



The Knesset

Research and Information Centre

Budgetary Control Department

Mr. Ami Zadik, Director

3rd Annual Meeting of OECD Parliamentary Budget Officials

Stockholm, 28-29 April 2011



The Targets

To assist the Knesset committees and members in the implementation of their parliamentary tasks:

- Legislation.
- Oversight of the executive branch.
- Debates on current issues.



Basket of services

- Background documents for committee debates.
- International comparisons.
- Economic analyses.
- Comparative surveys.
- Long-term studies.
- Consultants for committees.



The Clients

- Knesset committees and committee chairs.
- Members of Knesset.
- Knesset departments, such as Legal Department and Knesset management.

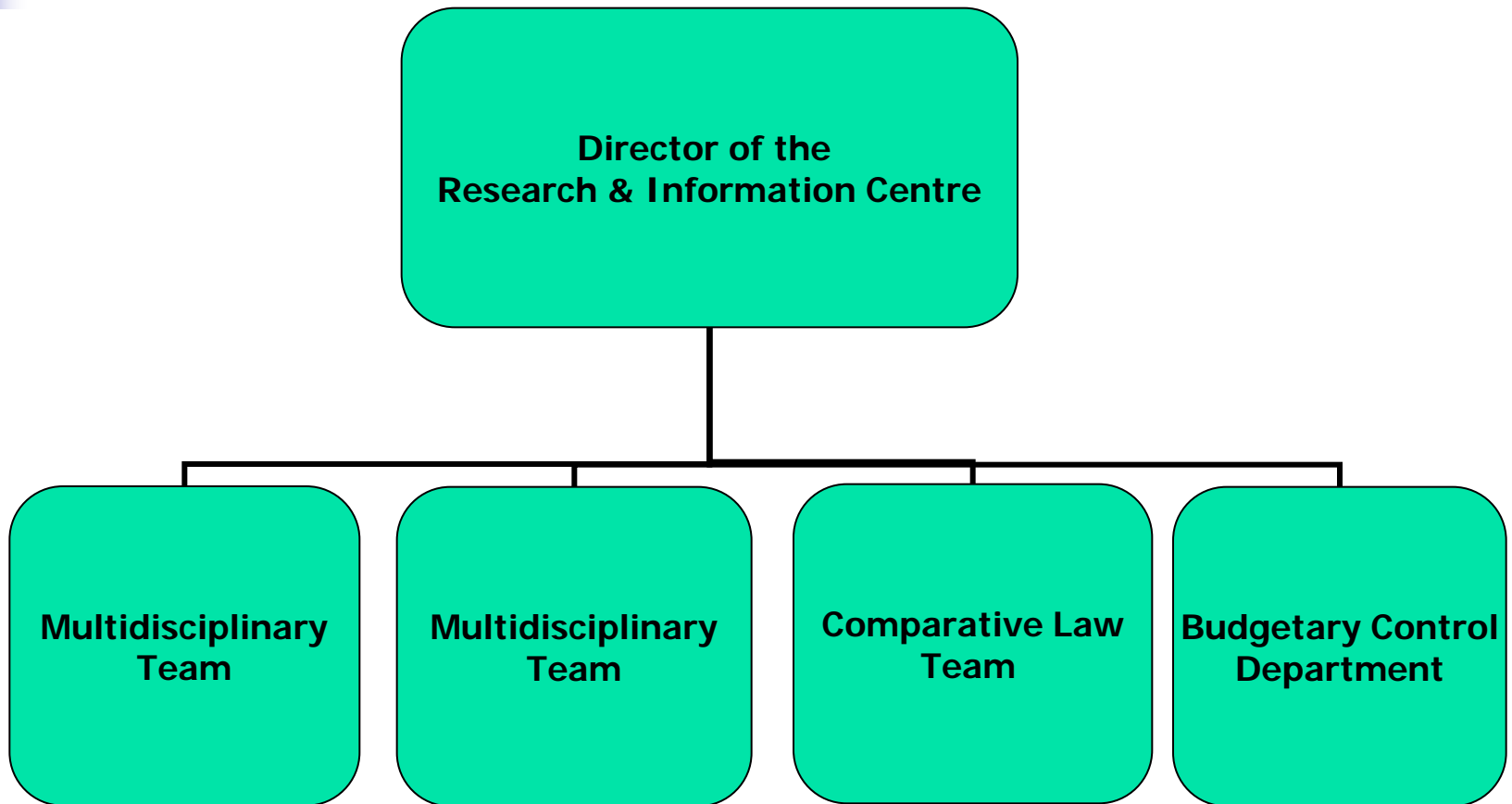


The RIC in Numbers

- 11 years of activity.
- More than 3,000 documents.
- 25 employees in research and information, 4 team heads.



Organizational Structure





Budgetary Control Department

- Establishment in November 2007.
- 6 economists and director.
- Annual budget – 1.9 million Shekels (about 0.6 million USD).
- 460 documents in total, of which 145 documents were prepared for the Finance Committee.



Budgetary Control Department - Missions

- Delivering data about budget performance during the budget year.
- Assisting the Knesset committees and members with budgetary and economic data and analysis.
- Providing the Knesset committees and members with cost estimates of private and government bills.



Budgetary Control

Department – Added Value

- Eliminating government monopoly by providing alternative analyses.
- Simplifying complexity (“Decoding”).
- Improving the budget process in the Knesset.
- Servicing the whole political spectrum in the Knesset.
- Providing rapid responses to committee requests.



Cost Assessment of government and private bills

- Prior to the establishment of the RIC, Knesset Members had no alternative source of information for cost assessments of private and government bills.
- According to Section 138a of the Knesset Rules of Procedure, a Knesset committee or member has the right to request an alternative cost assessment from the Budgetary Control Dept.



The Vision

- Upgrading of parliamentary work: more professional, more informed, less a rubber stamp for the government.
- Improving the Knesset's status and image.



The Outcome

“The RIC constitutes a credible and independent source of professional information, which enables Knesset Members to make considered, clear and substantive decisions... One cannot now imagine the Knesset without the availability of the RIC.”



The Outcome

“Until its establishment, Members of the Knesset had to contend with a deluge of uncontrolled and disorganized information, ...in this way more effective control of the Knesset is facilitated over the work of the Government, and thus in practical terms, the principle of the separation of powers is accomplished”.

The Speaker of the Knesset, Member of Knesset Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin. Remarks at Seminar to mark a decade of the Research and Information Centre on December 21, 2010.



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Thank you