

SECTION 4 IMPROVING PARTNERSHIPS WITH ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT

- 4.1 Partnerships with the private sector
- 4.2 Partnerships with non-governmental organisations
- 4.3 Partnerships with academic institutions
- 4.4 Local empowerment

4.1 Partnerships with the private sector

The philosophy underlying the Government's Investment Policy is that the State will be essentially a facilitator of economic activity. The Government's participation in the commercial sector will continue only in special and limited circumstances as indicated below:

- areas of strategic importance, such as oil and gas;
- enterprises providing a special service; and
- other enterprises of strategic importance in which a foreign investor would be unwilling to undertake an investment without government participation.

Where government investments do not now satisfy the criteria for retention, an orderly programme of divestment will be pursued. A Divestment Policy was formulated and a Divestment Action Plan Drafted.

The context of change

The Government's shift from being actively involved in commercial activities to being that of a facilitator of economic activity recognises that privately owned enterprises operate more efficiently than state enterprises. Private sector companies are profit motivated whereas state enterprises, even though they may be making money, tend not to focus their energies on being competitive and more efficient because they can always fall back on the Treasury.

Implementing change

In summary, the procedures for divesting a state-owned enterprise are as follows:

- (i) select consultants to advise on divestment options;
- (ii) issue Information Memorandum to prospective purchasers;
- (iii) receive and evaluate bids;
- (iv) select preferred purchaser and obtain Cabinet approval;
- (v) enter into negotiations with the preferred bidder;

(vi) execute the purchase agreement.

Supporting material

Status of Divestment of Government's Investments in State Enterprises and Other Enterprises May 13, 1994

4.2 Partnerships with non-governmental organisations

At present, government forms partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for the purpose of providing services to the general public in critical areas. This is done mainly through the provision of annual grants to organisations as a contribution to their operations. These organisations, by and large, have one or other of the following characteristics:

- (i) they provide a service for a sub-set of the population for whom no service exists; or
- (ii) they provide specialised services which are supportive of government efforts in respect of an issue deemed to be of national importance.

Serious consideration is now being given to broadening this partnership, particularly in respect of social service delivery.

The context for change

In comparative terms, it can be surmised that NGOs have traditionally been able to provide these services at a cheaper rate and arguably more efficiently than has government. Recognising this and cognisant also of the issues of quality control and levels of service, government has sought to explore whether its contribution to social development could be maximised by providing an increased level of funding to existing NGOs with some track record to provide service delivery. There is some discussion of a fee for service arrangement. The role of the social sector arm of government would then be redefined to include policy formulation, monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation.

Implementing change

The process from here will be:

- (i) critical analysis of the services provided by NGOs – key areas to be addressed include client group, service capability, quality of service, level of training of personnel;
- (ii) determination of the services that can more effectively and efficiently be provided by NGOs and government;

- (iii) clarification of the respective roles of government and NGOs in the partnership;
- (iv) development of a government/NGO programme team.

4.3 Partnerships with academic institutions

Links have been established between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of the West Indies (UWI) in respect of public administration and training of administrative officers. Both organisations have provided technical assistance to each other, particularly in respect of training and education programmes being conducted by the respective organisations. For example, lecturers at the UWI assist in the management training being conducted by the public service. Similarly, public servants have lectured and provided supervisory and other assistance to the Social Work Programme at the University.

This relationship with the University provides a link between the demands for skills and orientation needed in the public service. The interchange of professionals provides this opportunity.

4.4 Local empowerment

The programmes for empowerment are geared to the individual and the community. The agencies which administer the programmes are:

- *National Commission for Self-Help* which facilitates improvements by communities to their physical environment through the use of self-help programmes and in partnership with relevant agencies.
- *Small Business Development Company Ltd.* which provides guarantees for loans, business planning advice and direct business support services, to assist the small entrepreneur who may otherwise be unable to access assistance from the normal financial institutions.
- *Youth Training and Employment Partnership Program (YTEPP)*, a comprehensive training programme which provides young people with the necessary skills to become waged or self-employed.
- *Civilian Conservation Corps* which provides temporary employment for unemployed youth while helping them to develop skills which make them more marketable and cause them to appreciate and defend their environment.
- *National Apprenticeship Scheme* which prepares young people for entry into the world of productive work, in keeping with the needs of employers.

In the early 1980s, Trinidad and Tobago began to experience the recession which continues to be part of our economic reality and which has led to a rapid rise in unemployment. These agencies attempt to ease the impact of the structural adjustment plans, implemented by the Government to place the country on the road to economic recovery, by:

- encouraging among individuals and communities the spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- introducing to individuals and communities the concepts of self-employment and co-operative ventures;
- improving physical amenities in communities through self-help and working partnerships with relevant agencies; and
- raising the self-esteem of participants.

The onset of the economic recession has manifested itself in decreased revenues for the Government, and an increase in the unemployment rate, particularly among young people. Consequent upon the decrease in its revenues, the Government has had to limit the scope of its community development programmes. The widespread unemployment among young people has led to general disaffection and an increase in crime.

A range of agencies were established to empower the individual and the community. Because they are not central government agencies, they are freer to respond more quickly and more creatively to the needs of their clientele. The agencies are also able to access funding from non-governmental sources, an advantage in these times of economic rigour.

The greatest risk in relation to business-related programmes lies in their orientation towards a spirit of entrepreneurship. This is a new concept for the general target group. The failure rate among new businesses is quite high and the challenge is to ensure at least a seventy per cent success rate. Under the YTEPP programme, the challenge for participants is to take the risk of being self-employed. The risks associated with the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Apprenticeship Scheme both concern the placing of young people after their training is finished. The success of these measures requires fundamental cultural changes.

For the community development programmes, a strong sense of community spirit is required because the executing agent in these projects is always the community. Project management skills are provided by partner agencies. For the youth training programmes, there is a network of relationships with schools, youth clubs, youth camps, young people, and christian and other religious groups.

Supporting material

Information pamphlets on:

- (i) National Apprenticeship System
- (ii) Small Business Development Company Limited
- (iii) YTEPP – Partnership in Training