

REPORT  
FROM

**Public Administration and Appropriations  
Committee**

EXAMINATION  
OF

The Realignment of Ministries and Departments

Office of the Parliament  
Parliamentary Complex  
Cabildo Building  
St. Vincent Street Port of Spain  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



## Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

The Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) is established by Standing Order 102 and 92 of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively. The Committee is mandated to consider and report to Parliament on:

- (a) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;*
- (b) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented; and*
- (c) *the administration of Government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.*

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Dr. Lackram Bodoë, MP	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Amrita Deonarine	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy	Member
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julien	Member
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member

### Committee Staff

The current staff members serving the Committee are:

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Ms. Khisha Peterkin	Assistant Secretary
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**Date Laid in HOR:**

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## Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee



Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George,  
MP



Dr. Lackram Bodoe, MP  
**Vice-Chairman**



Mr. Wade Mark  
**Member**



Mr. Clarence Rambharat  
**Member**



Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP  
**Member**



Mr. Hassel Bacchus  
**Member**



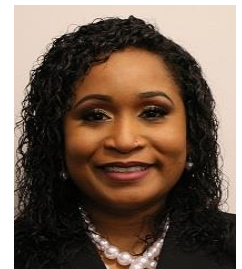
Ms. Amrita Deonarine  
**Member**



Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie, MP  
**Member**



Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julien, MP  
**Member**



Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy  
**Member**

## Acronyms

The following are terms as stated in the report:

CF - Consolidated Fund

CPO – Chief Personnel Officer

DPA – Director of Personnel Administration

DX – Digital Transformation

GORTT - Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

IDF - Infrastructure Development Fund

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

IAU – Internal Audit Unit

M&Ds – Ministries and Departments

MOT – Ministry of Tourism

MPAC - Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MDAs – Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MOF – Ministry of Finance

MPADT – Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation

MTCA – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

MCDCA – Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts

MSCD – Ministry of Sport and Community and the Arts

MSYA – Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

MPA – Ministry of Public Administration

MOC – Ministry of Communications

MDT - Ministry of Digital Transformation

NATT - National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago

OPM – Office of the Prime Minister

PMCD – Public Management Consultancy Division

PRESA – Property and Real Estate Services Division

PAAC - Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

PD - Personnel Department

P&L – Pension and Leave

PSIP - Public Sector Investment Programme

SCD - Service Commissions Department

UDeCOTT - Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report of the PAAC for the Twelfth Parliament contains the details of the examination into the realignment of M&Ds.

### Objectives of Inquiry

To determine:

- i. The short-term and long-term impacts of the realignment of M&Ds;
- ii. The mechanisms that can be implemented to minimize the negative effects of a realignment; and
- iii. The overall concerns associated with administrative/ internal controls.

The PAAC agreed to examine the realignment of the following M&Ds:

- The MSCD;
  - The MSYA was merged with the Community Development Division of the former MCDCA. The Youth Affairs Division was removed from the Ministry of Sport altogether;
- The MTCA.
  - The MTCA, formerly known as the MOT was merged with the Culture and Arts Division of the MCDCA.
- The OPM.
  - The MOC was condensed into a Division and aligned to the OPM
- The MPADT;
  - The MPA was aligned with a new Division, DX.

It is however noted, that subsequent to the inquiry but prior to this report the MPADT was separated on July 19, 2021 to form the MPA and the MDT<sup>1</sup>.

The Committee made recommendations related to the issues identified. Observations and recommendations are presented in **Chapter 3**.

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<sup>1</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Gazette No. 111, Vol.60. Accessed on December 16, 2021: <http://news.gov.tt/sites/default/files/E-Gazette/Gazette%202021/Gazettes/Gazette%20No.%20111%20of%202021.pdf>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### THE COMMITTEE

The PAAC of the Twelfth Republican Parliament was established by the revised Standing Orders to:

- examine the current public expenditure, thereby capturing the full budget cycle by providing Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the budget; and
- conduct a real-time examination of the expenditure of M&Ds.

In the 12th Parliament, the Members of the Committee were appointed by resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate at sittings held on Friday November 9, 2020 and Tuesday November 17, 2020 respectively.

#### **Chairman & Vice-Chairman**

By virtue of S.O. 109(6) and 99(6) of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively, the Chairman of the Committee is the Speaker and at its First Meeting held on November 25, 2020, Dr. Lackram Bodoie was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

#### **Quorum**

Additionally, in order to exercise the powers granted to it by the House, the Committee was required by the Standing Orders to have a quorum. A quorum of three (3) Members, inclusive of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, with representatives from both Houses, was agreed to by the Committee at its First Meeting.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### **Determination of the Committee's Work Programme**

At an in-camera meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, November 25, 2020, the Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry into the re-alignment of the following M&Ds:

- i. The MPADT;
- ii. The MTCA;
- iii. The OPM; and
- iv. The MSCD.

### **The Inquiry Process**

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outline the inquiry process followed by the PAAC in its examination into the realignment of M&Ds:

- i. Identification of entities to be examined;
- ii. Preparation of an Inquiry Proposal for the selected entities:
  - The MPADT;
  - The MTCA;
  - The OPM; and
  - The MSCD
- iii. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
  - Description
  - The objective of Inquiry; and
  - Proposed Questions.
- iv. Request for written response was sent on March 10, 2021. Responses were received from:
  - MSCD on March 22, 2021;
  - MTCA on April 8, 2021;
  - MPADT on April 8, 2021; and
  - OPM on March 23, 2021.

- v. Based on the responses received, additional questions were sent on June 16, 2021. Responses were received from:
  - MSCD on July 5, 2021;
  - MTCA on July 9, 2021;
  - MPADT on July 16, 2021; and
  - OPM on July 9, 2021.
- vi. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry;
- vii. Request for Ministerial Responses. Review Responses.
- viii. Engage in follow-up.

### 3. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ***MPADT***

#### **1. Inadequate Office Accommodation and Storage Facilities**

**Prior to the realignment of the MPADT there were several issues with accommodation of staff and storage at the MPA**

The MPADT stated that prior to its realignment the MPA was experiencing challenges regarding accommodation for its staff, storage for equipment, consumables and records. These challenges have continued into the MPADT's post-realignment period. Also, in an effort to reduce rental expenditure the rental of storage space at a facility in Arouca was terminated. Although expenditure was reduced, the maintenance of the increasing number of paper records and unserviceable items strained the MPADT's ability to provide sufficient and adequate storage.

The written response from the MPADT dated July 2021 indicated that the aim of the process for determining additional space requirements and storage areas was to dispose of unserviceable items. Furthermore, the PRESD in conjunction with the Offices of the Commissioners of State Lands and Valuations, was seeking available spaces and land suitable for the construction of a Government warehouse facility as well as the acquisition of properties suitable for the storage of Government documents and records.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- ***The MPADT should seek to locate temporary accommodation to address the ongoing staff and storage concerns and submit a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***The PRESD and the Commissioners of State Lands and Valuations should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 regarding the selection of suitable accommodation for the construction of a Government warehouse facility and acquisition of properties for the storage of Government documents and records.***

#### **2. Additional Staff Needed to fulfill the MPADT's Mandate**

**Prior to the MPADT's realignment, there was a need for a review of its staffing requirements.**

In the written response received, the MPADT indicated that additional staff was needed to fulfil its mandate. In light of the increased mandate which includes digital transformation the MPADT

indicated that at the time (April 2021) it was in the process of reviewing its organisational structure and staffing requirements. There were two hundred and ninety (290) existing employees (147 established and 143 contract). Regarding vacancies, the MPADT indicated that there were two hundred and four (204) vacant positions (127 established and 77 contract).

Subsequent information received in July 2021, indicated that there were one hundred and forty-seven (147) vacant established positions, of which 107 had incumbents and 40 had no incumbents. These offices, fall under the purview of the SCD and were filled by appointments and promotions through the DPA. During the same period, the MPADT completed the filling of vacancies at PRESD and attention was given to engage resources to support the DX Programme under the National Information and Communications Technology Division. These persons were hired on a short-term basis. Additionally, a number of hires were made for the digitisation of the GORTT Records Project. As the resourcing of the DX programme progresses, the other vacancies within the Ministry would be addressed following the completion of the review of the structure in October 2021.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MPADT should provide a status update on the completion of the review of its organisational structure which was scheduled to be completed in October on the staffing requirements to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***With the assistance of the SCD, the MPADT should submit a timeline for the filling of the 147 vacant positions to Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

**3. Finalisation of the Succession Planning Framework/Model**

**Effective succession planning is an ongoing process of identifying, assessing and developing employees to ensure leadership, management and supervisory continuity throughout a Ministry to sustain its performance.**

The MPADT was mandated to develop a Succession Planning Framework/Model and as such, a Steering Committee was established with key MDAs. A draft of this framework/model was completed and is being reviewed thereafter shall be amended if needed. Subsequent information revealed that the Succession Planning Framework/Model would be completed by the Ministry's Human Resource Department by the end of July 2021.

***Recommendation:***

- ***The MPADT should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 regarding the completion and implementation of the Succession Planning Framework/Model.***

**4. The Tagging of Inventory via a New QR Barcode System**

**The operation of the new Tagging System led to an increase in efficiency and effectiveness.**

All assets at the Head Office, PMCD, PRES D, and the ICT Centres were tagged with paper labels. However, a more effective method utilising QR barcodes was identified and was being implemented across the MPADT. The current stock of labels was depleted and steps were taken to procure additional labels. The Corporate Services Division advised that the completion date for the tagging of inventory was anticipated to be August 31, 2021. However, given the existing COVID-19 Protocols and work restrictions, the date was no longer feasible and a new completion date for December 31, 2021 was proposed. The MPADT also indicated that additional staff would be required for this process to assist already assigned staff in balancing the tagging project along with the regular duties.

***Recommendation:***

- ***The MPADT should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the status of the tagging of inventory including the details of the procurement of additional labels and the recruitment of additional staff.***

**5. A structural review of the IAU**

**The IAU requires additional staff to fulfill its mandate.**

The current staff complement of the IAU consists of:

- 1 Auditor II (Acting);
- 1 Auditor I (Acting); and
- 2 Auditing Assistants

In the written response dated April 2021, the MPADT indicated that its staff complement was inadequate due to its expanded role, which included the digitalisation of the Public Service alongside its existing workload. The IAU requires a full complement of staff as identified in the staff establishment with the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to perform its audit assignment within standards and set deadlines. MPADT indicated that the PMCD was

reviewing the structure of the Unit in the context of its expanded role and was awaiting the Division's recommendations. The review of the PMCD would be completed by the end of October 2021.

In written response dated July 2021, the MPADT stated that while the MOF began the process of rolling out the development of Risk Based Internal Auditing in several Ministries the MPADT was not involved in the roll out process. The MPADT indicated that it was of the view that amendments to the 1965 Financial Regulations were imminent in order to support the thrust of the Government towards E-Auditing and Risk-based Assessment Auditing. The MPADT has had no communication with the MOF regarding this matter.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MPADT should prioritise the recruitment of additional staff and provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022;***
- ***The MPADT should provide a status update on the following to Parliament by August 15, 2022***
  - ✓ ***the review of the structure of the MPADT by the PMCD;***
  - ✓ ***Communication was made with the MOF regarding the participation in the roll out of the Risk Based Internal Auditing process; and***
  - ✓ ***feedback received after follow-up with the MOF.***

**6. Employee P&L Records were not up-to-date**

**It is important for pension and leave records to be kept up to date in order to guarantee a smooth process when staff retire.**

The written response dated April 2021, the MPADT was still pursuing the P&L records for the staff of the Government Printery who was assigned to the previous MPAC in 2015. Subsequent responses dated July 2021 stated that all P&L records for officers due to retire in 2021 were up-to-date.

However, the MPADT indicated the reasons for the lengthy delay in getting P&L record up-to-date as follows:

- i. Movement of officers from and to other MDAs without their personal files being kept up to date;

- ii. Incorrectly prepared P&L records which have to be redone;
- iii. Increments not awarded and salary not adjusted in previous M&Ds; and
- iv. Non-submission of P&L Records from other MDAs.

Notwithstanding the issues stated (above) that contributed to the delay in updating P&L records, the MPADT indicated that it usually takes a while to obtain officers' P&L Records from the previous places of employment. These issues further prolong the preparation of P&L Records for submission to the Pensions Division.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MPADT should provide a status update on whether all P&L records were up-to date to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***The MPADT should provide strategies to alleviate any delays as a result of the issues identified above by August 15, 2022.***

## ***MTCA***

### **1. Inadequate Storage and Accommodation**

**Prior to its realignment the MOT was troubled with the pervasive issue of inadequate storage space for files, office supplies, stock and its external warehouse.**

During its realignment, the MTCA continued to struggle with storage issues and inadequate space to house the newly assigned Culture Division. Additional accommodation was requested through the PRESD and the requisite Cabinet approval was secured for the temporary assignment of Level 10, Tower C of the International Waterfront Complex. However, the MTCA was yet to utilise the space due to the accommodation of a Special Unit of the MOF. The Unit requested an extension to July 31, 2021, to depart the space.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- ***The MTCA should provide an update on any improvements to its storage and accommodation space to Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

### **2. Understaffed Units**

**The MTCA was affected by understaffing which resulted in operational challenges and dysfunction.**

As at April 2021, the MOT had the following staff complement:

Total Staff - 96

- Established: 58
- Contract: 8
- Short-term: 30

After realignment

Total Staff - 437

- Established: 135
- Contract: 244
- Short-term: 58

Yet, the Ministry indicated that the following units were understaffed

- Legal;
- Human Resource;
- Finance and Accounts;



- Communications; and
- ICT.

Subsequent to the realignment, the MTCA received additional established and contract positions. The staff who performed these functions in the key support Units such as Legal, Human Resource, Finance and Accounts, Communications and ICT were either retained in an acting capacity or in many instances, opted to revert to their substantive positions and remain at the MOT. As such, there was a shortage of Senior and Middle Management Staff members resulting in operational challenges and some level of dysfunction within the Units. Additionally, the Ministry's core units were staffed primarily through short-term employment in the following core Units

- Projects;
- Tourism Advisory;
- Corporate Communications; and
- M&E;

The M&E Unit did not have a Manager/Unit Head. As such, two (2) short-term employees were included within the Research and Planning Division. The other Units were staffed primarily by contract officers, whose contract expired or were near expiration:

- Information and Technology Unit - 3 Members of Staff whose contracts have expired;
- Legal Unit – Three (3) Members of Staff, two (2) of whose contracts have expired; one (1) was retained on a short-term engagement to ensure business continuity.

The PMCD was approached to determine an appropriate structure for the MTCA to enable the fulfilment of its mandate. A Further Adjustment Note was prepared by the PMCD, which identified an additional sixty-three (63) positions (establishment and contract). The Note was submitted to Cabinet for approval.

Further information indicated that the MTCA was preparing notes for submission to Cabinet to employ persons on long-term contracts, in addition to those within the Adjustment Note, which was still awaiting Cabinet's approval. The SCD provided personnel for some of the requested posts including those assigned to the Human, Audit and General Administration Units. The MTCA continued to liaise with the SCD for the filling of the other outstanding positions.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The PMCD should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on Cabinet’s approval of the Adjustment Note; and***
- ***The MTCA should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the filling of any of outstanding positions.***

**3. Incomplete Transferral of Staff and Circulating Files**

**The MTCA was still awaiting approvals for the staff of the Culture Division from the SCD and circulating files from the surrendering Ministry**

When a realignment occurs, a Ministry is responsible for undertaking the following steps:

- i. Upon an Officer’s assumption of duty, the surrendering Ministry should transfer the Officer’s personal file. This is expected to take place on or before an officer’s assumption of duty.
- ii. Integrated Human Resource Information System records, salary particulars, pension and leave records, pay record and ledger cards should be transferred by the surrendering Ministry, within one (1) month of the transfer.
- iii. It should be noted that the Accounts Unit of a receiving Ministry will be unable to process payments for any transferred officers without the above-mentioned documents.

In its written response the MTCA indicated that all employee files were received from the MOT, with the exception of the circulating P&L files. There were thirty-nine (39) files outstanding. The MTCA indicated that a request for the files from the MOT was made, however, as at June 17, 2021, no files were received. The MTCA indicated that it last communicated with the MCDCA on this matter on June 17, 2021.

Regarding the necessary approval and/or authorisation from the SCD, the MTCA indicated that no approvals were received for the staff of the Culture Division, and the SCD was addressing the matter. It should also be noted that the request for first-time acting and temporary approvals for staff of the Culture Division originated from the MCDCA. As such, some of the transferred posts did not have the relevant authorisation and therefore could not be filled. This matter has been highlighted by the MTCA who was collaborating with the PMCD and the MCDCA for a resolution.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MTCA should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on:***
  - i. the receipt of the circulating files from the former MCDCA;***
  - ii. The SCD should provide a status of approval and authorisations of staff; and***
  - iii. In the event that there are still outstanding approvals and or authorisations the SCD should provide a strategy to prioritise and conclude the process.***

**4. Cultural Challenges**

**It can be challenging to move from one Ministry to another, having to learn new ways of going about objectives.**

Since its realignment, staff members were experiencing cultural challenges after merging with the Culture Division. New staff members had to acquaint themselves with a new environment, new colleagues, new leadership and new operating procedures which were different from the MOT. New staff members were apprised of the need to ensure compliance with the MTCA's executive views, policy and regulatory compliance. The MTCA stated that there were also management challenges (people, processes, systems) inclusive of staff expectations and those of its augmented clients and stakeholders.

To remedy these challenges, a Transitions Management Team was established, comprising of officers at different levels and from various Units/Divisions which membership constituted a vertical 'slice' of its staff complement. The Team was tasked with a number of responsibilities including planning, portfolio alignment, brainstorming, forecasting (anticipation of problems, identification of opportunities), problem solving, and communication. To date, the following have been executed:

- relocation of the Culture Division to the MTCA's Head Office;
- creation of new seating and layout plans for the Head Office;
- initial development of process maps for various activities with the aim of
- establishing standardised procedures across the MTCA and its entities;
- conduct of internal staff surveys (to check staff temperature/pulse);
- planned orientation and internal training/induction sessions; and
- development of Internal Communication Strategies.

Additionally, the Communications Unit created an internal e-newsletter “The Internal Beat” which was circulated internally and to entities under its purview. The newsletter serves as a useful tool in disseminating information Ministry-wide. It was used to share general information and updates on the relocation process, introduce the newly transferred members of staff and to commemorate national days and international events. The MTCA stated that it recognised the importance of addressing cultural challenges and as an initial step, introduced a number of inclusion measures, such as, integrating staff, the use of staff contributions in the production of the newsletter and the execution of common projects.

***Observation:***

- ***The Committee notes the action taken by the MTCA to remedy the cultural challenges faced since its realignment.***

***Recommendation:***

- ***The MTCA should conduct an assessment on the benefits derived from the establishment of the Transitions Management Team since its inception and report its findings to Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

**5. Increase in training opportunities for the IAU**

**Further training for the IAU would ensure greater efficiency, productivity and effectiveness in the Unit’s execution of its mandate.**

The MTCA stated that in its communications with the SCD regarding the filling of posts in the IAU, developmental training was recommended to improve the Unit’s effectiveness. The IAU scheduled audits of:

- i. the revenue collected from tourism sites and performance spaces;
- ii. the contract register;
- iii. P&L records; and
- iv. the accounting records of the current MTCA and the former MCDCA.

In a subsequent submission dated July 2021, the MTCA stated that auditing of the accounting records of both current and former Ministries would be completed by the end of 2021. The MTCA also indicated that a proposed training plan was in the process of being developed. This plan would incorporate both formal and informal training and should be completed upon the assumption of the Auditor II.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MTCA should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on:***
  - i. The feedback from the SCD regarding filling posts in the IAU;***
  - ii. The completion of the auditing of accounting records of both the current and former Ministries and any other auditing works conducted; and***
  - iii. the completion of the training plan.***

**6. Challenges experienced with the PSIP**

The PSIP is a strategic investment plan of the GORTT in the formulation of the National Budget which reflects public investment against national priority areas for development. The PSIP comprises programmes and projects of MDAs designed to achieve national strategic objectives and is funded through the CF and the IDF.

As a result of the realignment there was an increase in the number of projects under the PSIP which caused the delay of the implementation projects. The merger under the combined portfolios of Tourism, Culture and the Arts resulted in:

- a. Additional responsibilities including the oversight of the following entities:
  - National Academy for the Performing Arts;
  - Southern Academy for the Performing Arts;
  - Naparima Bowl;
  - Queen's Hall;
  - National Museum and Art Gallery;
  - The Museum of the City of Port of Spain; and
  - Stollmeyer's Castle;
  
- b. The transfer of existing contractual arrangements and/or establishment of new contractual agreements from the former MCDCA to the MTCA.

**Absence of contractual agreements**

It should be noted that owing to the absence of the contractual agreements between MTCA and UDeCOTT for the newly added entities, and the outstanding debt prior to its realignment, funds were re-allocated towards those projects with existing contractual agreements to meet existing

financial commitment. Total debt owed from previous years was \$9,933,123.45 from the following projects:

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (VAT Inclusive)</b>
Tourism Sites and Attractions	\$4,173,018.23
D009 – National Academy of the Performing Arts	\$339,397.62
D007 - Museum of the City of POS	\$38,537.00
B002 – National Academy of Performing Arts (IDF)	\$382,170.60
B003 – Southern Academy of the Performing Arts	\$5,000,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,933,123.45</b>

Subsequent information indicated that the MTCA was in the process of seeking Cabinet’s approval for the continued engagement of UDeCOTT for the provision of project management services for all entities under its purview.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MTCA should submit a status update to Parliament on:***
  - i. the progress made in acquiring the necessary human and financial resources in relation to the implementation of its PSIP by August 15, 2022;***
  - ii. the plans to monitor its PSIP and pay off the debt owed from previous years to meet existing financial commitments; and***
  - iii. Cabinet’s approval to engage UDECOTT for the provision of project management services.***
- ***The MTCA should conduct a Needs Assessment to determine whether a Project Management Unit should be established at the MTCA and submit a status update of same to the Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

**7. Revision of the Strategic Plan**

As a result of its realignment the MTCA was forced to draft a new Strategic Plan to address all areas of its new mandate.

In April 2021, the MTCA undertook a strategic planning process in collaboration with its internal and external stakeholders to provide a coherent Strategic Plan that addressed all areas of its mandate. The Strategic Plan will seek to provide a road map for the development and growth of

both sectors. The MTCA stated that the Strategic Plan was expected to be completed by December 2021.

***Recommendation:***

- ***The MTCA should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the completion of the Strategic Plan.***

## ***OPM***

### **1. Inadequate Staffing Arrangements**

**The OPM is in need of additional staff in various Units, and was affected by the non-classification of technical positions.**

Prior to its realignment, the OPM's staff complement was three hundred and fifty-five (355) and increased after the realignment to five hundred and twenty-four (524) staff members. Although there was an increase, the OPM reported that it was still short staffed. The following were the vacancies across the OPM and its Divisions as at March 2021:

- Contract Positions – 177 positions;
- Established Positions with Bodies - 220
- Established Positions without Bodies - 393

The Committee was informed that three (3) senior technical positions at the Gender and Child Affairs Division and the State Counsel III and State Counsel II were yet to be classified by the CPO. As at March 2021, the senior technical positions remained vacant. OPM stated that its Legal Services Division was also in need of additional support.

OPM informed the Committee that PMCD was involved in a restructuring exercise at the NATT and the Government Printery. Both Divisions were suffering severe shortages of technical staff. OPM stated that some of the positions at the Government Printery were redundant. As at July 2021, the redundant positions were still on the establishment. The Committee learnt that the removal of the redundant positions was contingent upon finalisation of the “2017 Review of the Operations of the Government Printery” which was being done by the MPADT. This review was submitted to the PMCD for consideration and approval. As at July 2021, the OPM was still awaiting feedback from the MPADT on the matter.

A request for an update on the restructuring exercise at the NATT revealed that in July 2021, NATT was asked to provide detailed position descriptions for all staff. A template was provided by PMCD. Discussions with PMCD were to resume with a view to finalising this exercise, as position descriptions remained outstanding. As at July 2021, NATT was in need of HR expertise to deal with its day-to-day management.



Furthermore, the OPM indicated that additional human resource capacity in the form of a Human Resource Officer I and II were requested. A draft note to Cabinet was prepared and was at the Finance and General Purposes Committee. OPM explained that these positions would be necessary in order to treat with the additional responsibilities inherited. As at June 23, 2021, PMCD informed the OPM that no feedback was received from the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the matter.

Subsequent information received indicated that the PD was in the process of conducting a Job Evaluation Exercise in which the classification and remuneration of all positions in the Civil Service would be considered. PD stated that the delay in the classification of positions will negatively affect the recruitment of staff to fill the entrance and intermediate level positions within the Legal Unit. As a result, the associated tasks would fall to the Director, Legal Services whose responsibilities were meant to entail dealing with more complicated legal matters and managerial functions.

***Recommendations:***

- ***Provide an update on the following to the Parliament by August 15, 2022:***
  - ✓ ***The Classification of the technical and State Counsel positions by the CPO;***
  - ✓ ***Filling of vacant positions across the OPM and its Divisions;***
  - ✓ ***The restructuring exercise being conducted on the NATT and the Government Printery;***
  - ✓ ***Draft Note to Cabinet before the Finance and General Purposes Committee;***  
***and***
  - ✓ ***The Job Evaluation Exercise on the Civil Service undertaken by the PD.***

**2. Delay in the transferral process from the SCD**

**Job positions from the former MOC were not standardised to operate under OPM and as such, operating without approved terms.**

In a written response received in March 2021, OPM indicated that not all approvals for transfers were obtained. Letters of transfer could not be issued due to the absence of first approvals from the SCD. OPM stated that the reasons for the delay in the receipt of letters of transfer from SCD was as a result of “persons not released to receiving Ministries because they chose to remain at OPM based upon seniority. The positions that they formerly occupied were transferred to other

Ministries due to the re-alignment of Ministries. OPM was not immediately fully aware of the permanent establishment of the Communications Division or these seniority issues. The OPM sought guidance from the SCD and was told to seek the permission of Cabinet to create temporary posts in the establishment for the period in which these persons were due to be paid acting allowances i.e., January 1, 2021 to February 28, 2021.”

***Recommendations:***

- ***The SCD should provide a status update on the receipt of transfer approvals of staff to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***The OPM should provide an update on whether permission for temporary posts on the establishment was received from Cabinet as well as whether allowances were paid to the respective staff.***

**3. Cultural Challenges**

**Procedures and processes used in carrying out specific functions at the former MOC differed from those at the OPM.**

In its March 2021 response, the OPM indicated that varying degrees of noncompliance was noted with public service policies and regulations. The OPM stated that in some instances officers were reluctant to make changes to the format of work. Some officers believed that they were no longer responsible for certain duties, which caused delays for payments to be executed. The OPM also experienced challenges regarding the integration of key operational functions within the Department. As a result, meetings were held with all stakeholders identifying all concerns, and the adoption of methods to ensure the existence of uniformity regarding all public service policies and regulations compliance. OPM also indicated that due to the inadequacy of space, accommodation for staff has been a challenge. Subsequent information provided specified that the OPM was working with PRES D for the provision of adequate accommodation.

Due to the realignment of the OPM, some staff were unfamiliar with the accounting procedures. In certain instances, some of those individuals were no longer in the Accounting Unit. Individuals who are currently assigned to the Unit were trained in the procedures and processes required for the job. The IAU also played a part in having some of the changes implemented by flagging issues encountered with work submitted for audit. The Committee questioned whether training

was planned to reinforce the public service policies and regulations. OPM stated that the MPADT and the Treasury Division were being approached to have training workshops conducted.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The OPM should conduct an assessment of the performance of all staff since its realignment and submit its findings to Parliament by August 15, 2022;***
- ***The OPM should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the progress made (if any) to improve its accommodation; and***
- ***The OPM in collaboration with the Public Service Academy should devise a training programme (with workshops including dates) to reinforce public policy and regulations by August 15, 2022.***

#### **4. Issues with Tagging of Inventory**

**Not all items from the former MOC were tagged.**

In its March 2021 response, the OPM stated that since its realignment not all items were tagged. The OPM has experienced challenges with the printing of tags as there was no money in the vote to purchase additional tags for the Communications Division. There was also a shortage of staff at the OPM's Head Office which delayed the tagging of inventory. When questioned on the timeframe for the tagging of inventory in the Communications Division, the OPM stated that this was dependent on the availability of funds to purchase the necessary tags and the proposed relocation of the Division.

The OPM currently uses the OpenMAINT system to tag its inventory. However, the tagging exercise was postponed given the possible relocation of the Communications Division. In the interim, an excel spreadsheet was used to record inventory utilising the existing OpenMAINT tag numbers. OPM also stated that due to the loss of data previously entered, all tags implemented prior will now be changed as the OpenMAINT system generates a new code when data is re-entered.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The OPM should seek to recruit the necessary staff to effectively tag all of its inventory. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022;***

- ***The OPM should provide a status update to Parliament on the following by August 15, 2022:***
  - ✓ *The receipt of funding to purchase additional tags;*
  - ✓ *The commencement of tagging inventory in the Communications Division;*
  - ✓ *The relocation of the Communications Division; and*
  - ✓ *The proposed dates of completion of tagging via the OpenMAINT System.*

#### **5. The Staffing Requirements in the IAU**

**An analysis should be conducted on whether the Unit’s staffing requirements has been sufficient in meeting the overall needs of the OPM.**

As at March 2021, the OPM’s IAU staff complement was as follows:

- Auditor II – 1 post
- Auditor I – 2 posts
- Auditing Assistant – 6 posts

The OPM stated that it was difficult to ascertain the adequacy of its staff requirements since a lot of the audit time is engaged in correcting simple accounting transactions that contain a variety of omissions and non-disclosures. This compromises the efficacy of an audit being used as a management tool to scrutinise internal processes, systems and controls.

When asked whether the assigned staff was adequately trained, the OPM stated that the audit staff assigned to most IAUs are done by virtue of seniority and not based on knowledge and training. As such, most officers who are assigned to the IAU for the first time may have some or limited knowledge of the areas they are required to audit. During their assignments and interaction with other audit staff, sharing of information takes place and this forms the basis of their training. The OPM further stated that professional training in Internal Audit is usually provided by the Institute of Internal Auditors. The Department stated that “the IAU of the OPM was not up to that standard since no training was afforded to officers assigned”.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- ***The OPM should prioritise and conduct an analysis to determine whether the current staff complement of the IAU is sufficient to meet the overall objectives of the OPM. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***

- *The OPM should draft a training schedule for the staff in the IAU and submit a copy to Parliament by August 15, 2022.*

## ***MSCD***

### **1. Inadequate Office Accommodation and Storage Facilities**

**Inadequate office accommodation and storage facilities have slowed down productivity at the MSCD's Divisions.**

The MSCD in its March 2021 response stated that prior to its realignment there were several issues with its accommodation, these include:

- The Government owned facility at ALGICO Building, Jerningham Avenue, Belmont had multiple issues including a faulty sewer, poor air-conditioning, electrical and other safety issues; and
- Several of MSCD's rented offices also had electrical, air-conditioning and elevator issues and that most of the facilities did not have adequate storage.

To resolve this, the Ministry made several requests to PRES D to obtain suitable accommodation for several of the District Offices of the Community Development Division and Community Mediation Services Division. As at March 2021, no response was provided. The Ministry stated that in the meantime rented storage was being used by both Divisions. The Ministry was still in need of accommodation for its Physical Education and Sport Division.

Subsequent information received indicated that Cabinet agreed to the MSCD entering into a contract with UDeCOTT. This sought to procure an entity to design, construct and finance the works to be conducted at the government-owned facility at ALGICO Building. The MSCD would then seek further approval from Cabinet prior to the contract of refurbishment works. The Ministry stated that UDeCOTT submitted a proposal for the refurbishment of the ALGICO Building and a note for Cabinet was to be submitted before the end of July 2021.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- ***The MSCD should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the refurbishment works at the ALGICO Building; and***
- ***PRES D should provide a status update on the request for additional accommodation for several of the District Offices of the Community Development Division and Community Mediation Services Division to Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

## 2. Insufficient Staffing Arrangements

**Additional staff would be beneficial in assisting with the achievement of the overall objectives and increasing the output rate of the MSCD**

In March 2021, discussions were ongoing with the PMCD to recruit additional staff for the MSCD. The following table details the MSCD's staff complement before and after its realignment:

	<b>Total staff complement before the re-alignment</b>	<b>Total number of Filled Contract positions and Established Posts before the re-alignment</b>	<b>Total staff complement after the re-alignment</b>	<b>Total number of Filled Contract positions and Established Posts after the re-alignment</b>
<b>Contract</b>	Total 525	252 Filled 273 Vacant 58 on Short Term Engagement 1 Service Provider	Total 389	134 Filled 235 Vacant 69 on Short Term Engagement 5 Service Providers
<b>Established</b>	Total 385	162 filled 129 acting	462	188 filled 118 acting
<b>Daily paid</b>	Total 18	17	16	15

In written response dated July 5, 2021, the MSCD also indicated that there were several anomalies with the initial realignment of Ministerial portfolios as detailed in the Cabinet Minute #289 (2nd session) dated October 8, 2020. These anomalies included:

- “Some positions from former Ministries (MSYA and MCDCA) were not transferred to the new MSCD even though the Divisions were transferred;
- Some positions from the former MCDCA were not transferred to MTCA;
- Some positions were transferred from the former MSYA to MSCD in error;
- Senior posts such as the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Permanent Secretary were transferred to another Ministry and the post holders remained in the former Ministries. This has since been rectified by SCD;

- Advice given to Ministries on payment of arrears and contract positions transferred in Circulars needed further clarification based on different interpretations. Different interpretations were given to different Ministries;
- Difficulty in obtaining various records from the former Ministry; and
- Many outstanding bills from former Ministries with insufficient or no allocation to pay these bills.”

As a result, the MSCD was conducting an investigation into the adequate staffing required. This will be determined after consultations with the PMCD for the review of the MSCD’s structure. In written submissions received in July 2021, the MSCD stated that the PMCD verbally advised that it did not receive the approval to restructure “new Ministries” arising out of the realignment of Ministerial portfolios in August 2020. At the time, PMCD was only considering the renewal of contract positions which expired prior to and within the next six-month period. The MSCD was also undertaking a recruitment and selection process to fill the vacant positions and continued to make request to the SCD for the filling of public service posts.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MSCD should provide the actions taken to address the anomalies experienced since its realignment to Parliament by August 15, 2022;***
- ***The MSCD should submit to Parliament by August 15, 2022 a status update on the following:***
  - ✓ ***a list of the additional staff positions needed;***
  - ✓ ***the posts and positions filled;***
  - ✓ ***the timeline for filling the posts that are still vacant; and***
  - ✓ ***the findings of the investigation conducted on the number of staff required.***
- ***The PMCD should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the review of the structure of the “new Ministries”.***

**3. Delayed Transfer of Files and Outstanding Records**

**The MSCD did not receive all transferred employees’ files after the realignment.**

The MSCD was not in receipt of all the transfer approvals from the SCD to the new Ministry for some of its officers. The MSCD was still awaiting approval of transfer for some permanent staff



as well as approval for all acting appointments. The MSCD stated that “while it was awaiting acting approvals, payment of acting allowances had stopped. As such, a total of one hundred and eighteen (118) persons were affected and some officers were unable to receive acting allowances”. The SCD also advised that “the delay was due to the difficulty in locating several office records and in some instances challenges in accurately identifying the vacancies in which persons were acting.” As of April 29, 2021 acting approvals were received from SCD. The MSCD stated that the length of time SCD takes to grant approvals was a challenge.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The SCD should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on:***
  - ✓ ***The approval of acting appointments;***
  - ✓ ***the completion of outstanding transfer approvals for MSCD’s permanent staff and acting appointments; and***
  - ✓ ***the payment of the outstanding allowances inclusive of acting allowances, to the 118 affected staff members.***

#### **4. Challenges arising from the Realignment of the MSCD**

##### **Internal issues occurred when transferring staff**

MSCD stated that anomalies were found with the transfer of some posts and positions. There were positions that were inadvertently omitted. Some critical positions were removed without the addition of corresponding posts, and some key senior positions were transferred with no directive for placement. The removal of critical posts and transfer of senior positions has affected the efficient operations of the MSCD in particular the Human Resource Department and the Research Unit. The MSCD stated that there was also a delay in the receipt of personal information of staff from the MSYA.

Generally, when a realignment occurs, the succession plans are the first to be affected as follows:

- several staff who were trained in one Ministry may be transferred,
- persons who were acting in higher positions may have to revert or be accommodated in different posts;
- persons are new to certain portfolios; and
- persons may request to revert to their substantive posts in other Ministries.

The MSCD stated that succession planning in the public service is challenging, as it has very limited control of the future appointments of staff to acquire the experience and knowledge to maintain its efficiency. As a result, the MSCD had to determine:

- the new seniority;
- offer level three training by supervisors; and
- sometimes re-deploying staff to ensure the goals and objectives are achieved.

Subsequent information received indicated that the anomalies experienced were referred to PMCD. PMCD planned on submitting a Note to Cabinet for consideration and approval to rectify these anomalies and then inform the final placement of staff when the Note to Cabinet is approved. The MSCD was informed that the Note was prepared but deferred.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The SCD should develop a contingency plan to prepare for effects on its succession planning in the event of a future realignment and submit to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***The PMCD should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 regarding the deferred submission of the Note to Cabinet for consideration and approval to rectify the anomalies faced.***

**5. The need for more staff in the IAU**

**The MSCD required additional staff for its IAU to fulfill tasks set out in its annual Audit Plan.**

The MSCD's IAU consisted of the following:

- Auditor II;
- Auditor I;
- Audit Assistant (2); and
- Clerk Typist I.

Due to the realignment, the auditable areas increased significantly and as at March 2021 the Internal Audit was uncertain as to the full complement of staff needed. The MSCD stated that the complement of staff was inadequate to effectively achieve the assignments set out in its annual Audit plan. The unit, in partnership with a representative of the MOF, was, at the time, involved

in developing a Risk-based Internal Audit Strategy and Operational Plan. The MSCD explained that upon completion of this exercise, an analysis of the resources and skills requirement will be undertaken to determine whether adequate skills and resources are available to deliver the plan. A tentative date of July 31, 2021 was given for the completion of the plan.

Regarding the competence of the staff assigned to the Unit, the MSCD stated that of the four members of the auditing staff, two are new to the unit and are not adequately trained in all areas of auditing work. Some training was done internally by the Auditor I regarding the objectives of the field work conducted on Community Facilities.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The MSCD should provide a status update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on:***
  - ✓ ***The completion of the Risk-based Internal Audit Strategy and Operational Plan; and***
  - ✓ ***the requisite number of staff required after completion of the Risk-based Internal Audit Strategy and Operational Plan.***
- ***The MSCD should conduct training sessions, to ensure its staff are up-to-date on all internal auditing practices. A timeline and schedule for these sessions should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022; and***
- ***The PSA should consider developing training sessions for staff of realigned M&Ds. Details on these training sessions and respective dates should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022.***

**Status update from the PMCD as at January 6, 2022**

Further to the request for written submissions, the Committee requested a status update on the approval and authorisation of the employees assigned to the MPADT, MTCA, OPM and MSCD. The Department informed the Committee of the following:

**MPADT**

- Cabinet Minute No. 1665 of October 7, 2021 approved the transfer of permanent posts and contract positions from the former MPADT to the MPA and the MDT.

**The MTCA, OPM and MSCD**

- Cabinet Minute No. 289 (2<sup>nd</sup> Session) of October 8, 2020 approved, inter alia, the staffing establishments (permanent and contract) of the MTCA, OPM and MSCD;

- Cabinet Minute No. 2111 dated December 16, 2021 was approved, inter alia further adjustments to the staffing of establishment of the MTCA, OPM and the MSCD; and
- Cabinet Minute No. 2112 dated December 16, 2021 approved, inter alia, the transfer of contract positions previously omitted in the 2020's Realignment Note for the MTCA and the MSCD.

## CONCLUSION

During the First Session of the Twelfth Parliament, the PAAC conducted a written inquiry on the realignment of the following Ministries and Departments:

- The MSCD;
- The MTCA;
- The MPADT; and
- The OPM.

The realignment of M&D's has created a number of issues such as cultural challenges, delays in the approval and updating of employees' files, an interruption of Ministries' succession plans, untrained and unskilled staff and poor internal audit and inventory control systems. The Committee is of the view that the adoption of its proposed recommendations will lead to greater efficiencies within M&D's, and allow for a smoother transition in the event of future realignments. Moreover, the Committee intends to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this Report.

This Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George

**Chairman**

Sgd.

Dr. Lackram Bodoë

**Vice-Chairman**

Sgd.

Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy

**Member**

Sgd.

Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy

**Member**

Sgd.

Mr. Hassel Bacchus

**Member**

Sgd.

Mr. Wade Mark

**Member**

Sgd.

Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie

**Member**

Sgd.

Mr. Clarence Rambharat

**Member**

Sgd.

Ms. Amrita Deonarine

**Member**

Sgd.

Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julien

**Member**

Sgd.

# APPENDIX I

## The Inquiry Process

## **The Inquiry Process**

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outlines the Inquiry process followed by the PAAC:

1. Identification of entity to be examined;
2. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the selected entity. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
  - Description
  - Background;
  - Overview of Expenditure
  - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
  - Proposed Questions.
3. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposals by the Committee and when approved, questions are forwarded to the entity for written responses;
4. Issue of requests for written comment from the public are made via Parliament's website, social media accounts, newspaper and advertisements;
5. Preparation of an Issues Paper by the Secretariat for the Committee's consideration, based on written responses received from the entities. The Issues Paper identifies and summarises any matters of concern in the responses provided by the entity or received from stakeholders and the general public;
6. Review of the responses provided and the Issues Paper by the Committee;
7. Conduct of a site visit to obtain a first-hand perspective of the implementation of a project (optional);
8. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submissions and the site visit (if required). If there is need for a public hearing, the relevant witnesses will be invited to attend and provide evidence. There is usually no need to examine the entity in public if the Committee believes the issues have little public interest or the Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.
9. Issue of written request to the entity for further details should the Committee require any additional information after the public hearing.
10. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.
11. Engage in follow-up.