

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management

A Profile of the Public Service of
Trinidad and Tobago

The Public Service Country Profile Series: No.4



Commonwealth Secretariat

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management

A Commonwealth Secretariat publication series distributed in collaboration with The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM).

This major publication series provides practical guidance to managers at all levels within the public service.

The Commonwealth Portfolio leads the series. In loose-leaf format for easy updating, it distils and analyses innovations and best public service management practice from across the Commonwealth. Its 65 entries will be published in stages and cover the following key areas:

- a. making the most of staff
- b. making government more efficient
- c. improving the quality of services
- d. improving partnerships with organisations and agencies outside of central government
- e. making management more effective
- f. improving the management of finance
- g. improving policy-making.

An overview of Commonwealth best practices and the management of change, and the entries in sections a and e were published in early 1995.

The Portfolio is complemented by *The Public Service Country Profile Series* which provides a unique insight into recent developments and best public service management practices in a broad range of Commonwealth countries. Profiles of the public service of the following countries are currently in print:

Canada
United Kingdom
Malaysia
Trinidad and Tobago
Zimbabwe
New Zealand
Malta
Singapore

These and many other publications of practical value to managers, administrators, advanced students and academics requiring in-depth insights into the trends and opportunities confronting government are available from:

The Publications Unit
Information and Public Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Facsimile: +44 (0) 20 7839 9801
Email: r.jones-parry@commonwealth.int

**Current Good Practices
and New Developments
in Public Service Management**

**A Profile of the Public Service
of Trinidad and Tobago**

**Current Good Practices
and New Developments
in Public Service Management**

**A Profile of the Public Service
of Trinidad and Tobago**

The Public Service Country Profile Series: No.4



**Commonwealth Secretariat
1995**

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the Commonwealth Secretariat or of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management.

Copyright © Commonwealth Secretariat 1995

Second print June 2000

Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat

May be purchased from:
The Publications Unit
Information and Public Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Facsimile: +44 (0)20 7839 9081
Email: r.jones-parry@commonwealth.int

ISBN: 0 85092 420 0

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

FOREWORD

Since 1975, the Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and its predecessor the Management Development Programme, have been providing extensive assistance to Commonwealth governments confronting the challenge of securing administrative and managerial improvements in the public sector. The Division's analyses of major trends and opportunities for public sector reform are complemented by its tailored consultancy and training packages designed in response to national and regional needs.

The current widespread debate concerning the managerial and structural options which will best fit the public service for the challenges of the next century touches the very centre of the questions concerning the role and responsibilities of the governments of the future.

The structure and processes of the overall public sector, that area of national social and economic life which is directly answerable to government, are significant in two ways. They serve to deliver, or to fail to deliver, the policy objectives of government, and they serve as a marker which government unavoidably sets down concerning accountability and transparency in national affairs, and the legal and constitutional framework for development.

As the range of structural options and accountability relationships utilised within the public sector increases, the complexity and diversity of that sector are growing. Assessing the strategic options for the public sector requires a clear understanding of the managerial alternatives and the actual and potential capacities of the core public service. I believe that this publication, and its companion volumes, is a significant contribution towards that understanding.

The Public Service Country Profile Series has grown out of a larger publication series examining current good practices and new developments in public service management. A pan-Commonwealth expert working group met in Kuala Lumpur in early 1993 to discuss the possible development of a policy guide for senior officials, highlighting the key principles underpinning recent managerial developments within the public service. This ground-breaking workshop developed the framework for *The Commonwealth Portfolio*, a distillation and analysis of innovations and best practices in public service management from across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Portfolio is being published in loose-leaf format for easy updating, and its 65 entries will cover the major areas of change within public service management.

I am particularly pleased to note that in constructing the Portfolio the expert editors and compilers have been determined to ensure its relevance to the real challenges faced by senior officials and managers. To ensure that the principles it identifies are firmly grounded in real experiences and genuine achievements within the public service, member governments across the Commonwealth were approached to take part in a unique mapping exercise, identifying the actual changes which had been made in some key areas of public service management. That so many governments unhesitatingly agreed is a tribute to the spirit of co-operation and to the strength of professional networks within the public services of Commonwealth countries.

The Public Service Country Profile Series sets out the results of that mapping exercise, country by country, to provide an unprecedented insight into the real managerial and structural changes underway in the public service. In providing some firm ground on which those public servants, both elected and appointed, who are faced with the challenge of public service reform can stand while assessing the options available, the Country Profile Series marks a milestone in the debate concerning the management of the public service. Reality is informing rhetoric at last.

Dr Mohan Kaul
Director
Management and Training Services Division
Commonwealth Secretariat

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was made possible by the dedicated work of many colleagues in the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service who generously contributed their ideas and time.

Particular thanks are due to Ms Gillian Macintyre, Ms Jennifer Holder and Ms Yolande Gooding who undertook comprehensive research while responding to the very considerable pressures of their positions within the Public Service. Ms Kathleen James-Stephen painstakingly prepared the draft manuscript.

The initiative was made possible by the effort and leadership of Senator the Honourable Gordon Draper, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago with responsibility for Public Administration and Public Information. The entire project was co-ordinated by Dr Aubrey Armstrong, Principal of Aubrey Armstrong Management Associates.

Sir Kenneth Stowe provided most valuable suggestions in designing the publication series and concerning the style and content of all the country profiles.

The cover design was provided as a corporate contribution towards Commonwealth co-operation through the kind assistance of Francis Plowden of Coopers and Lybrand, London.

Roy Chalmers and Greg Covington have assisted immeasurably in all aspects of the production of this series.

Although every attempt has been made to retain the accuracy of the contributing authors, final responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies rests clearly with the editors. The inclusion of any statement within this publication does not imply that this is an exhaustive analysis of current trends, or that this is official policy of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Nick Manning
Adviser (Organisation Structure and Design)/*Project Co-ordinator*
Management and Training Services Division
Commonwealth Secretariat

CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Section 1	Making the most of staff	9
1.1	Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices	11
1.2	Enhancing management training and development	12
1.3	Achieving a mission orientation	14
1.4	Improving recruitment and retention practices	16
1.5	Utilising performance appraisal	17
1.6	Utilising performance incentives	19
1.7	Improving human resource information systems	21
1.8	Improving work performance	22
Section 2	Making government more efficient	25
2.1	Improving strategic planning	27
2.2	Improving productivity	30
2.3	Selecting appropriate organisational structures	33
2.4	Deregulation/re-regulation	35
2.5	Contracting out of services	37
2.6	Redundancy management	39
2.7	Strengthening anti -corruption measures	41
2.8	Introducing comprehensive audits	42
2.9	Strengthening records management	45
Section 3	Improving the quality of services	47
3.1	Establishing a customer service	49
3.2	Improving standard setting	51
3.3	Customer service training	52
Section 4	Improving partnerships with organisations/ agencies outside government	53
4.1	Partnerships with the private sector	55
4.2	Partnerships with non-governmental organisations	57
4.3	Partnerships with academic institutions	59
4.4	Local empowerment	60
Section 5	Making management more effective	63
5.1	Management development	65
5.2	Improving management information systems	66

5.3	Devolution and delegation	68
5.4	Improving the management of external consultants	70
Section 6	Improving the management of finance	73
6.1	Strengthening audit systems	75
6.2	Reforming financial management	78
Section 7	Improving policy analysis and co-ordination	79
7.1	A particular initiative in improving policy analysis and co-ordination: establishing Standing Committees	81
7.2	Improving policy presentation	83
7.3	Public consultation on policy development	86
	Contact addresses	89
	Further publications from the Management and Training Services Division	91

INTRODUCTION

Edited extracts from a speech by Senator the Honourable Gordon Draper, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, during the debate on the National Budget on 29 January 1992.

As we implement and institute mechanisms and measures which will ensure an efficient and effective public sector we are not alone. Similar programmes are under way in the private sector. Both arms are moving forward together for the development of our society.

The vision for an effective and efficient public service is driven by a commitment to reforming the public service in consultation with the public sector trade unions so as to ensure greater responsiveness to the needs of citizens, an improved quality of service, speedier delivery of services, greater efficiency in revenue collection and elimination of archaic systems which result in wastage of financial and human resources and greater accountability. In short, our vision of a public service is client-oriented, results-oriented and also one which will allow for rewards for performance.

Many efforts have been made in the past to reform the public service in Trinidad and Tobago, and one question that may be asked is: "Why is this different?" In 1964, a commission under J. O'Neil Lewis was established to report on the Role and Status of the Public Service in the age of Independence. That was followed in 1973 by a Report on a Futures Research seminar which put forward a case for reform of the administrative systems in Trinidad and Tobago. In 1975, an Administrative Improvement Programme Report was submitted by a UN project team. In 1981, a committee of permanent secretaries put forward their own proposals for improvement and efficiency in the public service. Between 1984 and 1986, a Public Service Review Task Force, chaired by Reginald Dumas, was established and between 1988 and 1991, an Administrative Reform Task Force was in place in this country.

Significantly, the task which has been entrusted to my Ministry is not to make *recommendations* for reform but to *implement* reform. Our own experiences in Trinidad and Tobago, and experiences in other parts of the world, indicate that one of the fundamental stumbling blocks to implementing public service reform is the lack of political will. In Trinidad and Tobago, that political will is now present.

We need to note however that reforming the public service is a Herculean effort. Administrative change needs to be managed very carefully. We need to take account of the actual elements which we wish to change, but as importantly, we

need to take account of the process we use to bring about that change. So that process, to my mind, is as important as content in this approach to implementing public service reform.

First, to deal with some of the elements of content, let me identify some of the common threads that have run through all those attempts at administrative reform to which I have referred above. There are a number of issues which have kept surfacing again and again:

- the need for us in the public service to review the system of laws, rules and procedures which regulate processes for public administration;
- the system of planning, both national and sectoral;
- the system of financial administration, including budgeting, accounting and financial control;
- the whole area of accountability;
- the system of human resource management, including recruitment, training, industrial relations, salary and wage administration;
- the system of human resource development;
- the management systems;
- the systems for tendering, procurement and supply of resources in the public service;
- the systems for records management; and
- the systems for providing accommodation, equipment and supplies.

In short, the documentation and plans which we have developed in recent years have articulated clearly the issues which need to be dealt with in any programme of public service reform. These form the basis of our own approach to implementing reforms.

If we are to bring about change, we have to build a climate of collaboration. That spirit and that climate of consensual decision-making and collaboration form the centrepiece of our implementation of public service reform. Indeed, this Government, as we took up office, started on the basis that we needed to understand how the public service worked because one of the impediments to real public service reform and change has to do with the approach and attitude of government

ministers to the public service; the failure of government ministers to understand their relationships with permanent secretaries and the public service; the concerns and confusions that arise as we attempt to understand the meaning of our Constitution which talks about the minister as manager and the permanent secretary as supervisor. It is our contention therefore, that public service reform fundamentally involves a clarification of that relationship.

All government ministers, before taking up office, spent time in training. A significant part of that training has ensured that all of us understand the relationship between ministerial office and public service office. In developing that spirit of consensual decision-making and collaboration, one of the three training days was shared with permanent secretaries and heads of department in the public service as well as with the trade unions. This is how the implementation of reform has begun.

Let me now turn for a while to some of the elements of reform itself, and some of the guidelines which we will use to implement that reform. Let me start by focusing on some very broad reform guidelines which will underpin much of what we do as we implement reform. If we reflect on the public service, a lot of the public service work has to do with the processing of information, therefore, the capacity of the public service to process information competently and speedily becomes a central part of its activity. We also recognise that the development of an efficient and effective public service will necessitate the use of cost-effective technologies and we propose to embark on activities which would lead to that.

I have already alluded to the notion of client-orientation. All public service departments and ministries have a client base. One of the key tasks of the public service, therefore, is to identify clearly the needs of those client bases and to work towards developing the goods and services to satisfy those needs. That client orientation, the thinking that goes into that, the training that goes into that, the management processes that will make that come alive will also become a central part of the implementation of reform.

We recognise that the public service also has to become more proactive. A critical component, therefore, of the implementation of our reform will be the insistence on the development of strategic plans in all ministries and, indeed, we have already heard from contributors that ministries are well under way to the development of those plans.

The issue of accountability has also continued to be one which has thread itself through all previous attempts to talk about public service reform. We are totally committed to putting in place the mechanisms and systems which will ensure real accountability. Training has also been talked about, and one in which we will have much to say and much to do as part of the implementation efforts.

Let me now, in elaborating on these, begin to sketch what are some of the areas which we shall be implementing over the next five years. There are no quick fixes. The strategic planning to which I referred and which will become a key plank in our implementation efforts, will allow all ministries to look over the next five years, to articulate clearly what the objectives and targets are. More than this, it will give all of us in this House, as well as the national community, yardsticks against which we can measure the performance of ministries and departments. It will also be a vital starting point for us eventually to roll down to a reform of the system of performance appraisal in the public service because we would then be able to link very directly the performance of individual public servants with the requirements of their departments in the ministries. It cannot happen in a vacuum. It has to be systematically planned.

A strategic plan is not a document. While a document forms part of it, I will contend that the process that we use to get to that document is as important as the document itself. Because we need plans within our ministries for which everyone in those ministries can take ownership. If people in the ministries and departments have to own the plans, they have to be involved in the process of planning. A significant part of our implementing public service reform therefore will call on public servants across the board to be involved in the process of strategic planning so that, at the end of the day, their plans will be *their* plans and we can move on to implementing them. It would also allow us, on an annual basis in this House, to ask for and to receive reports on the performance of individual ministries. That, I submit, would be one critical element of accountability.

One of the elements of our reform activity concerns management information systems. I will speak about some particular applications we are introducing.

One of the difficulties in managing the public service has to do with tracing correspondence and matters which come into ministries. We have therefore already instructed the National Information System Centre to implement, through the public service, a computerised registry system. It will allow us to respond more speedily to requests, queries, letters, etc. which come into ministries from members of the public. In other words, client-orientation suggests a need for a more speedy response to requests and letters which come in. The issue of management information systems will become a critical part of our implementation efforts.

One of the concerns which has also been voiced from time to time about the public service has to do with its capacity to plan, manage and analyse projects, particularly relatively large projects. We intend therefore to focus significant training resources on all elements of the project management segment, which will mean that we will develop within ministries a greater capacity to identify projects, to appraise them and to manage them. Part of this programme will also involve the development of a manual and operating procedures relating to projects which will permit us to

manage project-related activity, funding and so on, in a more effective and more efficient way.

The issue of accountability is critical in the task of implementing reform. There is an accountability cycle, which includes the budgetary process, the systems for identifying projects to go into the budget, and the controls which are put in place. We recognise that there needs to be a review of these elements in the budgetary cycle. Some elements of these have already been clearly identified and articulated in other reports.

I wish to speak briefly on two of those elements. The first has to do with the whole system and process of internal auditing, because the internal audit function must be seen as one of the fundamental elements of control within organisations. A recent comprehensive report by the Auditor General assesses the internal audit function in the public service. The report points to the absence of clear guidelines, standards and procedures for internal auditing; to the absence of audit manuals; to the fact that often audit plans do not cover all areas of operations; to the fact that financial budgets were at times non-existent, resulting in an absence of financial control. It speaks to the fact that job specifications were not always available. It speaks to the fact that training programmes were lacking and that there were lengthy delays in replying to audit queries.

Again, the findings and the recommendations find their way very easily into our discussions relating to implementing reform. Improving the internal audit function would certainly significantly impact on the process of accountability.

The Government is also committed to institutionalising in the public service a system of comprehensive auditing or value for money auditing. In thinking about the use of resources in the public service, and indeed outside public service, we need to be concerned with how well these resources have been used with respect to efficiency, economy and effectiveness. It is vital therefore that we spend time and effort in enquiring from time to time how well we are doing across, not only our financial resources, but all other resources. The Auditor General's reports examine internal audit and information systems. It is our view that all of the measures, procedures and support necessary to institutionalise comprehensive auditing must be in place in the public service, and indeed will be a part of our own implementation effort for public service reform.

I turn now to a range of activities which may be subsumed under the broad heading of "human resource management and human resource development" which are also central elements of the implementation of our reform efforts in the public service. We will review and develop new approaches and systems for the training and development of all categories of staff in public service. We will, in the short-term pay particular attention to training in the areas of budget management and inter-

personal relationships for those persons who are in contact with the public. We recognise that we need to have more meaningful access to technical assistance in the area of training and to utilise in a more meaningful way the efforts and approaches of international agencies to the training of public servants. We also recognise the need to work with other agencies. We look forward to collaborating with the University of the West Indies and other training institutions, as we develop a new thrust and approach to the task of training and developing our public servants. We recognise that as our environment has changed so the requirements of and demands on our public servants have changed. Unless we implement measures to ensure that they continue to be equal to the task then they will be seen as unable to satisfy some of the demands of our society.

In this context I would like to note also the importance of computer literacy. Computer training will be one of the cornerstone elements of public service training.

Accommodation comes under the umbrella of "human resource management" and we are acutely aware that the physical environment is one of the critical elements which will determine levels of productivity and efficiency in public service. We therefore intend to address the issues relating to the standards and design of office accommodation for the public service.

Drug abuse in our society is a concern and we propose to implement across the public service, systems of employee-assistance programmes which will allow public servants to have access to counselling and treatment, not only for drug abuse, but for any other issues which may be impacting on their performance.

One of the elements which impacts on performance and efficiency in the public service has to do with the range of laws and regulations which seem to engulf the public service. These laws and regulations need to be changed so that they are in line with a modern, efficient and productive public service. This year, therefore, we will be bringing a number of revised regulations and bills relating to the public service in all its areas – civil service, prisons, police, fire – geared to ensuring that we now have in place a legal framework which will facilitate the efficient and effective management of our public service.

We also have to treat the issue of performance appraisal in the public service. While we are aware that the existing system in place for appraisal in the public service could be used better than it has been, we are also acutely aware of the fact that modern human resource management principles dictate a revision and an implementation of new approaches to performance appraisals.

We intend to begin the implementation of new approaches to performance appraisal in the public service. Again, both the design and implementation will be done on

the basis of collaboration and consultation with the public service unions. We recognise that the implementation of new performance appraisal systems will require changes in behaviour and an acceptance on the part of public service managers and supervisors that a fundamental part of performance appraisal has to do with counselling to bring about changes in behaviour in public servants. We propose therefore to design and embark on a range of training activities geared to ensuring a clear understanding of the new forms and approaches and the role which performance appraisal must play in the overall management of the human resource.

A survey carried out in 1985 on the public service sought to determine the extent to which public servants were aware of what had gone into their appraisal forms. It was discovered that almost ninety per cent of public servants were not aware of what had been put on their forms. This is clearly counter-productive and is not the kind of activity which will lead to high levels of productivity and efficiency. Feedback on performance is a critical element of human resource management. The new forms, therefore, and the training associated with them will ensure that kind of situation will no longer exist.

We are also painfully aware that one of the constraints under which the public service currently operates is a classification system that goes back to the 1960s. We recognise that a review of the classification system of the public service will clearly take more than one year. In fact, our initial estimates suggest that it will take somewhere in the region of two years. We propose however to begin the process because, as I have alluded to earlier, the environment has changed and the nature of public service jobs has changed. In some cases piecemeal efforts have been made to review the classification system but the time has now come for a wholesale revision of that system. Part of our implementation of reform will lead us in that direction.

We are also aware that when we think about the public service, we need at times to be more mindful of elements relating to cost and cost recovery. As part of our implementation of reform therefore, we will be looking at the public service in terms of cost centres and seek, where possible, a more meaningful return for services delivered by the public service. Where services are provided to the public at large, including the private sector, insufficient attention has been paid to the costing of these services in relation to the real cost of providing them. In the context of some of our discussions on revenue, we need to examine some of these activities and we propose to do so.

One of the elements of the public service which is under pressure is collective bargaining machinery, and we propose to implement mechanisms to improve the industrial relations climate, reduce the number of grievances which arise, and generally allow for a more harmonious relationship to exist between public service workers.

The objectives of a revised joint consultative machinery are threefold:

- to meet the need for a systematic channel of communication between management and staff;
- to provide for the participation of staff in management decision-making, within specified limits; and
- to set up a grievance procedure for the discussion of cases where a recognised association wishes to make representations.

In short, mechanisms for consultation and the development of a climate within which the parties who work in the public service could meet and treat with each other in a non-threatening, non-alienating way.

We propose to ensure the establishment of joint consultative committees in all ministries of public service.

What I have outlined provides, I hope, an indication of the range of areas and issues which the implementation of reform will take into account. I would stress that we are no longer at the stage where we are writing and submitting reports, we are at the stage of implementing them.

We are confident that not only will we *implement*, but that having implemented, we will *deliver* to the public of Trinidad and Tobago an efficient and effective public service that, together with the private sector, can facilitate and foster economic growth – a public service which all of us will love and of which we can be proud.

SECTION 1 MAKING THE MOST OF STAFF

- 1.1 Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices
- 1.2 Enhancing management training and development
- 1.3 Achieving a mission orientation
- 1.4 Improving recruitment and retention practices
- 1.5 Utilising performance appraisal
- 1.6 Utilising performance incentives
- 1.7 Improving human resource information systems
- 1.8 Improving work performance

1.1 Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices

There is no legislation that deals specifically with non-discrimination in employment practices. However, the current legislation for the public service as embodied in the Public Service Commission's regulations attempts to ensure that appointments to the public service are made in an equitable manner through selection "on the basis of written competitive examinations and interviews".

The Human Resource Philosophy and Policy Framework states unequivocally as follows:

"Given the Government's belief that its human resources are the key elements in the goal achievement process, the Public Service Organisation must at all times seek to attract and retain persons of the highest calibre regardless of class, creed, race, sex, colour, marital status, age or political affiliation. It must therefore establish and maintain recruitment, selection and placement procedures that promote equity, fairplay, justice and consistency."

1.2 Enhancing management training and development

The thrust of Public Service Reform initiatives in respect of training of managers is to develop a cadre of managers in the public service capable of managing in an environment that will demand from them an entrepreneurial spirit and a greater degree of autonomy.

Two levels of training and orientation are undertaken:

- (i) training for new Permanent Secretaries and those about to take up this position was initiated in 1992;
- (ii) training for middle managers in the Civil and Protective Services was re-designed and strengthened at that time.

A separate entry provides details of customer service training (see 3.3).

The context for change

The new vision for the public service sees it as an organisation that among other things:

- demonstrates a sense of caring for its members and its clients;
- is client-driven;
- produces prompt results;
- is results-oriented;
- provides for the growth and development of its members;
- is highly flexible and adaptable to a changing external environment.

This new vision is synonymous with the new thrust of the Government to transform Trinidad and Tobago into a more "efficient, market-oriented and internationally competitive economy".

The public service has been largely perceived by the public as an overweight bureaucracy unresponsive to the needs of its clients, while the internal view was that the public service has been generally uncaring of its staff and their working conditions, growth and development. In this scenario, it was imperative that some

mechanisms be put in place to deal with both internal and external perceptions. Training was seen as one such initiative.

Implementing change

The Public Service Training Committee was established in 1992 to rationalise training efforts being undertaken throughout the public service.

This Committee:

- (i) considers training programmes submitted by ministries/ departments/statutory authorities for courses of study of any duration;
- (ii) submits proposals to Cabinet for its approval regarding such courses.

Training for Permanent Secretaries is typically conducted over four weeks, totalling 50 contact hours. The course content covers self-management, including stress management; transition and change management in large complex organisations; financial management; strategic management; and human resource management, balancing people, systems, and technology.

At middle management level, programmes are extended over several weeks and total some 400 contact hours. The content is extended to include a human interaction laboratory, human resource management, and development and implementation of a change management project.

Within the first year of training it is anticipated that this training programme will lead to:

- the implementation of a change management project in the respective ministries and departments; and
- a group of trained middle managers from whom Permanent Secretaries could be chosen.

Within two years this training will produce improvements in the strategic planning process, as indicated by the development of implementable annual plans providing a benchmark for the assessment of the achievements of the ministry/department.

1.3 Achieving a mission orientation

Retreats and *change teams* have been major elements in the process of developing "buy-in" by all the stakeholders in the process of change development and more particularly in respect of developing a mission and vision for the organisation.

The process is intended to solicit the views and ideas of all levels of staff in ministries and departments, with a view to developing a mission and objectives shaped by staff who would therefore be likely to have a vested interest in putting them into operation.

The context for change

In a bureaucracy in which the style of communication is generally top-down, the involvement of junior level staff in shaping the organisation may be frightening to managers. This fear needs to be managed both at the stage of the *retreat* and in the stages that follow since it may be exhibited by non-implementation of the group decisions – behaviour which may sabotage the effectiveness of the process.

Implementing change

In an effort to involve rank and file employees in the strategic planning exercise, *retreats* were held for entire ministries and departments. At these retreats, employees were encouraged to vision for their organisations.

Ministries were introduced to the idea of *retreats* by holding information-sharing sessions. At these sessions, staff were sensitised about the changes that were envisaged for the public service and were provided with the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and express fears and concerns about the change process. They were also informed about the approach that was being used to evolve a mission statement for their ministries/departments.

The first retreats were held in February 1992, and by November 1994 some 31,000 public servants had participated. Thereafter, teams were set up to collate the findings/suggestions of each group and to synthesise the various inputs.

The process leads to:

- a statement of vision for the ministry/department;

- a mission statement;
- strategic objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives;
- staff buy-in to the mission/vision of the organisation.

It also contributes to the establishment of *change teams*. A change team is a standing committee in a ministry/department headed by the Permanent Secretary or head of department and comprises elected members of every job family.

The change team is an agent of empowerment of employees in the ministry. Its purpose is to:

- (i) identify items to be placed on the agenda for reform, relative to the ministry/department achieving its mission and objectives; and
- (ii) to facilitate the development and constant review of the ministry's strategic plan.

1.4 Improving recruitment and retention practices

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago intends to create a new organisation structure for the overall direction and control of human resource management (HRM). This structure will include the decentralisation of the HRM function with the aim, inter alia, of improving the recruitment of staff.

The context of change

The recruitment process is centralised in the office of the Director of Public Administration. Recruitment has been generic and thus, has often led to inappropriate personnel being assigned to ministries. Decentralisation of the HRM function will help managers to make more effective human resource decisions, including on the issue of recruitment.

Implementing change

A Task Force was established in 1992 to rationalise the HRM function and the central HRM agencies and to establish HRM Units in ministries. The Task Force made proposals to Cabinet in 1994.

It is anticipated that the new HRM organisation structure will be established by December 1995.

This new HRM organisation structure will lead to:

- (i) more effective recruitment practices;
- (ii) more effective management of human resources; and
- (iii) a more effective match between employee skill, experience, training and jobs.

1.5 Utilising performance appraisal

A new system of performance appraisal was introduced to the public service on a pilot basis in the Ministry of Agriculture. The features of the new system are:

- (i) the establishment of performance standards at the start of the appraisal process;
- (ii) a process of continuous monitoring, appraisal and feedback, designed to guide the employee during the appraisal process; and
- (iii) joint completion of the appraisal form by supervisor and employee.

A series of training sessions is under way to facilitate the understanding of the new system, the performance management concepts which guide it, the relevant procedures, and to help departments in developing departmental objectives and standards as a precursor to identifying individual objectives and standards of performance. It should be noted that the system was demonstrated and discussed at the level of the Cabinet.

The context for change

The existing system of performance appraisal does not by and large take cognisance of the development of employees. Successive reports over the last 30 years have pointed to the need to review the system in order to bring it more in line with current HRM principles. The new system responds to this need.

Implementing change

A pilot programme has been tested in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources. The results are being evaluated for implementation across the wider public service.

Training programmes to orient managers and their staff to the new system and the procedures are being undertaken.

It is estimated that the system will be in operation in all ministries and departments by 1995. It will lead to:

- established standards of performance for jobs throughout the public service;
- greater efficiency as indicated by higher processing capacity;
- more effective systems through which to reward efficient performance.

The system will be monitored and evaluated.

Supporting material

Performance Appraisal Manual

1.6 Utilising performance incentives

In keeping with the new performance management thrust, annual merit increases will be tied to performance standards as described in 1.5. These will commence once the new system of appraisal is introduced.

The context for change

Prior to 1987, there was an almost automatic annual increase in salary on the anniversary of the employee's appointment to the public service called an increment. Persons who attained standard performance and above were eligible for increments. There was, and continues to be, a predisposition by supervisors to mark everyone in the middle of the grading scale. In consequence, by and large, there has been no recognition or reward for excellence in performance and, at the level of the Service Commissions where the final decision is made regarding promotion, the only distinguishing criteria is seniority. It is not surprising therefore that there has not always been a match between person and job, particularly at management level.

The Medium-Term Policy Framework (MTPF) 1994-1996 makes explicit the policy direction of the Government in respect of public service reform viz:

"Improvement in the administrative capacity of the public service is an important element in the country's process of transformation to a more efficient, market-oriented and internationally competitive economy."

This policy is further expanded in respect of human resources thus:

"Human resource development is a critical element in the effective and efficient operations of the public service. In this regard Government will continue to take the necessary steps to maximise this inherent human resource potential through motivation, training and incentive-based remuneration."

Implementing change

The implementation of a new system of performance appraisal will provide a framework for the identification of outstanding performance. Negotiations with the unions regarding the reinstatement of the performance merit increase are under way

and a system is being developed with an anticipated commencement date of March 1995.

1.7 Improving human resource information systems

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is assessing options for a fully integrated Human Resource Management Information System which will underpin the following functional areas:

- payroll;
- personnel administration;
- industrial relations;
- manpower planning and development;
- health and safety.

A pilot project is under way at the Ministry of Finance, and aims to carry out the following:

- determine the basic system design;
- data capture;
- data entry;
- programming and testing;
- system testing;
- system implementation.

The pilot project will be evaluated for wider application by June 1995. Implementation of an HRIS will result in:

- quick access to human resource data;
- more effective human resource management decisions, e.g. manpower planning and development.

1.8 Improving work performance

A particular initiative in improving work performance: upgrading accommodation

The Office of the Prime Minister (Public Administration) has been actively engaged in upgrading accommodation for public servants throughout Trinidad and Tobago. A special budget allocation was made to address the numerous outstanding demands for improvements to the physical spaces in which public servants were forced to operate.

In discussions with the Public Services Association, it was agreed that accommodation would be a priority reform area. The belief was held that the existing working conditions were, in several cases, totally undesirable and in fact acted as demotivators to staff performance. It was thought that this was a means by which the morale of staff could be boosted, and the spin off effect was expected to be an increase in worker performance.

This ongoing process began in 1992 and involves five steps:

- (i) discussions with the Union – agree on areas of priority;
- (ii) prioritise the list of offices to be refurbished;
- (iii) visit offices to get first hand account of the problems;
- (iv) engage a quasi-government organisation with a track record for efficacy to carry out agreed repairs and in some instances relocation of offices; and
- (v) visit offices after repairs or relocation has been completed to check current status and perceptions of staff.

It should be noted that visits were made to the offices not only to establish the existing working conditions and the inadequacies but also to demonstrate to the staff, particularly those in outlying districts, an interest and concern for them.

Major repairs and relocation of all priority projects were completed within a year.

This programme has led to:

- more habitable accommodation for public servants;

- increased work morale; and
- improved work performance.

A particular initiative in improving work performance: Rationalisation of Temporary and Acting Arrangements

A programme has been initiated to reduce the number of persons acting in or holding temporary posts in vacant posts.

Many public officers had been either temporary or acting in vacant posts for many years. This was one of the first complaints addressed to the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister as one of the factors which heavily influenced people's motivation to work. This status – temporary or acting – had been the lot of individuals for as many as ten years; some individuals were in fact close to retirement. There was consensus that it needed to be addressed as a pressing reform initiative.

This programme has required close liaison with the Service Commissions in and has led to:

- the identification of the number of staff in this position; and
- the identification of a priority list for programme implementation.

A particular initiative in improving work performance: The Employee Assistance Programme

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been implemented, on a pilot basis at the Ministry of Education. The programme provides professional counselling services to employees and their families.

The establishment of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) relates to the understanding that employees have personal and work-related problems which may affect their performance on the job which in turn has a cost to the employer. The EAP essentially provides professional services which are geared to treating these problems and which aim to return the employee to full productivity and well being. The Ministry of Education, with some initiation from the Teachers' Union, agreed to test the programme as the need for such a programme seemed most apparent in that Ministry.

The pilot project commenced in October 1993 and full implementation of the programme in the Ministry of Education was achieved by April 1994. An end-of-year evaluation resulted in the decision to introduce the programme to the rest of the public service, beginning with the Ministry of National Security.

It is anticipated that the programme will lead to:

- reduced absenteeism rates, planned and unplanned;
- reduced use of sick leave benefit;
- reduced accidents and/or damage to equipment; and
- reduced diversion of supervisory time in treating the personal problems of employees.

SECTION 2 MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT

- 2.1 Improving strategic planning
- 2.2 Improving productivity
- 2.3 Selecting appropriate organisational structures
- 2.4 Deregulation/re-regulation
- 2.5 Contracting out of services
- 2.6 Redundancy management
- 2.7 Strengthening anti-corruption measures
- 2.8 Introducing comprehensive audits
- 2.9 Strengthening records management

2.1 Improving strategic planning

Ministries/departments have been encouraged to employ modern business management tools to improve the management of their operations. In 1993, all ministries and departments were asked to develop five-year strategic plans outlining vision, core purpose, strategic objectives, strategies for achieving those objectives and the physical, human and financial resources required to achieve these objectives. These agencies were further asked to prepare yearly action plans which would inform their annual budgetary estimates. The ministries/departments will then be required to report on implementation of their yearly action plans.

The context for change

The strategic planning process is a useful tool which allows agencies:

- to project themselves conceptually into a predetermined point in the future;
- to review and assess their mandates, programmes and achievements to ensure consistency with government policy;
- to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their administrative and delivery systems in executing government policy; and
- to strengthen their capabilities to survive in a constantly changing environment.

The suggested approach requires the commitment of senior managers. They are being encouraged to utilise consultation and consensus to ensure that staff feel a sense of ownership and personal investment in shaping the future directions of their organisations. In addition, managers are being asked to organise their work differently and become more results-oriented.

Implementing change

The strategic plan of a ministry/department must be consistent with the policy planning directions set by government and must be informed by the limitations and constraints that impact on the administration and execution of policy. Ministries/departments were given the following guidelines to prepare their strategic plans:

- the Permanent Secretary/head of department is responsible for directing the strategic planning effort;
- senior management should provide the forum and impetus for consultation, dialogue, communication and decision-making;
- the broad areas and aspects of strategic interest should be identified and articulated in a way that provides a framework for the strategic planning process to begin;
- record, document and communicate results, decisions and action plans on an ongoing basis.

A summary of the steps involved in the strategic planning process is as follows:

- Appoint a change team, representing a vertical cut of the ministry/department. The change team must be headed by the Permanent Secretary or head of department and should have union representation.
- Organise facilitated workshop/s for staff to:
 - contemplate the ministry/department's vision and core purpose;
 - assess and analyse the impact of environmental factors;
 - assess and analyse the current realities and future prospects;
 - determine stakeholders;
 - develop strategies for the plan.
- Appoint a strategic planning team, which could be the change team or a specially appointed team, to prepare the strategic plan and yearly action plans.
- Ensure Minister is included and kept informed of developments.
- Communicate the efforts/results of the Strategic Planning Process, using the "roll down" approach. The change team should be instrumental in that regard.
- Assign senior management with the responsibility for implementing relevant parts of the plan.

- Conduct continuous and systematic evaluation of plans by way of proper documentation of achievements and regular staff meetings to review and evaluate performance. These achievements are to be reported quarterly to Cabinet.
- Use the change team to assist the implementation effort.

Costs depend on the size of the agency and the extent to which the process may have been facilitated by external consultants. The sourcing of external assistance and training of staff in the areas of strategic planning and change management is critical to successful business planning.

Anticipated benefits of this improved strategic planning system include:

- greater responsiveness to the needs of clients;
- an improved quality of service;
- speedier delivery of services;
- greater efficiency in operations;
- greater efficiency in revenue collection;
- elimination of archaic systems which result in wastage of financial and human resources;
- greater accountability;
- growth, development and job satisfaction of public servants.

Supporting material

- (i) Mission Statement of the Cabinet Secretariat
- (ii) Mission Statement Ministry of Health and a Prototype for the proposed Regional Health Authority

2.2 Improving productivity

The public service traditionally has been regarded as a mammoth organisation with low productivity. Worldwide, steps are being taken to re-organise and restructure public service operations with a view to improving productivity and ultimately service delivery. It is expected that the increased delegation of authority to line managers will enable them to manage their agencies more effectively. In addition, emphasis is being placed on the development of standards of work performance and strengthening systems to ensure greater productivity. A more highly productive public sector will enhance private sector operations and will consequently benefit the entire nation.

A particular initiative in improving productivity: the establishment of new human resource management structures

The human resource function in the public service is currently spread among several departments. This situation does not allow for efficiency and accountability in the management, training and development of this resource. The new vision is to decentralise and streamline the functions of the Central Human Resource Management Agencies and to establish Human Resource Management Units in ministries. The central agency will provide advisory/consultative service in Human Resource Management to the line agencies; formulate policy; and perform an auditing function. Line managers, through the Human Resource Units, will have increased responsibility to perform human resource planning, performance management, recruitment and appointment activities.

A particular initiative in improving productivity: computerisation

A consultant was engaged in 1993 to develop a computerisation policy for the public service. This project was part of an Institutional Strengthening Programme to improve government effectiveness in the area of Computerisation and Management Services. The specific objectives of this project are to:

- improve effectiveness in computerisation;
- recommend standards;
- plan for the introduction of key applications in the public service;
- ensure skills transfer.

A policy document is being prepared against the background of an overall strategy which emphasises the identification of organisational vision and strategic objectives and the matching of resources to strategic objectives. Specific projects, undertaken or planned, include:

- Bulk purchase of 73 computers to facilitate the introduction of PERSYS (Personnel Information System) and the Registry Information System in ministries/departments.
- Computerisation of the Judiciary/Magistracy. The following projects are in progress at the Supreme Court:
 - the Computer-aided Transcription Project;
 - the Supreme Court Legal Database and Information System;
 - the Registry Computerisation Project.

These projects are intended to reduce delays in the administration of justice and improve the delivery of services.

- Computerisation in the Ministry of Planning and Development to effect management of the Public Sector Investment Programme and improve capability in economic modelling and statistical analysis.
- Implementation of computerisation projects in the Ministry of Finance:
 - introduction of the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) in all divisions of Ministry of Finance, to provide a database for human resource inventory, establishment control and compensation administration;
 - computerisation of the Co-ordinating and Monitoring Unit to improve the financial monitoring system and to computerise the processing of entry documents both for export and import;
 - computerisation of the Treasury Division to enhance the financial management and control function;
 - computerisation of the Inland Revenue Division to modernise the tax processing system;
 - introduction of the Automated Systems Customs Data Project (ASYCUDA) in the Customs Division.

- Implementation of computerisation projects in the Office of the Prime Minister:
 - introduction of a Document Image Management System (DIMS) in the Prime Minister’s Secretariat to allow multi-user access simultaneous access to important information and effect compact document storage;
 - computerisation of the Central Statistical Office to enhance the production of statistical and financial data and to computerise the processing of entry documents for export and import;
 - introduction of an Electronic Mail/Records Management Information System pilot project linking divisions in the Office of the Prime Minister, to enhance search and retrieval capabilities and allow the electronic transfer of records.
- Computerisation in the Transport Division to modernise vehicle licensing operations.
- A comprehensive computerisation project including applications to facilitate human resource management, rostering, management of criminal records and fleet management in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force.
- Computerisation of the Population Registration System to improve efficiency in producing birth and death certificates; identification of eligibility for National Health Insurance; and to establish a continuous population register.

A particular initiative in improving productivity: Work Flow Analysis

It is recognised that significant gains in productivity cannot be achieved by simply computerising existing operations. If there are inefficient processes in these operations, automation alone will not correct this problem. A work flow analysis needs to be undertaken. Such an evaluation has been done at the Immigration Division. The results of that study are yet to be implemented.

2.3 Selecting appropriate organisational structures

The organisational structure of ministries/departments and their varying responsibilities fall under the purview of the Office of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister determines the functional differentiation of ministries based on the administration's political mandate. Notwithstanding this, ministries/departments have been asked to develop strategic plans which will identify Vision and Core Purpose statements and clarify their major functions and sub functions.

The recently introduced strategic planning process should seek to ensure that programmes and projects are consistent with government policy directions. Ministries/departments should then use the objectives in their yearly Action Plans to determine their personnel establishment, work load and system requirements.

Most ministries/departments, although they have developed strategic plans, have not advanced the process sufficiently to make informed decisions concerning organisational structure and size. The Ministries of Health and Education, however, have developed new top structures bearing in mind their strategic objectives.

The context for change

Most public services are described as being overstaffed. Administrative reform in Trinidad and Tobago has argued that reform is not about retrenching staff arbitrarily, in fact careful analysis may reveal that some departments are understaffed or not suitably staffed. The strategic planning process allows ministries/departments to match their strategic objectives with their human resources, thereby ensuring effective utilisation of that resource.

Implementing change

The main prerequisite for this action is the development of a strategic plan and yearly action plans. The critical element in this process is consultation both with:

- the political directorate to ensure consistency with political emphasis; and
- staff, thereby facilitating the achievement of both individual and organisational goals.

Another measure that will enhance this action is the development of a human resource information system. This will provide information on the personnel

establishment regarding training and skills. When an agency's work plan has been defined, the information systems enable decisions to be made as to the human resources required to implement the plan.

Supporting material

- (i) Ministry of Health – Old Organisational Structure
- (ii) Ministry of Health – New Organisational Structure
- (iii) Towards a Healthy Nation, prepared for the Ministry of Health by Health & Life Sciences Partnership

2.4 Deregulation/re-regulation

The economic policy of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the period 1994 to 1996 has the following objectives:

- enhanced fiscal discipline supported by complementary monetary and financial policies;
- reliance on the private sector for incremental investment and growth;
- promotion of exports as the major source of growth and employment; and
- preservation of the social fabric.

The Government's monetary and financial reform policies and its trade reform policies have shifted away from a strict regulatory function towards the freeing up of controls. In 1993, the Government introduced exchange rate arrangements that involved the removal of exchange controls on both the current and capital accounts. The floating of the dollar is linked to the trade liberalisation programme which includes the following measures:

- removal of almost all non-oil manufactured items from the Import Negative List, with some exceptions;
- administration of a temporary protective regime of import surcharges on those items removed from the Negative List;
- introduction of a duty rebate system;
- phased reduction of the Common External Tariff from forty-five per cent in 1992 to twenty per cent in 1998; and
- the implementation of the ASYCUDA (Automated Systems Custom Data Project) system to facilitate the processing of both imports and exports.

In support of these efforts, the functions of developmental agencies, which fell under the portfolio of the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism (now Trade and Industry), were rationalised. The Tourism Development Authority (TDA), the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and the Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company (TTFZC) were merged into one agency, the Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TIDCO).

The Government's monetary policy is influenced by the need to:

- achieve stable non-inflationary growth;
- strengthen the external competitiveness of the domestic economy; and
- improve the country's level of foreign reserves.

Senior managers of public sector agencies need to be aware of these policy objectives and measures for the purposes of organisational planning. Recognising the emphasis being placed on private sector investment with a view to generating increased employment, these agencies need to be structured to facilitate this investment.

Another area in which the Government has changed its approach to regulation is with respect to public utilities. The Government has re-organised the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The Commission's new focus will be the carrying out of performance audits of all designated public utilities. It is intended that the conduct of these audits will inform the rate fixing process and, more importantly, evaluate whether services are being provided efficiently and effectively.

Regulation of public utilities is necessary because of market failure. It is therefore a substitute for competition and consequently its goals should be directed, as far as practicable, to achieving such results that would normally be evident in a free market setting. The Government is of the opinion that "regulation should seek to ensure that public utilities are so managed that they provide adequate and safe services in their market area to all customers on equal terms at 'just and reasonable' prices."

Previously the PUC was primarily concerned with fixing rates for public utilities. This was done by conducting rate hearings and the mechanism used was the Strict Rate Base/Rate of Return. This system provided little incentive for cost reduction and efficiency as there was little or no reward for minimising costs. The new approach emphasises the undertaking of studies in economy and efficiency and utilises a formula approach for setting rates. Consequently, the regulatory machinery will be simple and the time and cost of rate hearings will be avoided.

2.5 Contracting out of services

Increasing emphasis is being placed on service delivery and one of the means identified for improving service delivery is the contracting out of services. The Regional Health Authorities Act 1994 provides for the decentralisation of the Health Services. The Ministry of Health will no longer run health services directly. These services will be provided by five Regional Health Authorities. Annual service contracts will be negotiated with each region, specifying type and volume of service to be provided. The Ministry of Health will ensure that these services are provided efficiently and effectively by means of end-of-year performance reviews.

The context for change

It is recognised that the contracting out of services is a measure which can ensure that services are provided more effectively and efficiently. High costs, unreliability of supply and a lack of professionalism, as is evident in the present in-house system of providing janitorial services, are among the factors which would influence the decision of an agency manager to contract out services.

Implementing change

Ministries/departments have been asked to examine the services that they provide in the context of their strategic objectives with a view to identifying those services which should be discontinued. In addition, it has been indicated that agencies should apply the principles of activity-based costing in determining the cost of the services they provide. In the call circular for the 1995 Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, ministries/departments have been required to cost at least two programmes. This measure is intended to strengthen the linkage between the strategic plans and the budgetary estimates. However, it will also provide costing information which will be useful in determining whether a service might be more effectively provided by an external agency. Services already contracted out include:

- maintenance services for new police stations (such services are to be phased out in all police stations);
- security services at the Inland Revenue Division, the VAT Administration Office and the District Revenue Offices;
- security services at the post offices and mail delivery between Piarco Airport and the General Post Office.

The sequence of activities is as follows:

- (i) prepare agency's strategic plan;
- (ii) apply the principles of activity-based costing to the agency's operations;
- (iii) identify those services that can be contracted out, based on the agency's strategic objectives and cost information data.

2.6 Redundancy management

The context for change

With the introduction of new human resource management structures in the public service, public sector organisations will have increased responsibility for their human resource management functions, including human resource planning. Effective human resource planning will result in strategies for staffing the organisation. In those instances where surpluses are identified, one of the approaches may be separation of workers. This process will allow for effective planning and implementation of such measures.

The following initiatives have resulted in the separation of workers:

- the rationalisation of the developmental agencies which fell under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism;
- the re-organisation of the Public Utilities Commission (referred to under Section 2.4);
- re-structuring at the Public Service Transport Company (PSTC), whereby the 1,500 workforce was reduced by 84.6 per cent to 230 by way of an enhanced voluntary separation package;
- early retirement and voluntary separation programmes for daily paid workers, whereby a total of 26,000 workers was reduced by 15 per cent to 22,000. Of these, 40 per cent took early retirement and 60 per cent accepted voluntary separation programmes.

Implementing change

Separation from an organisation is traumatic both for the individual and the organisation. Proper management of separation exercises is important to minimise the traumatic effects on both parties. Essential elements of such an exercise are:

- *communication* to counteract suspicion and distrust;
- *keeping staff informed* of developments and receiving feedback on the proposed changes can inform management's strategies for implementing the changes;

- proper *preparation of staff* for the separation (both those who will be leaving and those who remain) to show concern for employees and the continued life of the organisation.

The key principles of redundancy management are:

- (i) The strategic planning exercise is critical for ensuring organisational relevancy. The involvement of the political directorate in this process ensures consistency with policy directions.
- (ii) Develop strategies to ensure communication flows are established and maintained throughout the transition.
- (iii) Develop strategies for dealing with the unions. The unions should be involved from the very beginning of the process.
- (iv) Undertake a needs survey of those persons who will be separated to determine the mix of programmes that should be offered.
- (v) Conduct separation workshops for staff which deal with letting go of the past and visioning for self. Other programmes that should be offered might include personal counselling; financial counselling; training and re-training; and entrepreneurial development.
- (vi) Proper planning and preparation to ensure that severance benefits are paid on time.

2.7 Strengthening anti-corruption measures

Ethics and accountability are major issues which need to be addressed by any democratic government wishing to ensure the trust of its citizens in its stewardship. Consequently, the creation of an environment which promotes integrity is of paramount importance to any administration.

The Service Commissions are responsible for disciplinary procedures and in this regard are guided by the Service Regulations. In the case of the Fire, Prisons and Police Services, the Regulations include a Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct prohibits activities outside the service and the acceptance of gifts and rewards. The Code also clearly identifies what are regarded as corrupt practices. The Civil Service however has no Code of Conduct and consequently the interest of the employer predominates and such acts of misconduct are regarded as a breach of the public servant's implied terms of employment. In addition, there is the Integrity in Public Life Act No. 8 of 1987 which requires persons in public life to declare their financial affairs. Members of the House of Representatives, Ministers of Government, Parliamentary Secretaries, Permanent Secretaries and Chief Technical Officers are required to file a declaration of income, assets and liabilities annually with the Integrity Commission. It should be noted that corruption is also a breach of criminal law.

Notwithstanding the legislative measures outlined above, a preventive measure is the creation of an organisational climate which produces members of high integrity and professionalism and contributes towards the development of the full potential of the members of the organisation. Such a climate would greatly reduce the incidence of corruption. The Government, through its Human Resource Management Philosophy and Policy Framework, has indicated its commitment to the creation of this type of working environment throughout the public service. Top management has a critical role to play in the creation of such an environment.

2.8 Introducing comprehensive audits

The traditional role of auditing in Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed worldwide, has been the conduct of regularity audits, embracing all aspects of compliance with laws and regulations and of financial accountability. More recently however, information is also being sought on whether government activities are achieving the purpose for which they were established and whether they are doing so economically, efficiently and effectively. Consequently, auditors are increasingly being called upon to perform audits that go beyond the traditional determination of whether funds were spent in accordance with legal and financial requirements. This new audit, sometimes called Performance Auditing or Comprehensive Auditing, seeks to determine whether monies were used in an economic manner and whether programme results were achieved.

The Auditor General's Department recognised the need for Comprehensive Auditing several years ago and introduced a limited form of efficiency auditing during 1972. Reports on these audits were included in the Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of government departments and agencies which were submitted to Parliament. A further step was made in 1986 when the Department established a Comprehensive Auditing Division and introduced full comprehensive auditing procedures in its work programme. To date, eight such audits have been undertaken. The strategic plan of the Auditor General's Department 1993 – 1997 identifies increased conduct of comprehensive audits as one of its strategic objectives.

In addition to the above, training was undertaken in the area of management auditing. In 1993, seventy persons were trained to conduct management audits and eight were trained as trainers. This programme was part of an Institutional Strengthening Programme to improve the Government's effectiveness in the area of Computerisation and Management Services. The participants have conducted a practical assignment in the Judiciary/Magistracy to assess that organisation's administrative machinery.

The context for change

As indicated previously, the use of comprehensive auditing in the public sector enhances public accountability. It gives the taxpayer the assurance that public funds are being properly accounted for and that programmes are being economically and efficiently operated. It is also a business management tool which seeks to appraise and improve management methods and performance. It assists managers by providing them with an independent and systematic examination of how well their

operations are being planned, conducted and controlled. It identifies major deficiencies in management practices and controls. Such an audit provides recommendations on how to achieve better value for money in the future. It has been found that the close working relationship that comprehensive auditing requires between the auditor and the entity's managers and staff improves communication by helping top management to understand better the organisation's operations and provides lower management levels with a useful channel for communication to the top.

Implementing change

Increased conduct of comprehensive auditing in the public service requires proper planning and preparation. It would be impossible to subject all agencies to comprehensive auditing annually because of limited availability of qualified personnel and limited financial and other resources. A plan should be worked out whereby over a given period of time all agencies would be subjected to this type of audit. The parliamentary term in Trinidad and Tobago is normally five years and so the suggested time frame is five years, thereby ensuring that all entities would be audited at least once in a parliamentary term.

In scheduling the audits, the Auditor General's Department should take into account knowledge and experience gained from doing financial audits of the entities. Other criteria for determining priority would be:

- parliamentary concern;
- public concern as expressed in media comment;
- potential for savings or improved quality of service; and
- value and significance of programmes and projects.

Plans should be formulated both for the long-term (five years), and the short-term, or current fiscal year. The next step is to identify the number, size and mix of audit teams required for the current financial year. It must be noted that comprehensive audits can take one to two years to complete.

Throughout the audit, emphasis must be placed on co-operative efforts and interaction between client and auditor. In addition, the establishment of Audit Advisory Committees are essential for the successful implementation of comprehensive auditing, providing a sensitive and strategic steer. A Committee should be established for each comprehensive audit and its membership should be knowledgeable in the operations of the auditee and should include outside experts.

Since the Committees are to provide technical and policy advice to the audit team, it is important that they be involved at all stages of the audit, especially at specific control points.

Contracting the required skills from outside the Department would address the problem of limited availability of qualified personnel within government.

The Auditor General is statutorily required to report annually on the accounts of departments, statutory boards and public enterprises. Some change must take place to allow the Auditor General to undertake more comprehensive audits. There is a need for legislation which would give the Auditor General's Department a clear mandate to perform comprehensive audits. In addition to legislative changes, the internal audit function in ministries/departments needs to be strengthened.

There is some difficulty in determining satisfactory levels of management performance; standards need to be established. However, initiatives in the areas of strategic planning and performance management will facilitate this type of evaluation.

2.9 Strengthening records management

Records Management in the Public Service is presently controlled and managed manually. The present system provides the following functions:

- registration and indexing of records (letters, memos, reports, files etc.);
- cross referencing;
- tracking the physical movement of records; and
- retention and disposal scheduling.

The National Information Systems Centre (NISC) developed a software application which can perform some of the functions outlined above. This Registry Information System (RIS) is limited in that it is designed for single user use. It has been installed in twenty-six ministries/departments.

The divisions within the Office of the Prime Minister have been selected to participate in a pilot introduction of an Electronic Mail and Records Management Information System. Such a system would, in addition to the above functions, provide increased search and retrieval capabilities and allow for the electronic transfer of records.

The context for change

Proper management and control of information is essential to facilitate decision making at all levels of an organisation. Timeliness of information flow and retrieval will influence efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. Information is a resource and like any other organisational resource it should be linked to the organisation's goals and objectives. Consequently, in moving from a manual record management system to an automated system, the organisation's information systems strategy must be informed by its business strategy.

Implementing change

The following issues need to be addressed in determining a suitable application for information management:

- What information does the organisation need to achieve its strategic goals and objectives ?
- How do people need to use information to do their work properly ?
- How should information flow inside the organisation and between the organisation and the outside world ?
- What are the organisation's information resources ?

Improvements in strategic records management are planned which will:

- integrate the management of documents, files and records with the management of data processing and management of information systems;
- streamline information flows within the organisation; and
- encourage and empower staff to upgrade their skills in handling recorded information.

SECTION 3 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES

- 3.1 Establishing a customer orientation
- 3.2 Improving standard setting
- 3.3 Customer service training

3.1 Establishing a customer orientation

The context for change

The Government believes that everyone is entitled to good public services. In the present economic climate taxpayers are also demanding value for money. With limited resources available to fund services, there must be greater awareness of and provision for what the customer requires.

The vision of a public service which is client-oriented and sensitive to the needs of its various customers is one of the fundamental tenets of the reform effort in Trinidad and Tobago. In particular, the new focus on the Public Service as a *facilitator* of private enterprise rather than a *provider* of services, requires that public servants develop a customer orientation in their work.

The principles which the Government believes should underlie all service to the public are:

- *Courtesy and helpfulness*
Convenient opening hours, and courteous and helpful service from frontline staff who will wear name badges for easy identification.
- *Information and openness*
Full, accurate, and easily available information on qualifying criteria and specifications for service.
- *Consultation and feedback*
Regular and systematic consultation with and feedback from users of services.
- *Standards*
Setting, monitoring and eventually publishing standards for the service that individual users can reasonably expect.

Implementing change

As a first step towards achieving this orientation, steps have been taken to introduce across the public service:

- Customer service training for frontline staff – those who interact daily with members of the public – to provide them with the awareness and

skills to deliver quality customer service. Similar training is also given to secretarial staff and receptionists.

- Customer Contact Officers – senior officers who can, if necessary, challenge the system to respond, and who offer an appeal mechanism for the dissatisfied customer.
- Questionnaires, which provide feedback on the performance of frontline officers, as well as on the service provided.

In the Police Service, a Police Complaints Authority has recently been established. Its main function is to receive and investigate complaints against the Police Service, with a view to improving the public image of the Service.

The successful establishment of a customer orientation is dependent on the commitment and enthusiasm of public servants at all levels, but especially frontline staff. Such an orientation does not necessarily mean more costs. It does call for an examination of what is done, how it is done, and how it could be done more efficiently and effectively.

Key stakeholders are all government ministers, Permanent Secretaries and other public servants, citizens accessing the various services.

A vital first step is the introduction of the concepts of customer and quality service to all members of staff including the senior managers, and the training of frontline staff.

Although no overall standards have been specifically set by the Government, except through the vision identified for the public service reform effort, individual ministries have been encouraged to set their own. The general timeframe for a total transformation is about two to three years, but immediate improvements may be seen in individual agencies.

3.2 Improving standard setting

It is recognised that improvements in the overall performance of the public service will only be sustained if measurable standards are introduced. Standards place a direct responsibility on both the individual and the organisation to perform. They help in the identification of strengths as well as weaknesses.

The idea of measurable standards of performance has been introduced by various means into the public service as part of the recent reform initiatives. It is one of the main points of focus in the customer service programme. It is the foundation of the new performance appraisal system which is currently being introduced into the public service. Ministries and departments have also been requested to include performance targets in their strategic plans.

However, standard setting remains a voluntary activity of individual ministries and departments. Although the movement seems to be slowly heading in that direction, no attempt has been made to design a "Citizens' Charter" for the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service.

The Government has not reached the point of developing detailed standards for all its agencies. However, the process has begun through discussions among the senior managers about the need for such standards and the introduction of the rank and file employees to the concept, through customer service orientation and the new performance appraisal system.

A particular initiative in improving standard setting: annual service contracts between the Ministry of Health and the Regional Health Authorities

As indicated previously in Section 2.5, the operational aspects of health services will now be provided by Regional Health Authorities (RHAs). The performance of these Authorities will be evaluated in terms of outcomes, such as the number of patients seen etc., and eventually in terms of the health status of the population, for example disease-specific mortality and morbidity rates.

3.3 Customer service training

Customer service training is a programme to equip senior level and customer service representatives with skills in processing and dealing effectively with members of the public and internal customers.

This ongoing series of programmes is intended to develop the skills of effective customer contact in public servants who deal directly with members of the public. Two levels of customer relations personnel have been trained:

- (i) Persons identified as Customer Contact Officers, i.e. persons to whom members of the public may turn in respect of resolving some issue or for information. These were generally persons of a sufficiently senior level to be able to challenge the system to respond; and
- (ii) Persons who in the normal course of duty deal with the general public, such as over-the-counter officers.

In addition, four ministries and departments with which the public deals most frequently and which were perceived, more so than other departments, to be inefficient, were singled out for special attention. In these departments, training is planned on site.

Areas addressed included understanding self and choosing appropriate behaviour, and skill development in dealing with a range of customers in a variety of situations.

It is anticipated that this training will lead to improved customer relations and concomitant improved public perceptions of service which may be measured by:

- feedback from customers through questionnaires;
- reduction of processing time by at least fifty per cent.

It is fully recognised that other systemic changes need to take place to consolidate the benefits of this initiative. Other initiatives, such as systems analysis, have also been introduced.

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

SECTION 5 MAKING MANAGEMENT MORE EFFECTIVE

- 5.1 Management development
- 5.2 Improving management information systems
- 5.3 Devolution and delegation
- 5.4 Improving the management of external consultants

5.1 Management development

It is an accepted principle that ministries/departments are responsible for training and developing their own staff. However, the Central Training Unit and the Coordinating Consulting Team of the Office of the Prime Minister have designed training programmes for middle and senior managers across the public service.

The main objectives of the training are:

- to provide managers with the tools to manage confidently and efficiently in an environment of change;
- to introduce managers to new concepts, techniques and practices in the management of resources (human, financial and technical); and
- to provide a forum for networking and the interchange of experiences.

There are other management programmes which are available to public servants although not exclusively. These are run by the University of the West Indies, the Institute of Business – affiliated to the University of the West Indies – and various private institutes which are generally affiliated to foreign universities. Access to these programmes is through individual administrative arrangements.

Quarterly meetings, chaired by the Minister responsible for Public Administration, are arranged for Permanent Secretaries and heads of departments. At these meetings, various aspects of change management are discussed. Monthly meetings of Permanent Secretaries are called by the Head of the Public Service to discuss management issues. There are also seminars run by the Central Training Unit and various private sector organisations, e.g. Chamber of Commerce, on topical issues which affect both the public and private sectors.

The team-building and retreat sessions which are conducted for the members of Cabinet from time to time are also seen as management development.

5.2 Improving management information systems

The context for change

Currently, information systems used throughout the public service are paper-based and manual. This has implications for timeliness, accuracy and retrievability of information. With the introduction of computerisation, steps are being taken to update and upgrade information systems. To achieve the vision of the public service which is highly responsive, client-oriented, flexible and adaptable, providing quality service and producing prompt results, the easy availability of up-to-date information is critical.

Implementing change

The business of government is based primarily on information. Any proposals for improving the conduct of government business must also consider improving the management information systems. To this end, various computerised systems are being pilot-tested with a view to eventual introduction across the public service. These include:

- a Human Resource Information System;
- a Document Image Management System;
- a registry information system;
- an information system which will link agencies needing similar information, such as the Transport Division, the Inland Revenue Department and the Police.

The two major impediments to the success of this programme may be a lack of funding for the purchase of computers and the reluctance of the older managers to use the computer, or their tendency to view it only as a word processing tool for secretaries. The risk of unauthorised access to classified information is no greater than it is in manual systems.

It is accepted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that in moving from a manual to a computerised system in an organisation as large as the public service, it is important to ensure compatibility of hardware, both within and among departments, especially where networking is planned. Therefore the National

Information System Centre oversees the computerisation programme in liaison with client ministries.

The National Information System Centre advises on the sourcing and adaptation of software packages, implementation schedules and provides back up support where needed.

5.3 Devolution and delegation

The context for change

The development of a public service which is client-oriented, highly responsive to its environment, provides quality service and seeks the growth and development of its members, requires that some devolution and delegation occur. Ministries are being given responsibility for certain operations which influence their performance. However, the right to monitor the functioning and performance of ministries and to set standards in those areas which cut across the service remains at the centre.

Implementing change

The new vision for a dynamic and responsive public service allows ministries greater individual freedom in certain functional areas, e.g. human resource management, financial management, estate management, supply management and information dissemination. The measures which are being instituted to ensure each ministry's ability to cope with increased responsibilities include:

- The setting up of human resource units in each ministry. This gives managers the opportunity to recruit appropriately and allows them to have more meaningful control over training, discipline, and development.
- The decentralisation of the Organisation and Management Division and the placing of O and M officers into each ministry department. This move provides managers with specialised management expertise in specific areas.
- The decentralisation of the procurement function into ministries to permit managers to control their purchasing portfolios in a more cost-efficient manner.
- The decentralisation of the property management function will allow ministries to choose their own accommodation and negotiate their rents instead of having this done for them by the Property Management Unit.
- The provision of a public relations/information sharing capability in each ministry.
- The establishment of Implementation (Change) Teams responsible for monitoring reform initiatives identified to advance the strategic objectives of the ministry/department's strategic plan.

- The recruitment of short-term consultants in areas where a skills need has been identified to advance the strategic objectives of the ministry/department.
- The strengthening of the top management structure of ministries by the creation of posts of Deputy Permanent Secretary in selected ministries. It is envisaged that this office would assist the Permanent Secretary by allowing increased emphasis to be placed on change management activities in addition to the increased responsibilities referred to above.

Ministries are also being allowed to choose their own accommodation and negotiate their rents instead of having this done for them by the Property Management Unit.

All functions for devolution are selected in close consultation and discussion with the senior managers in ministries. A clear understanding of objectives and guidelines relating to roles and responsibilities must be established.

5.4 Improving the management of external consultants

The context for change

There is a need to ensure that all consultants are appropriate for the job for which they are selected. Very often, consultants are selected to do assignments for which there are other consultants more eminently qualified, especially in terms of understanding environmental issues and appreciating the culture of the organisation. However, because of inadequacies in the selection process, the most appropriate person is not obtained. Sometimes, the consultants sound good on paper, but have little practical experience and come with their own agendas and predispositions. Quite often, the work of the consultant is not closely monitored with the result that there is distorted reporting, little or no transfer of skills and a waste of badly needed funds.

Implementing change

In improving the management of external consultants, the aim of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is to:

- improve the means for identifying consultants;
- improve the quality of consultants employed;
- improve mechanisms for improving the output of consultants; and
- ensure that a transfer of skills takes place.

A good consultancy must meet certain basic criteria. For example, the consultant must be able to handle relational matters, design organisational interventions, and implement "start-up" activities. He/she must provide evidence of having performed optimally in an operational capacity, as well as in a consulting capacity, in the specific field. He/she must also indicate how the required transfer of skills will be managed. Consequently, the mechanisms to be used within Trinidad and Tobago to improve the management of external consultants are:

- the pre-qualification of consultants, i.e. the designing of tight specifications which indicate the profile required to apply for the job;
- very detailed and specific terms of reference with precise delivery times;

- improved systems for monitoring the work of consultants by a multi-disciplinary in-house team headed by a specific officer of senior management status who will be held accountable for the deliverables; and
- careful selection of counterparts;
- a clear idea of the outcomes required;
- identification of the resources necessary for achieving the outcomes; and
- well defined ground rules for interaction between the consultants and the local staff to be established early.

SECTION 6 IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF FINANCE

6.1 Strengthening audit systems

6.2 Reforming financial management

6.1 Strengthening audit systems

The context for change

Accountability is a key factor that influences the level of trust that citizens have in the government which serves them. It involves not only compliance with financial accounting procedures but a commitment to keep the public informed of its policies and performance. Public sector auditing systems should support this thrust.

Enhancing the internal audit function

The Auditor General's Department recognises the need to shift from purely financial audits to comprehensive or value for money audits. Apart from the legislative amendments required to effect this change there is a need to enhance the internal audit function in the public service. Internal auditing is a useful tool which provides management with information on the progress of the organisation towards the achievement of its objectives within an approved budget. Top management must have the assurance that a mechanism exists within the organisation which can supply them with timely, accurate, relevant and complete information. The internal audit can give this assurance and is the link between top management and management at operating levels. Internal audit can also assist line management by assuring them that adequate financial and management controls have been established and are operating effectively. If not, the internal auditor can advise as to weaknesses in the system of internal control and recommend appropriate remedial action.

Internal audit in the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service has encountered several problems. A comprehensive report done by the Auditor General's Department on the internal audit function in government ministries/departments and Statutory Boards in 1987 noted that:

- (i) Most senior managers were not aware of the specific functions to be carried out by the internal audit staff. Consequently, their services were often under-utilised and/or mis-used as they were assigned duties outside the scope of internal auditing.
- (ii) Many of the internal audit units in the public service were not staffed by appropriately qualified personnel. Staffing requirements were not based on well-defined audit plans.
- (iii) Audit plans did not include all areas of the entities' operations.

- (iv) Periodic audit reviews and updating of programmes were not undertaken.
- (v) There was a lack of audit manuals.

The report therefore concluded that great reliance could not be placed at that time on the work of the internal audit, in providing Attest and Certification audits. To date, while there has been some improvement, there is need for institutional strengthening of the internal audit function in the public service.

Establishment of Audit Committees

In the private sector, Audit Committees act as advisory bodies to the Board and/or senior management on issues relating to internal and external audit and on financial and other accountability responsibilities. An Audit Committee complements the relationship between internal audit and the Chief Executive Officer, further safeguarding the independence of the internal audit. They also oversee internal audit's activity, thereby helping to increase the effectiveness and value to the organisation of the internal audit.

Audit Committees are a recent development in the public sector. They have been used in the conduct of comprehensive audits, however they could perform a useful role with respect to the internal audit function. Internal auditors at present report to the Permanent Secretary/Accounting Officer, but it is conceivable that they could report to an Audit Committee. The Committee would supervise the implementation of recommendations made by the internal auditor and provide liaison with external auditors. Membership of that Committee could include suitably experienced and qualified persons from outside the ministry/department, thereby providing an independent perspective.

Introducing Computer Audits

Bearing in mind the increasing use of computers in government organisations, it is recognised that data emanating from these systems is used as a basis for preparing information for management, thereby influencing the decision-making process. Consequently, greater emphasis needs to be placed on controls surrounding the computer system to ensure reliability of information. As computer systems change and develop, the controls associated with the systems must evolve. It is also necessary that management and auditors understand the technology of the controls to perform effectively. The auditor should have the necessary tools in order to exercise reasonable and prudent judgement when evaluating existing controls. This aspect of computer auditing relates to security. There is also the use of computers as an audit tool, that is the ability to use a software application to assess and verify

accounting procedures and ultimately verify financial data. Currently, the Auditor General's Department has limited capability to audit in the area of computer security and is lacking both in the area of equipment and technical knowledge to undertake a computer application audit.

Implementing change

Enhancing the internal audit function

It is increasingly accepted within government that:

- (i) the internal audit function in the public service should be clearly distinguished as a separate career path;
- (ii) training in the latest methodologies, techniques and procedures of internal audit should be provided;
- (iii) new recruits must meet minimum educational requirements relative to the internal audit function;
- (iv) senior positions within the career path of internal audit should require the holders to be Certified Internal Auditors or have a similar qualification.

Establishing Audit Committees

Further consideration should be given within the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service to the establishment of Audit Committees. The proposal should address terms of reference, membership and guidelines for operation.

Introducing Computer Audits

It will be necessary to:

- (i) train staff in information systems and technology and computer audit software applications;
- (ii) acquire the necessary hardware; and
- (iii) develop guidelines for computer security.

6.2 Reforming financial management

The context for change

If Permanent Secretaries are really to manage their ministries and be fully accountable for their organisations, they need to have greater financial flexibility. Public service managers need to become more acutely aware of the financial implications and/or repercussions of the decisions they make.

Implementing change

It has been recognised that the reform of financial management in the public service, must undergird any other aspect of reform. However, in the current climate of economic recession and decreasing revenues, the Ministry of Finance has not been able to adopt the bold and sweeping measures necessary to achieve that objective. However, discussions have been conducted around some initial, incremental steps which may be taken towards achieving reform in financial management. The areas being explored at present are:

- achieving an output orientation, i.e. encouraging ministries and departments to focus on outcomes rather than procedures in getting the job done;
- accrual accounting as opposed to the cash-based accounting methods which are used at present;
- activity-based costing which identifies the cost of each activity performed by the organisation and allows securely based decisions to be made concerning activities which may be eliminated;
- improving procurement procedures; and
- improving estate management.

It should be noted, however, that it is uncertain how the shrinking revenue base will be able to meet the demands of an accrual accounting system.

Discussions and, where necessary, training sessions with the Permanent Secretaries and other key personnel will be planned. Particular discussions will be necessary with the Ministry of Finance concerning appropriate delegation to ministries.

SECTION 7 IMPROVING POLICY ANALYSIS AND CO-ORDINATION

- 7.1 A particular initiative in improving policy analysis and co-ordination: establishing Standing Committees
- 7.2 Improving policy presentation
- 7.3 Public consultation on policy development

7.1 A particular initiative in improving policy analysis and co-ordination: establishing Standing Committees

Cabinet has established four Standing Committees of Energy, Agriculture, Tourism and Industry, and Services to advise on sectoral policies and to oversee and co-ordinate the development of major projects on these sectors. These Committees are chaired by the Prime Minister and comprise a mix of ministers, senior public servants and private sector personnel with expertise and interest in these areas. The Standing Committee on Energy was the first to be established, consequently the Terms of Reference of the other three were patterned on this Committee. The specific Terms of Reference of the Energy Committee are as follows:

- (i) to draft, for the consideration of the Cabinet, a 'National Energy Policy';
- (ii) to review the status of designated projects in the energy sector and advise the Cabinet on appropriate action;
- (iii) to advise on new investments and review the need for incentives that could lead to the further development of approved projects;
- (iv) to advise on the harmonisation of major projects in the energy sector and to monitor the development of approved projects;
- (v) to advise the Cabinet on strategies and measures to bring greater co-ordination and cohesion to the entire energy sector;
- (vi) to advise government on any matter referred to it that relates to policy direction, management and operations of the energy companies, including the divestment within the state energy sector; and
- (vii) to monitor the implementation of such measures as are included in the National Energy Policy and policy decisions taken by the Cabinet.

The relevant ministries function as the Secretariat for these Committees.

The Government, in its Medium-Term Policy Framework, identified increased investment, both local and foreign, as a major objective for the period 1994-1996. The ability to attract such investment will impact on foreign exchange earnings and employment. The sectors for which Standing Committees were identified are priority areas. The private sector/public sector combination on these Committees is intended to facilitate the exchange of ideas between the two sectors; enhance

co-operation with respect to policy development and improve implementation of major projects.

Another Committee established to enhance policy analysis and co-ordination was the Public Sector Negotiating Committee. The specific mandate of this Committee is to oversee public sector negotiations. The Chief Personnel Officer provides technical advice to the Committee and the Personnel Department support secretarial services.

7.2 Improving policy presentation

After the first two years of attempting to communicate the message relevant to Public Service Reform, the Government has come to the realisation that certain formal structures have to be put in place to communicate with the public. These structures have been crystallised into a Communication Strategy. The dissemination of information on government plans and policies critically influences their reception and acceptance by the general public, and their sustainability and ownership by the public servant. The main objectives of the Communication Strategy are:

- to bring co-ordination and focus to the Government's communication activities;
- to provide a standard against which achievements may be measured;
- to ensure that all members of the public are reached.

The Strategy uses all forms of communication and media, including:

- the *print* media
 - reform bulletins which are published by the Office of the Prime Minister and highlight, on a quarterly basis, reform activities within the public service;
 - newspapers articles on specific activities/plans in ministries/ departments;
 - pamphlets, bookmarks, and flyers which provide information on the vision, goals, and objectives of the reform effort in the public service.
- the *electronic* media
 - videos which portray public servants in the process of change: used for both information and training;
 - television programmes which are aired nationally and which outline the developments and progress made in Public Service Reform, as well as day-to-day government activities of interest, e.g. Inside Parliament;

- radio programmes which do the same.
- *Advertisements*
 - there has been some discussion on the use of strip advertisements, posters, etc. which keep "Reform" in the minds of the public at all times;
 - specially printed T-shirts, pens and key rings presented to participants of training courses and similar events which become prized possessions in the public service.
- *Expositions*
 - one exposition of the business of the public service has already taken place in Tobago and the success of that venture has led to requests for a similar event in Trinidad.
- *Establishment of a communication presence in ministries*
 - decentralisation of the Press/Public Relations section of the Information Division of the Office of the Prime Minister and the situating of the officers in ministries to work directly with the ministers and Permanent Secretaries.

The context for change

Reliance on the national media for effective, unbiased reporting of plans, policies and programmes generally has not been consistently productive.

In addition, the centralised nature of the operations of the Media Unit of the Division, which is responsible for the dissemination of all government information, did not lend itself to the timely presentation and airing of specific issues as they pertain to ministries and departments.

There was also no mechanism for the internal sharing of information within the public service, nor was there any assurance that the general public or even other public servants either knew or understood how to access properly the services provided.

Implementing change

In Trinidad and Tobago it was recognised that the first step towards co-ordinating and improving policy presentation was the definition of a Communication Strategy which outlines objectives, targets and means. Co-ordination and monitoring of implementation from the centre is important and there must be an appreciation and acceptance of the need for each ministry to communicate, on an on-going basis, issues and information which affect its various publics, both internal and external.

The Trinidad and Tobago Communication Strategy focuses on three particular areas:

- (i) the circulation of information to the relevant sections of the public, whether through bulletins, newsletters, expositions, notices, or manuals;
- (ii) in a hostile media environment, the development of an "alternative system" of information dissemination, i.e. alternative to the national media;
- (iii) the institution of mechanisms to receive specific feedback from the relevant sections of the public.

In most cases, immediate responses may be measured from the receipt of feedback questionnaires and public reactions to the measures instituted and publicised through the publication of internal bulletins and newsletters, and the production and airing of programmes on the national media. Open communication requires that the public servant relinquish the age-old perception of the total anonymity and confidentiality of the service and begin subscribing to the need for information and openness when providing service to the public.

Supporting material

A range of publicity material has been produced by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, including published bulletins on public service reform and pamphlets outlining the vision and the reform measures.

7.3 Public consultation on policy development

Policy issues which intimately affect the citizenry and which may benefit from public discussion, particularly if controversial, are usually put out for public consultation. Consultation may take several forms. Formal consultation takes place through the following:

- *Tripartite Committee* – a standing committee which is chaired by the Minister of Labour and comprises representatives of government, private enterprise and labour. It meets regularly to discuss issues pertaining to labour.
- *Green Paper* – which is a document issued for public comment on a specific subject area.
- *Community/stakeholder meetings*, i.e. taking the issues to the various communities and interest groups.

Informal consultation takes place through the following:

- Quarterly meetings of Permanent Secretaries and their private sector counterparts.
- Seminars on topical issues organised by both public and private sector organisations to which they invite each other.

Such consultation initiatives are undertaken to sensitise the citizenry about issues which will affect them intimately and to obtain the benefit of discussion with key stakeholders of specific issues. Public consultation allows for the safe venting of controversial issues and permits the development of an appreciation of other views and standpoints.

When formal consultation is used, the choice of measure adopted depends on the issue and the stakeholders involved. The choice is generally made by the Cabinet.

Very often, the Green Paper is used in tandem with community and stakeholder meetings which allow interest groups to be heard. Sometimes the community or stakeholder meetings are used as instruments in themselves to provide information to or have discussions with members of the public or specific interest groups.

Informal consultation takes place on a regular basis through quarterly meetings between the Permanent Secretaries and the Chief Executive Officers of the major

conglomerates in the private sector. At these meetings the needs and objectives of both groups, in terms of policy and policy regulation, are discussed. The seminars are organised around policy areas which may need clarification or which may be contentious.

Informal consultation leads to increased understanding of each sector's point of view and therefore to greater sensitivity as to the effect of the policies and measures.

Formal consultation leads to greater understanding and acceptance of government policies.

Contact addresses

All publications of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago referred to in this book may be requested from:

The Ministry of Public Administration and Information
Central Bank Tower
Eric Williams Plaza
Independence Square
Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago

Facsimile: (+1) 809 625 8061

Further publications from the Management and Training Services Division

Management of the Privatisation Process

A guide to policy making and implementation, 1994

Capacity Building for Management of Privatisation

Report of the regional consultation workshop held at ZIPAM, Zimbabwe, March 1994

Economic Management and Planning

Case studies of selected Commonwealth countries

Bakul H Dholakia and Ravindra H Dholakia, 1994

price £7.95

Administrative and Managerial Reform in Government: a Commonwealth Portfolio of Good Practice

Proceedings of a pan-Commonwealth Working Group Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, April 1993

Choices in Decentralisation

An overview and curriculum for central government officials responsible for the reorganisation of administration at the local level

Brian Smith, 1993

Government Information Technology Policies and Systems

Success strategies in developed and developing countries

Chun Kwong Han and Geoff Walsham, 1993

Information Technology Policies and Applications in the Commonwealth Developing Countries

Mayuri Odedra and Shirin Madon, edited by G Harindranath and Jonathan Liebenau, 1993

price £8.00

The Changing Role of Government: Administrative Structures and Reforms

Proceedings of a Commonwealth Roundtable held in Sydney, February 1992

Public Administration in Small Island States

edited by Randall Baker, 1992

Successful Decentralisation

Proceedings of a Roundtable held in Male, December 1992

Performance Contracts: A Handbook for Practitioners

This handbook provides detailed information on the planning and implementation of performance contracts and includes selected cases from Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries

Biodiversity and Gender for Sustainable Development

Editors: Rogers W'O Okot-Uma & RoseMarie-Rita Odiachi 201pp, ISBN: 0-85092-558-4, GB£25.00

Strengthening MDIs

The Role of Management Development Institutions in Public Service Reform, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No: 9, by Sam Agere, 102pp, ISBN: 0-85092-585-1 GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Redefining Management Roles

Improving the Functional Relationship between Ministers and Permanent Secretaries, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No:10, by Sam Agere, 112pp, ISBN: 0-85092-614-9 GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Environmental Assessment of Development Projects:

A Guide for Planners and Managers by V Nagarajan & R W'O Okot-Uma, 2594pp, ISBN: 0-85092-558-4, GB£25.00

Rethinking Policy Analysis

Enhancing Policy Development and Management in the Public Service, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No: 8, Sam Agere & Ibbo Mandaza, 73pp, ISBN: 0-85092-583-5 GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Managing Change

The Evolving Role of Top Public Servants, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series No: 7, Peter E Larson & Amanda Coe, 48pp, ISBN: 0-85092-584-3, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Better Information Practices

Improving Records and Information Management in the Public Service, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series No: 6, Sam Agere, Victoria Lemieux & Peter Mazikana, 134pp, ISBN: 0-85092-582-7, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Government Secure Intranets

Information Technology & Globalisation Series, Editors: Larry Caffrey and Rogers W'O Okot-Uma, 60pp, ISBN: 0-85092-611-4, GB£15.00

Introducing New Approaches

Improving Public Service Delivery, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series No: 5, Mohan Kaul, 71pp, ISBN: 0-85092-564-9, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Personnel Records: A Strategic Resource for Public Sector Management

(Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Sector Management) A Public Service Thematic Series, Piers Cain and Anne Thurston, 160p, ISBN: 0-85092-552-5, GB£8.95/US\$13.95

WCMC Handbooks on Biodiversity Information Management

1. Companion Volume (1 floppy disk incl.) - 17pp - ISBN: 0-85092-551-7
2. Volume 1 - Information and Policy - 29pp - ISBN: 0-85092-544-4
3. Volume 2 - Information Needs Analysis - 23pp - ISBN: 0-85092-545-2
4. Volume 3 - Information Product Design - 28pp - ISBN: 0-85092-546-0
5. Volume 4 - Information Networks - 32pp - ISBN: 0-85092-547-9
6. Volume 5 - Data Custodianship & Access - 24pp - ISBN: 0-85092-548-7
7. Volume 6 - Info. Management Capacity - 48pp - ISBN: 0-85092-549-5
8. Volume 7 - Data Mgt. Fundamentals - 33pp - ISBN: 0-85092-550-9

Series Editor: J H Reynolds, GB£22.50P/US\$33.75ø. Only sold as a complete set of 8 books.

Information Sharing between and within Governments

Information Technology & Globalisation Series, Study Group Report, edited by Larry Caffrey, 72pp, ISBN: 0-85092-555-X, GB£10.00

Better Policy Support

Improving Policy Management in the Public Service, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series No: 4, Mohan Kaul, 74pp, ISBN: 0-85092-518-5, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Information Technology and Globalisation

Implications for Developing Countries

Eds: Mayuri Odedra-Straub, Rogers W'O Okot-Uma and Günther Cyraneck, 168pp, ISBN: 0-85092-440-5, GB£10.00

From Problem to Solution

Commonwealth Strategies for Reform

Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series: No. 1, Mohan Kaul, 69pp, ISBN: 0-85092-452-9, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Redrawing the Lines

Service Commissions and the Delegation of Personnel Management, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement, Series: No. 2, Charles Polidano and Nick Manning, 90pp, ISBN: 0-85092-461-8, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Working Towards Results

Managing Individual Performance in the Public Service

Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement *Series: No. 3*, by Noella Jorm, Julie Hunt and Nick Manning, 107pp, ISBN: 0-85092-491-X, GB£9.00/US\$14.00

Government in Transition

The Inaugural Conference of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, 28-31 August 1994, 307pp, ISBN: 0-85092-422-7, US\$17.50

Economic Management and Planning

Case Studies of Selected Commonwealth Countries, Bakul H. Dholakia and Ravindra H. Dholakia, 234pp, ISBN: 0-85092-407-3, GB£7.9

Information Technology Policies and Applications in the Commonwealth Developing Countries

Mayuri Odedra and Shirin Madon, edited by G Harindranath and Jonathan Liebenau, 203pp, ISBN: 0-85092-401-4, GB£8.00

These and many other publications of practical value to managers, administrators, advanced students and academics requiring in-depth insights into the trends and opportunities confronting government are available from The Publications Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX.

The Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (MTSD)

Managing for success

For managers in developing Commonwealth countries facing challenges ranging from civil service reform to business re-engineering, MTSD provides practical advice and rapid assistance through tailored packages of consultancy and strategic training. It assists with public service modernisation, organisational reform and restructuring, commercialisation, business planning, management development and the introduction of appropriate management and financial information systems.

Training for excellence

MTSD can assist in identifying training needs at sectoral, organisational or business unit levels. It provides top level training for senior staff and helps develop national and regional centres of excellence in priority areas. MTSD draws on the expertise of specialists within the Commonwealth Secretariat and can call on an extensive network of international experts to develop leading edge training programmes in strategic management, information systems, environmental management and enterprise development.

Building on strengths

All MTSD assistance programmes are sensitive to local needs and build on the strengths of existing staff and institutions. MTSD provides particular opportunities for women in the public and private sectors to develop their management skills.


Initial enquiries and requests for assistance can be made to:

The Director
The Management and Training Services Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 747 6329

Facsimile: +44 (0) 20 747 6335

Cover design provided through the kind assistance of Coopers & Lybrand, London

A stylized graphic on the left side of the cover. It features a sun with radiating lines in the upper half and a globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines in the lower half. The sun and globe are rendered in a dark teal color against a background that is split horizontally into a reddish-pink top half and a light blue bottom half.

Commonwealth member governments have been taking part in a unique mapping exercise, identifying the actual changes which have been made in some key areas of public service management. *The Public Service Country Profile Series* sets out the results of that mapping exercise, country by country, to provide an unprecedented insight into the real managerial and structural changes under way in the public service.

In providing some firm ground on which those public servants, both elected and appointed, who are faced with the challenge of public service reform can stand while assessing the options available, *The Public Service Country Profile Series* marks a milestone in the debate concerning the management of the public service.

ISBN: 0 85092 420 0

ISBN 978-1-84859-526-2



9 781848 595262