



AUDITOR GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT OF JAMAICA



HURRICANE MELISSA RELIEF INITIATIVE AUDIT

**GOVERNANCE, PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES AND RECEIPT & DISTRIBUTION OF
STARLINK DEVICES**

Compliance Audit Report

Published: February 2026

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The Auditor General is appointed by the Governor General and is required by the Constitution, Financial Administration and Audit Act, other sundry acts and letters of engagement, to conduct audits at least once per year of the accounts, financial transactions, operations and financial statements of central government ministries and departments, local government agencies, statutory bodies and government companies.

The Department is headed by the Auditor General, Pamela Monroe Ellis, who submits her reports to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in accordance with Section 122 of the Constitution of Jamaica and Section 29 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

This report was prepared by the Auditor General's Department of Jamaica for presentation to the House of Representatives.

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This report outlines the findings from our real-time audit of
the Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative, focusing on
governance, oversight, and the receipt and distribution
processes for Starlink devices

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Auditor General's Foreword

The audit of Hurricane Melissa relief was undertaken to determine whether activities were executed with due regard to transparency and accountability. This report is focused on the oversight responsibilities of the National Disaster Fund Committee, procurement activities from the National Disaster Fund, acquisition and distribution of Starlink devices and inventory and stores management. The findings presented herein are intended to support continuous improvement in disaster response management, while enhancing accountability and safeguarding public funds.

I wish to thank the management of Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODEPM) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) for their responsiveness and courtesies extended to my staff.



Pamela Monroe Ellis, FCCA, FCA
Auditor General

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Audit at a Glance



Executive Summary

On October 28, 2025, Jamaica was severely impacted by Hurricane Melissa, a Category five hurricane that caused widespread devastation especially in the western areas of the island. The government launched a coordinated relief effort, with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) as the central agency responsible for emergency response and recovery operations. The ODPEM, established as a body corporate under the Disaster Risk Management Act (DRMA) of 2015, is the entity mandated to oversee national disaster management¹. ODPEM functions as the central agency responsible for coordinating emergency response efforts and managing the delivery of relief services. This included immediate relief efforts and the establishment of a disaster relief website to manage donations and aid logistics.

The audit sought to examine whether ODPEM effectively ensured the transparency and accountability of resources received and utilised under the Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative. In addition, the audit evaluated the adequacy of internal control systems designed to prevent and detect potential fraud, waste, and abuse of public resources during disaster response and recovery activities. This report is the second in a series of audit reports intended to evaluate multiple aspects of the Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative. Specifically, this report covers the oversight responsibilities of the National Disaster Fund Committee, procurement activities from the National Disaster Fund, acquisition and distribution of Starlink devices and inventory and stores management.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS), a total of 420 contracts have been awarded in response to Hurricane Melissa, amounting to \$11.13 billion (**Appendix 5**). The audit concerning these contracts is currently in progress. This report analyses the procurement activities conducted by ODPEM utilizing the \$350 million authorized for withdrawal from the National Disaster Fund. We have determined that of this \$350 million, ODPEM has so far drawn down \$207 million.

The audit identified areas of concern regarding governance and oversight of the National Disaster Fund, as well as deficiencies in the procurement of equipment and areas for improvement in inventory management. As this engagement is being conducted concurrently with the relief efforts, the audit acknowledges the steps ODPEM has begun to take to address the issues identified. This summary outlines the key deficiencies observed and presents recommendations for strengthening controls and improving overall compliance.

Key Findings

National Disaster Fund Committee

- 1. The National Disaster Fund Committee (NDFC) did not effectively oversee the management of the National Disaster Fund.** The Committee mandated to provide policy oversight, general administration, and effective management of the National Disaster Fund (NDF), convened only twice during its tenure, with the last meeting held in June 2022. The Committee was appointed in September 2020, and its term expired in September 2023. However, as at December 2025, there was no evidence of any new appointments, indicating non-compliance with the requirements of

¹ Section 3(1) of DRMA: There is hereby established for the purposes of this Act, a body to be called the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management which shall be a body corporate to which the provisions of section 28 of the *Interpretation Act* shall apply.

the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act². We found that the National Disaster Fund Guidelines document, which is intended to support the administration of the NDF remained in draft as at December 2025. In January 2026, ODPEM responded that it “*will make the necessary representation to the MoFPS regarding the appointment of a new Fund Committee and will conclude its review of the draft Committee guidelines no later than January 30, 2026, and submit them for signature by the appropriate authority*”.

2. **Section 40 of the DRM Act requires the Financial Secretary to approve withdrawals from the National Disaster Fund after consulting the NDFC. However, at the time the Director General of ODPEM requested \$350 million for Hurricane Melissa relief efforts, no committee had been appointed. The Financial Secretary subsequently approved the withdrawal of the \$350 million from the NDF.** The Director General of ODPEM submitted the withdrawal request acting in the capacity of Secretary to the National Disaster Risk Management Council, to support critical relief activities—including food distribution, municipal supplies, and National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) operations—following the passage of Hurricane Melissa on October 28, 2025. The Director General of ODPEM in a letter to the Financial Secretary, dated October 28, 2025, stated that the ODPEM had identified areas of intervention through coordination with local authorities and other stakeholders during pre- and post-disaster planning. In January 2026, ODPEM reported that consultations had occurred through operational meetings of the NEOC and verbal engagements with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (MLGCD). ODPEM despite our request has not provided meeting minutes or documentary evidence to support its representation that consultation was held with local authorities and key stakeholders.

Purchases Funded by the National Disaster Fund

3. **ODPEM did not publish the awarded emergency contracts on the Government of Jamaica Electronic Procurement (GOJEP) platform within the mandated one-month period, as required by the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2025.** Our review of ODPEM’s contract documentation for Hurricane Melissa relief activities identified 25 procurements valued at \$85.6 million as at December 17, 2025. From this population, we sampled 10 contracts totalling \$81 million and found that nine of the 10, totalling \$67 million, were supported by the required eligibility documents and had received the appropriate approval from the Head of the Entity. ODPEM applied the emergency procurement methodology, and the documented justifications complied with the Procurement Act and its accompanying Regulations. The details of the contracts were not published on the GOJEP platform. Our concern with one contract is detailed in paragraph 4. Following our report to ODPEM regarding the absence of publication on the GOJEP platform, as at January 21, 2026, six out of the 10 sampled contracts have since been published.
4. **We noted that the procurement of 200 Starlink devices valuing \$12.12 million was initiated by way of a ministerial instruction and not by the ODPEM’s Director General, contravening the Public Procurement Act 2015, which assigns direct responsibility for all procurement activities**

² Section 1 of the Fourth Schedule of the DRM Act 2015 states: The Fund Committee shall consist of such number of members not being less than seven nor more than ten as the Cabinet on the advice of the Minister may appoint by instrument in writing.

to the Head of the Procuring Entity³. Our review of correspondences revealed that the procurement activity was initiated by a letter from the Minister of Energy, Transport and Telecommunications in his capacity as the Co-Chair of the Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee (RROC)⁴ on November 13, 2025, to the attention of the Director General for payment to be made by ODPEM for the 200 devices to Supplier No. 1. However, only the Head of the Entity is legally empowered to initiate procurement and there is no provision under the Public Procurement Act that allows the Minister to approve or initiate commitments, to select suppliers or vendors or to give any directive to ODPEM as to which supplier to pay. The Starlink devices were bought using funds from the \$350 million withdrawal requested by the Financial Secretary, but they were not listed among the items that supported this request.

5. **The Starlink devices were delivered to the Office of the Commissioner of Police on November 14, 2025. However, it was noted that the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) began preparing the required procurement documentation (Internal Emergency Procurement Requisition Form) on November 19, 2025, five days subsequent to delivery.** The requisition form—which documents the procurement request, approvals, justification for emergency procurement, supplier selection, and risk assessment—was created retrospectively to formalize the process.
6. **Our review determined that 120 devices were distributed among 17 entities; of these, 13 entities confirmed receipt of a total of 86 devices. Physical inspections conducted at eight entities revealed all 41 issued devices remained unused and in storage.** Additionally, five entities did not record the Starlink devices in their asset inventories, and three municipal corporations reported that the devices had not been entered into municipal inventory listings but were issued directly to the respective Councillors (**Appendix 3**). Conversely, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) indicated that, although the agency received three devices, measures are being implemented to render them operational. JCA further informed us that the devices' power supplies are of European specification, necessitating the replacement of power adapters to meet local requirements at an additional cost. Upon examination of 41 devices, we observed that all units were equipped with European two-pin electrical plugs, requiring adapters for use. As of January 6, 2026, 80 out of 200 Starlink devices remained in storage at the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF).

Inventory Management

7. **Food items, tarpaulin, and water purchased at a total cost of \$59.6 million were not recorded in ODPEM's inventory or stores records.** ODPEM lacked an effective system for accurately recording, tracking, and periodically reconciling goods and assets acquired, which is essential to ensure accountability, sound management oversight, and reliable financial reporting. This issue persists despite recommendations from the Auditor General's Department in a report published in July 2024, which highlighted the weaknesses and implications associated with deficiencies in inventory management. Furthermore, robust inventory procedures are mandated by the Disaster

³ Section 20 of the Public Procurement Act 2015. The head of every procuring entity shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of all processes connected with procurement for that entity and, in particular, shall (a) develop an annual procurement plan for the procuring entity; (b) establish a specialist procurement unit staffed by persons competent and adequately trained to manage and execute the procurement proceedings engaged in by the procuring entity; and (c) ensure that the public procurement engaged in by the procuring entity complies with section 19.

⁴ Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee- sub-committee of the Cabinet.

Risk Management Act. ODPEM reported that its warehouse inventory operates as a paper-first system; items received and issued are initially documented on “_receipt and issue vouchers_” before the details are entered into the computerized inventory management system. This practice differs from previous information provided to us, which indicated that the SAGE 300 software was used for inventory management. Nonetheless, we found no evidence that inventory records had been updated accordingly. ODPEM stated that its inventory system would be updated by January 9, 2026, but as of now, this process remains incomplete and no timeline for full implementation has been provided.

Recommendation

- i. The Cabinet, on the advice of the Minister, should take urgent steps to appoint the National Disaster Fund Committee to ensure full compliance with the DRM Act⁵. Prompt establishment of the Committee will strengthen oversight of the Fund and enable the Financial Secretary to benefit from the statutory requirement for consultation prior to approving any withdrawals.
- ii. Additionally, ODPEM should improve inventory management and transparency. This includes maintaining complete asset records, using standardized pre-numbered requisition forms for all relief requests, and finalizing and implementing the inventory management Standard Operating Procedures. ODPEM should publish all procurement activities as required under the Public Procurement Act to promote accountability, transparency and public access to information.
- iii. ODPEM should immediately implement a structured deployment and activation plan for all Starlink devices acquired for emergency response operations. This plan should include clear criteria for allocation based on priority needs, assignment of responsibility for device activation, and documented procedures for monitoring usage and effectiveness. ODPEM should also undertake a review of the current device assignments to verify their appropriateness and alignment with operational needs. As part of this process, ODPEM should identify and formally designate staff within each recipient entity who will be responsible for the devices. This will help ensure that the units can be rapidly deployed and effectively utilized during emergency events.
- iv. Furthermore, ODPEM must ensure that all Starlink devices are properly recorded in the inventory management system, with regular reconciliations to confirm their physical location and operational status. Moving forward, procurement activities should be strictly initiated and approved by the Head of the Entity, in accordance with statutory requirements, to safeguard transparency and accountability.

⁵ Section 1 of the Fourth Schedule of the DRM Act 2015.

Part One

Introduction

Background

1.1. In 2015, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) was designated as a body corporate under the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act of 2015, as the public body mandated to oversee national disaster management⁶. The DRM Act repealed the Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Act (1993). Section 4 of the DRM Act states that the principal objects of the Office shall be to- advance disaster preparedness and emergency management measures in Jamaica by facilitating and coordinating the development and implementation of integrated disaster management systems; and institute measures as may be necessary for mitigating disasters. The functions of the Office include the following:

Figure 1:ODPEM's statutory functions



Source: Disaster Risk Management Act (2015)

⁶ Section 3(1) of DRM Act: There is hereby established for the purposes of this Act, a body to be called the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management which shall be a body corporate to which the provisions of section 28 of the *Interpretation Act* shall apply

1.2. On October 28, 2025, Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica as a Category 5 hurricane, causing catastrophic damage across the island, particularly in the western parishes. In response, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) launched the Hurricane Melissa relief and recovery initiative, a coordinated national effort designed to provide immediate relief (food, shelter, medical supplies), support housing recovery, and strengthen long-term community and climate resilience through partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental and international organisations. According to data from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS), 420 contracts valued at \$11.13 billion have been awarded in response to Hurricane Melissa. The audit of these contracts is currently underway. The ODPEM directly coordinates the Hurricane Melissa relief efforts in Jamaica and plays a central role in both emergency response and recovery. Additionally, the Government of Jamaica launched the disaster relief website *supportjamaica.gov.jm*, which handles donations and humanitarian aid logistics.

Audit rationale, scope and methodology

1.3. Disaster relief efforts often face challenges such as the need for rapid decision-making, fluid operating conditions, coordination across multiple agencies, and heightened risks of resource misallocation, all of which can strain governance and control systems and increase public demand for transparency. A real-time audit helps address these issues by verifying whether emergency procurement and operational processes remained compliant and properly documented. It also evaluates the adequacy of governance and coordination mechanisms. In addition, the audit reviews controls over the receipt and distribution of relief resources. Overall, it provides independent assurance to strengthen accountability and enhance future disaster response efforts.

1.4. The objective of the real time audit is to assess whether the activities relating to the Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative were conducted with due regard for transparency and accountability. Specifically, the series of audits seek to determine whether internal controls were adequate to prevent fraud, waste and abuse of public resources during disaster response and recovery, by assessing whether (Figure 2);

- appropriate IT controls exist over www.supportjamaica.gov.jm website,
- all donations (including funds and benefits in kind) have been accounted for in keeping with the relevant GoJ guidelines; and
- Procurement activities complied with the applicable laws, regulations and guidelines

Figure 2 Areas to be covered in Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative Real Time Audit

Information Technology Audit

Did appropriate IT controls exist over the supportjamaica.gov.jm website to ensure information security?

Governance & Oversight

Is there an effective institutional framework in place to manage disaster relief efforts?

Financial Management

Are all hurricane relief funds and in-kind donations accurately accounted for?

Procurement

Is the awarding of contracts for goods and services compliant with the applicable GoJ procurement procedures?

Inventory Management

Does ODPEM have an effective inventory management system in place to account for all relief items, whether procured or donated?

Relief Distribution

Are procured and donated item distributed to the intend beneficiaries?

Source: AuGD planning documents

1.5. We also considered how the audit will contribute to the wider strategic aim of the Auditor General's Department to promote improvements in the use of public funds through better governance and resource management (**Figure 3**). This audit focused on one of the thematic approaches of the Auditor General's Department, which are aligned with national priorities and key development concerns.

Figure 3 In scoping the audit , we considered how it would contribute to the achievement of the Auditor General's Department wider strategic aims by:

- a) Assisting the Government of Jamaica with useful recommendations that will aid in improvements in the delivery of public services.
- b) Targeting coverage of the Auditor General's Department (AuGD) Audit Themes, governance, resource management and accountability to aid in achieving the AuGD's vision of promoting a better Country through effective audit scrutiny of Government operations; and,
- c) Providing assurance to Parliament and the public on the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the operations of MDAs.

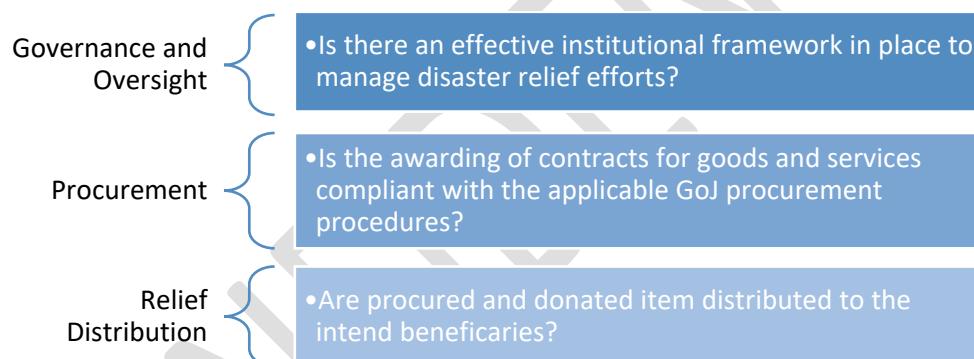
Source: AuGD's Audit Study Plan

1.6. The audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards issued by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), including the Guidance on Auditing Disaster Management (GUID 5330). Specific focus is being placed on the Recovery & Relief Activities and National & International Response to Emergency phases of the disaster management cycle. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements, plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that reliance may be placed on ODPEM's internal controls. The series of audits will also include a review of the key information technology systems used in the Hurricane Melissa Relief Initiative, related documents, interviews with management and staff, key stakeholders, observations and analysis of data and information provided by ODPEM.

Key Areas Covered in this Report

1.7. This report focuses on the governance and oversight of the National Disaster Fund, as well as the procurement of disaster relief activities, receipt and distribution of Starlink devices, including the associated inventory management processes and controls, for the period up to January 2026 (Figure 4). Subsequent reports will address the areas of Information Technology (IT), Financial Management, Procurement and Relief Distribution controls in greater detail.

Figure 4 Focus of this report



Part Two

Management of the National Disaster Fund

	At A Glance		
	Systems and practices	Criteria	Key Findings
Governance and oversight of the National Disaster Fund	Section 37 of the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act, 2015 mandates the establishment of the National Disaster Fund Committee with responsibility for providing policy direction, general administration, and effective management of the National Disaster Fund (NDF).	The Committee was not operational as the tenure of the committee expired in September 2023. Further, the previous Committee only met twice during its tenure.	
Withdrawal from the National Disaster Fund	Section 40 of the DRMA Act, states that “no money shall be withdrawn from the Fund unless authorized by the Financial Secretary, after consultation with the Fund Committee”.	The Financial Secretary authorized a \$350 million withdrawal without the required consultation, given that the National Disaster Fund Committee was not operational.	
Publication of procurement contracts	The Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2025, states that contracts are to be published, within one month after the emergency contract was awarded.	As at December 17, 2025, ODPEM did not published its procurement activities as required. Subsequent verifications on the GOJEP platform on 21 January 2026 revealed that only 6 of the 10 sampled contracts were published.	
Inventory Management	Scope and format of the asset register: Section 2.1 of the GOJ Comprehensive Asset Management Policy (2020) states (vii) When an asset is acquired, all documents pertaining to the asset shall be included in the Asset Register during the Receive and Inspection process. (this is inclusive of, but not limited to, source, cost, description) This will ensure a complete record of the genesis of the assets.	We noted that goods valued at \$59.6 million and Starlink devices valuing \$12.12 million were not included in ODPEM's inventory records.	
Procurement Initiation and Approvals	Section 20 of the Public Procurement Act 2015: The head of every procuring entity shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of all processes connected with procurement for that entity.	The procurement of Starlink devices valuing \$12.12 million was initiated by ministerial instruction and the purchase decision being actioned in advance by the Minister instead of ODPEM's Director General.	
	We expect the Minister's role to be limited to providing policy direction and should not include operational procurement and distribution instructions.		
 Met the criteria  Criteria partially met; improvement needed			Did not meet the criteria

Governance and Oversight

2.1 The National Disaster Fund Committee did not effectively oversee the management of the National Disaster Fund. Section 37 of the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act, 2015 mandates the establishment of the National Disaster Fund Committee with responsibility for providing policy direction, general administration, and effective management of the National Disaster Fund (NDF). The last Committee was appointed in September 2020 by way of Cabinet Decision 43/20; however, its tenure expired in 2023, with no evidence of new appointments as at December 15, 2025. Therefore, there was no functioning Committee in place for the oversight of the National Disaster Fund. Notably, the Committee's inaugural meeting was convened on June 29, 2021, which was nine months after the Cabinet formally appointed its members. Following this, our examination revealed that the last documented meeting of the Committee occurred on June 30, 2022. Further, Section 11(1) of the Fourth Schedule of the DRM Act states '*the Fund Committee shall meet as often as may be necessary or expedient for the transaction of its business (but meetings shall be held at least once in every two months), and such meetings shall be held at such times and places and on such days as the Committee may determine.*'

2.2 In addition, while Section 39 of the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act outlines the responsibilities of the Committee, the operational procedures required to guide its functioning had not yet been approved. Governance documents intended to support the administration of the NDF remained in draft form as at December 2025, with no established timeline for their approval or implementation. Consequently, the Fund continued to operate in the absence of a formally constituted oversight mechanism and finalised governance framework.

2.3 The non-operational status of the Committee creates uncertainty regarding how the National Disaster Fund has been managed, administered, and utilized for disasters, subsequent to the last committee meeting. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the required criteria for funding projects related to disaster mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery were developed and actively utilized. Our review of the financial management and reporting of the Fund will be the subject of our review in a subsequent report.

2.4 In December 2025, ODPEM advised that the guidelines for the Committee, which would inform the fund approval process in accordance with the DRM Act, were in draft form. Moreover, a timeline for the finalization and submission of this draft document for approval was not provided. In its January 2026 response, ODPEM acknowledged that:

"the tenure of the first National Disaster Fund Committee expired in September 2023. It is to be noted, however, that the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (MLGCD) was only notified by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS) of Cabinet Decision #43/20, which appointed ten persons to the fund committee to administer to the National Disaster Fund by way of a letter dated April 13, 2021. Consequent to notification of appointment from the Ministry of Financial [sic] and the Public Service, the first committee meeting was convened on June 29, 2021, two (2) months post the letter of notification. A second meeting was convened on June 30, 2022. The ODPEM will make the necessary representation to the MoFPS regarding the appointment of the National Disaster Fund Committee Members.

The then Chairman further guided that the draft guidelines, as presented, had benefited from consideration by the previous committee and stakeholders. The ODPEM is reviewing the draft

National Disaster Fund Guidelines and will make the necessary submission for signature by the appropriate authority. It is envisaged that the ODPEM will conclude its review of the draft guidelines no later than January 30, 2026."

Request for Funds in response to Hurricane Melissa

2.5 Section 40 of the DRMA Act, states that withdrawal from the fund shall be authorized by the Financial Secretary after consultation with the National Disaster Fund Committee⁷. However, the requisite consultation could not be undertaken by the Financial Secretary, prior to granting approval for the withdrawal of \$350 million from the National Disaster Fund, given that there was no functioning committee.

2.6 On October 28, 2025, the Director General of ODPEM, in the capacity of Secretary of the National Disaster Risk Management Council⁸, requested approval from the Financial Secretary, MoFPS for the withdrawal of \$350 million from the National Disaster Fund to cover critical relief activities (food packages, municipal supplies, and NEOC operations) due to the passage of Hurricane Melissa (Table 1). By way of letter dated October 30, 2025, the Financial Secretary granted authorization for the use of the funds. As at December 2025, ODPEM liquidated NDF investments totalling \$207 million and deposited the proceeds into the National Disaster Fund bank account to facilitate payments. Total credits/inflows to the bank account as at December 4, 2025, stands at \$207.66 million.

Table 1 Breakdown of funds requested from the National Disaster Fund

Items	Est. Cost (\$'000)
50,000 food packages	300,000
Hurricane straps	6,000
Igloos	9,000
Tarpaulins	8,000
Mattresses	14,000
Cots	6,000
Fuel for trucks island wide	2,000
Toll for trucks island wide	1,000
Haulage	4,000
Total	350,000

Source: ODPEM Request Letter

2.7 Further, the request to the Financial Secretary stated that *"The ODPEM has identified areas of intervention in the recovery process through its coordination with local authorities, and other stakeholders in its pre and post planning phase."* However, evidence of the collaboration with the stakeholders to determine the need was not presented for review. In its January 2026 response, ODPEM acknowledged that:

under the current circumstances, the mandate, as per Section 40 of the Disaster Risk Management Act (DRMA) 2015, could not have been fulfilled; the tenure of the National Disaster Fund Committee had expired, and a committee had not been reestablished. The ODPEM will make the necessary representation to the MoFPS regarding the appointment of a new Fund Committee and will conclude

⁷ Disaster Risk Management Act 2015 Section 40: No money shall be withdrawn from the Fund unless authorized by the Financial Secretary, after consultation with the Fund Committee

⁸ The National Disaster Risk Management Council in Jamaica was established under Section 16(1) of the Disaster Risk Management Act, 2015.

its review of the draft Committee guidelines no later than January 30, 2026, and submit them for signature by the appropriate authority.

Regarding verifiable evidence of stakeholder collaboration undertaken to determine the needs requirements for the fund drawdown request, the OPDEM [sic] submits that the consultations were conducted through a series of operational meetings of the National Emergency Operations Centre and through verbal consultations with the MLGCD.

Procurement of Hurricane Supplies - \$85.6 million

2.8 From a review of procurement records for the items purchased from the National Disaster Fund, we noted 25 procurement activities with total committed funds of over \$85.6 million as at December 17, 2025. We selected all procurements with values over \$1 million for audit review, which totalled \$81 million for ten procurement activities. Nine of the 10 procurement activities reviewed were properly supported with documentation and were approved by the head of the entity, with clear justifications provided for the methodology used to procure goods and services as required by the Procurement Act and Regulations. Each supplier, where required, had a Tax Compliance Certificate (TCC) and Public Procurement Commission (PPC) registration, which were presented for the award of the contracts (Appendix 1).

2.9 The Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2025 First Schedule Part A: Paragraph 3 states '(1) Where situations of emergency or extreme urgency necessitate the award of a procurement contract (referred to as an emergency contract), the procuring entity shall give notice to the public of all emergency contracts awarded by that procuring entity. (2) A notice referred to in sub-paragraph (1), shall (a) be published, within one month after the emergency contract was awarded, in the manner specified in guidelines issued by the Office.' However, as at December 17, 2025, the ODPEM did not publish these procurement activities as required by the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2025. In January 2026, ODPEM responded that:

"the necessary steps were taken to have the procurements in question published as required by the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act 2025. The Contract Award Notices are attached for reference."

2.10 Subsequent verifications on the GOJEP platform on January 17, 2026, revealed that six of the 10 sampled contracts, were uploaded as required by the amended Act. A timeline for the completion of the activity was not provided.

Inventory Management

2.11 ODPEM is expected to manage relief inventory through a finalised, approved standard operating procedures (SOP) document and maintain accurate, real-time records in its computerized inventory system. All transactions should be supported by standardised documentation, including signed receipt books and store issue vouchers, to provide a reliable audit trail and ensure compliance with the government's asset management requirements. Specifically, the standard process for procured relief inventory dictates that items are verified by Procurement, handed to Logistics with invoices, and immediately entered into its computerized inventory system. Similarly, distribution should only occur upon receipt of formal, approved requisitions, with the system updated instantly to reflect new balances.

2.12 However, in practice, these controls were not fully implemented. The audit found gaps in physical documentation and accountability, with incomplete documentation undermining the audit trail. We noted that goods valued at \$59.6 million and Starlink devices valuing \$12.12 million were not included in ODPEM's inventory records. The GOJ Comprehensive Asset Management Policy (2020) stipulates that assets should be included in the asset register⁹. ODPEM indicated that the Office did not use its computerized inventory system but instead utilised manual record-keeping, resulting in a backlog and lapse in the update of electronic records. ODPEM's standard operating procedures (SOP) document to govern inventory was unapproved and undated.

2.13 These control weaknesses significantly increase the risk of inventory errors, and the inability to account for procured goods. Inaccurate stock reporting and incomplete audit trails result in regulatory non-compliance and undermine the efficiency of relief operations, potentially delaying support to affected communities. In January 2026, ODPEM responded that:

"warehouse inventory procedure is a paper-first system, whereby items received and issued are initially recorded on receipt and issue vouchers, as applicable. Following the completion of the paper-based transaction, the relevant details are subsequently entered into the SAGE system.

ODPEM partnered with the Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA) to develop and deploy a Disaster Management Information System (DMIS). In its initial iteration, the DMIS includes a bespoke inventory management module. The DMIS has been deployed and is currently being updated by ODPEM staff using verified inventory data. It is expected that the DMIS inventory module will be fully populated by 09 January 2026.

An Inventory Management Standard Operating Procedure and a Warehouse Manual existed prior to Hurricane Melissa; however, these documents remain unsigned. The undersigned will cause these documents to undergo the required internal processes to secure the relevant approvals and signatures. Notwithstanding the absence of signatures, the Logistics Manager and warehouse team operate in accordance with the referenced documents."

2.14 A timeline for the approval of the Inventory Management Standard Operating Procedure and Warehouse Manual was not provided. The team conducted verification on January 21, 2026, of the operational status of the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) and noted that, although the system was in place, it remained in the testing phase and was not fully functional.

Procurement of Star-link Devices - \$12.12 million

2.15 In November 2025, ODPEM expended \$12.12 million (before tax) from the National Disaster Fund for the procurement of 200 Starlink devices. There was no evidence of the statutory requirement for approval from the Financial Secretary authorizing the withdrawal of funds from the National Disaster Fund and the transaction lacked the required prior contractual commitment and purchase decision by Director General of ODPEM. We expected that the devices procured for disaster response would be acquired specifically to support emergency operations, promptly activated and in use to ensure reliable internet connectivity during post-disaster recovery efforts.

⁹ Scope and format of the asset register: Section 2.1 of the GOJ Comprehensive Asset Management Policy (2020) states (vii) When an asset is acquired, all documents pertaining to the asset shall be included in the Asset Register during the Receive and Inspection process. (this is inclusive of, but not limited to, source, cost, description) This will ensure a complete record of the genesis of the assets. (viii.)No newly acquired asset(s), from whatever source, is to be recorded in the Asset Register without the corresponding acquisition information, except in the case of Heritage Assets, where no cost can be determined, or any other situation sanctioned by MoF-AMU.

2.16 Our review of correspondences showed that the procurement was initiated by a letter from the Minister of Energy, Transport and Telecommunications in his capacity as the Co-Chair of the Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee (RROC) on November 13, 2025, to the attention of the Director General for payment to be tendered from ODPEM for 200 Starlink Mini 4th Gen devices. ODPEM presented two invoices dated November 11, 2025, from a supplier, reflecting \$12.12 million before tax¹⁰. The engagement of the supplier by the Minister breached Section 20 of the Public Procurement Act 2015 (Responsibilities of the Head of Procuring Entity), which places direct responsibility for all procurement activities on the Head of the Procuring Entity¹¹. This means only the Accountable Officer or Head of the Entity is legally empowered to initiate procurement and there is no provision in law, which allows the Minister/Co-Chair (ROCC) to approve or initiate commitments, select suppliers or to give any directive to ODPEM for payments.

2.17 By way of correspondence dated November 13, 2025, the Minister/Co-Chair (ROCC) directed ODPEM to facilitate payments amounting to \$12.12 million, to a supplier for the acquisition of 200 Starlink Mini 4th Generation devices. The correspondence further, stated *“that the distribution of the devices will be via the Office of the Commissioner of Police, under my directive and accountability oversight.”* Additionally, review of documentation showed that the devices were delivered to the Office of the Commissioner of Police on November 14, 2025. Formal approval for the procurement was not granted by the Director General until November 20, 2025.

2.18 Nonetheless, ODPEM commenced the preparation of the required supporting procurement documentation (Internal Emergency Procurement Requisition Form) on November 19, 2025, five days after the delivery had already occurred. The Form, which includes the request for procurement, approvals, justification for using emergency procurement method, selection of supplier, and risk assessment, was created to retroactively formalize the process. The information on the form stated that formal Request for Procurement was made by the Preparedness and Emergency Operations Division (PEOD) on November 19, 2025; five days after receipt of the devices. This procurement documentation developed after the fact outlined an emergency procurement scenario triggered by telecommunications service disruptions during a National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) Level 3 activation¹². The notation on the form also stated that a single supplier was contacted; however, no documented rationale for the selection of the supplier (Supplier No. 1) was noted. The sequence of events, particularly the receipt of the devices prior to the initiation and approval of procurement records, indicates that the procurement process did not comply with established requirements and resulted in the circumvention of key controls intended to ensure transparency, competitiveness, and value for money (**Appendix 4**).

2.19 ODPEM was unable to provide evidence regarding the condition of the Starlink devices, including details of the devices in its inventory records or information on the distribution and monitoring of these assets. In January 2026 ODPEM stated it:

¹⁰ Invoice No. 0553 (\$12.12 million) and Invoice No. 3080 (\$13.938 million – inclusive of GCT)

¹¹ Section 20 of the Public Procurement Act 2015. The head of every procuring entity shall have overall responsibility for the conduct of all processes connected with procurement for that entity and, in particular, shall (a) develop an annual procurement plan for the procuring entity; (b) establish a specialist procurement unit staffed by persons competent and adequately trained to manage and execute the procurement proceedings engaged in by the procuring entity; and (c) ensure that the public procurement engaged in by the procuring entity complies with section 19.

¹² Government of Jamaica activated the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) to Level 3 – Full Response Phase on October 25, 2025, in response to the rapid intensification of Hurricane Melissa (<https://opm.gov.jm/government-activates-national-emergency-operation-centre-neoc-in-response-to-adverse-weather-conditions/>).

"is taking the necessary steps to adhere strictly to procurement and management protocols, ensuring that approvals are granted prior to commitments, and that inventory and distribution records are maintained and available for audit."

Verification of Star Link Devices

2.20 The GOJ Comprehensive Asset Management Policy (2020)¹³ mandates that all Government assets should be promptly recorded in asset registers, allocated appropriately, and properly managed. On January 6, 2026, we sought to verify the existence and utilization of the 200 Starlink devices delivered to the Office of the Commissioner of Police. We found that 120 devices were distributed to 17 entities, while the remaining 80 devices were on site and not in use at the time of inspection (**Appendix 3**). Information identifying the intended recipient entities for the 80 undistributed devices was not provided. The devices were also not recorded in the inventory of the Office of the Commissioner of Police.

2.21 We sought to verify the utilization of the 120 devices issued to the 17 entities. However, only 13 of the 17 entities provided information relating to 86 devices. Audit verification conducted at eight of these entities revealed that all 41 devices issued to them were unused and kept in storage. Additionally, five entities did not record the Starlink devices in their asset inventories, raising concerns regarding accountability and safeguarding of Government of Jamaica (GOJ)-owned assets (**Appendix 3**).

2.22 The JCF reported that one Star link device was allocated to the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service. However, MoFPS indicated by way of correspondence dated January 14, 2026, that no device was received by the Ministry. On January 25, 2026, JCF in response to our query stated *"please be advised that the device in question was collected by [name redacted], a Sergeant of Police. He is assigned to [name redacted] as a Close Protection Officer and collected the device on her behalf. Please also note that her name was referenced on the distribution form in the field distributed to location."*¹⁴ The JCF is yet to respond to our request to present the authority from the Minister / Co-Chair (RROC) or ODPEM authorizing the distribution of this Starlink device.

2.23 Three municipal corporations that provided responses indicated that the devices were not recorded on the municipalities' inventory listings and were issued directly to the respective councillors¹⁵. Examination of documentation provided by recipient entities revealed that six entities were notified of the allocation of Starlink devices by letters from the Minister/ Co-Chair (RROC) dated between December 14 and 17, 2025, approximately one month after the devices were procured and delivered. We also noted that two entities returned 13 devices due to overallocation¹⁶.

2.24 In response to the audit team's request to verify five Starlink devices reportedly procured by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) indicated that the Ministry had also received Starlink devices from an

¹³ GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA COMPREHENSIVE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR MoFPS (February 18, 2020) – Overview This policy is applicable to all central funded Government of Jamaica (GoJ) Entities; that is, Ministries, Departments, Executive Agencies, Municipal Corporations, Fully-Funded and Partially Funded Public Bodies; and Jamaican Embassies, Missions and Consulates overseas. In the case of self-financing Public Bodies, the principles herein may be adopted.

¹⁴ Email from Superintendent of Police JCF Information Communications and Technology Division, Technology Branch.

¹⁵ St. James Municipal Corporation, St. Ann Municipal Corporation and St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation.

¹⁶ St Elizabeth Municipal Corporation - five devices returned, St Ann Municipal Corporation eight devices returned on January 5, 2026.

international supplier as part of its crisis response efforts. According to MLSS, the devices were transmitted via the Office of the Commissioner of Police for operational use in support of post Hurricane Melissa response activities. The devices donated by the international supplier reportedly comprised 46 stationary units and 10 mobile units, all of which were received as complete kits. Review of documentation provided by MLSS indicated that 10 of the stationary kits donated by the international supplier were subsequently exchanged for mobile units including five, which were purchased by ODPEM. At the time of reporting, the audit team had not yet conducted a physical inspection of the 56 devices to confirm their existence, condition, and activation status. The results of the physical verification exercise will be reported in the subsequent audit report.

2.25 Additionally, we noted that the devices procured and distributed were not suitable for immediate operational use, as the devices were supplied with standard European 2-pin plugs (Figure 5). Consequently, the recipient entities would require plug adapters for the Starlink devices before the devices can be used. For example, Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) indicated that the *“The Agency is currently acquiring the mounting peripherals for the Starlink mini-kits, given the absence of these components from the packages received. We've also noted the power supply being of European specification and will hence be replacing the power adapters to the specifications required for our application. The four (4) Standard Kits are also lacking the appropriate mounting brackets specific to the requirements of each location where the device is to be installed. Please note that the Agency has engaged a vendor for professional services to complete the installation of the devices”*¹⁷.

Figure 5 Photos of Star link devices 2-pin plugs



Source: AuGD verification exercise

¹⁷ Email correspondence dated January 26, 2026 from JCA's CIO to AuGD.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Procurement Activities reviewed

Items procured	Supplier names	Contract values (\$)	Procurement Method	Award date	Required Publication Date ¹⁸	Diff-days ¹⁹	Publication Date (GOJEP)	Published GOJEP
Food items	Supplier No. 2	5,564,652.28	Restrictive bidding	26 th Oct 25	27 th Nov 25	21	7 th Jan 2026	Yes
	Supplier No. 3	1,302,541.17	Restrictive bidding	27 th Oct 25	28 th Nov 25	20	NS	No
	Supplier No. 2	6,565,982.56	Restrictive bidding	6 th Nov 25	7 th Dec 2025	11	7 th Jan 2026	Yes
	Supplier No. 4	1,160,316.00	Restrictive bidding	3 rd Nov 25	4 th Dec 2025	14	NS	No
	Supplier No. 3	15,795,009.26	Restrictive bidding	3 rd Nov 25	4 th Dec 2025	14	8 th Jan 2026	Yes
Tarpaulins	Supplier No. 5	22,859,230.00	Direct	30 th Oct 25	1 st Dec 2025	17	7 th Jan 2026	Yes
Water	Supplier No. 3	6,307,175.00	Direct	31 st Oct 25	1 st Dec 2025	17	7 th Jan 2026	Yes
Sub-total		59,554,906.00						
Transportation services	Supplier No. 6	2,996,697.00	Direct	30 th Oct 25	1 st Dec 2025	17	NS	No
Transportation services	Supplier No. 7	4,615,634.00	Direct	1 st Nov 25	2 nd Dec 2025	16	NS	No
Starlink Devices	Supplier No. 1	13,938,000.00 ²⁰	Direct	14 th Nov 25	15 th Dec 2025	3	7 th Jan 2026	Yes
Grand Total		81,105,237.00						

NS - Not Seen

Source: ODPEM Records

¹⁸ The Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2025 PART A Paragraph 3. (1) Where situations of emergency or extreme urgency necessitate the award of a procurement contract (referred to as an emergency contract), the procuring entity shall give notice to the public of all emergency contracts awarded by that procuring entity. (2) A notice referred to in sub-paragraph (1), shall—(a) be published, within one month after the emergency contract was awarded, in the manner specified in guidelines issued by the Office.

¹⁹ Between statutory publication date and date of report (December 18, 2025).

²⁰ \$12,120,000 plus GCT.

Appendix 2 – Timeline: Starlink Acquisition (\$12.12 million)

Date	Detail
November 11, 2025	Date on Supplier's Invoice
November 13, 2025	Correspondence from the Minister/ Co-Chair of the Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee (RROC) directing payment of the invoice
November 14, 2025	Delivery of the 200 Starlink devices to the Office of the Commissioner of Police (JCF)
November 19, 2025	"Internal Emergency Procurement Requisition Form signed by Acting Senior Director - Preparedness and Emergency Operations Division.
November 20, 2025	ODPEM Director General approved payment.
November 21, 2025	ODPEM (Procurement Unit) submitted a request for payment to the supplier
November 25, 2025	Payment made by ODPEM to supplier.
December 15, 2025	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee addressed to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructural Development (MEGID) advising of his approval for the allocation of 1 Starlink device.
	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Committee addressed to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining advising of his approval for the allocation of 5 Starlink devices.
	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee addressed to Managing Director, Spectrum Management Authority advising of his approval for the allocation of 5 Starlink devices.
	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee addressed to CEO, CHASE Fund advising of his approval for the allocation of 2 Starlink devices.
December 17, 2025	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee addressed to Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)advising of his approval for the allocation of 11 Starlink devices.
	Correspondence from Minister/Co-Chair, Hurricane Relief and Recovery Oversight Committee addressed to Managing Director, JSIF advising of his approval for the allocation of 8 Starlink devices.

Source: ODPEM Records

Appendix No. 3 – Distribution of Starlink Devices Paid for by ODPEM

Entity	Devices Distributed	Date Collected from JCF	Physically Inspected (AuGD)	Included in Inventory Records	In Use (Activated)
Office of the Prime Minister	10	23 rd Dec 2025	Yes	Yes	No
CHASE Fund	2	22 nd Dec 2025	Yes	No	No
Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development	1	23 rd Dec 2025	Yes	No	No
ICT Authority	2	22 nd Dec 2025	Yes	No	No
Jamaica Customs Agency	3	22 nd Dec 2025	Yes	Yes	No
Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority	10	22 nd Dec 2025	Yes	No	No
Jamaica Social Investment Fund	8	22 nd Dec 2025	Yes	Yes	No
Spectrum Management Authority	5	5 th Jan 2026	Yes	No	No
St. Ann Municipal Authority (SAMC)*	8	19 th Dec 2025	No	NV	NV
St. James Municipal Authority	16	30 th Dec 2025	No	NV	NV
St. Elizabeth Municipal Authority (SEMA)*	15	19 th Dec 2025	No	NV	NV
Ministry of Labour and Social Security	5	25 th Nov 2025	No	NV	NV
Trelawny Municipal Authority	9	22 nd Dec 2025	No	NR	NR
Westmoreland Municipal Authority	14	19 th Dec 2025	No	NR	NR
Hanover Municipal Authority	6	18 th Dec 2025	No	NR	NR
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining	5	29 th Dec 2025	No	NR	NR
Minister of Finance and the Public Service	1	24 th Nov 2025	No	NV	NV
TOTAL	120				

*-16 Starlink mini-kits received by SAMC on December 19, 2025, but eight returned to JCF on January 5, 2025.

*-20 Starlink mini-kits received by SEMA on December 19, 2025, but five returned to JCF on January 5, 2025.

NR= No response received from public entities.

NV= Not verified by the Auditor General's Department

Source: JCF records

Appendix 4 – After the fact procurement processes

Section	Title	Sub-Title	Details
A	Request Details		November 19, 2025, by ODPEM Preparedness and Emergency Operations Division (PEOD)
B	Emergency Event Triggering Request		Telecommunications Services
		Activation Level	NEOC Level 3
		Description of Requirement	200 Starlink Mini 4 th Gen devices
C	Approvals	Recommended	Senior Director -Preparedness and Emergency Operations Division (Acting)
		Approved by Head of Entity	Signed by Acting Director General.
		Procurement Office	Signed by Director of Public Procurement.
D	Emergency Justification	Description of Emergency Situation	Based on the justification given by the requesting Division, the devices are needed to restore and maintain connection to the internet in areas that have limited bandwidth to connect to local network providers.
		Justification for using emergency procurement method	Due to the urgency of the need and to avoid operational disruption the direct contracting methodology was applied.
		Impact if Procurement is not immediately approved	Operational Disruption – disruption to operations at repeater sites as indicated in attached memo.
E	Market Sounding/Supplier Selection	Supplier(s) Identified	Supplier No. 1, contact numbers, price quoted (\$12,120,000). Reason for selection - section left blank.
	Basis of Supplier Selection		Availability during emergency; pre-approved emergency supplier; Sole supplier available.
F	Value For money (VFM) Assurance	Steps taken to ensure VFM despite the emergency	Urgency balanced with cost.
G	Risk Assessment	Identify risks associated with Emergency Procurement	Overpricing; Limited documentation; Fraud/corruption risks.
		Mitigation Measures	Based on the documentation attached, the request was made to facilitate an expressed need. Only one supplier was contacted due to the expressed urgency of the need the request was facilitated as instructed by the Director General.

Source: Extracted from ODPEM's Internal Emergency Procurement Requisition Form

Appendix 5 – Hurricane Melissa Procurement Listing (GOJEP)

Procuring Entity	Number of Contracts	Total Awarded Value
Brown's Town Community College	1	\$1,810,000.00
Bureau of Standards Jamaica	1	\$62,123.00
Factories Corporation of Jamaica Limited	5	\$22,094,600.00
HEART NSTA/Trust	15	\$16,647,915.13
Jamaica Business Development Corporation	1	\$22,235,389.90
Jamaica Constabulary Force	13	\$34,216,356.23
Jamaica Fire Brigade	1	\$2,075,920.00
Jamaica Tourist Board	1	\$1,646,666.00
MPM Waste Management	5	\$39,879,750.00
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Mining	12	\$101,800,812.28
Ministry of Finance and the Public Service	1	\$125,000.00
Ministry of Health and Wellness	11	\$131,305,040.67
Ministry of Labour and Social Security	37	\$211,216,338.45
Ministry of National Security	4	\$539,644,508.31
National Education Trust	11	\$768,176,012.50
National Fisheries Authority	5	\$61,595,701.18
National Health Fund	59	\$2,193,749,419.17
National Housing Trust	2	\$3,102,943,179.82
National Identification and Registration Authority	2	\$17,434,164.10
National Irrigation Commission	2	\$114,829,156.00
National Solid Waste Management Authority	32	\$641,232,600.00
National Water Commission	15	\$361,876,843.18
National Works Agency	6	\$125,657,571.29
Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management	12	\$254,329,570.04
Petrojam Limited	16	\$387,636,831.00
Port Authority of Jamaica	13	\$697,696,896.29
Post and Telecommunications Department	1	\$59,800.00
Rural Agricultural Development Authority	11	\$224,566,579.29
SPM Waste Management Limited	5	\$29,810,700.00
Scientific Research Council	1	\$1,251,295.00
Southern Regional Health Authority	9	\$34,275,373.17
St. James Municipal Corporation	2	\$2,975,000.00
Tourism Enhancement Fund	38	\$142,574,774.52
Tourism Product Development Company Limited	10	\$472,205,000.00
Transport Authority	2	\$19,559,412.00
Trelawny Municipal Corporation	2	\$36,993,000.00
Universal Service Fund	4	\$114,391,220.50

WPM Waste Management Limited	33	\$121,281,308.05
Western Regional Health Authority	19	\$79,829,640.00
TOTAL	420	\$11,131,691,467.07

Source: Information obtained from MoFPS

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