



JAMAICA'S EXPERIENCE

TITLE: National Competitiveness Council (NCC)



Country: Jamaica

Institution: National Competitiveness Council (NCC)

Other institutions involved: Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) and Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)

Context

During the last five years, Jamaica has slipped in its ranking in the Doing Business Report from 63 to 90. This slippage has resulted in poor investor confidence and a negative perception of doing business in the country.

In March 2010, the Government of Jamaica established the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) to advance policy advocacy, research and public awareness of those initiatives that create an enabling environment for the development of Jamaican businesses. The NCC represents an amalgamation of the membership and initiatives of the National Export Council (NEC) which addressed the operational and legislative constraints facing the export sector, the Trade Facilitation Board which was formed to improve efficiency in the exporting and importing processes, and the Target Growth Competitiveness Committee (TGCC), a component of the Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP), which actively lobbied for business-friendly policies and regulations; and is therefore recognized as the most comprehensive forum to discuss national competitiveness issues.

The NCC is a public private partnership which is chaired by the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce and works closely with the ministries, departments and agencies to address bureaucratic issues in Jamaica.

Since the introduction of the NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda which was developed through consultations with public and private sector, the NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda has been revised to include reforms for the period 2013-2015 which now form a part of Jamaica's Growth Strategy and are included in the Medium Term Framework of the National Development Plan, Vision 2030. Additionally, some of the reforms from the NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda are now reflected in the Memorandum of Economic Financial Programme (MEFP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Agreement with Jamaica. The NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda has helped to infuse a greater sense

of urgency to accelerate the implementation of key reforms critical to fostering a more enabled business environment in Jamaica.

Objectives

The key focus of the National Competitiveness Council is to:

- a) Co-ordinate and drive cross-functional and multi-agency strategies that seek to address the impediments to establishing and doing business in Jamaica, including work related to the National Export Strategy
- b) Formulate the necessary measures leading to speedy processing of business and investment proposals
- c) Provide policy advice on steps towards an improved and competitive business climate and
- d) Communicate effectively with broader stakeholders and the general public regarding the implementation of initiatives that affect the business environment

In addition to the macro objectives stated above, the National Competitiveness Council has been concentrating its efforts on the speedy and timely implementation of the twenty (20) reforms in its NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda. This comprehensive Reform Agenda examines each of the now ten indicators against which Jamaica is ranked and further identifies the major goals for the period 2013-2015 which, if achieved will improve Jamaica's ranking in the Doing Business Report. These goals are translated into actionable and specific initiatives with deliverable dates assigned in order to ensure their implementation. Ministries and Agencies report in against their progress on a monthly basis and are accountable to private and public sector committees on the status of the deliverables.

Relevance

The development of the Reform Agenda has sensitized public and private stakeholders of the importance of removing bureaucratic impediments to enhance investors' confidence and to become more competitive as a country. There is a unified understanding among ministries, departments and agencies on the importance of improving Jamaica's ranking in the Doing Business Report. The work that is to be done through the implementation of the Reform Agenda is a culmination of the efforts and collaboration facilitated by the NCC in ensuring that Jamaica introduce reforms that will positively impact investors' perception of doing business in the country. Furthermore, the inclusion of the NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda in national discussions related to business climate reforms and its potential impact in driving the implementation of key reforms have resulted in the Reform Agenda being considered as one of the most comprehensive Agenda to promote competitiveness and productivity in Jamaica.

Implementation

The implementation of the NCC Reform Agenda is managed through the NCC Secretariat who works with technical working groups, ministries, private sector and multilaterals to ensure that deliverables progress against stated timelines. Stakeholders are required to proactively determine and identify where necessary the level of assistance required to ensure that the deliverables are met. Below is a summary of the Implementation Plan:

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	TOTAL # OF REFORMS	NOT STARTED	IN PROGRESS	ON TRACK	COMPLETED
2013	13	0	5	4	4
2014	4	2	2	0	0
2015	3	2	1	0	0

Key Reforms

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Tabling of the Secured Obligations Bill at Legislative Committee | - March 2013 |
| 2. Tabling of Secured Obligations Bill in Parliament | - August 2013 |
| 3. Establishment and operation of the collateral registry | - December 2013 |
| 4. Selection of preferred bidder and commencement of final negotiations | - August 2013 |
| 5. Rollout of Port Community System – Phase 1 | - March 2014 |
| 6. Business Registration Super Form- Amendment of relevant legislations | -December 2013 |
| 7. Development of online super form completed | - January 2014 |
| 8. Tabling of the Insolvency Act in Parliament | - December 31, 2013 |

Distribution of tasks

Each indicator in the Doing Business Report has indicator measures that break down how the Doing Business Report Team compiles their findings and indicate the areas for improvement. The NCC Secretariat developed a cross-functional matrix that brought together all agencies that impact a specific indicator measure and shared the findings of the Report with them. By bringing together the decision makers from the executive management of each of these agencies with their technical persons, the NCC Secretariat was able to develop an action plan which the agencies supported and were committed to implementing.

Each agency had to indicate the timelines in which they would accomplish each task and submit the information to the NCC Secretariat for review. The agencies then formed their own implementation task force which rolled up progress updates to the NCC.

Achievements and results

Overall results were still not favourable except in the indicator Paying Taxes where there was an improvement in the country's ranking from 174 to 163. It was noted that given the period in which the Doing Business Team compiles and evaluates its data, that reforms implemented outside of that time frame would not be considered.

Indicator	Doing Business 2013	Doing Business 2012	Change
Starting a Business	21	21	0
Getting Electricity	123	110	↓-13
Dealing with Construction permits	50	50	0
Registering Property	105	104	↓-1
Getting Credit	104	97	↓-7
Protecting Investors	82	79	↓-3
Paying Taxes	163	174	↑+11
Trading Across Borders	106	99	↓-7
Enforcing Contracts	129	128	↓-1
Resolving Insolvency	32	28	↓-4

It is anticipated that reforms that are implemented in the revised NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda will be reflected favourably against their various indicators in the 2015 Doing Business Report. Nevertheless, the implementation of the key reforms as stated previously will improve the business environment to a more investor friendly climate for Jamaica and improve the country's response to Access to Credit, Starting and Closing a Business, Protecting Investors and Trading across Borders.

Capacity to replicate and potential for exchange of this experience

The approach used by the National Competitiveness Council can be easily replicated provided that there is high level support from governments and private sector. The NCC Doing Business Reform Agenda represents a comprehensive approach to effecting business climate reforms and allows for expansion or phases during different implementation periods.

Human, operational and institutional capacities

The National Competitiveness Council is willing to share experiences and methodology with countries who wish to undertake a similar approach to improving their business climate. The NCC would be willing to lead a "Competitiveness Business Climate Think Tank" with special focus on improving the business climate which would allow NCC from different countries to share specific approaches to dealing with the indicators in the Doing Business Report.

Modalities to replicate the exchange

Modalities that would be considered appropriate would be a) Study Exchange programme amongst National Competitiveness Councils with quarterly videoconferencing regarding status updates by country.

Good practices and concrete lessons

1. Important and critical to get highest level of support possible to implement Agenda (Cabinet, key Ministries)
2. Involve and Apprise Private Sector of developments and progress of key initiatives
3. Engage multilaterals as a Reform Agenda such as what was developed for Jamaica is viewed favourably as a document supported by public and private sector
4. Ensure agencies and ministries implement according to plan
5. Develop a public communications campaign to ensure that stakeholders are kept current of developments and achievements.

This initiative has reinforced the importance of public collaboration on matters of national importance. Each agency is seen as playing a critical role in the process and this is evidenced in the concerted efforts employed to address the various indicators. There is transparency in the process and so each ministry and agency understand how they contribute to the achievement of the larger goal: To improve Jamaica's ranking in the Doing Business Report.

Experiences and subjects to learn from other RIAC members

This initiative could benefit from the experiences of RIAC countries especially in the areas of accelerating legislative and policy reforms and harnessing resources to implement business climate reforms.

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