitudes which are not conducive to productivity.

D. THE CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE THE BACKLOG OF WORK IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Objective Of The Campaign

5. The main objective of this campaign is to clear the backlog of work faced by Government agencies within a specified time period. Other than that, efforts need to be taken to prevent any future recurrence of this problem. Backlog of work gives rise to delays which will result in complaints from the agencies' customers and can also lead to malpractices and corruption. By clearing the backlog of work, Government agencies will be able to enhance the quality of its services to the public. This campaign is to be implemented in all Government agencies. More focus is to be given to agencies which are heavily involved in matters related to business, trade, investment, development and the provision of basic services to the public.

Steps That Can Be Taken By Government Agencies

6. In order to clear the backlog of work, Government agencies need to take the following steps:
- a. Identify the volume of backlog that needs to be cleared;
 - b. Prepare an action plan or implementation schedule to clear the backlog of work;
 - c. Establish a Special Task Force or other alternatives such as overtime work or additional work shifts to clear the backlog of work that has been identified;
 - d. Review the systems and work procedures with a view to simplify and expedite the work processes. Among the measures that can be taken to review the systems and work procedures are as follows:
 - i. Reduce the steps involved within the work processes;
 - ii. Use forms that request for only relevant information to make decisions;
 - iii. Use checklists and clear criteria to make decisions;
 - iv. Use more efficient equipment such as office automation and computers;
 - v. Redistribute the work among the officers and staff;
 - e. Provide skills training to officers and staff who are involved; and
 - f. Monitor the progress of the efforts taken to clear the backlog of work, for example through Management Meetings and Morning Prayers.


E. MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

7. In order to ensure that this campaign achieves its objective, Heads of Departments are required to monitor the progress of efforts taken to clear the backlog of work in the agencies under them. A Feedback Form For The Backlog Of Work is proposed for use to facilitate Departments in reporting on the progress of these efforts. This on this feedback can be prepared in separate sheets. An example of how to fill the form for the backlog of work in the National Registration Department is as in **Appendix 2**. It is required that the feedback be provided to the Secretaries General of Ministries/State Secretaries once every four months.

F. EFFECTIVE DATE

8. The Campaign To Reduce The Backlog Of Work In Government Agencies is to begin on 31st October 1995 in conjunction with the Quality Day and will be a continuous exercise.

“SERVICE FOR THE NATION”



Tan Sri Dato' Seri Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul Hamid
Chief Secretary to the Government

FEEDBACK FORM FOR THE PROGRAMME TO REDUCE

THE BACKLOG OF WORK

Name Of Agency: _____

Time Period To Reduce The Backlog Of Work: _____

Date Of Reporting: _____

Name Of Activity/ Application/Procedure (1)	Total Original Backlog (2)	Balance Of The Backlog (3)

**GUIDE FOR FILLING IN THE FEEDBACK FORM
FOR THE PROGRAMME TO REDUCE THE BACKLOG OF WORK**

1. Name Of Agency

This space is to be filled with the name of the agency doing the reporting.

2. Time Period To Reduce The Backlog Of Work

This space is to be filled with the specified time period to clear the backlog of work identified during the implementation of the Programme To Reduce The Backlog Of Work. The time period to clear the backlog of work needs to be established at the beginning of this programme. For example the National Registration Department established that the time period to clear the backlog of the work of the processing of applications for identity cards totaling 500,000 is from June to December 1995. The date June to December 1995 needs to be filled in the space provided for the Time Period To Reduce The Backlog Of Work.

3. Date Of Reporting

This space is to be filled with the date of completion of reporting the feedback.

4. Name Of Activity/Application/Procedure

This space is to be filled with the name of the task or work carried out by an office such as processing applications for citizenship, applications for the approval of building plans, applications for conversion of land use and others.

5. Total Original Backlog

This space is to be filled with the volume of the backlog of work at the beginning of the launching of the Programme To Reduce The Backlog Of Work for each activity/application/procedure listed in column (1).

6. Balance Of The Backlog

This space is to be filled with the volume of the remaining backlog of work for each activity/application/procedure listed in column (1) when the reporting was.

**FEEDBACK FORM FOR THE PROGRAMME TO REDUCE
THE BACKLOG OF WORK**

Name Of Agency: National Registration Department

Time Period To Reduce The Backlog Of Work: 28.6.1995 – 31.12.1995

Date Of Reporting: October 1995

Name Of Activity/Application/Procedure (1)	Total Oroginal Backlog (2)	Balance Of The Backlog (3)
1. Applications For Identity Cards	1,448,921	687,797
2. Applications For Citizenship:	6,885 (Total)	2,031 (Total)
a. Under Section 15(1) – Form A	3,049	1,022
b. Under Section 16 – Form E	393	91
c. Under Section 19 – Form G	3,443	918