



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

September 2, 2020

Clerk of the House
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building
Port of Spain

Attention: Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel

Thirty-Third Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the follow up on the status of the implementation of the recommendations on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance and general controls as stated in the Reports of the Auditor General on 2017, 2018 and 2019 Public Accounts.

Reference is made to your letter dated July 23, 2020 on the above subject.

2. In this connection you are advised as follows:

Recommendation:

The Ministry of Finance should report to Parliament on the feasibility of presenting ICT expenditure separately in the Estimates of Expenditure by August 30, 2020;

Response:

While the Ministry of Finance fully supports and endorses the observation made by the Auditor General that the lack of a distinct listing of ICT expenditure in budget documents raises the likelihood of inefficiencies in policy implementation and the absence of disaggregated figures could lead to inappropriate decisions on planning, budgeting and resource allocation and inefficient use of financial resources, achieving this may not be a straightforward undertaking.

In this regard, the Ministry of Finance will have to undertake an exercise to define and have government-wide consensus on suitable sub-categories to monitor ICT spend with input from

key stakeholders under the guidance of the Budget Division. Appropriate recommendations could then be made for budgetary classification.

Recommendation:

iGovTT should report to the Parliament on the extent to which the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement contributed to the fulfilment of the recommendation of the Auditor General that there may be a more strategic approach to procurement of IT systems, licences, support and maintenance across Ministries and Departments to achieve value for money by August 30,2020.

Response:

See attached report from iGovTT.

3. The delay in submission is deeply regretted. Should you require any additional clarification, do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully



.....
Vishnu Dhanpaul
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Finance



PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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

Parl.: 5/1/2

July 23, 2020

Mr. Vishnu Dhanpaul
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Finance
Level 8
Eric Williams Finance Building
Independence Square
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Permanent Secretary,

The Thirty-Third Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Follow-up on the status of the implementation of the recommendations on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) governance and general controls as stated in the Reports of the Auditor General on 2017, 2018 and 2019 Public Accounts.

I refer to the Report at caption which was presented in the House of Representatives on July 01, 2020 and in the Senate on July 02, 2020. A copy of the Report is enclosed for ease of reference.

Standing Orders 110(6) and 100(6) of the House of Representatives and Senate respectively, require the Minister with responsibility for the Ministry/body reported on by a Joint Standing Committee to present to each House a paper responding to the recommendations/comments contained in the Report.

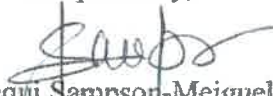
The recommendation directed to the Ministry of Finance is outlined on page **twenty (20)** of the Committee's Report.

You are kindly asked to note that this written response must be submitted to this office by **Tuesday September 01, 2020**. An electronic copy should be sent to coth@tparliament.org.

Your early attention to this matter is appreciated.

Thank you.

Respectfully,


Jacquie Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House



National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited

Public Accounts Committee Request for Report

Status on the implementation of the recommendations on
ICT governance and general controls as stated in the
Reports of the Auditor General on 2017, 2018 and 2019
Public Accounts

24 August 2020





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iGovTT's Report

Response to Question 1 – GovNeTT Stabilization

iGovTT should provide a status report to Parliament on the completion of the GovNeTT stabilisation initiative by August 30, 2020.

GovNeTT is the premier shared service that operates as a local cloud for the backbone of GoRTT's network. Since its deployment in 2009, the stabilization of the infrastructure begun in February 2019 to improve the quality of services such as email, domain services, internet, security, remote access and wide area network connectivity. It should be noted that on 06 June 2020, all critical services were upgraded with the new Hardware and Software solutions. Since then, iGovTT has been working with the vendor to transition the project fully into operations. These activities include Administrator training, User training, and some outstanding configuration clean-ups. Despite these lingering activities, all users are now consuming services from the upgraded and stabilized platform. The stabilized environment has provided the following benefits:

- Larger E-mail Mail boxes (Minimum mailbox from 150Mb to 1GB)
- Increased WAN and Internet Bandwidth (Minimum WAN from 1Mbps to 10Mbps)
- Enhanced Security (Upgraded Firewall appliances)
- Enhanced Collaboration tools (Upgrade from OCS 2007 to WebEx)
- Updated Service Desk solution (Upgrade from v12 to v17)
- Enhanced Administration for Ministries and Agencies (New monitoring and Administrative tools deployed)

All of these upgrades will result in higher availability and stability of the network. They will also increase the compatibility with new technologies.

Response to Question 2 – Website Cyber Security



iGovTT should report to Parliament on the status of the development of a policy on Government website cyber security requirements by August 30, 2020.

iGovTT continues to actively collaborate with the Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation on the drafting of policies for consideration. With regard to the policy on the government's website cyber security the company is also liaising with the Trinidad and Tobago Cyber Security Incident Response Team (TTCsIRT) through the GILAC committee.

Response to Question 3 – GILAC

iGovTT should report to Parliament on the existing GILAC reporting mechanism and its recommendations for the implementation of a system for direct feedback between GILAC and the Government by August 30, 2020.

iGovTT is a primary contributor to the GILAC activities which are managed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation. As a contributor, iGovTT participates in meetings, shares professional experiences for ICT best practices and thought leadership, assists with policy writing and reviews and presents on key ICT trends and benchmarks. iGovTT proposed the need for additional committees to ensure better governance arrangements surrounding GoRTT's ICT activities.

Response to Question 5 – ICT Training

iGovTT should report to Parliament on whether there are plans to extend the server maintenance and e-learning training to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies by August 30, 2020.

e-Learning has been extensively utilized over the last several years via the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (MEA). The sessions are technical and would have benefitted many IT Managers and other persons within GoRTT. The MEA contract expired on 30 June 2020, however, Cabinet by Minute No. 1355, 28 July 2020 granted approval for iGovTT to negotiate and procure MEA 2020 - 2023. In that regard, it is only consequent upon the conclusion of the negotiations that the content of the MEA with regard to training and others services will be known in entirety. It is confirmed that Premier Support Workshops will be negotiated. These are advanced technical training sessions that run from one (1) to five (5) days and are delivered by a Microsoft engineer in person or online. These workshops are focused on enhancing knowledge and skills around a specific technology, product or online service. Historically these sessions have been successful and as such the intention is to continue to extend training to GoRTT under the MEA.

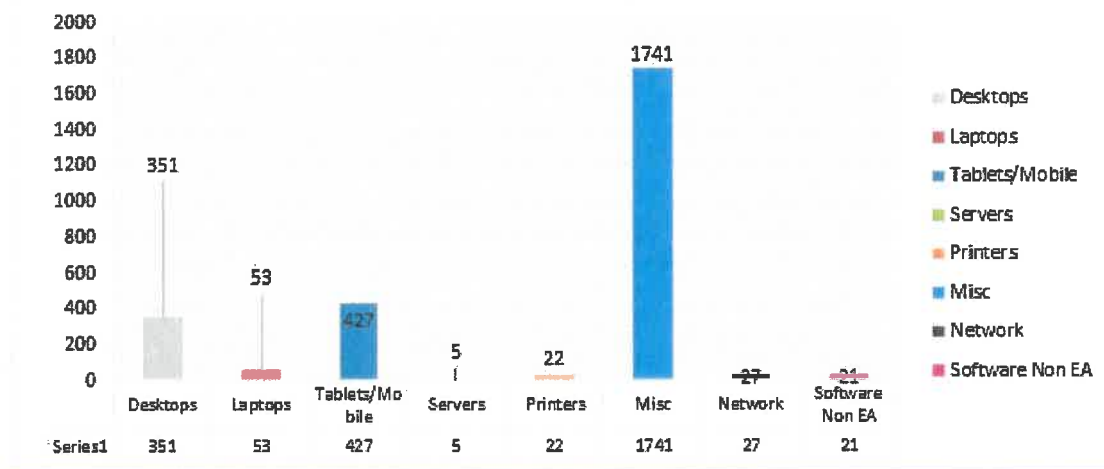
Response to Question 6 – Expenditure on ICT

iGovTT should report to Parliament on the extent to which the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement contributed to the fulfilment of the recommendation of the Auditor General that there be a strategic approach to procurement of IT systems, licenses, support and maintenance across Ministries and Departments to achieve value for money by August 30, 2020.

In accordance with the annual Call Circular issued by the Ministry of Finance (requests for computer equipment should be supported by the recommendation of the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited.), iGovTT processed fifty-seven (57) individual Request For Approvals in 2018 - 2019 for the procurement of computer hardware and third party software for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).


This strategically impacts, by providing an initial gauge on the resulting percentage growth (approximately 15 - 25% annually) of the accompanying Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (MEA) that provides productivity and system software for various classes of computer equipment. The quantities are illustrated below:

Hardware & Software Approval Oct 2018 to Sept 2019



Additionally, iGovTT is responsible for managing and administering the MEA software contract on behalf of the line ministry and GoRTT. This MEA contract provides software products, software assurance benefits and support services to GoRTT MDAs including other advantages, namely:

- (i) eligibility for Microsoft services and product upgrades and updates at no additional cost, during the period of the MEA;

- 
- (ii) access to value-added services such as software support, discounted premier consulting hours; online and in-country training sessions;
 - (iii) a fixed price for software and support services for the life of the MEA which, in turn, obviates any price variations due to market forces that may occur in the said period; and
 - (iv) leveraging of economies of scale through volume purchasing that allows for price discounts and therefore facilitates cost savings on the public purse.

Upon request for MEA licenses, GoRTT subscribers are required to submit periodic reports of the Microsoft licenses deployed in respective environments by updating software installation profile records provided by iGovTT. This facilitates the following:

- Compilation of an up-to-date inventory of Microsoft licenses deployed throughout GoRTT
- Monitor contract compliance with respect to eligible license quantities
- Detect and discourage the deployment of rogue licenses within MEA subscriber environments

Since 2012, GoRTT MEA subscribers have been charged with budgeting for their growth. Thus, they are required to purchase any licenses classified as being “New” additions to their entitlements using the quotation and invoicing system implemented by iGovTT. Remittance for these “New” licenses are then submitted to Microsoft annually at the MEA contract anniversary date to be added to the existing contract.

The MEA represents a critical component of GoRTT’s thrust for use of shared enterprise ICT resources to deliver services to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is our view that this model should be replicated in additional areas beyond this domain so that the requisite benefits of shared services can be derived.

Response to Question 7 – Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

iGovTT should provide Parliament with its assessment of the overall success of the Enterprise Agreement in promoting shared services and the uniformity of ICT across the public service by August 30, 2020.

The MEA was established on the premise of fostering a homogenous environment for software and software solutions throughout the GoRTT. This allowed the seamless sharing of files without having to perform conversions for access, editing and viewing. This also ensured that IT officers are able to move between MDAs and effectively support the systems in a new environment as they were all based on the same vendor products. Interoperability and integration of systems were also simplified as products from the same provider were highly cohesive and could be easily connected. The use of single vendor products enabled the implementation of centralized and shared services platforms, such as GovNeTT, where the domain and email solutions are based on Microsoft systems and easily integrated with the Microsoft Office desktop productivity suite. There has been exploration of other technology products and tools in the GoRTT, however, Microsoft remains the most widely used by all GoRTT MDAs with over twenty-seven thousand (27,000) devices using Microsoft software. Presently, the Microsoft file formats are the standard formats used in the GoRTT for data and document storage. These are also the formats used by many related organizations and Governments allowing for ease of information sharing between entities.

Response to Question 8 – Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

iGovTT should report to Parliament on the status of a new Enterprise Agreement to come into effect after the extension of the original 3-year Agreement expired in June 2020 by August 30, 2020.

Cabinet by minute no 1355 of 28 July 2020 granted Approval for the negotiation and procurement of the MEA 2020-2023 as follows

- (i) The Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation (MPADT), in accordance with the provisions of Section 20A (1) (c) of the Central Tenders Board Act, Chapter 71:91, contract the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) to act on its behalf; and provide procurement and contract management services for the Microsoft Agreement
- (ii) The commencement of negotiations between the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) on behalf of the GoRTT and the Microsoft Corporation

Pending the approval of Cabinet, Microsoft granted the GoRTT a grace period of ninety (90) days for 01 July to 28 September 2020.

The attached timeline indicates the procurement process.

Response to Question 9 – Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

iGovTT should inform Parliament whether there is any substantial difference between the conditions of arrangements in place from June 2020 onward and the 2016 – 2019 Enterprise Agreement.

We do not anticipate any major changes compared to the prior, however, once the contract is executed, this information will be submitted to the PAC.

Response to Question 10 – Server Maintenance and E-Learning

iGovTT should report to Parliament on whether there are plans to extend the server maintenance and E-Learning training to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies by August 30, 2020.

The MEA contract expired 30 June 2020. By Cabinet Minute No. 135 of 28 July 2020, Cabinet granted approval for the negotiation and procurement of the MEA 2020 - 2023. In that regard it is only subsequent to the completion of the negotiations that the content of the MEA with regard to training and others services will be known.



However, under the services Microsoft contract, Premier Support Workshops will be one point of negotiations. These are advanced technical training sessions that run from one (1) to five (5) day periods and are delivered by a Microsoft engineer in person or online. These Workshops are focused on enhancing knowledge and skills around a specific technology, product or online service. The number of workshops that can be conducted will be dependent upon the cost of the negotiated Microsoft Services Agreement. Once the contract is executed, a survey will be conducted with the GoRTT on the Microsoft solutions and applications in their environment and the required training needs and a training plan will be developed thereafter.

Note the plan is to continue to extend training to the GoRTT under the MEA, and one such training will be server maintenance training.

Response to Question 11 – Winning Solutions

iGovTT should report to Parliament on a list of winning solutions by August 30, 2020.

The following three winning solutions were produced by three teams:

- i. EmployTT – Online recruitment system which will aid citizens to conveniently access job vacancies within MDAs, making applying for these positions simple, quick and trackable whilst lessening the cost of marketing these positions to the general public.
- ii. e-Appointment – Online scheduling system which will aid citizens to conveniently make, change and cancel their own appointment for Government services.
- iii. ttcommute – Mobile application which will assist commuters in navigating across Trinidad and Tobago giving them a range of options for traveling across the country.

Response to Question 12 – Hackathon 2019

iGovTT should report to Parliament on the timeline for the implementation of the solutions developed during the 2019 Hackathon by August 30, 2020.

Two solutions from the hackathon will be implemented later this year and the third in 2021 as identified hereunder:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i. | employTT | - | September 2020 |
| ii. | eAppointment | - | October 2020 |
| iii. | ttcommute | - | Due to the level of complexity this was deferred for continued development |



iGovTT should report to Parliament on the MDAs within which each solution was deployed by August 30, 2020:

iGovTT to pilot and adopt employTT and eAppointment by September and October 2020 respectively. Future deployments to be marketed by iGovTT to targeted MDAs such as the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation and the Ministry of Labour.

iGovTT should report to Parliament on the results of the proposed solutions by August 30, 2020:

We anticipate that the implementations will be a success and we will collate the information to assess accordingly and subsequently report to PAC.

Response to Questions for the Additional Information

What have been the five (5) top achievements made since the launch of the National ICT Plan?

iGovTT's achievements for the period 2018 to 2022 are all aligned with the Vision 2030 Plan and the top five achievements are shown below:

Achievement	National ICT Plan	Vision 2030
National Payment Gateway (GovPayTT) deployed in March 2020 at MAGLA to provide citizens with a payment platform for Government-related transactions accessible round the clock.	Strategic Thrust 3: Enhancing Service Delivery	Theme 2: Promoting Good Governance and Service Excellence
Stabilisation of the Government Wide Area Network (GovNetTT) to improve the quality of services such as email, domain services, internet, security, remote access and wide area network connectivity.	Strategic Thrust 1: Improving Connectivity and Enhancing ICT Infrastructure	Theme 3: Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation
Omni-channel approach to the delivery of services. This was achieved through the deployment of live chat and chatbot technology (ttGovChat) to provide real-time customer service (live chat) and 24-hour service (chat bot) in the dissemination of information concerning government services via the ttconnect Enterprise Portal.	Strategic Thrust 3: Enhancing Service Delivery	Theme 2: Promoting Good Governance and Service Excellence
Implementation of a Hackathon (HackTT) where tertiary students developed solutions for GoRTT that could be used to provide service to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.	Strategic Thrust 2: Building ICT Human Capital	Theme 1: Putting people first: Nurturing our greatest asset

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Improved governance of throughout GoRTT with regard to ICT. This was achieved through the establishment of various committees, sector seminars and as a primary contributor in GILAC

Strategic Thrust 3: Enhancing Service Delivery

Theme 2: Promoting Good Governance and Service Excellence