

## MINISTRY PAPER NO: -

### PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – UPDATES ON THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS & ORDERS AND THE NATIONAL SPATIAL PLAN

#### OBJECTIVES

NEPA's Corporate Strategy and Operational Plan for 2009-2010 provides a proactive response to global challenges such as climate change, the trans-boundary movement of non-indigenous biological material and hazardous waste management. It also recognizes the opportunities that are available through the use of new technologies, enhanced systems and processes, and a responsible cadre of top professionals.

#### FUNDING

The funding for the 2009/2010 financial year is as follows:

Funding Sources	Amount	Remarks
Recurrent	\$582M	
Capital A	\$33.2M	
Capital B	\$21.4M	GOJ Component and grant fund for two (2) projects
Other Special Projects	\$44.2M	Approx. \$500,000 US grant from UNDP for three (3) projects.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$680.8M</b>	

#### ACHIEVEMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/2009

##### Development Approval Process

Since November 2007, NEPA has implemented an improved system for the processing of applications. During 2008-2009 significant improvements to the applications processing system were made through the introduction of new technology and the building of staff capacity. This system has resulted in a very significant reduction in the number of applications being carried forward from one quarter to the next and from one year to the next.

Another significant action that was taken was the 'combining' of the relevant authorities. Greater efficiencies have been achieved by considering planning & environmental matters simultaneously. Development applications will benefit from a more holistic approach to the development approval process.

The new approach in the operation of the Board and its Technical Committee allowed for decisions to be made on applications at a faster rate; hence reducing the waiting period for applicants.

As the result of the actions above NEPA has been able to significantly reduce its backlog of applications and has significantly improved the timeline for processing applications. At the end of the budget year 2007-2008, a total of 1411 applications were carried forward. At the end of this budget year 2008-2009, a total of 345 applications are being carried forward and of these 345 applications, 311 are still within the 90-day deadline while only 34 applications have exceeded the 90-day target.

In line with the reduction of the number of applications that are being carried forward, the average number of the applications processed within 90 days has increased from 19% at the beginning of the budget year (April 2008) to 94% at the end of the budget year (March 2009).

***(It should be noted that these figures pertain to the processing time by NEPA and does not include the time at the Local Planning Authorities.)***

#### **Public Access Interface of AMANDA**

The public access interface to track development applications online has been operational since July 2008. The current implementation of public interface provides major milestones and the current status of development application in NEPA in real time.

In 2009-2010 the public interface will be further developed to provide online access services, and to create a virtual One Stop Shop.

#### **Development Orders**

These are prepared under the Town and Country Planning Act to control the development of land in the areas for which the Orders apply in an orderly and progressive manner. During the 2008-2009 Financial Year three (3) draft Development Orders were prepared namely; Negril, Kingston and St Andrew and St Catherine. Work also commenced on the Development Order for the parish of St James.

### **PROJECTIONS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/2010**

1. **Development Orders:** In the 2009-2010 Financial Year it is anticipated that the draft St. James Development Order will be completed and that work will commence on the St. Thomas Development Order.
2. **The National Spatial Plan:** The National Spatial Plan is intended to provide the national framework for spatial planning. NEPA and the PIOJ submitted a project proposal which has been approved by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for preparation of a National Spatial Plan in the present Financial Year. Work is scheduled to commence in the second quarter of the Financial Year and expected to last for 18 months.
3. Continue to improve the Agency's internal systems and work flow processes.
4. Optimize staff performance.
5. Develop an effective enforcement and compliance management system. New strategies will be employed in the area of enforcement to ensure effective surveillance and the prosecution of environmental breaches.
6. Implement a scientific and risk-based approach to the monitoring of permits and licences.
7. Integrate climate change adaptation and hazard risk reduction strategies into planning and resource management processes.
8. Use of Information Technology for better management, communication and public participation.
9. Apply more rigorous scrutiny of applications with more judicious use of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) mechanism.

10. Develop an integrated framework for the management of waste including hazardous waste.
11. Build capacity for improved Protected Areas and Ecosystems Management.
12. Implement more results-oriented Public Education and Community Outreach Programmes.
13. Actively solicit the help of communities in monitoring.
14. Collaborate with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in the development of a more effective legislative framework.
15. Commence activities for the phase-out of Hydro-Chloro-Fluoro-Carbons (HCFCs) as a follow-up to Jamaica's impressive progress on the phasing out of Chloro-Fluoro-Carbons (CFCs).
16. Consolidate the lessons learnt and finalize the design of the Watershed Management Model under the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (IWCAM) Project.
17. Develop a framework for incorporating the valuation of natural resources in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The specific strategies and related actions outlined above are intended to build on past accomplishments of the Agency, and are also geared towards achieving NEPA's common vision of preserving Jamaica's environment through the promotion of sustainable development. These objectives will be achieved by forging strong partnerships with significant stakeholders and improving the image of the Agency by providing greater access to its information and resources.