



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

Ref: 3/4/3/ Vol I

August 18, 2022

Ms. Keiba Jacob
Secretary to the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee
c/o Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex, Cabildo Building
St. Vincent Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Ms. Jacob,

MTCA Response to the Fifth Report of the PAAC on the Examination of the Realignment of Ministries and Departments

Further to your organisation's letter dated June 23, 2022, Ref: *Parl:5/6/20* and your subsequent approval, via email, for a one-week extension on the submission of a written response to the Fifth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the examination of the realignment of Ministries and Departments, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is pleased to submit its responses to the findings and recommendations of the Committee. **Appendix I** refers.

Sincerely,

Permanent Secretary

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWELFTH REPUBLICAN PARLIAMENT

FIFTH REPORT FROM – Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

EXAMINATION OF- The Realignment of Ministries and Departments

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS (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.

Recommendation:

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

MTCA Response:

Subsequent to the relocation of the Special Unit of the Ministry of Finance from Level 10, the MTCA was able to occupy this additional floor, thereby allowing for a substantial increase in storage and accommodation space.

While there are still challenges with respect to the adequate housing of the Culture Division’s archival materials, which were once properly and securely housed at the former Frederick Street location, recent arrangements rectified this problem such that the items are currently in the process of being properly secured. The archival materials include very old recordings on LP records, U-matic tapes, cassettes etc. that will be digitised and made available for public access (conditions apply) in the cultural library. Accommodation for the cultural library is not ideal but it has been set up and access to the contents is available.

Adequate storage is still required for the Culture Division’s closed files, which, due to the nature of the work, should be information that is readily accessible (such as for FOIA requests or cultural agreements, grants etc). The current storage space is unsuitable given the high levels of humidity and dust/dirt; an ideal environment for the quick deterioration of files, if not corrected, and a potential health hazard to staff. It must be noted that due to the inadequacy of space as well as the increasingly growing number of staff, the MTCA is in communication with the Ministry of Public Administration for Level 11, Tower C to be assigned to the MTCA.

2. Understaffed Units

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

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 25, 2022 on the filling of any outstanding positions.

MTCA Response:

The MTCA has since been able to fill several positions to allow for more effective and efficient functioning of the Ministry. Subsequent to April 2021, the MTCA was able to fill **28 vacant contract positions** and **4 established posts** (3 of which are in an acting capacity).

With Cabinet's approval of the Further Adjustment Note, via Minute Nos. 2011 and 2112 dated 16.12.2021, (which created 42 contract positions in the Legal, Monitoring and Evaluation; Information and Communications Technology; Projects; and Communications Units as well as 20 established posts in the Finance and Accounts; Human Resource Management; and General Administration Units), an additional **8 established posts** (acting capacity) and **11 contract positions** were filled.

The MTCA is at various stages of the recruitment process for additional contract positions and is also working with the SCD for the filling of more established posts.

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.

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 authorisation 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.

MTCA Response:

Circulating files from the former MCDCA are still outstanding. To date, only two (2) of the thirty-nine (39) outstanding files have been received. A total of thirty-seven files are therefore still to be submitted to the MTCA. The last reminder was sent on July 7, 2022.

With regard to the necessary approvals and/or authorisation from the SCD, approvals have since been received for the staff of the Culture Division.

4. Cultural Challenges

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

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

MTCA Response:

With a change in the Executive of the MTCA in October 2021, a new approach was taken to accelerate the change management process, through the employment of a Performance Coach and Advisor for one year. As part of the change management and team building initiatives employed to manage the transitioning process, five (5) types of activities were undertaken at the levels of the individual, Unit and wider organisation. These included individual coaching sessions, internal department workshops, organisation-wide monthly skills-based workshops, lunch and learn sessions, and thematic team building encounters. These activities are continuing and are expected to be completed in November 2022.

The purpose of these initiatives were to assess participants' personal Emotional Intelligence mastery, their knowledge of the merged ministry, their knowledge of the new entities that were incorporated into the receiving entity, and the willingness to collaborate with one another and understand the respective Units and entities as a proxy for their closer collaboration.

In response to surveys used to determine the impact of these sessions, almost all respondents agreed that they now knew more about one another's team building skills, and their team members' capabilities in goal setting, drive, strength, and congruence, among other values.

The MTCA notes that the combination of activities has proven effective in increasing personal competence; promoting intra-department collaboration and increasing knowledge of departments and entities of the merged Ministry. Additionally, given the fact that participants have increased their inter-departmental outreach, this speaks well of the impact of the activities in facilitating the interpersonal, and work related knitting of the merged entities of the Ministry Tourism, Culture and the Arts. Further monitoring, evaluating and rewarding of these new skills are ongoing.

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.

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.

MTCA Response:

- (i) All posts in the Internal Audit Unit have been filled (in an acting capacity).
- (ii) The auditing of all accounting records of both the current and former Ministries have been completed.
- (iii) With regard to the training plan, the MTCA will be conducting Audit Training with the Institute of Internal Auditors during the period 19th -23rd September, 2022, with three (3) staff carded to participate in same. The course content for the training is as outlined hereunder:-
 - Strategic Leadership
 - Cyber Security Audit in an Unsecured World
 - Root Cause Analysis
 - Reputational Risk
 - Fraud Detection, Deterrence and Incident Report –The Auditor’s Role.

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.

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;
- iii. Cabinet’s approval to engage UDECOTT for the provision of project management services; and
- iv. 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.

MTCA Response:

- i. The Project and Facilities Management Unit (PMFU) is responsible for management, maintenance and development of sites under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. Approval was granted by Cabinet for the following positions:
 - 1 Project Manager
 - 1 Project Support Officer
 - 1 BOA 11

Facilities Management

- 1 Facilities Manager
- 2 Facilities Officer
- 1 BOA 11

Currently, interviews are ongoing for the positions of Project Support Officer; Facilities Manager; two Facilities Officers and a Business Operations Assistant II to be assigned to the PMFU.

Cabinet, in July, 2022 assigned four (4) new sites to the Ministry, namely, Lopinot Historical Complex, River Estate Museum and Waterwheel, Diego Martin, Fort Picton and Fort George. In addition, the Ministry has responsibility for Maracas, Manzanilla, Vessigny and Las Cuevas Beach Facilities, the La Brea Visitor Centre, Paramin and the Galera Light House. As a result of the increased requirements of the Unit, the approved structure is in need of enhancement. The Ministry is currently reviewing the current structure with a view to addressing the needs.

One of the major financial challenges in fiscal 2022 has been the untimely release of funds to facilitate project implementation at the Tourism Trinidad Ltd (TTL). The Ministry has held meetings with the Ministry of Finance and TTL to identify challenges re. Releases.

- ii. The Project and Facilities Management Unit is responsible for oversight of the projects and, together with the Research and Planning Unit, monitors the PSIP. The Ministry continues to engage suppliers to submit invoices in a timely manner.
- iii. Under the PSIP programme, the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (UDeCOTT) remains the project manager for larger (large budget) projects such as National Museum and Arts Gallery Refurbishment, Desperadoes Pan Theatre Project and Ariapita Avenue Enhancement. Cabinet, by Minute 2142 of December 22, 2021, agreed that the Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (RDC) provide project management services under the Tourism Sites and Attractions Programme.
- iv. A Project Management and Facilities Unit was approved by Cabinet Minute 2112 of December 16, 2021. The Unit was required to manage the development projects and maintain the facilities after construction. This is necessary to maintain the tourism standard whilst nurturing the local tourism product. A well outfitted unit comprised of project managers, project engineers, field officers (liaison officers), facility managers and facility officers are required to effectively manage the growing portfolio of sites under the MTCA. (See response to question 6(i) also).

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.

Recommendation:

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

MTCA Response:

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is currently reviewing the recommendations made by the Consultant towards finalisation of same and submission of the Note for Cabinet.