



The Office of the Minister of Planning and Development

PL&D: 6/12/3 Vol. XII-Temp.

March 9, 2023

The Honourable Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP
Speaker of the House
Speaker's Chamber
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
The Red House
St Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Madam Speaker,

Additional Information Received from the Office of the Prime Minister, Central Administrative Services Tobago Re: Seventh Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021

Reference is made to my letter PL&D: 6/12/3 dated February 01, 2023 on the captioned subject.

In this regard, please find attached recent information received from the Office of the Prime Minister, Central Administrative Services Tobago which is in addition to the Ministerial response previously submitted for the recommendations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) contained in the Seventh Report of the PAAC on the examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021. An electronic copy of the response will be e-mailed to the Parliament via coth@ttparliament.org.

Sincerely,

**Penelope Beckles, MP
Minister**

Enc.

*cc: Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel,
Clerk of the House*



**Ministerial response to recommendations/observation contained in
The Seventh Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations
Committee on the examination into the implementation of the Public
Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATION

2. High Staff Turnover within the Project Management Units (PMUs) of various MDAs (Page 12)

Recommendations

The MPD should submit a brief report to Parliament on the following by December 31, 2022:

- i. The number of vacant, filled and no longer open positions within PMUs of the MDAs with high project management staff turnover**

Response:

At the Office of the Prime Minister, Central Administrative Services Tobago (OPM-CAST), there is no official unit that performs the functions of Project Management. As such, any reference to positions, vacancies, staff turnover and challenges relation to project management staff are not applicable. The Project Management functions with respect to the Public Sector Investment Programmes (PSIP) are mainly executed by the Junior Planning Officer, the Executive Assistance and other supporting staff once available.

- ii. The project implementation challenges and other challenges experienced by MDAs due to the frequent departure of project management staff**

Response:

The rate of implementation of projects is severely impacted by the unavailability of the requisite human resource. This includes but is not limited to the lack of technical persons on the workforce as the OPM-CAST heavily relies on external Divisions for assistance in that regard.

- iii. Details on specific plans and the constraints to implementation, aimed at standardising remuneration for project management staff across MDAs**

Response:

No response

3. The Social and Economic effects of COVID-19 (Page 13)

Observation:

The Committee acknowledges the unexpected nature of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and that this constituted the greatest challenge to business continuity in recent memory.

Recommendation:

The MPD should report to Parliament on the challenges identified by the PPRD and the Planning Unit, how these challenges were overcome, as well as the Lessons Learnt and the Strategies to be adopted based on these lessons by December 31, 2022

Response:

The challenges identified by the OPM-CAST include:

- disruptions in the global supply chain and foreign consultants who could no longer perform their roles with travel restrictions due to COVID-19;
- unavailability of skilled personnel to adequately create appropriate specifications for the procurement of specialised equipment for instance, the supply, delivery, testing and commissioning of two Single Phase 32 Step Voltage Regulators; and
- existing staff shortage at Central Tenders Board (CTB) who is responsible for advertising tenders on behalf of the OPM-CAST.

The measures identified by the OMP-CAST to overcome the challenges identified include:

- meetings were held virtually to keep both internal and external stakeholders abreast of project updates; and
- incorporated technology in the project monitoring and evaluation process.