



## **Improving Cabinet Procedures and Support in Sierra Leone**

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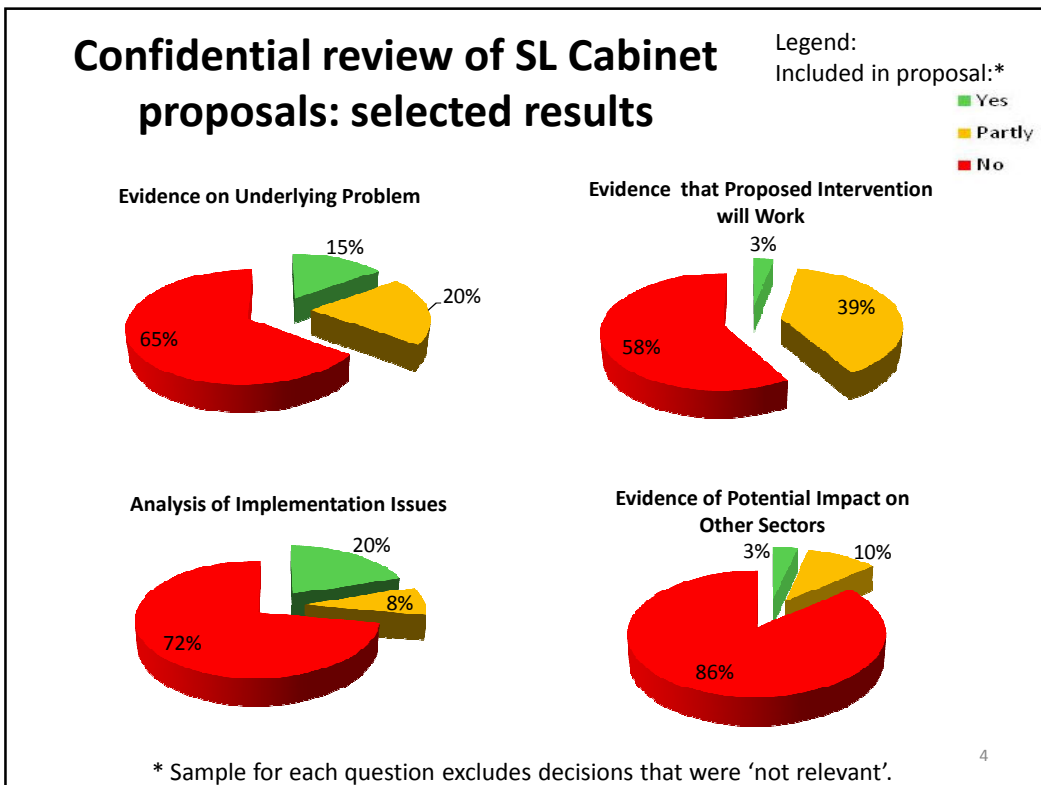
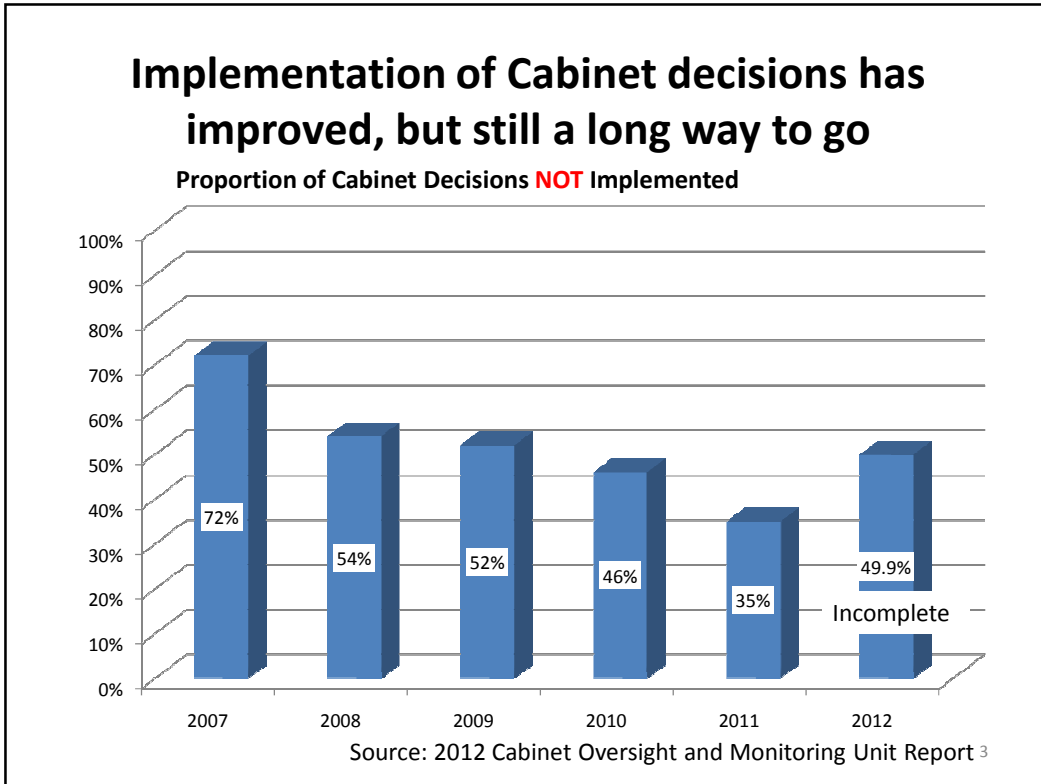
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### **Need for review of Cabinet procedures**

- **Sierra Leone's Cabinet procedures have been improved**
  - increasing proportion of resolutions are now implemented
  - international review in 2008 concluded that SL Cabinet works reasonably well – not a rubber stamp, adding significant value
- **However, my discussions with some experienced Cabinet Members suggested further improvements were needed**
- **Significant concerns raised by Ministers:**
  - proposals not properly thought through
  - meetings too long, often cluttered with routine issues
  - multiplicity of ad hoc committees, which often do not meet
  - last minute circulation of important/complex proposals
  - failure to consult where other Ministries will be impacted
  - lack of coordination in implementing complex decisions
- **Many decisions of Cabinet are not implemented.**

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## Proposed Vision for Cabinet Process

Effective collective decisions under the Constitution that:

- a) are based on **well-prepared Memoranda**, with evidence that proposed interventions will work and assessment of their likely impact, including the impact on other sectors and groups;
- b) use **Ministers' time** effectively, allowing them to review and obtain advice on important proposals, and focusing on strategic issues, especially the President's Agenda for Prosperity; and
- c) are **implemented effectively**, with necessary coordination among government organisations and regular implementation reports to Cabinet.

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## 3 key outcomes of new procedures

- 1. Better proposals**
  - with justification for priority; evidence that proposed intervention will work; costs estimated; impact on other sectors; implementation issues
  - easy to read and understand
  - some proposals should not even come to Cabinet
- 2. Improved coordination**
  - affected Ministries consulted (eg coordinating new roads & agriculture)
  - Cabinet Members have time to review and be briefed
  - Coordination in implementing complex Cabinet decisions
- 3. Decisions implemented**
  - implementation issues assessed *before* proposals are submitted
  - proposals prepared in with Ministry officials including front line managers
  - realistic implementation targets, taking into account required legislation, capacity constraints, funding, etc.

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## **4 strategies to achieve these outcomes**

1. New Cabinet Manual
2. Standing Cabinet Committee system
3. Building policy capacity in Ministries
4. Strengthening support from Cabinet Secretariat.

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## **Strategy 1. New Cabinet Manual**

- **Based on input from experienced Ministers and international experience**
  - current Manual mostly dates from 1960; last revised in 1998
  - support from Africa Cabinet Government Network
- **To include key procedures:**
  - clearer criteria for what goes to Cabinet for decision
  - requirement for consultation with other Ministries
  - realistic deadlines for submitting Memoranda
  - clarification of roles of Deputy Ministers and civil servants
  - structured format for Memoranda to ensure key issues are addressed and to save time for Ministers (next slide).

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**EVIDENCE-BASED MEMORANDUM FORMAT TO COVER:**

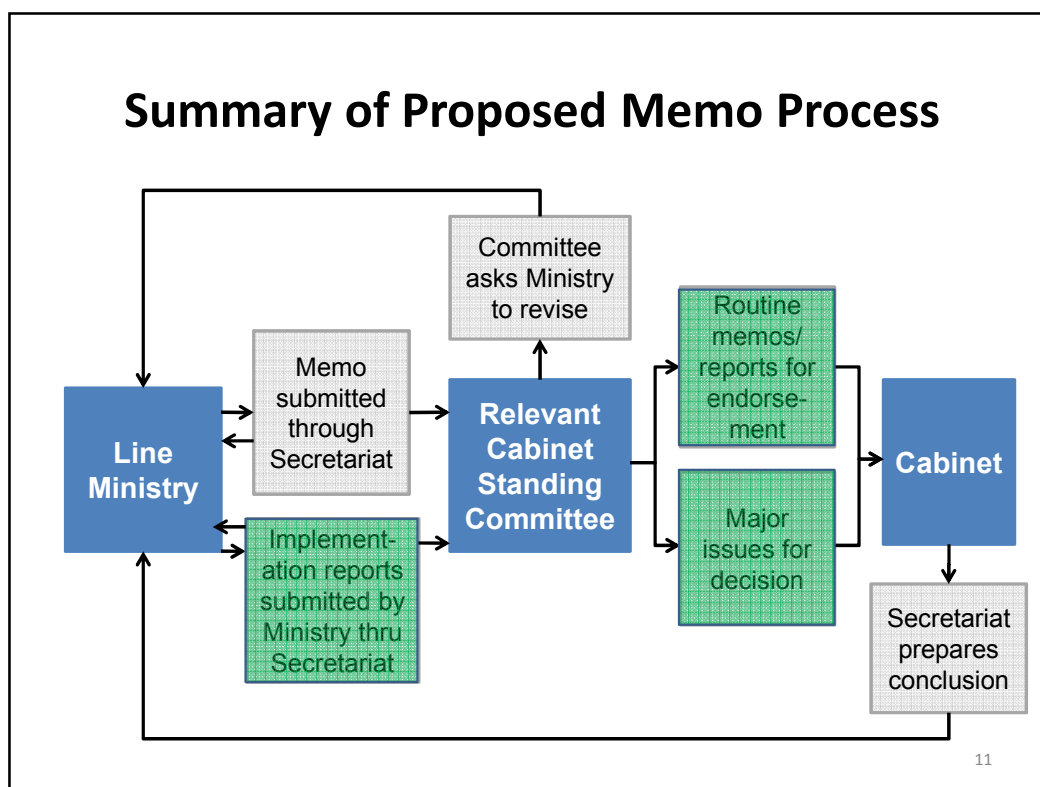
- a. What decision is requested from Cabinet?
- b. How will proposed action advance A4P?
- c. Evidence of need? How will location be justified?
- d. Evidence that proposed intervention will work (including how key stakeholders will respond - eg will they actually participate, respond to incentives, invest, etc)?
- e. Economic, social and environmental impacts?
- f. Impact on specific groups (eg women, specific industries)?
- g. What will it cost? Where will funds come from?
- h. Legal implications? Is legislation required?
- i. Possible impact on other sectors/ministries?
- j. Who has been consulted? Do they agree with recommendation?
- k. Has implementation plan been prepared? Risks? Capacity constraints? Realistic timetable?
- l. How will implementation and impact be monitored and evaluated? Clear accountability? Milestones and targets?
- m. How will it be announced? Potential opposition?

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**Strategy 2. Standing Cabinet Committees**

- **Proposing 3 (maybe 4) committees**
  - eg economic/infrastructure; social/human development; and governance/gender
- **Committees to be permanent**
  - largely replacing current ad hoc committees
  - comprising relevant Ministers, Deputy Ministers
  - senior civil servants providing technical/professional advice
- **To review all relevant proposals before Cabinet**
  - effectively decide minor issues, saving Cabinet time – subject to Cabinet endorsement normally without discussion
  - review complex proposals and recommend to Cabinet
  - send proposals back for further work where necessary
  - review implementation reports.

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### Strategy 3. Policy Capacity in Ministries

- **Cabinet Focal Person in each Ministry**
  - key civil servant in each Ministry nominated by Minister
  - support Minister by liaising with Secretariat in preparing draft Memoranda and implementation reports
  - to help Ministry comply with Cabinet requirements
- **Training for policy staff in Ministries**
  - briefing on new Cabinet requirements (eg format)
  - best practice in preparing proposals , eg presenting options to Ministers
  - implementation planning and reporting
- **Opportunity for policy development workshops for Ministers**
  - drawing on expertise of more experienced SL Ministers.

## Strategy 4. Strengthening the Secretariat

- **Secretariat needs to improve its support to the Cabinet**
  - complement the role of the President's Office
  - review policy proposals
  - facilitate Ministries' assessments of how proposals can be implemented and what impacts they will have
  - coordinate implementation of complex decisions
  - monitor and report on implementation (utilizing IT)
  - support development of the public service
  - especially performance in implementing Cabinet decisions
- **Management & functional review of the Secretariat**
  - to ensure the right mix of staff and structure
  - so that the Secretariat can effectively support Cabinet.

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## VISION FOR CABINET SECRETARIAT

The Cabinet Secretariat to be an efficient, effective and **dependable** pillar of support to the Executive by playing a **proactive** role in facilitating **implementable** Cabinet decisions and **helping** other Public Service organizations to do **their** jobs effectively to achieve **timely** implementation of Cabinet's decisions.

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## How these strategies support outcomes

