



Standard Estimates Questionnaire 2013/14

Report of the Finance and Expenditure
Committee

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Standard Estimates Questionnaire 2013/14

Recommendation

The Finance and Expenditure Committee recommends that the House take note of the Standard Estimates Questionnaire for 2013/14, which is attached as Appendix B.

Introduction

The Finance and Expenditure Committee has approved a Standard Estimates Questionnaire to be used in the select committee examinations of the 2013/14 Estimates of Appropriations. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

The Standard Estimates Questionnaire for 2012/13 was used as the basis of the 2013/14 questionnaire. After consultation with the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General, we resolved to revise the questionnaire as outlined below to improve its relevance and usefulness for the 2013/14 Estimates examination.

Content

The questionnaire is designed to be brief and high-level, asking only for information supplementary to that supplied in the Estimates. It is not expected to be burdensome. The main focus is on votes rather than on the operations of departments and other Crown entities, as current and past operations are examined in the subsequent financial reviews.

The objective of the questionnaire is to elicit matters on which vote Ministers may wish to elaborate orally before a committee, and to help a committee target its examination of the vote with the administering department or entity.

We have removed question 6 from the 2012/13 questionnaire (*Which outputs under the vote are considered priorities in 2012/13 for achieving the outcomes desired from the vote and why? Please provide detailed information in your response along with a list of the outputs considered to be main priorities, arranged in order of priority.*) Experience has shown that the responses to this question tend not to include information of value that is not already supplied in response to other questions.

We have removed the final bullet point of question 8 in the 2012/13 questionnaire (*Have any concerns arisen regarding the performance of the Crown entities over the previous financial year? If so, please provide details.*) as we consider that this question is more appropriate to a financial review than an Estimates examination, being focused on the previous year's performance.

For the same reason, we have re-worded question 13 from the 2012/13 questionnaire to focus the question on the Estimates for the coming financial year rather than on the previous year's performance.

Appendix A

Committee procedure

The committee met on 13 and 27 March 2013 to consider the Standard Estimates Questionnaire 2013/14.

Committee members

Todd McClay (Chairperson)
Maggie Barry
David Bennett
Hon Clayton Cosgrove
Hon David Cunliffe
Paul Goldsmith
John Hayes
Dr Russel Norman
Hon David Parker
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Kate Wilkinson

Appendix B

Standard Estimates Questionnaire 2013/14

Outcomes desired from the Vote

1 Which agencies incur expenditure under this Vote, and who are the responsible Ministers? What outcomes are sought from the Vote, and how do these agencies contribute to these outcomes? Please indicate where outcomes desired from the Vote are shared with another Vote and/or department, and explain how results against these shared outcomes will be reported.

Expenditure under the Vote

2 Please provide a copy of the output agreement, and describe the main current or emerging factors (including social, environmental, or economic factors) that have affected the type and amount of the appropriations sought under the Vote in 2013/14. If applicable, please provide a copy of the department's 4-year budget plan and the associated organisational development plan (workforce strategy).

3 What effect have fiscal pressures had on the appropriations and the outputs sought under this Vote in 2013/14? What impact are fiscal pressures expected to have on output performance? How will adverse impacts on output performance be managed?

4 What financial risks have been identified in relation to this Vote? How are any financial risks that have been identified being monitored and managed?

5 Please explain briefly the significant changes and reasons for them, affecting this Vote for 2013/14, including the following:

- New policies or outputs.
- Policies or outputs that have been discontinued from the previous year.
- Policies or outputs that have changed from the previous year (for example, reprioritised or refocused policies, increased or decreased outputs).
- Any changes to types of appropriation, or increases or decreases of 10 percent or more (or \$10 million or more, whichever is lesser), in the amount of appropriations; where appropriations have decreased, please explain the impact on the department administering the Vote and the agencies receiving funding.
- Any funds carried forward or transferred from previous appropriations.
- Any changes to staffing levels in the 2013/14 financial year and out-years, including full-time-equivalent staff; total head-count; and the numbers and percentages of staff defined as "front-line" staff (whose roles require them to provide a service directly to the public for a significant rather than an occasional part of their duties), and "back-office" staff.
- Any changes to the Vote arising from the Canterbury earthquakes (please outline all significant impacts on the Vote).

6 Is the department administering this Vote reviewing, or intending to review, any legislation for which it is responsible? What changes to legislation are proposed, and why? If legislation needs to be changed because of policy changes, please specify the policy areas and changes being considered. How would the proposed legislative change affect the appropriations within this Vote? What effect is it expected to have on any other Vote?

Crown entities funded under the Vote

7 In relation to any Crown entities funded under the Vote:

- Are there any significant changes to the outputs they produce, and, if so, how do these changes affect the appropriations sought?
- What changes, if any, have Crown entities made to the structure and scope of their output classes to ensure they are consistent with the relevant appropriations in this Vote?
- What changes, if any, have been made to Crown entities' performance information presented in this Vote?
- Are there any particular performance risks or concerns for the 2013/14 year?
- How will the performance of the Crown entities be monitored to ensure the risks are well managed?

8 What specific expectations have been signalled by the responsible Minister to each of the Crown entities funded under the Vote? If no expectations have been set, please explain why. Please describe in detail any specific human-resource, financial, or operational issues or risks that may arise in meeting these expectations. How will any issues and risks be managed?

Capability of agencies to deliver outputs

9 What specific capability risks and challenges have been identified in the agencies delivering outputs under this Vote? What action is being taken to manage these challenges?

10 What are the particular challenges and priorities for the agencies funded by the Vote in responding to the Canterbury earthquakes?

11 Does the department administering the Vote intend to use external resources (such as external consultants, leased executives, advisers, or contractors) in providing its outputs in 2013/14? If so, please provide the following details regarding this expenditure:

- the total budget for 2013/14, compared with the overall departmental budget
- the purpose of each engagement
- the reason that internal resources cannot be used.

12 How have any mergers and machinery-of-government or other structural changes made in 2012/13 affected the Vote?

13 Are any of the entities funded under the Vote considering or developing any plans to

- enter into any kind of shared services arrangements?
- form or enter into any type of joint venture or public-private partnership?

- access external equity?

In each case, please provide details.

Other information

14 What improvements have been made to the performance information presented under this Vote for 2013/14? What advice has your department received from central agencies and the Controller and Auditor-General about performance information areas that need improvement, and what steps are being or will be taken to improve them?

15 Do you wish to bring to the attention of the committee any other matters relevant to your Vote that have not been described in the Estimates documents, in your Budget press statements, or in response to other questions in this questionnaire?

16 Please provide an electronic copy and 25 paper copies of each output plan drawn up between you (or an agent) and a department and/or other party for the supply of outputs for the 2013/14 year related to this Vote. If output plans have not yet been finalised, and you do not wish to provide draft plans, please notify the timetable for finalisation, and provide an electronic copy and 25 paper copies of each output plan as it is completed.