

EB/APC/10/1

February 12, 2010

To: Members of the Agenda and Procedures Committee
(Mr. Rutayisire, Chairman; Mr. Callesen, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. He, Mr. Kotegawa,
Mr. Nogueira Batista, Ms. Vongpradhip, Mr. Weber)

From: Siddharth Tiwari, Committee Secretary

Subject: **Streamlining Rule N-16 Procedures for Business Travel**

The attached note, for APC consideration, contains proposed changes to the consultation process under Rule N-16. A proposed recommendation to the Executive Board appears on page 4. The issue will be taken up by the Committee on **Thursday, February 18 at 4:00 p.m.**, in the Board Committee Room (12-120B).

Questions may be referred to Mr. Conway, OBP (ext. 38461).

This paper will shortly be posted on the extranet, a secure website for the Executive Directors and member country authorities.

Att: (1)

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Members of the Executive Board

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Streamlining Rule N-16 Procedures for Business Travel

February 12, 2010

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This paper proposes new procedures that are intended to streamline the consultation process under Staff Regulation Rule N-16(c)(i), which requires that official travel by persons on the staff of the Fund to a member's territory be undertaken only after consultation with the Executive Director appointed, elected, or designated by the member.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In December 2008, management initiated a project to streamline Fund travel processes, and a working group was established to review processes and put forward proposals. At that time, in response to a request from the Dean of the Executive Board two informal presentations were made to Executive Directors to apprise them of the proposed work. The streamlining initiatives were supported by Senior Budget Managers and the SAC.

3. The Travel Process Working Group has developed a Travel Portal that includes three primary components designed to streamline procedures. They include:

- A Fund-wide travel plan that is web-based and updated dynamically as departments make mission decisions. It includes financial controls to ensure that all approved missions are within department travel budgets and eliminates the current practice under which staff must await approval of travel authorizations in order to make airline reservations. The streamlined practice should enable staff to make reservations earlier to realize cost savings.¹
- A simplified travel reservation process has been defined to reduce the time spent by staff and the travel agency in making airline arrangements. Hotel details are also captured on the Travel Portal, including hotel contact information. The portal also provides for the pre-clearance of hotel rates that exceed policy for valid reasons.
- A self-service expense reporting module is being developed to simplify the expense reporting process for administrative assistants and for traveling staff who wish to complete their own expense reports. Staff will be able to complete their expense reports while traveling, enabling them to submit expense reports and receive reimbursements earlier.

4. The initial implementation of the Travel Portal is scheduled for February 2010. That phase includes the Travel Plan and the Trip Reservation process. The Expense Reporting component is scheduled to be completed before the end of FY10.

¹ Training on the use of the Travel Portal will be provided to offices of the Executive Directors ahead of the application rollout.

III. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSULTATION PROCESS UNDER RULE N-16

5. The requirement under Rule N-16(c)(i) that an Executive Director be consulted prior to staff travel to a territory of a member of his or her constituency was adopted by the Board in 1948. It has been the understanding that the “consultation” refers to a full and adequate opportunity to exchange views and information on the plans by staff to undertake official travel to a member territory. While the Director’s approval is not required, the consultation has the effect of informing him/her of mission travel to a constituent country and affording an opportunity to share thoughts, advice, and concerns with a department in relation to the proposed travel.

6. The Travel Portal will provide Executive Directors with more information earlier on Department travel plans by providing access to approved trips to constituent countries three months in advance of mission start dates.

The proposed process reflecting the operation of the new system provides that each N-16 consultation be deemed complete 7 calendar days after the department officially initiates the consultation with an Executive Director’s office unless the Executive Director extends the consultation period. Executive Directors would have the prerogative of extending each consultation for further 7 day periods if they deem that necessary. Executive Directors will also have the ability to complete consultations before the expiration of the seven day period through the Travel Portal by clicking a box to indicate that the consultation has taken place.

The proposed streamlining changes would entail fewer e-mails to complete consultations. E-mails will go directly from departments to Executive Director Offices eliminating the need for incoming and outgoing messages to be routed through The Secretary.

Departments are likely to initiate N-16 consultations earlier with the new portal in place to take advantage of airfare costs savings.

IV. NEXT STEPS

7. Upon Executive Board approval, the proposed change in the Rule N-16(c)(i) process will be implemented with the planned roll out of the Travel Portal on or about February 26, 2010. Training for OED support staff will be conducted prior to implementation.

V. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Agenda and Board Procedures recommends the adoption by the Executive Board of the following decision:

The Executive Board hereby approves the changes to the consultation process for official travel by persons on the staff of the Fund to a member's territory under Rule N-16(c)(i) as set out in paragraph 6 of EB/APC/10/1, effective as of the date of implementation of the new Travel Portal.