

tendering process was completed and the project start in the first quarter of FY2020/21. After the pilot phase is over (planned for 18 months), ERM would be rolled-out to selected MDAs. The ERM manual was drafted and published on MoF's website.

(6) Setting-up of an independent Fiscal Commission

The Fiscal Commission Bill intended to facilitate the establishment of an independent Fiscal Commission was tabled in Parliament in December 2020 and passed in 2021. The legislation creates the framework and empowers the Fiscal Commission to act as a guardian for adherence to Jamaica's fiscal rules: monitor the Government's compliance with the legislated fiscal rules and will focus on specific areas, such as assessing the macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts presented in the annual and interim Fiscal Policy Paper and assessing the consistency of the fiscal balance trajectory with the legislated fiscal rule and the medium and long-term debt sustainability. The bill of Parliament passed in 2020, its implementation plan has been developed and the recruitment of the Fiscal Commissioner will take place during this fiscal year.

(7) Modernisation of Central Bank

The amended Bank of Jamaica (BoJ) Act took effect on April 16, 2021, giving the bank full operational independence in the implementation of monetary policy its main objectives being to maintain price stability, through the achievement of an inflation target, and financial system stability. Most notably, the new law removes the power of the Minister of Finance to give the Central Bank directions on monetary policy. BoJ is currently working on launching a digital currency - JAMDEX (Jamaica Digital Exchange).

Although, the PFM RAP initially covered the period FY2017/18 until FY2020/21, due to Covid-19, several activities were delayed; thus, the plan remained valid for FY 2021/22 when the unmet targets and delayed activities would continue to be monitored.

A new PEFA exercise is expected to be conducted in FY2022/23; this will update of progress since the last PEFA in 2016, establish a new PEFA baseline and inform the drafting of a new PFM action plan.

Jamaica is currently on Annex II of the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes. This means that Jamaica has made sufficient commitments to reform its tax policies but remain subject to close monitoring while executing on the commitments. Within this context, Jamaica needs to complete its tax regime reform before the end of September 2022, for the OECD Forum on Harmful Tax Practices (FHTP) to certify that these reforms are sufficient.

In conclusion, the public finance management reform strategy is sufficiently relevant and credible, including on domestic revenue mobilisation, and the eligibility criterion is met.

2.3.4 Transparency and Oversight of the Budget

The fiscal governance framework updated in 2015 set, among others, a fixed budget calendar which requires the approval of the budget for the next fiscal year before end-March.

All the budget documents are publicly available free of cost on the Ministry of Finance website: <http://www.mof.gov.jm/budget>.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act (FAA) and the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act (PBMAA) established the Fiscal Responsibility Framework (FRF) for Jamaica. The FRF seeks to provide for more prudent fiscal management and more broadly confirms the commitment of the government to promote fiscal discipline. The enhanced fiscal rules require among other things, that the annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the accompanying Fiscal Policy Paper (FPP) be tabled simultaneously in February of each year to allow for the passage of the budget prior to the start of the fiscal year. The FAA established a calendar which strengthened the rules governing the budget preparation and approval.

The recent budgets complied with the calendar and in February each year, the Estimates of Expenditure and Estimates of Revenues were tabled in Parliament. The Minister of Finance, through his budget speech marked the start of the budget debate; this was followed by interventions by the Opposition Spokesman on finance and planning, by the Leader of the Opposition, by the Prime Minister and ended with the Minister of Finance closing budget speech. The budget is usually passed before the end of the March. The Parliamentary sessions in which the