

More scrutiny on public spending

TheStarOnline

March 04, 2013

By RAZAK AHMAD

KUALA LUMPUR: Bold measures that include more scrutiny by the Auditor-General on public spending and better monitoring of how political parties are financed will be enforced in the second phase of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP).

Also in the works is the appointment of anti-graft compliance officers in all ministries.

Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) anti-corruption director Ravindran Devagunam said these measures were among the proposals made last year by Pemandu's National Key Result Areas (NKRA) Anti-Corruption Laboratory.

He said they have been approved for implementation during the second phase of the transformation programme (GTP 2.0) between now and 2015.

Ravindran said the Auditor-General's report, which details how funds allocated to Government agencies were spent, will no longer be tabled in a single session annually in Parliament.

"From this year, it will be divided into segments that will be issued to MPs during each of the Dewan Rakyat's three annual sessions.

"This is to allow the Auditor-General to present his findings in a more in-depth manner."

In addition to the new report format, the National Audit Department will develop an online chart listing every spending-related problem of each ministry.

Items in the chart marked green will indicate the issue has been identified and fixed, yellow will signify that work to resolve the problem is ongoing, while red means no action has been taken.

"Every six months, ministries with the most number of red entries will have to explain to the Prime Minister," said Ravindran, who is director of Pemandu's NKRA on Fighting Corruption.

He said the Societies Act 1966 will be amended to better monitor political party financing, adding this would be done by the end of the year.

"After the amendment, funds channelled to all societies, including political parties, will be required to be issued in the party's name with proper accounting and auditing practices that will be verified by the Registrar of Societies," he said.

To boost integrity and curb corruption in the public sector, the Government has, to date, set up internal affairs units in major enforcement agencies, such as police, Customs, Immigration and the Road Transport departments.

"The next step will see the Government appointing compliance officers in all ministries, who will be empowered to channel internal complaints more quickly and effectively to the authorities, including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission," said Ravindran.

Meanwhile, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid welcomed the new format of the Auditor-General's report, saying under the the current

practice the report would be presented at about the same time as the tabling of the Budget.

Copyright © 1995-2013 Star Publications (M) Bhd (Co No 10894-D)

Source:

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2013/3/4/nation/12787523&sec=nation>