



# PARLIAMENT BUDGET OFFICE

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## **Introduction and background**

Pursuant to the need to enhance its Budget and Financial oversight function, Parliament of Zimbabwe has established a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) which began operations on the first of September 2016. Zimbabwe follows its peers; South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda who have all enhanced their fiscal oversight capacity by establishing Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs). The Zimbabwean Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established in terms of Section 154(4) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which provides that; *“The Committee on Standing Rules and Orders must appoint such other staff of Parliament as it considers necessary.”* This constitutional provision gave Parliament the operational autonomy and independence to appoint Staff of Parliament to actualise the proposed functions of the Parliament Budget Office.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the PBO is to provide independent, objective and professional advice and analysis to Parliament on matters related to the budget, economic policy and money bills. The Budget Office also carries out targeted quantitative and qualitative research on issues relevant to Parliament's legislative, representative and oversight roles. It serves as a technical support unit to the Parliament and its Committees on budget and financial matters regarding analysis of audit reports, macro-economic and micro-economic policies as well as monetary policies.

This institutional innovation enables the legislature to engage in the budget process in a more objective, effective, and responsible manner. The establishment of the PBO is intended to strengthen the Parliament of

Zimbabwe's technical capacity in holding state institutions to account on public finances. The media, academia and the public will also benefit through access to the publication of these documents on the Parliament's website.

### **Staff complement**

Parliament resolved to adopt a phased introduction of the budget office, which currently has engaged 2 Senior Analysts (one Macro-economic Policy and the other for Accounting and Auditing). In the interim, they report to the Assistant Clerk [Committees]. The approved structure has 7 Senior Analysts to cover various areas of specialization. Prioritization is motivated by the apparent realisation that most of the work of Oversight Committees revolves around an objective analysis of how public resources are being expended and whether the development and implementation of macro-economic policies is in line with the dictates of national interest

### **Functions of the Parliament Budget Office**

- Analysis of the National Budget Proposals - The PBO undertakes a technical review of the budgetary estimates contained in the Executive's budget and produces the analysis report for committees and Members of Parliament to enable the legislators to objectively debate the various provisions of the national budget.
- Analysis of National Economic Development Policy Proposals - The PBO is responsible for objectively reviewing and evaluating the merits of national economic development policies which include the Monetary and Fiscal Policy Statements and Annual Development Plans. The principal objective of the review process is to evaluate whether national resources are deployed optimally across competing needs and priorities. The medium to long-term impact assessments of government programmes enable Parliament to debate on development evaluation and to propose policy adjustments in order to avoid policy inconsistencies.
- Economic Policy Briefs - The PBO prepares simplified briefs on budgets and other economic concepts for the benefit of members of the Legislature, the media, civil society and the public in general. The time demands placed on policy makers in the Executive branch and the Legislature as well as the complexity of budgets, create a demand for such policy briefs.
- Continuous Economic Policy Research Capacity -The PBO undertakes continual research initiatives on economic policy subjects, sector developments, global economic policy developments and trade

economics in order to strengthen the knowledge base of Parliament from a global perspective.

The Office is expected to strengthen the capacity of Members of Parliament to thoroughly interrogate the national budget and key government economic policies thereby enabling them to put forward informed, objective and well balanced proposals for consideration by the Executive.

### **Contacts**

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