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Building macroeconomic capacity in East Africa



IMF East AFRITAC
Regional Peer Learning Virtual Workshop:
Public Investment Management
Date: 2-6 November 2020

1. Background

Public Investment Management Units (PIM units) have been established across the region in recent years. These intend to serve more effective project appraisal, selection and implementation of capital projects, in light of increased infrastructure spending and alternative actors in service provision (PPPs, SOEs, non-concessional financing).

To undertake their role effectively, PIM units require cross dimensional skills (planning, appraisal, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation) with functions that cut across different stages of the PFM cycle and require close coordination with more standard Ministry departments such as macro, budget, cash planning and the accountant general's department. Close coordination is also required for departments responsible for externally financed projects, PPPs and SOE oversight. To support these functions, many PIM units are adopting IT systems often referred to as Public Investment Management Systems (PIMIS) or Integrated Project Databanks to track a project in every stage of the cycle from inception to ex-post evaluation.

PIM units are at different stages of maturity across the region. Their ability to play the sole gatekeeping function for all capital projects has been mixed.¹ In some countries, quite complex appraisal models and practices have been attempted, but are not having much traction to influence budget decision making. These have tended to concentrate on new projects, but fiscal space limitations, restrict the use of these skills.²

The issue of fiscal space in for capital budgeting and project prioritization has become increasingly important as a result of COVID-19. A number of countries have had to scale back their investment and reprioritize which projects will receive funding. Similarly, the SOE sector is also having to scale back investment in light of large reductions in income generating activities.

¹ This role is intended to slow or restrict projects entering the budget which are not viable and/or not ready for implementation.

² A number of countries are overcommitted in the development budget and face a situation of negative fiscal space, meaning they face "second best" project prioritization, which is a form of selecting a project based on the lowest fiscal cost to Government through arrears, penalties and legal fees.

to implement support packages, placing further emphasis on the need to prioritize key investment projects.

Integration of both IT systems development and the functional relationship between PIM units and mainstream Ministry IT systems and departments remains largely in flux.

There are signs of a duplication of roles and responsibilities in some countries and ongoing debates persist as to whether the unit should be based in the Finance or Planning Ministry in countries where these are separated.

2. Peer Learning Objectives

The workshop aims to bring together selected countries from East, West and Southern Africa with established PIM units to: (i) share lessons in their reform transition; (ii) discuss options to update/recalibrate their reform plans based on lesson learning if required, and; (iii) and develop a collegial link across the continent.

3. Peer Learning Themes

This workshop will focus on the following themes:

- (i) The changing role of PIM in the region and the impact of COVID-19;
- (ii) Internal organization of PIM departments and links to the wider Ministry;
- (iii) Public Investment Management IT Systems;
- (iv) The role of decision making processes for appraising and selecting projects;
- (v) Decision making processes and linkages with the budget process;
- (vi) Progress in establishing a PIM reform road map and capacity building plan.

4. Organization

The workshop objectives will be achieved through a mixture of facilitation methods over five half day sessions. These will include both presentations of international good practice and sharing of experiences via country presentations and group discussions as per the attached schedule.

Due to regional travel restrictions, the workshop will be conducted virtually. [WebEx](#) will be used as the main video conferencing platform and participants can access using this [link](#). All presentations and material will be shared electronically to participants through the cloud platform [Box](#) and can be accessed through this [link](#). There may be an option to undertake a physical follow up workshop when travel safely resumes.

The workshop is intended to be highly interactive, so will be structured around targeted group discussions in order to foster peer learning between participants. The first and final day of the workshop, will include all participants. In between these days, countries will be divided into smaller groups consisting of between 10 and 15 participants. Each group will contain a representative from East, West and Southern Africa based on the draft schedule attached.

Each country team is asked to prepare, prior to the workshop, a 30 minute presentation, concentrating on the most pressing theme from those listed above.

Targeted group sessions will then discuss the specific issues raised in the presentation and explore the scope for identifying reform priorities. Following the sessions, each country team will be requested to prepare and submit mini action plans to the facilitators, which will form part of a broader cross cutting plenary session on the final day.

5. Target Participants

Participants should be Heads of PIM units, Deputies and senior technical officials. The workshop will be limited to four participants from each country.

6. Administrative Arrangements

Nominations for the Workshop should be emailed to East AFRITAC not later than 30th September 2020.

All nominations and enquiries should be sent to the following workshop coordinators:

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