

INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM):

# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO END-OF-TERM REPORT 2014–2016

Josh Drayton  
University of the West Indies  
St. Augustine Campus  
First End-of-Term Report





# INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM): TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO END-OF-TERM REPORT 2014–2016

Trinidad and Tobago's OGP action plan contained good first steps on open data and natural resource governance, although most commitments saw limited progress over the implementation period. The next action plan should focus on institutionalising civil society participation in the OGP process and address additional priority topics like government procurement corruption and open budgeting.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP participating country. This report covers the period September 2014 to July 2016 and includes developments up to September 2016.

In 2013, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago developed an interministerial committee tasked with coordinating the national action plan. The Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC) is the lead agency coordinating the implementation of Trinidad and Tobago's OGP commitments. However, this ministry had little legal power to enforce policy changes in other agencies within government. Its principal mandate is to improve public service delivery and to engage in public sector reform. It cannot compel other agencies to enter into commitments. Because of the ministry's limited mandate, the action plan is heavily oriented to public service delivery.

Open government responsibilities have been given to many ministries. However, these responsibilities were not specified in the official allocations of government ministry responsibilities from May 2010 to September 2015. This lack of specificity indicates the level of attention that open government initiatives received.

On 7 September 2015, Trinidad and Tobago held general elections that resulted in a change of government from the People's Partnership, a coalition government that had led for the past five years, to the People's National Movement (PNM). The new administration reduced the size of the cabinet from 31 to 22 government ministries and re-allocated responsibilities. One major step forward in this process was including open government as a specific item of responsibility in the schedule of MPAC.

At the time of the writing of this report, Trinidad and Tobago had not developed a new action plan for its second cycle. However, there are some access to information commitments that are worth carrying into the new action plan. Other areas of budget transparency and government procurement can be included and linked to the natural resource commitments that have received limited success.

*This report was prepared by Josh Drayton, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.*

## TABLE 1: AT A GLANCE

NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS: 13

### LEVEL OF COMPLETION

	MIDTERM	END-OF-TERM
COMPLETED:	0	1 (8%)
SUBSTANTIAL:	2 (15%)	1 (8%)
LIMITED:	8 (62%)	10 (77%)
NOT STARTED:	2 (15%)	1 (8%)
UNCLEAR:	1 (8%)	0

### NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS WITH:

CLEAR RELEVANCE TO OGP VALUES:	12 (92%)	12 (92%)
TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL IMPACT:	1 (8%)	1 (8%)
SUBSTANTIAL OR COMPLETE IMPLEMENTATION:	2 (15%)	2 (15%)
<b>ALL THREE (🌟):</b>	0	0

### DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

MAJOR:	N/A	0
OUTSTANDING:	N/A	0

### MOVING FORWARD

NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS CARRIED OVER TO NEXT ACTION PLAN:	N/A
---	-----

# CONSULTATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their OGP action plans. The Trinidad and Tobago government did not hold any consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs), although both the government and CSOs recognized the need to engage in the implementation process as captured in the midterm IRM progress report. Over the past year, there has been no OGP-related communication from the government concerning commitment implementation.

No explanation was given to the researcher for the lack of government consultation during the implementation of the action plan.

**Table 2: Action Plan Consultation Process**

PHASE OF ACTION PLAN	OGP PROCESS REQUIREMENT (ARTICLES OF GOVERNANCE SECTION)	DID THE GOVERNMENT MEET THIS REQUIREMENT?
During Implementation	Regular forum for consultation during implementation?	No
	Consultations: Open or Invitation-only?	No
	Consultations on IAP2 spectrum	N/A

## PROGRESS IN COMMITMENT IMPLEMENTATION

All of the indicators and methods used in the IRM research can be found in the *IRM Procedures Manual*, available at (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>). One measure deserves further explanation, due to its particular interest for readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top between OGP-participating countries: the “starred commitment” (★). Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

1. It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity.
2. The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
3. The commitment would have a “transformative” potential impact if completely implemented.
4. Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving a ranking of “substantial” or “complete” implementation.

Based on these criteria, at the midterm report, the Trinidad and Tobago action plan contained no starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Trinidad and Tobago’s action plan contained no starred commitments.

Commitments assessed as star commitments in the midterm report can lose their starred status if at the end of the action plan implementation cycle, their completion falls short of substantial or full completion, which would mean they have an overall limited completion at the end of term, per commitment language.

Finally, the graphs in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress reporting process. For the full data set for Trinidad and Tobago, see the OGP Explorer at [www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer).

## ABOUT “DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?”

Often, OGP commitments are vaguely worded or not clearly related to opening government, but they actually achieve significant political reforms. Other times, commitments with significant progress may appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government. In an attempt to capture these subtleties and, more importantly, actual changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable: “Did it open government?” in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practise has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. This can be contrasted to the IRM’s “starred commitments” which describe potential impact.

IRM researchers assess the “Did it open government?” variable with regard to each of the OGP values relevant to this commitment. It asks, did it stretch the government practise beyond business as usual? The scale for assessment is as follows:

- Worsened: worsens government openness as a result of the measures taken by commitment.
- Did not change: did not change status quo of government practice.
- Marginal: some change, but minor in terms of its impact over level of openness.
- Major: a step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale
- Outstanding: a reform that has transformed “business as usual” in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes as implemented for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed on government openness practises at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

Trinidad and Tobago's national action plan was developed to advance exciting and new initiatives in public service improvement, open data, and governance. Although commitments did not deal with some major policy problems in the areas of government procurement and budget transparency that were advanced by civil society, they represented good first steps in laying the groundwork for more ambitious and transformative commitments in the future.

One commitment was substantially implemented:

- 2.2 Access to Information: Increased data sets in open formats.

One commitment was fully implemented:

- 4.3 Natural Resource Governance: Inclusion of the mineral and mining sector into the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI).

While government and civil society expressed interest in moving open government initiatives forward in Trinidad and Tobago, the environment warrants a more concerted implementation effort by the government. This is evident in the limited implementation of ten of the thirteen commitments. Additionally, information from the IRM researcher's interviews revealed that civil society lacked the capacity to broadly advocate and press government about implementation. This capacity gap manifested in civil society not commenting on any of the commitments concerning public service improvement and giving limited opinions about access to information commitments. This gap needs to be addressed for civil society to become more robust in its monitoring and advocacy roles.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF COMMITMENTS

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. end-of-term reports assess an additional metric, "Did it open government?" The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on this metric. For commitments that were already at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the "Did it open government?" variable. For further details on completed commitments at midterm, please see Trinidad and Tobago IRM midterm progress report.<sup>1</sup>

The national action plan of Trinidad and Tobago aligned with the government's National Framework for Sustainable Development 2010, which included the following focus areas: people-centred development; poverty eradication; social justice; security and information; communication technologies; diversified, knowledge-intensive economy; good governance; and foreign policy. However, the researcher noted in the IRM midterm report that civil society was not meaningfully and sufficiently consulted in the development of the action plan.

This action plan is the second of two versions developed after consultations. The first version of the action plan included six thematic areas, but two themes were removed: public procurement and budget transparency. Meeting with the IRM researcher, a government official provided limited and unclear information about this removal process. The final version of Trinidad and Tobago's first plan contained 13 commitments from the following four themes:

Summaries of each appear below:

1. **Public service improvement:** This thematic area is primarily concerned with developing the capacity of the public sector and relevant agencies to deliver quality services to the public. This theme's five commitments include certifying 75 public service agencies in quality service delivery, developing human resource capacity in four agencies, developing a pilot research instrument to assess the quality of public service delivery, creating an interactive media platform to help citizens access government services, and establishing a virtual contact centre for national scholars.
2. **Access to information:** This thematic area focuses on open data initiatives that foster innovation and new opportunities for social and economic development. The four commitments involve adopting a data standards and classification framework, conducting an open data readiness assessment, reviewing public information needs, and creating an open data government portal.
3. **Governance:** The action plan defines governance as "the mechanism that allows a more open relationship between government and society at large." This thematic area has a single commitment to create a civil society board that gives the government feedback on policy activities.
4. **National resource governance:** This thematic area focuses on natural resource management, accountability systems, and openness. Commitments in this section include auditing the accounts of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) to align with international standards, publishing the cadastre of licences and contracts for the exploitation and production of oil and gas, and including the minerals sector in the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI) reporting mechanism.

Furthermore, the two removed areas (public procurement and budget transparency) received much public attention over the past two years. They both had the potential to transform the national policy environment and to greatly enhance accountability and transparency. For example, one of the major CSOs at the helm of public procurement issues in Trinidad and Tobago, the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), wrote to the Ministry of Planning and Development on a number of occasions pressing for the reform of the public procurement system.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the intention to include civil society in the budgetary process would have built on previous important government activity, as captured in Minister of Finance Winston Dookeran's statement at the Budget Engagement workshop with CSOs held in July 2010:

Civil society plays an important role in the development of the country as they come from all levels of the community and the value which they bring to the budgetary process is important. . . . [T]he articulation of people's values, ideas and proposals coming out of the budgetary process will give Government the direction it needs to proceed in the future.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership, Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014-2015, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "JCC Policy Initiatives: Public Procurement," Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry, <http://www.jcc.org.tt/policy.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Finance, "Civil Society Meets Finance Minister to Discuss Upcoming Budget," media release, 13 July 2010, <http://bit.ly/1QSePN0>.

**Table 3 Overview: Assessment of Progress by Commitment**

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE <i>(as written)</i>				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
<b>Theme I: Public Service Improvement</b>																					
1.1. Public agency service quality			X			X			X				X								
1.2. Human resource capacity in public service			X		Unclear				X				X					X			
1.3. Pilot project for the "Easier Life for Citizens" Index government interactive portal			X		X				X				X							X	
1.4. Government interactive media platform			X		X		X		X				X							X	
1.5. Contact centre to address needs of national scholars			X		X		X		X				Unclear					X			
<b>Theme II: Access to Information</b>																					
2.1. Data standards policy			X		X		X		X				X						X		
2.2. Increase data sets in open formats			X		X		X		X						X					X	



COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		END-OF-TERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?								
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding						
2.3. Diagnostic review of public information needs				X	X					X			X									X					
2.4. Interactive open government portal			X		X		X				X				X									X			
Theme III: Governance																											
3.1. Civil society board				X		X						X															
Theme IV: Natural Resource Governance																											
4.1. Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries audit			X		X						X				X												
4.2. Oil and gas exploration				X	X		X				X			X											X		
4.3. Inclusion of the mineral and mining sector into the TTEITI				X	X		X				X				X											X	

# THEME I: PUBLIC SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

## 1.1 | TO CERTIFY PUBLIC AGENCIES' SERVICE QUALITY

### Commitment Text:

To ensure that 40 percent of Public Service Agencies have attained the Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard Certification (TTDS) namely Health, Education, Transportation, National Security, Works and Infrastructure and Trade service agencies.

### Milestones:

1. 75 service agencies signed up for the TTDS
2. Services charters are made public
3. Improvement plans adopted
4. Certification audits conducted

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC)

Supporting Institution(s): 75 Public Service Agencies, independent advisory panel with representatives from civil society

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: June 2016

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		END-OF-TERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding		
				X			X			X				X					X				

## COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to improve the quality of public service delivery among government agencies by creating service standards that are monitored by citizens. This commitment is part of a pre-existing initiative, the Gold to Diamond Standard Certification, launched on 24 June 2013. The commitment seeks to certify 75 agencies using the following certification criteria:

1. Customer Involvement and Understanding;
2. Communications;
3. Promoting a Customer Service Culture;
4. Responsiveness and Service Standards;
5. Service Environment;
6. Innovation and Creativity;
7. Technology; and
8. Partnerships

The commitment and pre-existing programme intend to enhance public service delivery and performance by defining standards of performance, focusing on citizens as customers, having more professionally trained public officials, and using the “whole of government” approach.<sup>1</sup>

To be certified, public agencies must fulfil the Diamond Standard certification. According to the certification programme, public agencies need to have a customer-focused culture with the aim of delivering quality services to the public.<sup>2</sup> This culture should feature engagement between customers and staff, simple business processes, high-quality service delivery, openness and transparency, continuous feedback for improvement, and technology for innovation.

## STATUS

### **Midterm: Limited**

According to public officials involved in the implementation of this commitment, 20 services applied for certification in the first cycle, and another 55 agencies signed up for Diamond Standard Certification in the second cycle.<sup>3</sup> The government reported that 17 agencies published service charters, and 28 service improvement plans were adopted. These activities would represent substantial completion of the first two milestones, although the IRM researcher was unable to verify the level of implementation since public officials provided no list of certified agencies.

For more information, please see the 2014–2015 midterm IRM report.<sup>4</sup>

### **End of term: Limited**

At the time of the writing of this report, 66 agencies have signed up to participate in this initiative. Interviewed public officials of the MPAC reported this figure. Participation of 9 of the 66 service agencies was postponed, and 18 agencies had to withdraw from the process. In the midterm report, the IRM researcher reported that 28 service improvement plans were adopted, but no certification audits took place. Public officials informed the IRM researcher that certification audits are continuous and are usually conducted every six months. However, the number of audits conducted was not reported.

It should be noted that, as in the context of the midterm report, the IRM researcher attempted to independently corroborate the information provided—requesting more information from the government—but has not been able to confirm the information from public officials. Additionally, no information and updates on the number of agencies included in the Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard (TTDS) could be found on the official TTDS website.<sup>5</sup>

Based on the research and interviews conducted, the IRM researcher concluded that the implementation of this commitment was limited, since 66 and not 75 agencies signed up. Additionally, signing up is the first of several steps to becoming certified.<sup>6</sup> In addition, 17 service charters were published but no additional evidence of progress was provided by public officials.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### **Public accountability: Marginal**

This commitment aims to build the capacity of public agencies to deliver public services efficiently and to certify those agencies based on service quality standards. The certification process includes a feedback mechanism: citizen user panels that provide feedback on the quality of service delivery. This commitment led to a marginal change in government conduct, reflected in the low number of agencies that went beyond signing up to participate in the TTDS. Nevertheless, the existence of the commitment represents the government's recognition of the problems with government engagement of citizens and with the use of feedback to continuously improve the quality of the services provided.

Even though public officials reported on the agencies participating in this process, there was no information online about agencies that signed up or those in various stages of the process. The lack of data poses challenges for citizens who may want to find out more about the process, participate, or view results of agency audits. Review of the data could increase public accountability. Unfortunately, civil society stakeholders who were interviewed did not express an opinion on this commitment. The IRM researcher requested from public officials a list of stakeholders involved in the TTDS process (for example, a list of persons on the citizen user panel and the private-sector expert panel). However, this information was not provided.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

The government has not started consultation to develop the next action plan but should enhance this commitment. While the commitment garners useful public feedback on the quality of service delivery in public agencies, a more defined commitment should feature an access to information and open data portal offering regularly published data related to citizen feedback. Citizens should also be able to access the names and level of completion of public agencies involved in the TTDS. This data sharing could also serve as a platform for civil society to advocate certification of high-demand public agencies.

For this commitment to be considered complete, public officials will first need to provide information to verify statements made in interviews. Additionally, it would be useful to gain feedback from stakeholders to determine the change that the introduction of this commitment had on improving public service delivery.

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian Public Service Commission, Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges, "1. The Whole of Government Challenge," Australian Government, <http://bit.ly/1QSF2jn>. The Trinidad and Tobago government uses the whole of government approach as an integrated method to respond to citizen issues. While initiatives can be formal or informal, the focus is on improving government service delivery.

<sup>2</sup> Diamond Standard, Trinidad & Tobago Diamond Standard, <http://www.mpac.gov.tt/diamond/content/about-ttds>

<sup>3</sup> A cycle refers to a period of training or a cohort.

<sup>4</sup> Open Government Partnership, Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014-2015, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, Trinidad & Tobago Diamond Standard, <http://www.mpac.gov.tt/diamond/content/trinidad-tobago-diamond-standard>

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, A Pocket Guide to Achieving the Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard, 5, [http://mpa.gov.tt/diamond/sites/default/files/Pocket%20Guide%20to%20attaining%20Diamond%20Status\\_0.pdf](http://mpa.gov.tt/diamond/sites/default/files/Pocket%20Guide%20to%20attaining%20Diamond%20Status_0.pdf).

# 1.2 | TO DEVELOP HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CAPACITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

**Commitment Text:**

To develop a strategic planning document, a Change Management Plan, and an ICT Plan in 4 public agencies and to develop a Competency Framework policy and system.

Milestones:

1. Bidding process to engage consultancy firm
2. Design phase (strategic planning and process redesign) concluded in four ministries
3. Transition Plan implemented
4. Competency Policy Framework and System documents delivered by consultant
5. Competency Policy Framework and System piloted in two agencies

Responsible Institution: Strategic Human Resources Management Council

Supporting Institutions: Localised Human Resource Units within various government ministries; Productivity Council; Human Resource Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NGO+ Professional Association)

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: March 2016

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		END-OF-TERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding		
				X	Unclear					X				X					X				
														X									

## COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to improve the human resource processes and strategies in four public service agencies by developing a strategic planning document, a Change Management Plan, and an Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Plan.

## STATUS

### **Midterm: Limited**

On 25 May 2011, the government of Trinidad and Tobago published a green paper titled *Transforming the Civil Service: Renewal and Modernisation*.<sup>1</sup> It listed six key areas that should be strengthened in the civil service, including the renewal and strengthening of the human resource management (HRM) system. This report outlined the weaknesses in the civil service HRM systems, including human resource capacity, legal framework, policies and procedures, organisational operations, and civil service compensation. This commitment aligns to the reform initiatives of the green paper.

According to the public officials interviewed, five consultancies have been through the bidding process, and a review of the organisational structure of one agency is in progress. The last three milestones have not yet been executed. All original target dates were revised to reflect an end date of September 2017.

### **End of term: Limited**

According to the public officials interviewed, there has been no update on this commitment since the midterm IRM progress report. The IRM researcher notes that this commitment is not relevant to OGP principles. The researcher also could not find supporting evidence demonstrating any change on this commitment. For further information, please see the midterm IRM report.<sup>2</sup>

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### **Access to information: Did not change**

### **Civic participation: Did not change**

### **Public accountability: Did not change**

This commitment aims to review the human resource capacity of the public sector so that it aligns with the needs of citizens. The commitment was not relevant to OGP principles. Its internal aim was to produce a policy document. The lack of progress in implementation and the inward aspect of this commitment resulted in no change in government openness in any OGP value area.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the time of writing of this report, the government has not engaged in consultation to develop the second action plan. The IRM researcher suggests, as did the midterm IRM report, that this commitment be discontinued and replaced with one that is relevant to OGP values.

---

<sup>1</sup> Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Green Paper: Transforming the civil service: Renewal and modernisation, <http://bit.ly/2sN9y7F>.

<sup>2</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

# 1.3 | TO CONDUCT A PILOT PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF AN “EASIER LIFE FOR CITIZENS” INDEX

## Commitment Text:

To develop a rigorous tool to assess the quality of public services delivered to citizens that can be measured, tracked and compared across Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

Supporting Institution(s): Ministry of Planning and Development; Civil Society Board (CSB)

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: June 2016

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
				X		X								X							
									X				X								

Editorial note: During the graphic design process, the relevance to OGP values for this commitment was incorrectly marked as access to information and public accountability in the midterm report. An erratum will be published in the progress report.

## COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to use a citizen-feedback pilot project to give the government feedback on the delivery of previously limited public goods and services. The commitment was developed because the government noticed it lacked a rigorous measurement tool to assess the quality of public services delivered to citizens.

## STATUS

### **Midterm: Limited**

At the midterm mark, the government had shared TTDS criteria with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), it had also joined the IDB Advisory Group and the methodology was being finalised. Correspondence about data collection was sent to the various ministries that will administer the survey. However, until the survey has been completed, results cannot be disseminated. Officials stated that, due to a change in government and realignment of ministerial portfolios, the new pilot project end date would be after July 2016. For further information, please see the midterm IRM report.<sup>1</sup>

### **End of term: Limited**

The government reported that the pilot survey was complete and a report was delivered to the government. The IRM researcher could not verify the survey's completion or the findings, as the results were not disseminated. Government officials stated that the report was an internal document. Interviewed civil society stakeholders were not aware of the pilot study and therefore had no input. The IRM researcher also requested documentation on the pilot study to contact nongovernment stakeholders involved, but this too was not provided.

The government provided no further evidence about the survey, its findings, or the dissemination of results from the midterm report. Therefore, the IRM researcher could not establish any further progress from that of the midterm report. For this reason, the progress was coded limited.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### **Civic participation: Marginal**

The commitment seeks to collect feedback from citizens on the quality of public services. However, it did not indicate what the next steps should be and how the survey data will be used in future policy development and planning.

This commitment has a potential to positively influence government outreach to citizens and incorporates feedback to improve public service delivery. However, the commitment as implemented has marginally enabled or improved opportunities for citizens to participate. As far as the IRM researcher could verify, the pilot project data has not been disseminated, and the feedback practice has not been institutionalised.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the time of the writing of this report, the government did not conduct consultations to develop the next action plan. This commitment is a useful step in collecting and disseminating data about citizen feedback on public service delivery and offerings. However, this commitment should be merged with activities in Commitment 1.1, which includes the certification of public agencies using the TTDS certification.

To complete the implementation of this commitment, the government should publish and disseminate the findings of the pilot surveys.

---

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism: Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014-2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).



# 1.4 | DEVELOPMENT OF A GOVERNMENT INTERACTIVE MEDIA PLATFORM

**Commitment Text:**

To develop interactive media on Government business processes and programs in order to better inform the public of the services available, requirements and process to access them. A total of 50 Public Services Agencies will participate in this exercise particularly those that citizens do business with on a regular basis such as Passport services, Licensing services, Registration of births and deaths, to name just a few.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC)

Supporting Institutions: Pilot agencies under the Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard (TTDS); Government Information Services Limited; Ministry of Communication; Ministry of Science and Technology; entrepreneurs and volunteers; Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (film agencies)

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: July 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?							
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	END-OF-TERM		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
				X	X		X		X					X							X			

## COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to use the TTDS to increase access to public services online. When this commitment was created, citizens had limited access to a range of public services. This commitment thus seeks to align e-government reform with the wider TTDS reform process by providing an interactive media platform. More than a repository of government information—with a one-way flow (accessing forms and “how to” information)—the platform offers citizens an outlet to interact with public officials.

## STATUS

### Midterm: Limited

According to public officials, a former official—no longer with the government due to an administration change—was responsible for this commitment. At midterm evaluation, the government was collecting information on this commitment, including data on the development of applications for agencies registered for TTDS certification. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>1</sup>

### End of term: Limited

Public officials report that work on this commitment has continued under the Diamond Buzz programme, which is part of the TTDS framework.<sup>2</sup> This programme seeks to ensure greater citizen satisfaction when doing business with government. To date, there have been 13 project ideas submitted to Diamond Buzz. (See table: Initial Diamond Buzz Project Ideas.)

INITIAL DIAMOND BUZZ PROJECT IDEAS	
• <b>Scholar indebtedness calculator</b>	• Student information management systems
• <b>Financial management database</b>	• A virtual map for health service centers
• <b>E-ticketing system</b>	• Requirements gathering (customer case management system)
• <b>Online Registration &amp; scheduling system for IT literacy classes</b>	• Intranet or monitoring dashboard
• <b>Development of a stores management system</b>	• Police e-ticketing system
• <b>Websites and website upgrades</b>	• Medication availability application
• <b>Client feedback management system</b>	

Of the 13 project ideas, five projects are in progress (in bold), two are completed (in blue), and six have been terminated due to challenges in establishing a team, garnering necessary approvals, legal restrictions on information, and funding constraints.

A number of project highlights are summarised below:

- Stores Management System to automate stores management at the National Archives: The system includes an open source solution, creation of customer workflows, security, and testing. It will be transferred to the National Archives by the end of September 2016.
- Scholar Indebtedness Calculator to help scholars estimate of repayment balances, including obligatory service: A prototype was developed, tested, and modified. It will be transferred to the Scholarship and Advanced Training Division of the Ministry of Education by September 2016.
- E-ticketing system for the Water Taxi Service that allows clients to purchase tickets online, with optional mobile boarding pass and smart card system: Progress on this project included interviewing staff and mapping processes. The project is on hold due to lack of funding. Funding options are being explored, with a decision to be made by the end of September 2016.
- Website upgrade of the South-West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA) allowing patients to access information about hospital services: The feature was presented and approved, and user experience research was completed. The website will be developed and transferred to the SWRHA by September 2016.

- Website upgrade and online student registration at Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL): The initial plan was approved, along with a proposal for a website redesign. Also, an online registration module was completed. TITL will provide content for the website, which will be developed by October 2016 and transferred to TITL by November 2016.

The deadline for the highlighted projects is after the action plan completion date. Given the level of activity invested in this commitment as reported by public officials, the commitment has been coded as limited.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### Access to information: Marginal

In Trinidad and Tobago, the public often lack sufficient and timely information regarding their rights and the requirements to access public services. This commitment aims to make government agencies and practises more open and responsive to citizens' needs. Fourteen of 50 public service agencies signed up to participate in this commitment, a significantly lower-than-anticipated number. However, public officials state that this commitment has also resulted in internal cultural shifts featuring more open interactions with citizens. This commitment seeks first to increase the public's access to government information, and second to provide an interactive media platform for citizens. As noted in the end of term section, the participating agencies need to first introduce the institutional framework to then increase the public's access to information. As implemented, the commitment focused on laying out the institutional groundwork for access to information via the interactive media platform. This was a marginal step toward improving the quality of disclosed government information.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the writing of this report, the government did not conduct any consultations to develop the next action plan. This commitment should be included in that plan, but it should contain an open data component to facilitate citizens' ability to access services-related data, as well as survey results.

To complete this commitment, government should make the interactive media initiative public. The IRM researcher notes that there are commitments to implement Diamond Buzz projects within the next month, following the end of the first action-plan cycle.

---

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Two members of staff from the TTDS, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, were interviewed.

# 1.5 | ESTABLISH A CONTACT CENTRE TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF NATIONAL SCHOLARS

## Commitment Text:

Provide a virtual call centre for delivery of services to national scholars and their associates.

## Milestones:

1. Development of virtual call centre policies and processes
2. Development of proposal
3. Delivery of terms of reference for the establishment of a virtual call centre
4. Establishment of a project steering committee
5. Procurement of ICT solution/selection of vendor
6. Recruitment of staff (CSAs, administrators, supervisors, managers)
7. Implementation of solution
8. Outfitting of call centre
9. Launch of Scholarships and Advanced Training Division website

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC)

Supporting Institutions: The National Information and Communication Technology Company (iGovTT), Government Human Resource Services Company (GHRIS), user and citizen panels

Start Date: August 2014

End Date: July 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
				X	X		X		X									X			
													Unclear								
													X								

## COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment seeks to increase access to information for national scholarship awardees using an online platform and virtual call centre. Scholarship awardees face major challenges accessing information on the status of their scholarships and related matters, especially while abroad. This e-government initiative fits into the broader framework of the TTDS. The Scholarships and Advanced Training Division (SATD) achieved TTDS certification in 2014.

## STATUS

### **Midterm: Unclear**

Public officials report that the Trinidad and Tobago cabinet approved funding for a virtual call centre.

The government did not provide verification documents regarding development of call centre policies and processes, or the award of a contract. However, an online search revealed a virtual portal for the contact centre.<sup>1</sup> Interviewed public officials stated that the contact centre will initially serve scholars via phone and email, and the IRM researcher verified this claim.<sup>2</sup>

However, the progress of the phone and email effort could not be verified; therefore, the completion of this commitment was unclear. No further evidence was provided on the establishment of user panels,<sup>3</sup> which the IRM researcher believes could improve citizen validation of this commitment. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>4</sup>

### **End of term: Limited**

According to the public officials interviewed,<sup>5</sup> this commitment's implementation has stalled. There has been no further progress since the midterm IRM progress report. The government reported that Milestones 1 to 5 were implemented, but it provided no verification documents. Therefore, the progress is coded as limited. The SATD applied for TTDS certification. It did not achieve certification, but it was highly commended (which is one tier down from certification). Public officials did not provide any further reason for why it did not achieve certification.

Interviews revealed that staffing for this commitment is being explored. However, the effort suffered a major setback after the ministry responsible for this commitment changed. The MPAC initially held the portfolio for SATD. A change in government administration shifted this division to the Ministry of Education. Public officials stated that a prospective vendor is willing to operate the call centre, but no decision has been made regarding operation.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### **Access to information: Did not change**

In 2015, 443 scholarships were awarded, but citizens and potential national scholars have challenges accessing scholarship information.<sup>6</sup> This commitment seeks to increase citizen access to scholarship-related information through the SATD website by including an interactive portal for citizens. The IRM progress report deemed this commitment as having a minor potential impact. It will provide an initial platform for information-sharing, which in turn can increase transparency, but deeper and more pressing issues present themselves in the lack of transparency in scholarship awarding.<sup>7</sup> While this commitment has the potential to increase information-sharing, it failed to achieve this due to limited implementation. The IRM researcher concluded that this commitment did not change government openness, nor did it enhance access to information mechanisms or the quality of government data communicated to citizens.

During interviews, CSOs expressed the need for greater transparency in awarding scholarships but gave no specific feedback on the implementation of this commitment.<sup>8</sup> It is also important to note that while CSOs are interested in this and other public service improvement commitments, they lack the capacity to fully understand this commitment without government engagement.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the writing of this report, the government did not begin consultation to develop the next action plan.

This commitment should be retained, given the level of importance citizens and scholarship awardees have placed on access to relevant and timely information. In addition, this commitment should be modified to include a public feedback mechanism—like the user panels in the TTDS certification process—and a mechanism that will increase government transparency in the awarding of scholarships. For example, the government could release data on the scores of awardees or criteria for scoring to qualify for scholarships.

To complete this commitment, the government must invest in the necessary human resources to staff the centre and launch the website. The IRM researcher notes that Trinidad and Tobago is currently in a recession and that this negatively impacts staff recruitment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholarship and Advanced Training Division, "Contact us," <http://www.scholarships.gov.tt/home/index.php/contact-us>. This site has been upgraded to include a contact link.

<sup>2</sup> Scholarship and Advanced Training Division, "Service Charter," Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, February 2014, [http://www.scholarships.gov.tt/home/images/docs/resources/Service\\_CharterSATD\\_March\\_2014.pdf](http://www.scholarships.gov.tt/home/images/docs/resources/Service_CharterSATD_March_2014.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago, *How to Produce and Use Charters for Public Services: A Practical Handbook for Ministries and Agencies* (draft report, 18 May 2012), 16, <http://www.mpac.gov.tt/diamond/content/service-improvement>

<sup>4</sup> Open Government Partnerships, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Interviews were conducted with two public officials at the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications.

<sup>6</sup> "443 National Scholarships Winners Announced," *Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*, 17 October 2015, <http://newsday.co.tt/news/0,218603.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Open Government Partnerships, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Interviews were conducted with various civil society organisations from 15 September to 24 September 2016.

# THEME II: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

## 2.1 | DATA STANDARDS POLICY

### Commitment Text:

To adopt, as a matter of Government policy, data standards and classification frameworks, through a multi-stakeholder consultative process.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Science and Technology

Supporting Institutions: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC), The National Information and Communication Technology Company (iGovTT), E-Business Information Technology and Telecommunications (eBitt), IT enterprises, e-business round table

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: June 2016

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?						
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	END-OF-TERM		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
				X	X		X			X				X					X				

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to develop an access to information classification and standard for open data initiatives. Currently, there is no Trinidad and Tobago government policy that informs the publication of government data in open formats.

### STATUS

#### Midterm: Limited

As of 7 September 2015, the MPAC indicated that, instead of developing a data standards policy, the National Information and Communication Technology Company's Draft Data Classification Policy would be used and amended as necessary. The IRM researcher verified this and found details in the MPAC annual report.<sup>1</sup> However, the project duration, including the start date, was missing from the report. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>2</sup>

## End of term: Limited

There has been no change in the status of this commitment since the midterm report. Based on feedback from public officials,<sup>3</sup> the open data standards policy is in draft form but is used to guide internal open data initiatives.

The IRM researcher also reports that no further evidence was provided by the interviewed public official concerning the draft open data standards policy or its use as an internal document.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### Access to information: Did not change

This commitment was created to address the lack of institutionalised mechanisms and systems to publish government data in open data formats. In addition to setting the rules, classifying accessible government data, and deciding formats, this commitment could aid the current access to information law: the Freedom of Information Act.<sup>4</sup> According to one civil society stakeholder involved in open data initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago,<sup>5</sup> while the establishment of a policy is important for open data, the government already has agencies that publish government data for the public, such as the National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation.<sup>6</sup> Given the limited level of completion of this commitment, it did not change or open government. It did not facilitate the disclosure of more government information, nor did it improve the quality of government information that was already made available.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the time of the writing of this report, the government did not conduct any consultations to develop the next action plan. This commitment should be retained and redrafted to be more comprehensive and ambitious. For example, it could include a milestone that mandates publishing data sets in the open data readiness assessment.

For this commitment to achieve a completed status, government should move the policy from the draft phase and adopt it as practise. It should also adopt the TTDS to monitor its implementation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Public Administration, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, *Annual Report 2013-2014 October-September: Our Journey to Diamond: Enhancing the Capability of the Public Service* (Port of Spain, August 2015), <http://bit.ly/2sn5evm>.

<sup>2</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Feedback was given by two Ministry of Public Administration and Communications public officials working on open data initiatives.

<sup>4</sup> Freedom of Information Act available at: <http://bit.ly/2rZDxVF>.

<sup>5</sup> An interview was conducted with a local technology expert on 14 September 2016.

<sup>6</sup> See National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), <http://www.namdevco.com/>.



## 2.2 | INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DATA SETS IN OPEN FORMATS

### Commitment Text:

To conduct an Open Data Readiness Assessment with a view to releasing at least six data sets in a machine readable format.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Science and Technology

Supporting Institutions: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC), National Information and Communication Technology Company (iGovTT), E-Business Information Technology and Telecommunications (e-Bitt), IT enterprises, e-business round table

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: March 2016

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			X		X		X		X						X				X		
															X						

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment focuses on the provision of government data in open formats via an open data online portal. While government data is available, they are not consistently available in open formats. This commitment seeks to lay the groundwork for this process in the following sectors: transportation, works and infrastructure, social services, immigration services, and birth and deaths.

### STATUS

#### Midterm: Substantial

Public officials reported that this commitment exceeded expectations. The Ministry of Science and Technology partnered with the World Bank to conduct the Open Data Readiness Assessment (ODRA). They reported that the draft ODRA was prepared in May 2015, and 27 data sets were published on the Trinidad and Tobago Open

Data Portal (data.tt).<sup>1</sup> The government hosted several hackathons (in collaboration with development partners) between January and June 2015.<sup>2</sup> More than 150 experts and representatives from various government ministries, the private sector, civil society, and academia were involved.<sup>3</sup> Civil society stakeholders were unaware of the relationship between the ODRA and OGP. In fact, civil society stakeholders who attended the ODRA validation workshop did not know about the OGP and Trinidad and Tobago action plan.

While the draft ODRA is not available online, copies were distributed at the validation workshop, which the IRM researcher attended. Daily newspapers mentioned the ODRA.<sup>4</sup> For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>5</sup>

### **End of term: Substantial**

Based on reports from public officials, the government has not progressed on this commitment beyond what was reported in the midterm IRM report. According to an interviewed public official, the government is concerned about the existing licensing of the data to be posted at data.gov.tt.<sup>6</sup> This concern has resulted in a more cautionary and conservative government approach.

Also, the site data.gov.tt is in beta stage and has not been fully launched. Data.tt continues to post data on its site and is owned by a local technology expert who has an interest in open data. He has also published maps.tt<sup>7</sup> and lab.tt,<sup>8</sup> both of which are open portals that can be utilised by government.

The Trinidad and Tobago Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI) secretariat also reported that TTEITI was also working on an open data platform featuring its data, to be launched in the near future.

## **DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?**

### **Access to information: Marginal**

Various government agencies—such as the National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO)—already disclose data in open formats.<sup>9</sup> However, there is no dedicated directive from the government to systematically publish data in open formats. According to one public official interviewed, this commitment represents a positive cognitive shift in how government sees information and how it facilitates the access of such information. The official stated that this shift is notable considering the government comes from a default position of secrecy regarding government information. However, in practice, this cognitive shift has not fully translated to an institutional shift, and this commitment represents a marginal change in opening government. According to the local open data expert who owns the .tt domain, the ODRA, conducted by the World Bank, identified many data sets that can be readily released and posted on the government portal. The demand for data in Trinidad and Tobago is high. According to the ODRA, journalists demanded data “on road traffic accident fatalities and on chikungunya incidence under-reporting,” while civil society demanded “more accessible and reusable data on government budgets and spending, ownership of companies, environment matters, gender, crops, biodiversity and effects of climate change.”<sup>10</sup> Also, there were no technical barriers to the government posting more data sets. While there was duplication of data sets posted on data.gov.tt (government portal) and data.tt, the government did seek to, through the beta version of the portal, improve mechanisms for the disclosure of information and the quality of information via open formats.

## **CARRIED FORWARD?**

The government has yet to conduct consultation to develop the next national action plan. This commitment should be retained, but greater effort should be made to ensure that the portal is launched and systematically updated. This commitment could include the final milestone concerning the development of six phone apps for the following sectors: transportation, works and infrastructure, social services, immigration services, and births and deaths.

To complete the commitment, the government should use the ODRA as a guide to using data sets to develop apps.

---

<sup>1</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Open Data Portal, <http://data.tt/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance and the Economy, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, *Speech by the Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy at the Presentation of the Open Data Readiness Assessment Report Press Conference* (Port of Spain, 1 May 2015), <http://bit.ly/1TEwKN1>.

<sup>3</sup> Verne Burnett, "ICT Community Centres Soon," *Newsday*, 8 May 2015, <http://bit.ly/1WhWBj>.

<sup>4</sup> "T&T is Open Data Ready," *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 12 May 2015, <http://bit.ly/1H1joiz>.

<sup>5</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Government Open Data Portal, <http://data.gov.tt/>

<sup>7</sup> Spatial data portal, <http://maps.tt>.

<sup>8</sup> "TTLAB: Innovative Technology Solutions through Interdisciplinary Research," <http://lab.tt/>.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on NAMDEVCO, see: <http://www.namistt.com/PricesVolumes.php>.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, *Open Data Readiness Assessment* (draft), 2015, 51.

## 2.3 | TO CONDUCT A DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW OF PUBLIC INFORMATION NEEDS

### Commitment Text:

To conduct a public consultation in order to identify critical data, needs, problems and gaps and deliver a report.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Science and Technology

Supporting institutions: Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC), National Information and Communication Technology Company (iGovTT), E-Business Information Technology and Telecommunications (e-Bitt), IT enterprises, e-business round table

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: March 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	END-OF-TERM		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
															Substantial	Complete					
				X	X				X			X						X			

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment aims to assess public information needs and, specifically, to identify critical public interest data, challenges to accessing data, and gaps in available data. There is currently no systematic or proactive government effort to determine how best to meet public requests for data.

### STATUS

#### Midterm: Not started

According to government officials reporting to the IRM researcher, the government took no action to implement this commitment. While CSOs interviewed have an overall interest in the action plan, they have not expressed an opinion on the progress of this initiative. There has been no stated engagement on citizen needs for public information. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>1</sup>

### **End of term: Not started**

Based on responses from public officials, there has been no progress on this commitment since the midterm IRM report. The IRM researcher could not find any supporting evidence on the implementation of this commitment.

## **DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?**

### **Access to information: Did not change**

The government has not engaged citizens about their data requirements so that it can produce data that matches their demands. The government has stalled its implementation of this commitment and did not change the existing policy environment. The government did not enhance the quality of information or the disclosure of information.

## **CARRIED FORWARD?**

The government has not conducted consultation for the next action plan. This commitment represents good first steps and should be viewed as a milestone to a more ambitious commitment. This commitment could be joined with Commitment 2.1 as the first stage in the development of the data standards policy, or as with other recommendations stated in Commitment 2.1.

---

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

## 2.4 | TO CREATE AN INTERACTIVE OPEN GOVERNMENT PORTAL

### Commitment Text:

To create an easily accessible open Government portal, with a platform/repository for open data, as well as an interface aimed at allowing for feedback from the public.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Science and Technology

Supporting Institutions: Interministerial Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) steering committee, National Information and Communication Technology Company (iGovTT), chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, higher-education institutions, Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: December 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	END-OF-TERM		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
															Substantial	Complete					
			X		X		X			X					X				X		
													X								

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment seeks to provide citizens with access to an online open data portal. When this commitment was drafted, there was no central open data repository for government data.

### STATUS

#### Midterm: Substantial

Public officials reported that a portal was created and a domain registered. It contains 10 data sets from five organisations.<sup>1</sup> The available data sets came from the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the Central Statistical Office, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Services, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Services. All the data sets were released online in August 2015, according to their time stamps. In the first quarter of 2015, a second portal launched at data.tt. This site holds 29 data sets. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>2</sup>

## End of term: Limited

There has been no progress on this commitment since the midterm IRM report. The government has not decided whether it will collaborate with data.tt. The IRM researcher explored the data sets on the government portal and found that the number of data sets published on the beta version of the portal was reduced to one.<sup>3</sup> Because of this reduction, the coding of this commitment changed from substantial at the midterm to limited. The government did not explain to the IRM researcher why the number of data sets was reduced.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### Access to information: Marginal

Government open data initiatives are still in the embryonic stage. There is a growing realisation of the potential of open data to help citizens and government alike make better decisions. The creation of the open data portal represents a concentrated government effort to create a repository of data in open formats, thereby ensuring easier access for citizens and other stakeholders. While, the portal was not launched, interviews with technical staff working on this commitment gave the impression that they understand the value of open data. However, whether that change is beyond the technical staff and reside at the higher levels is to be seen.

The portal signals a positive step in government thinking about mechanisms for citizen access to data. Interviewed public officials also reiterated that the background work and reflection needed to develop this portal represent a cultural shift in the way government communicated with agencies and citizens. A representative from the TTEITI says that open data can facilitate greater accountability in the extractive industries. However, he was not fully aware of the government portal and how it could be used. The representative's experience shows a need for the government to share information with government and external stakeholders about the open government portal and its uses. This commitment marginally opened government, as the portal is still in the beta stage.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

Government has not engaged in development of the next action plan. As mentioned before on the open data theme, consideration should be given to creating one commitment with the various milestones representing each of the commitments contained in this theme. The final milestone should be establishing clear classifications and standards for government data and launching an open data portal into which data sets are regularly uploaded.

To complete this commitment, the government should launch the open data portal and commit to posting a minimum number of data sets within a specified period.

---

<sup>1</sup> Data.tt, <http://data.tt>.

<sup>2</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Open Data, <http://data.gov.tt/>.

# THEME III: GOVERNANCE

## 3.1 | TO CREATE A CIVIL SOCIETY BOARD

### Commitment Text:

To establish a mechanism that allows adequate representation of Civil Society organisations in order to provide feedback to public policy decision making on a regular basis.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration

Supporting Institutions: Ministry of Planning and Development (Economic Development Board) Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC)

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: October 2014

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			X		X						X			X				X				

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment focuses on civic participation of civil society in government policy-making processes. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are no formal consultative mechanisms for civil society to participate in policy decisions. This commitment seeks to establish a mechanism called the Civil Society Board (CSB), which will be used as the main communication channel between civil society and government on policy issues.

### STATUS

#### Midterm: Limited

This commitment pre-dated the development of the national action plan. The process to establish a CSB started in 2011. The national action plan restated the CSB's intent to establish a mechanism that enabled regular, adequate civil society representation in public policy decision making. During the period under review, both the government and civil society stakeholders experienced challenges in implementing this commitment. In the governmental arena, the turnout at the election of the board was 12 percent, which led some to question



the legitimacy and representativeness of the elected board. On the civil society end, groups felt that the government's engagement was not genuine, since there was no communication post-election from the ministry. Consequently, at the time of the writing of this report, the CSB has yet to be established.

While elections took place, the rest of the process was not completed after the process lost legitimacy. The lack of communication between government and civil society stakeholders stalled the implementation. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>1</sup>

### **End of term: Limited**

Based on feedback received from civil society actors and public officials, there has been no action on this commitment since the midterm IRM report. The process lost legitimacy with the previous government administration, even though CSOs wanted it to continue. The civil society umbrella group formed out of the elected representatives has since become legally registered and incorporated. They have committed to becoming the mechanism through which government can consult civil society on policy matters. This group has also gained legitimacy among major CSOs in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?**

### **Civic participation: Did not change**

Civil society in Trinidad and Tobago has called on the government to engage in more sustained dialogues related to policy and national decisions. According to a civil society representative from the Association of Civil Society Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago (ACSOTT), engagement by the government has been described as symbolic or discretionary, rather than regular and meaningful. This commitment is the only commitment in the national action plan that specifically seeks to address civic participation of civil society in government processes, and that has the potential to transform the status quo. However, this process has stalled. Some civil society actors stated that it did not change the "arm's length" relationship that the government has with civil society,<sup>2</sup> while other civil society actors felt that the failure to implement this commitment worsened civil society's relationship with the government.<sup>3</sup> Although limited progress was made in implementing this commitment, it did bring together more than 900 CSOs who created an alternative mechanism to influence government policy.

There was a change in government administration, but there has been no communication to the CSOs regarding this commitment's progress. Improving government communication could extend a level of good will to the process.

Against this backdrop, this commitment did not change or improve opportunities for civil society to be involved and engaged in policy making. If the status quo is sustained, it may worsen the government's relationship with CSOs. On a positive note, ACSOTT, submitted their comments on this commitment when the midterm report was out for public comment. Their submission is a positive sign that the group has been monitoring the implementation of this commitment.

## **CARRIED FORWARD?**

Since the change of government in 2015, no additional evidence has demonstrated the new government's intent to continue the implementation of this commitment. Feedback from public officials also illustrates the lack of clarity on the part of government.

Given the level of importance placed on this commitment by all CSOs interviewed—and the non-implementation of the multistakeholder forum—the next action plan should develop a clearly defined commitment describing how government will engage CSOs in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Views expressed by representatives of the Association of Civil Society Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>3</sup> Views expressed by Hazel Brown, representative of the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women.

# THEME IV: NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

## 4.1 | TO AUDIT THE ACCOUNTS OF MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES

### Commitment Text:

To ensure by 2015 that the accounts of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs are audited to international standards.

Responsible Institution: Auditor General

Supporting Institutions: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI), Ministry of Finance (Board of Inland Revenue), multistakeholder group Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI), TTEITI secretariat

Start Date: October 2014

End Date: September 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			X		X					X									X		

### COMMITMENT AIM

The government and the TTEITI recognise the need to increase transparency and public accountability—in the extractive industries in particular, and in Trinidad and Tobago in general.<sup>1</sup> This commitment aims to raise the audits of the MEEI’s accounts to international standards.

## STATUS

### Midterm: Limited

While not all targets were met under this commitment, public officials reportedly are working to ensure this commitment is implemented. According to the public officials who conducted the initial audit training, the Auditor General was unable to access data from the Board of Inland Revenue (BIR) since the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) did not want to release the data to be audited. The BIR is the main state agency responsible for collecting taxes in Trinidad and Tobago. In this case, the BIR invoked the official secrecy provision (section 4 of the Income Tax Act, chapter 75:01).<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the implementation of this commitment stalled. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>3</sup>

### End of term: Limited

According to TTEITI representatives, staff training at the Auditor General's Department has been conducted and is also a continuous process. The auditing of the MEEI's and the BIR's accounts have not been conducted because of the invoking of the secrecy provision to prevent the Auditor General from accessing tax data related to the MEEI. A Joint Select Committee in Parliament appeared to recognise the problem, noting that it might entail amending section 4 of the Income Tax Act. At that sitting, held on 8 June 2016,<sup>4</sup> the Auditor General expressed frustration with the secrecy clause as an impediment to the audit process.<sup>5</sup> A report given by the TTEITI chair reflects the government's commitment to amending the Income Tax Act to waive the secrecy provision currently impeding the Auditor General's mandate.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### Access to information: Marginal

The accounts of the MEEI are not audited to international standards. While this commitment did not specify any participation mechanism to facilitate public accountability, it is a good first step in increasing the public's access to information on the ministry's accounts. This commitment marginally impacted government practises to disclose more or improve information. The Auditor General Department staff training is the first stage in the process and is focused on building internal capacity. Unless the Income Tax Act is amended to allow the Auditor General to fulfil the mandate, the scope of this commitment will remain limited. An amendment would be necessary to allow the Auditor General access to the relevant energy and the related extractives revenues information.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

This commitment should be continued and should include a public accountability mechanism, such as an online platform enabling public requests for information. Additionally, this commitment could be linked to open data commitments and feature open data access for citizens to the Auditor General's work.

---

<sup>1</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Secretariat, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Making Sense of T&T's Energy Dollars: Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Implementation Workplan (Port of Spain, January 2014), 10, section 5(e), <http://bit.ly/1SJGxAf>.

<sup>2</sup> Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Income Tax Act, Chapter 75:01, section 4 (22 December 1938), <http://bit.ly/1SJGTH6>.

<sup>3</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Public Accounts Committee, *Public Hearing, Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago*, 8 June 2016, <http://www.tparliament.org/documents/news/mrFFD6B3.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> Geisha Kowlessar, "Secrecy Rule in Income Tax Act to Be Amended," *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 23 June 2016, <http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/2016-06-23/secracy-rule-income-tax-act-be-amended>.

## 4.2 | OPEN PUBLIC ACCESS TO LICENCES AND CONTRACTS FOR OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION

### Commitment Text:

To make publicly available, via the website of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, the cadastre of licences and contracts for exploration and production of oil and gas resources in Trinidad and Tobago.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI)

Supporting Institutions: Multi-stakeholder group Trinidad and Tobago Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI), TTEITI secretariat

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: November 2014

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM		DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete		Worsened	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
				X	X		X						X									
														X						X		

### COMMITMENT AIM

This commitment focuses on access to information by creating more transparency concerning oil and gas contracts, as well as licences negotiated and entered into by the government. Traditionally, the government had not published information related to licences and contracts negotiated with the oil and gas sector.

Prior to the OGP action plan, information on private organisations' licences and contracts to explore natural resources in Trinidad and Tobago was not universally available. In April 2014, the MEEI added a licence register section to its website. It contains three data sets on oil and gas contract holders, petroleum sublicences, and quarry holders from 2010 to 2013.<sup>1</sup> It appears this commitment intends to clarify, update, and improve the information currently available through the register.

## STATUS

### Midterm: Not started

The TTEITI representative stated that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs (since named the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries) made information publicly available, citing a circular in 2013 that included all petroleum companies' reporting requirements.<sup>2</sup> However, at the time of the midterm evaluation, the information on the cadastre of licences and contracts had not been updated since April 2014.<sup>3</sup> For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>4</sup>

### End of term: Limited

Since the midterm progress report, the licence register has not been updated. According to a TTEITI representative, the current register covers 2011 and does not have information on newly assigned prospecting and exploration energy blocks. At the time of the writing of this report, the TTEITI was pressing the government to update the current register and include new energy blocks by November 2016.

No contract information has been posted to the MEEI website. This lack of data has been confirmed by TTEITI representatives, who state that only a contract template or model contract has been posted on the website.<sup>5</sup> Further, the TTEITI notes in its 2015 report,<sup>6</sup> that, based on the legal opinion received by the MEEI, contracts are confidential documents, according to section 35 of the Petroleum Act, and are exempted from public disclosure. The legal advice to the MEEI also states that the model Exploration and Production (E&P) Licence currently on its website would also include the full text of the general terms and conditions of a typical E&P contract.<sup>7</sup>

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### Access to information: Marginal

The oil and gas sector composes upward of 43 percent of the Trinidad and Tobago GDP.<sup>8</sup> However, access to information related to the award, nature, and terms of contracts—along with identifying territories allocated to prospecting and exploration—are not made public and are not up to date.

Besides the posting of the model Exploration and Production contract on the MEEI website, there was no change in the information provided online concerning the register of licences. One of the TTEITI representatives interviewed, stated that this commitment opens government marginally since, in the past, the government did not disclose any templates of contracts.<sup>9</sup> It was noted that while the template did not have any information related to actual contracts, it can be used by analysts or academics to review the areas negotiated and how terms and conditions are explained. This commitment could change government practise concerning releasing energy-related information to the public.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

The development of the next iteration of the national action plan has not yet started. Consultations are also outstanding. The IRM researcher recommends that this commitment be carried forward into the new action plan and that it include a public accountability mechanism.

---

<sup>1</sup> "License Registers," Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, <http://bit.ly/1RGNnBD>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, Circular to All Petroleum Companies Operating in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago: Information Requirements of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries," 18 December 2013, <http://bit.ly/1RXnjon>.

<sup>3</sup> "License Registers," <http://bit.ly/1Mf7mpl>.

<sup>4</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Contract template available at: <http://bit.ly/2sUJZS5>.

<sup>6</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Report 2014 and 2015: Connecting Citizens with the Country's Energy Resources, <http://bit.ly/2tShJga>.

<sup>7</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Steering Committee, *Trinidad and Tobago EITI Report 2014, 2015*, 88, <http://www.tteiti.org.tt/wp-content/uploads/Trinidad-and-Tobago-EITI-Report-Sept-30-2015.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> "Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative," [https://eiti.org/implementing\\_country/21](https://eiti.org/implementing_country/21).

<sup>9</sup> Interview conducted on 28 September 2016.

# 4.3 | INCLUSION OF THE MINERAL AND MINING SECTOR INTO THE TTEITI

### **Commitment Text:**

To include the National Quarries Company Ltd into the TTEITI reporting process by 2015 to cover fiscal period 2013/2014.

Responsible Institution: Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI) secretariat

Supporting Institution: Multistakeholder group (TTEITI)

Start Date: September 2014

End Date: September 2015

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE (as written)				POTENTIAL IMPACT				COMPLETION		MIDTERM	DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial		Complete	END-OF-TERM	
				X	X		X				X			X					
																X			X

### **COMMITMENT AIM**

This commitment seeks to bring greater transparency to the mineral and mining sector by including it in the TTEITI reporting process. When this commitment was adopted, only companies operating in the oil and gas sectors were audited by the TTEITI reporting process.

The National Quarries Company is a state-owned mineral and mining company. It is the largest producer of aggregate in Trinidad and Tobago. Based on TTEITI’s October 2012–September 2013 report,<sup>1</sup> the mining sector required substantial capacity-building to attain the international standard to participate in the TTEITI reporting process.

## STATUS

### **Midterm: Limited**

According to public officials and a TTEITI representative, a small scoping study was completed by the targeted date. Consulted officials reported that the second part of this commitment—workshops—was completed after the target date, but the memorandum of understanding with the National Quarries Company had not been established. According to the TTEITI representative, communication gaps between the MEEI and TTEITI contributed to the limited implementation of this commitment and the changed timelines. For further information, please see the midterm IRM evaluation report.<sup>2</sup>

### **End of term: Complete**

This commitment gained momentum in the second year of implementation.

According to TTEITI representatives,<sup>3</sup> a memorandum of understanding was signed between TTEITI and four companies that participate in the mineral and mining industry of Trinidad and Tobago. These companies are National Quarries Company (state owned), Lake Asphalt of Trinidad and Tobago (1978) Limited (state owned), Trinidad Cement Limited (publicly traded) and Hermitage Limestone Limited (private). According to a TTEITI representative, this group represented four out of 10 companies that the TTEITI had identified and requested that the MEEI write to request that they join the TTEITI reporting process.

According to the TTEITI report published 30 September 2016 that at the 16 September 2016, there were:

90 active mining operations in the country; 8 of these are licensed while the other 82 operated under expired licences.... There are also 60 new applications that are before the Ministry<sup>4</sup> for approval. Taxes that are payable to the MEEI are Corporation Tax, Individual income tax, Business Levy, and the Green Fund Levy. [However, the collection of] royalties and other payments due to the State . . . is currently estimated at less than 10% for all revenue from that sector.<sup>5</sup>

This commitment achieved more than projected, since the memorandum of understanding was signed with the National Quarries Company, and three additional companies (all of which are the major players in the mineral and mining industry) agreed to sign on and have been included in the TTEITI reporting process.

## DID IT OPEN GOVERNMENT?

### **Access to information: Major**

### **Public accountability: Did not change**

Before this commitment, mineral and mining companies in Trinidad and Tobago were not included in the TTEITI reporting process. These companies not only contribute to the revenues of Trinidad and Tobago, but also operate in environmentally sensitive regions. From earlier documented reports,<sup>6</sup> this sector is highly unregulated and poses a number of challenges and risks for the government as well as citizens.

The impact of this commitment on opening government practise is coded as major, given that this is the first time that companies in the mineral and mining sector have been included under the TTEITI reporting mechanism. Additionally, the sector is highly unregulated and includes many artisanal and smaller quarries. Their record keeping may not meet TTEITI standards.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, this commitment could increase regulation in this sector while facilitating public accountability.

The inclusion of four major companies in the pilot helps to set the tone and encourage smaller companies to participate in the TTEITI process. These large companies have disclosed information related to royalties and tax information that have been reconciled with the government's accounts. Given that this report was published on 30 September 2016 by the TTEITI, there is no evidence of the use of the report for public accountability.

This commitment is a major step forward in increasing the public's access to information on mining and mineral companies, in a system in which the revenues paid to the government are reconciled with government receipts and companies can be held to TTEITI reporting standards.

In terms of increasing public accountability, this commitment did not change the status quo. While there has been a major step to increase access to information, to change public accountability practises, the government is required to establish mechanisms for citizens to provide feedback and hold government accountable. Such mechanisms were not present in this commitment. Consideration should be given to the creation of a feedback mechanism to achieve a change in the public accountability going.

## CARRIED FORWARD?

At the time of the writing of this report, the government did not conduct consultation to develop the next action plan. Given that this commitment surpassed its objective, a more ambitious commitment should be developed—such as the creation of an interactive map that shows the level of mining activity, like what has been proposed for the oil and gas sector.

The commitment will transform the extractives sector by ensuring that data is easily available and updated. However, there is a need to build the capacity of smaller companies who may not have the required reporting standards in place. Additionally, civil society should become more involved in sensitising stakeholders to the value of the TTEITI process and its outcome.

The latest TTEITI report notes an initiative to develop and publish a beneficial ownership register for companies participating in the TTEITI reporting process. This is a positive and transformative step to increase public accountability in the extractives sector. In addition, it also has a demonstrative effect for other sectors of the country's economy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Secretariat, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, *Trinidad and Tobago EITI Report 2012: Making Sense of T&T's Energy Dollars* (Port of Spain, 30 September 2014), 56, <http://bit.ly/1WhZRne>.

<sup>2</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Interviewed were the Chair of TTEITI, Victor Hart and the Head of the Secretariat, Sherwin Long. TTEITI is a multi-stakeholder group comprising 6 government representatives, 6 energy companies' representatives and 6 civil society representatives.

<sup>4</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, TTEITI Report 2015, <http://www.tteiti.org.tt/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Trinidad-and-Tobago-EITI-Report-Sept-30-2015-Final-Issued.pdf>, 97.

<sup>5</sup> The White Paper on Minerals Policy: <http://www.energy.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/White-Paper-on-National-Minerals-Policy-June-2015.pdf> p. 12

<sup>6</sup> Open Government Partnership, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Trinidad and Tobago progress report 2014–2015*, [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago\\_14-15\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/TrinidadTobago_14-15_Final_0.pdf), 49–50.


<sup>7</sup> Those interviewed include the chair of the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI), Victor Hart, and the head of the secretariat, Sherwin Long. TTEITI is a multistakeholder group composed of six government representatives, six energy company representatives, and six civil society representatives.



## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The report on the national action plan for Trinidad and Tobago is based on analysis using a combination of desk-based research (sourcing laws, articles, and newspaper clippings) and interviews with government and nongovernment stakeholders. During the development of this final report, the IRM researcher conducted interviews with public officials from the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, representatives of the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, representatives from the Association of Civil Society Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago, two local open data experts, two representatives from women's nongovernmental organisations, and one representative from an access to information nongovernmental organisation. Additionally, the IRM researcher was provided with internal documents and presentations by public officials and sourced other public documents to verify reports by stakeholders. Interviews were conducted during September 2016, while document gathering took place from June to September 2016.

Commitments are clustered along the same thematic areas as in the national action plan, for ease of analysis. Commitments are also analysed based on three criteria: what happened since the midterm IRM progress report, whether it opened government, and what commitments should be carried forward.



Josh Drayton is a researcher in anti-corruption, open government, and public policy. He currently teaches public policy and anti-corruption at the University of the West Indies, Saint Augustine Campus.



The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments

from governments to promote transparency, to empower citizens, to fight corruption, and to harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.



Independent Reporting Mechanism  
Open Government Partnership  
c/o OpenGovHub  
1110 Vermont Ave NW Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005

Open  
Government  
Partnership

INDEPENDENT  
REPORTING MECHANISM