

## National Policy on Environmental Management Systems

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The Houses of Parliament are being asked to consider the National Policy on Environmental Management Systems (EMS) which is attached as **Appendix I** of this Ministry Paper, and agree that it be tabled as a White Paper.

### 2. Background

2.1 The National Policy on Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for Jamaica was submitted to Cabinet in April 2019. Cabinet, by Decision No. 15/19 dated May 20, 2019, approved the Policy as a White Paper and directed that it be tabled in The Houses of Parliament.

#### Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

2.2 The International Organization for Standardization (ISO 14001:2015) defines an EMS as “a part of the management system used to manage environmental aspects, fulfil compliance obligations, and address risks and opportunities”. The use of EMS can provide a competitive edge in trade and allow for regulatory flexibility as it relates to enforcement. Implementing EMS strategies often leads to cost saving opportunities and avoidance of waste. Moreover, improvement of operations with respect to increasing regulatory compliance and reducing the negative environmental impact of operations go a far way in improving the “triple bottom line”<sup>1</sup> – economic, environmental and social – performance especially within small market economies.

2.3 EMS is a tool that can be utilized by various stakeholders in the move towards sustainability. Indeed, EMS offer an adaptive supplement to compliance-based regulatory efforts within a country and can facilitate the achievement of common sustainable environmental protection goals. In this way, implementation of EMS within the public and private sectors can assist in ensuring that economic gains are not realized at the expense of Jamaica’s natural resources. The National Policy on EMS provides a link between increased operational efficiencies and profitability, through the pursuit of environmental goals and responsible stewardship.

### 3. The National Policy on EMS and Vision 2030 Jamaica

3.1 The Bruntland Commission<sup>2</sup> defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Governments are becoming increasingly aware that national development cannot be sustained if it degrades the environmental resources upon which it is based. This is recognized

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<sup>1</sup> The “triple bottom line” is an accounting framework/approach where achievements/ performance are valued in three dimensions: social, environmental and financial (also commonly called the three Ps: people, planet and profits).

<sup>2</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development established by the United Nations, 1983.

within Vision 2030 Jamaica - National Development Plan which reinforces the concept of the three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and the environment). The National Policy on EMS upholds the goals and outcomes outlined in Vision 2030 which is built on the notion that development status cannot be achieved without the “sustainable management and use of our environmental and natural resources as these are essential to enhancing the quality of life of all Jamaicans”.

3.2 At the national level, the implementation of the National Policy on EMS will contribute to the achievement of Goal 4 (Jamaica has a natural healthy environment) of Vision 2030 Jamaica, Implementation of the Policy will also support the country’s achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among the seventeen (17) SDGs, eight (8) can be directly linked to EMS principles namely SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (Climate action). In addition to advancing Jamaica’s progress on these targets, emphasis on the sustainable use of resources and reduction of waste through EMS implementation will also benefit key economic sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and mining and quarrying, which rely heavily on the island’s natural resources. In 2015, the Government collaborated with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the European Union to develop a Green Economy Scoping Study which highlighted six key economic sectors, including tourism and agriculture, that stood to benefit tremendously from greening initiatives. The Study identified a host of cross-cutting opportunities for the creation of a green economy such as education, capacity building and the production of low impact goods and services. The strategies and actions outlined in the Policy are aligned with the recommendations of that Study.

#### **4. The National Policy on EMS**

4.1 The National Policy on EMS seeks to stimulate businesses, the public sector and municipalities to improve their environmental performance by controlling, reducing, and where possible, eliminating the negative impact(s) of their activities on the environment, thus contributing to sustainable development. Through the implementation of the National Policy, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in green operational practices in keeping with the pursuit of a green economy.

4.2 The objectives of the Policy are:

- a) To establish a framework that facilitates the promotion and implementation of EMS by 2030;
- b) To increase the number of private sector organizations that are implementing EMS, and attaining related local and international certification;
- c) To introduce EMS programmes and principles to ministries, departments and agencies in an effort to improve the environmental stewardship of Government operations; and
- d) To increase awareness of EMS principles and to effect culture change with respect to sound environmental stewardship practices within the society.

4.3 A summary of the main actions/strategies of the Policy is as follows:

- i. Establishment of a multidisciplinary Working Group on EMS comprising public and private stakeholders to guide the implementation of this Policy;
- ii. Amendment of policy and legislation where necessary to provide the appropriate framework for implementation of this Policy;
- iii. Provision of incentives and sanctions based on provisions under relevant legislation to promote environmentally friendly operational practices;
- iv. Institutional and capacity strengthening for the monitoring and implementation of EMS programmes through the establishment of the EMS Resource and Implementation Centre at the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA);
- v. Development and provision of EMS training for the public and private sectors, including auditors for the National Certification Board of Jamaica (NCBJ);
- vi. Encouraging banking and financial institutions to provide low interest loans to assist with EMS design and implementation particularly for MSMEs;
- vii. Recognition of outstanding environmental performance through a highly publicised awards programme; and
- viii. Design and implementation of a sustained public education campaign promoting EMS and other green certifications, and consumption of environmentally friendly goods and services.

4.4 The National Policy on EMS acknowledges and promotes various types of certification schemes, including the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001:2015 and the national Green Business Jamaica (GBJ) certification programme. At present, a number of local organizations have been certified to ISO 14001. In addition, several entities are currently engaged in the GBJ Pilot Programme and numerous other organizations are implementing other green programmes relying on principles embedded in EMS. The establishment of an EMS can act as a baseline to streamline the adoption of a more rigorous and internationally recognized scheme such as ISO 14001:2015.

## **5. Institutional Arrangements**

5.1 The Ministry with responsibility for the environment (hereinafter referred to as “the MRE”) shall ensure that the objectives and directives of this Policy are fulfilled. The Working Group on EMS and the NEPA (via the EMS Resource and Implementation Centre), with assistance from the Management Institute for National Development (MIND), the National Certification Body of Jamaica and other key MDAs, will be responsible for supporting EMS implementation, training and certification. The NEPA, with support from the MRE, will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of EMS projects and activities. The MRE and NEPA will also be responsible for the monitoring of EMS projects and activities being implemented to ensure that such programmes are in accordance with the relevant EMS plans.

## **6. Financing**

6.1 The relevant MDAs will request annual allocation/subvention from the Government to assist in the implementation of this Policy. In addition, the MRE, with the assistance of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), will seek external support, including bi-lateral and multi-lateral project funds to support Policy implementation.

## **7. Implementation**

7.1 Several strategies and actions are outlined in the Policy and will be implemented, in collaboration with the relevant MDAs, in an effort to promote the adoption of EMS within the public and private sectors. The Working Group on EMS will be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Policy. On the ground, the EMS Resource and Implementation Centre within the NEPA will be responsible for: (i) the development of a framework for environmental performance reporting; (ii) overseeing EMS implementation within the public and private sectors; and (iii) EMS monitoring and evaluation. The MRE will collaborate with the NEPA and other key MDAs, as necessary, to report on the progress of the Policy's implementation to the Vision 2030 Thematic Working Group on Environment and Planning.

## **8. Consultations**

8.1 Subsequent to the tabling of the draft National Policy on EMS (Green Paper) in The Houses of Parliament in July 2018, consultations were held with representatives from the public and private sectors on September 14 and 12, 2018, respectively. The MEGJC invited written comments from several MDAs, including the Ministry of the Finance and Public Service (MOFPS) and the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC), and received same from the following:

- NEPA
- NCBJ
- Heart Trust NTA
- Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI)
- Ministry of National Security (MNS)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), and
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

The Policy was amended based on the comments received from these stakeholders.



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Andrew Holness, ON, MP

Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Growth and Job Creation

7<sup>th</sup> August 2019