

Annex 32:1

Act on the Icelandic Government Offices

No. 73 of 28 May 1969

Chapter I.

Article 1

The President of the Republic shall appoint cabinet ministers, decide on their number and allocate their functions.

Cabinet ministers are responsible for the affairs of government in the Icelandic Government Offices, which have their headquarters in Reykjavík.

Article 2

Ministerial meetings shall be held for the purpose of discussing new legislation and important matters of State. Furthermore, ministerial meetings shall be held if a Minister wishes to raise a matter for discussion.

Matters to be submitted to the President of the Republic for confirmation shall first be addressed at a ministerial meeting.

The Prime Minister shall preside at ministerial meetings.

Article 3

The Prime Minister shall entrust the post of secretary of ministerial meetings to a member of the staff of the Prime Minister's Office.

The secretary shall enter the minutes of ministerial meetings in a book of minutes following confirmation by cabinet ministers.

Article 4

The Icelandic Government Offices are divided into ministries as follows: The Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Business Affairs.

Ministries may not be established or discontinued except by law. However, ministries may be merged by an order of the President of the Republic.

Article 5

When functions are divided among cabinet ministers, each ministry shall be allocated undivided to a single minister.

Article 6

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Article 7

A cabinet minister shall provide for the division of his or her ministry into offices and departments by tasks.

Article 8

Government affairs are allocated to ministries in accordance with the provisions of a regulation issued by the President of Iceland on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, where it is ensured that affairs are entrusted to the proper ministries where, by their nature, they belong, cf. Article 4.

In the event of any doubt as to the ministry where a government affair belongs the Prime Minister shall resolve such doubt.

Article 9

Each ministry is responsible for supervision of the activities of agencies falling within the scope of its authority and all property pertaining to such agencies.

The minister shall decide on the location of agencies under his or her authority, except as otherwise provided by law.

Chapter II.

Article 10

Ministries are administered by permanent secretaries under the supervision of the minister. The Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office shall, in addition to that office, serve as the secretary of the Council of State.

The Prime Minister is authorised to provide for a permanent secretary to head more than one ministry and for more than one ministry to share, to the extent possible, a joint staff and joint premises. The arrangements provided for in the fifth paragraph may be rescinded by the Prime Minister if necessary, in which case the Prime Minister may also decide which of the ministries in question the permanent secretary should continue to head.

Article 11

The office of a ministry is headed by a director, and departments are headed by a head of department under the supervision of a permanent secretary.

If an employee of a ministry is appointed head of department, the post to which he or she is transferred need not be advertised. The same applies if a temporary employee, appointed under the first paragraph of Article 41 of the Government Employees Act, is offered another post in the Government Offices. Rules issued by the Prime Minister shall provide for the arrangements of advertising available posts in the Government Offices and other matters relating to the observance of this provision. Ministers shall issue terms of reference for heads of department and office directors providing, *inter alia*, for the scope of their office and their official duties.

Article 12

In addition to the permanent secretaries, office directors and department managers, the employees of ministries are officers, clerks and secretaries, as decided by the minister. However, a minister is authorised to appoint members of a ministerial staff under other titles.

Article 13

The Minister shall appoint permanent secretaries and office directors for a term of five years at a time. Other staff members are hired.

Article 14

If affairs of government are transferred between ministries, as provided in Article 8, the respective employees shall be invited to continue their work on such affairs in the Ministry to which the affairs are transferred. The transfer shall not entail changes in the employment terms of employees. The provisions of Article 7 of the Government Employees Act No. 70/1996 shall not apply to transfers of positions pursuant to this Article.

If affairs of government are transferred between ministries, as provided in Article 8, any unfinished administrative tasks shall be brought to a conclusion in the Ministry to which the affairs are transferred.

Article 15

A minister may call to his or her assistance, during the term of his or her office, a person from outside the ministry to serve as an office director, provided that such person relinquishes the post at the same time as the minister, in which case such person shall be paid a salary for three months, if he or she was not previously a government employee, or he or she shall be entitled to return to his or her former post or another post in the service of the State which does not carry a lesser fixed salary.

Article 16

Further provisions on the implementation of this Act may be established by an order of the President of Iceland on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.