# Table of Contents

Executive Summary............................................................................................................................................. 2

I. Introduction.................................................................................................................................................... 4

II. Overview of Trinidad and Tobago’s Development Context ...................................................................... 5
   2.1 Economic Overview.................................................................................................................................. 5
   2.2 Social Overview...................................................................................................................................... 9
   2.3 Environmental Overview ....................................................................................................................... 13

III. A Roadmap toward SDG Implementation in Trinidad and Tobago ......................................................... 15
   3.1 Alignment: The Rapid Integrated Assessment ..................................................................................... 15
   3.2 From Planning to Action: Prioritizing SDG Accelerators .................................................................... 19
   3.3 Integrating SDGs into Budgets and Financing the SDG Agenda ......................................................... 46
   3.4 Data, Monitoring and Reporting .......................................................................................................... 53
   3.5 Advocacy, Resources and Partnerships ................................................................................................. 59
   3.6 Coordination: Institutional Mechanism ............................................................................................... 62

References ............................................................................................................................................................ 65
Trinidad and Tobago Roadmap for SDG Implementation

Executive Summary

The Roadmap for SDG Implementation in Trinidad and Tobago outlines critical steps towards the achievement of the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 (Vision 2030) and the 2030 Agenda, covering the alignment of the national and international agendas, acceleration, financing, data requirements, advocacy and institutional coordination. The Roadmap aims to serve as a bridge between the implementation of the nationally defined development priorities and the SDGs.

The Roadmap is the product of a collaboration between the Ministry of Planning and Development and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), based on insights and information collected from a series of consultations and bilateral meetings.

An assessment of Trinidad and Tobago’s national planning documents, using the Rapid Integrated Assessment methodology developed by UNDP, shows that the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 (Vision 2030), the National Performance Framework and sectoral policies are aligned with 81 percent of the relevant SDGs targets. However, some important gaps remain particularly around the areas of gender equality, reduction of inequality and partnerships.

The greatest challenge in Trinidad and Tobago involves implementing policies that accelerate progress towards the national development goals and the SDGs in the current context of economic deceleration. The challenge is to look for actions that can accelerate progress while government spending is decreasing. Catalytic actions in the social, economic and environmental spheres will be needed to drive progress, and prevent setback, across multiple goals and targets.

The Roadmap proposes a set of five accelerators, one for each of the five focus areas of the National Development Strategy 2016-2030. To make progress towards the first focus of Putting people first: Nurturing our greatest asset, the Roadmap suggests strengthening and streamlining the existing social protection system, consolidating programmes, establishing a Unified Social Registry, operationalizing the social worker force and strengthening links with other sectors. To accelerate progress towards the second national objective of Good governance and service excellence, the Roadmap focuses on increasing access to justice by enhancing the capacity for prosecution and legal defence, embarking on criminal justice reform and increasing coordination among relevant actors. To move towards Quality infrastructure and transport, Trinidad and Tobago’s third national focus area, the Roadmap suggests greening infrastructure for sustainable development by enhancing service delivery, modernizing infrastructure and reforming service pricing. To Build globally competitive businesses, the Roadmap proposes strengthening competitiveness and productivity for inclusive growth by pushing for economic diversification, strengthening an enabling environment, focusing on productive capacity and creating an ecosystem for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. To Place environment at the centre of development, the Roadmap proposes developing an integrated land and coastal management system by enhancing the protected areas system, enhancing the land development system, strengthening regulatory enforcement and promoting sustainable land use practice.

While each of these accelerators is directly associated with one of the five focus areas of Vision 2030, they are conceived to be interlinked, have impacts across the whole of the development agenda and reinforce each other.
Another critical challenge in the implementation of the SDGs in Trinidad and Tobago is the need to find innovative financing mechanisms for critical investments. The Roadmap discusses some ideas to explore sources of domestic, international and private financing. It delves into opportunities for smart taxation and public subsidies reform, optimization of public spending, and leveraging innovative finance such as green and blue bonds, diaspora investment and impact investment.

The Roadmap also delves into some of the challenges and opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago in SDG monitoring and reporting. The Roadmap concludes that the country’s capacity for monitoring the implementation of SDGs needs improvement and recommends improved coordination, prioritization, standardization sensitization, innovation and partnerships for data generation.

Achieving the ambitious and transformation agendas set out in Vision 2030 and the SDGs will require inputs and contributions from all of society. The Roadmap proposes outreach efforts that rally ownership, participation and collaboration of all of Trinidadian and Tobagonian society. These include inspiring action through rising awareness, using art to change behaviour and using media to spread inspiring messages. The Roadmap also proposes building understanding for change and policy action to articulate why reforms are necessary and how the public will benefit.

Finally, the establishment of a clear institutional apparatus to lead the coordination and to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of Vision 2030 and the SDGs is central to determining success. For Trinidad and Tobago, this will require a fundamental change in the way policymaking, prioritization and investments are pursued. The Roadmap outlines an inclusive implementation focused framework, drawing on Vision 2030 and looking to integrate some of the principles of the global Sustainable Development Goals into national mechanisms.
I. Introduction

Trinidad and Tobago is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS). The country has a combined surface area of 5,128 square kilometres and a population of approximately 1.35 million people.\(^1\) Trinidad and Tobago’s economy is highly dependent on non-renewable sources such as oil and natural gas. Classified as upper middle-income, with a Gross National Income (GNI) of approximately US$33.4 billion and GNI per capita of US$24,970,\(^2\) the country is the most industrialized country in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago’s Human Development Index (HDI) in 2015 was 0.780, placing it in the high human development category and positioning it at 65 in a ranking of 188 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2015, Trinidad and Tobago’s HDI increased from 0.670 to 0.780, an increase of 16.4 percent.\(^3\) The country’s population is concentrated in the northeast of Trinidad in its capital city, Port of Spain, and in two suburban corridors east and south of the capital towards the towns of Arima and San Fernando, respectively.

Trinidad and Tobago recently adopted a comprehensive National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030, Vision 2030, which lays out a pathway for development that is sustainable and inclusive by 2030. Vision 2030 focuses around five thematic areas, within which 56 national development goals have been agreed. The thematic areas are: (i) putting people first: nurturing our greatest asset; (ii) good governance and service excellence; (iii) quality infrastructure and transportation; (iv) building globally competitive businesses; and (v) placing environment at the centre of social and economic development.

At the request of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, represented by the Ministry of Planning and Development, the UN Country Team (UNCT) fielded a mission to Trinidad and Tobago during the week of 18-25 April 2017.\(^4\) The objective of the mission was to develop a Roadmap for SDG implementation in the country. The Roadmap draws from insights gained during a series of consultations with key stakeholders over the course of the mission. Stakeholders consulted include ministries of government, civil society organizations, private sector organizations, international development partners and academia.

The Roadmap follows the elements identified by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) as critical for effective and coherent support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, under the acronym MAPS (mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support). Mainstreaming refers to landing the SDGs into national, subnational and local plans for development and shaping budget allocations. Acceleration focuses on targeting resources and interventions to areas that can have maximum impacts across various goals and targets. Policy support refers to ensuring that the skills and expertise of the UN development system are rendered available in an efficient and timely way. MAPS frames the UN development system’s support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and seeks to make available a set of tools, guidance and expertise to governments, civil society and other partners.

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1 Central Statistical Office (2017)
2 World Bank (2017)
3 UNDP (2016)
4 The mission was led by UNDP and included the participation of ECLAC, ILO, PAHO and FAO.
II. Overview of Trinidad and Tobago’s Development Context

2.1 Economic Overview

Trinidad and Tobago has a sophisticated economy for a country of its size, based on mineral extraction (oil and natural gas), agriculture, industry, financial services and tourism, although it is largely underpinned by a single commodity – oil. The dependence on the oil and gas sector is significant: it comprises 85 percent of export earnings, 40 percent of government revenue and over 35 percent of GDP.

Economic Growth

The high price of oil in the 1970s provided the foundation for Trinidad and Tobago’s significant development advances. Nonetheless, development progress has been highly susceptible to the fluctuations in the world price of oil. The country has witnessed boom-bust economic and fiscal cycles, with major increases in GDP and public expenditure occurring when prices are high, followed by sharp recession when prices fall. In the early 2000s, growth was strong, averaging nearly 10 percent. However, since the global financial crisis hit in 2008/2009, economic growth has stagnated. Between 2009-2016, growth either stood still or contracted, contributing to a deep recession. The outlook is for a return to positive growth in 2017 and through the period up to 2021, but at very modest levels. Of concern over this period is the decline in the general business environment, including the ease of doing business, tax efficiency and public service delivery. On the upside, Trinidad and Tobago currently has a low relative level of public indebtedness (although this is under threat based on current fiscal trends), adequate financial buffers, a solid human capital base and overall political stability, positive attributes expected to facilitate an economic rebound over the medium term.5

Table 1. Key Indicators - Forecasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator (%)</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (av)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government Balance (% of GDP)</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Account Balance (% of GDP)</td>
<td>-8.6</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (year end: $US bn)</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EIU (2017)

Fiscal policy

The sharp decline in energy prices has contributed to a steep fall in fiscal revenues, constraining public investment and raising the fiscal deficit in 2014/2015 to 4.7 percent of GDP and to 10.9 percent of GDP

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5 World Bank (2017)
in FY 2015/2016. In 2014, oil revenues totalled $19.3 billion. In 2016, as a result of declines in oil prices and changes in the fiscal regime (i.e., write-off of 100 percent of capital expenditure on oil and gas exploration in the first year), the same revenues dropped to just $1.7 billion, a 92-percent decrease. Correspondingly, the long-standing current account surplus turned into a deficit of 5.4 percent of GDP in 2015. Ongoing maintenance and declines in gas and oil production are estimated to have driven energy output 4.7 percent lower (year on year) as of September 2015. These factors have contributed to a steep rise in public borrowing, with the public debt to GDP ratio projected to rise to nearly 80 percent of GDP by 2021. This is considered unsustainable. Gross official reserves fell from US$11.3 billion to US$9.8 billion during 2015. Inflation is forecast to be in the 3 percent to 5 percent range. The fiscal outlook therefore remains challenging.

Fiscal sustainability will require a combination of fiscal rectitude, consolidation, reprioritization and reinvestment. The IMF estimates that a multi-year fiscal adjustment (contraction) of around 8.5 percent of GDP will be needed to keep the debt burden manageable. The economic downturn has already led to some increases in unemployment (although unemployment remains low overall – estimated at 4.0 percent in 2016), with job loses mainly in the oil and gas and manufacturing sectors.

**Fiscal Reform Measures**

The government has announced spending cuts of TT$4 billion (2.5 percent of GDP). This is combined with other fiscal adjustment measures designed to raise revenues. These include recourse to several ‘one-off’ revenue measures, notably a greater reliance on dividend transfers from the National Gas Company and an income tax amnesty that brought in an additional 0.3 percent of GDP in revenues. The government has announced its intention in the 2017 budget to reintroduce property taxation and to implement VAT reforms. In order to raise further revenues, the IMF has advocated for increasing excises on cigarettes, alcohol and soft drinks. It has also proposed a broad public expenditure review as a tool to assess and address public sector inefficiencies. The government has in this context announced a 7-percent reduction in operational expenditures. Stricter oversight and taxation of the gambling industry is also proposed for 2017. The budget also envisages one-off revenue (of TT$9.7bn, or US$1.4bn) from asset sales and unspecified sources, continuing the pattern since 2014 to compensate for the steep decline in energy revenue.

Despite austerity measures, the government spending per person per annum – approximately US$9,301 – remains the highest in Latin America and is comparable to that in Poland and European Union members in Eastern Europe. Total expenditure increased threefold in 2004-2015, with flat population growth. Spending on general public services, social protection and education accounted for the majority of the growth in expenditures.

Energy sector taxation reforms are a target for reform in Trinidad and Tobago. The country is one of the top subsidizers for vehicle-related fuel in the world (ranking in the top 12 countries). Moreover, fuel subsidies predominantly benefit richer sections of the population. Low-income earners, accounting for 50 percent of the population in 2014, received only 27 percent of total fuel subsidies, compared to 36 percent for the richest 15 percent of households. The resources spent on fuel subsidies have

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6 IMF 2016
significantly contributed to procyclicality and might better have been saved in the Heritage and Stabilization Fund – HSF (a Sovereign Wealth Fund – SWF). The authorities have accepted the need to remove fuel subsidies and have announced their intention to do so in a phased manner, using the savings to improve the social safety net and reduce transportation costs for low-income groups.

The government can presently finance annual shortfalls by accessing external and domestic borrowing or the US$5.5bn savings (as of June 2016) with the Heritage and Stabilization Fund. In 2016, Trinidad and Tobago issued its most recent international bonds, for a total of US$1 billion maturing in 2026. The bond has had a reasonably low yield of 4.5 percent despite consecutive downgrades by ratings agencies in 2016 (Moody’s Baa3-Negative outlook).

The government has reduced capital expenditure on public sector work projects (see the Public Sector Investment Programme 2017). In order to boost infrastructure and construction, the government has proposed 50-percent tax relief to “businesses that can mobilize private sector funding to provide public infrastructure and/or public facilities, amenities and services, now provided solely by the government”. This marks a shift toward greater use of public-private partnership models for infrastructure development.

**Financial Services**

Trinidad and Tobago has a relatively advanced financial system and is becoming a regional financial centre. In 2011-2015, the financial sector accounted for around 20 percent of non-oil GDP. Commercial banks have dominated the market, holding 45 percent of total assets, followed by insurance companies (16 percent) and pension funds (13 percent). While commercial banks were largely resilient to the global financial crisis and slowdown in domestic growth, the downfall of two non-bank financial institutions—the Colonial Life Financial Group (CLF) and the Hindu Credit Union—raised concerns. The restructuring of CLF has taken several years at an estimated cost of 10 percent of GDP. Domestic credit to the private sector is relatively low: even with a relatively low cost of financing, access to credit for non-energy companies is constrained. Domestic credit to the private sector is only 30 percent of GDP, among the lowest in the LAC region. The capital market is largely underdeveloped, with the volume of shares traded in 2016 at TT$92 million. A stock exchange has been in operation since the 1980s, with a market capitalization of TT$114.5 billion (October 2016). The current fiscal challenges have led to foreign exchange controls that have inhibited business development.

**Tourism and Agriculture**

Tourism, particularly on Tobago, offers good prospects for further expansion and untapped potential for growth if structural factors are addressed. There are environmental, social and ecosystem limits on island tourism and the government is committed to developing a sustainable product that provides an economic dividend while protecting the natural tourism asset. Tourism faces ‘product’ competition from its Caribbean neighbours. Per the Caribbean Tourist Organization, Trinidad and Tobago accounted for just over 1 percent of the 22.1 million international arrivals to the Caribbean in 2009. There is further scope to link future agriculture development to tourism needs.
Agriculture contributes only 0.5 percent of the national GDP although it employs an estimated 4 percent of the population. Major crops include coffee and cocoa, which are aimed mostly towards export. Other crops include rice, sweet potato, cassava, breadfruit, tomatoes, hot peppers, cucumber, pumpkin, pigeon pea, banana, mango, pineapple and pawpaw. The country produces only 8 percent of the food it consumes. With rising food imports and increasing global food prices, the government is prioritizing agriculture to diversify the economy, increase the country's food security and provide sustainable and productive employment opportunities.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector accounts for about 8 percent of GDP in Trinidad and Tobago. The sector employs approximately 8.3 percent of the labour force. There are eight main manufacturing sub-sectors: assembly type and related industries; chemicals and non-metallic materials; food, beverage and tobacco; household products; printing, publishing and paper converters; steel products; textiles and garments; and wood and wood-related products. The largest of these sub-sectors is food, beverages and tobacco, followed by chemicals and non-metallic materials. Between them, these two segments account for about two thirds of manufacturing output. The food, beverages and tobacco sector has performed well partly due to exports to the wider Caribbean market. It includes alcoholic and carbonated beverages, juices, cereals, chocolate confectionery, canned foods, baked foods and tobacco products. Manufacturing and process industries are centred on the free-trade zone. The sector has a high level of government involvement and manufacturing policy and incentives are the subject of continuing refinement. Recent environmental concerns have prompted thinking of policy that balances economic and environmental considerations. Trinidad and Tobago’s natural gas has a high methane content and, with very few impurities, is very suitable for methanol and ammonia production. The country is among the world’s largest exports of methanol and ammonia.

Services

The services sector, involving construction (including water and energy services), transportation, storage and communications, finance and tourism, is the major contributor to GDP and employment in Trinidad and Tobago. The services sector contributes over half of Trinidad and Tobago’s GDP. The sector is also a major source of employment, including personal services, education, tourism and financial services. The further development of the services sector as well as the diversification of services exports are necessary to reposition the domestic economy within the global economy and offer potential for growth and expansion, linked to a skilled workforce.

Remittances and FDI

There are no recent estimates of remittances, with World Bank data referring to a value close to 0.5 percent of GDP. Private remittances outflows seem to have surpassed inflows in 2013, as reported by the Central Bank. Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have declined in recent years and are at about 3.5 percent of GDP.

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7 World Bank (2017)
8 TTMA (2015)
2.2 Social Overview

The most recent publicly reported poverty estimate was constructed from the 2005 Survey of Living Conditions, which identifies 16.7 percent of individuals and 11 percent of households as poor. Per the survey, Trinidad and Tobago has significant geographic disparities in its poverty rate ranging from 4.5 percent in the Borough of Arima to 39 percent in Sangre Grande. While a new Survey of Living Conditions was conducted in 2014, it has not been made public.

Trinidad and Tobago has an extensive social protection system comprising many programmes spread across multiple ministries. Budgeted allocations to the social sector increased steadily from approximately 23 percent to 36 percent during the fiscal years 2005 to 2010. Nevertheless, relatively high levels of public social expenditure and investment have not resulted in commensurate improvements in human capital development.

Health

Health challenges in Trinidad and Tobago include mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, efforts to reduce maternal mortality and a high prevalence of HIV among specific population groups. However, the skyrocketing of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is perhaps the country’s major health challenge. The costs of NCDs are straining the health system, jeopardizing ambitions on universal health coverage while also reducing productive capacities.

Figure 1. Proportional Mortality (% of total deaths, all ages, both sexes)

![Proportional Mortality Chart]

NCDs account for an estimated 80 percent of all deaths in Trinidad and Tobago, with cardiovascular disease (32 percent), cancers (16 percent) and diabetes (14 percent) comprising the largest shares.

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9 Kairi Consultants Ltd. (2007)
10 NCDs are principally cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease. NCDs are now the world’s biggest killers – responsible for more death and disease than all other causes combined.
11 WHO (2014)
probability of dying prematurely – between ages 30 and 70 – from the four main NCDs is 26 percent.\textsuperscript{12} Most of these early deaths can be prevented through policies that reduce population exposures to four main behavioural risk factors: tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet.\textsuperscript{13}

Beyond the direct mortality, morbidity and health sector costs, NCDs result in significant indirect economic burdens on families and the nation at large. For families, out-of-pocket health expenditure was 38 percent in 2014, compared to a global average of 18.1 percent.\textsuperscript{14} WHO notes that, each year, 100 million people worldwide are driven into poverty due to out-of-pocket health spending.\textsuperscript{15} At the national level, in March 2017, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) estimated that diabetes, hypertension and cancer alone are costing Trinidad and Tobago US$8.7 billion annually – about 4.6 percent of GDP. More than half of the total burden is due to productivity losses related to mortality and morbidity.\textsuperscript{16}

Trinidad and Tobago has publicly recognized that it cannot treat its way out of the NCD epidemic. Prevention is critical and prevention requires the significant engagement of sectors beyond health, such as housing, agriculture, energy and environment, finance, education, labour and others.\textsuperscript{17} The Ministry of Health has completed and attained Cabinet approval for a five-year national strategic plan for prevention and control of NCDs.\textsuperscript{18} The plan’s first strategic objective is the development of multi-sectoral policies and partnerships for prevention and control as well as integration into development and economic agendas.

Trinidad and Tobago has a two-tier health care system encompassing a free-of-charge public system alongside private facilities. The public health care system offers primary, secondary and tertiary level care through a decentralized system of nine hospitals, 97 health centres and nine district health facilities. People commonly access services in both systems, depending on waiting times, expertise and equipment availability.

Structural deficiencies such as the aging infrastructure and persistent labour shortages lead to increased waiting times for patients and have contributed to the widespread perception that health care standards are deteriorating. The deficiencies, coupled with the rise in chronic diseases and an aging population, have resulted in increased health care costs. Per World Bank data, total health expenditure in 2014 represented 6 percent of GDP, up from 4 percent in 2000.\textsuperscript{19} Despite the challenges, the government has pledged to make universal health insurance available. The aim is to ensure that, by 31 December 2018, a national health insurance system will be in place. There are ongoing initiatives that

\textsuperscript{12} Idem.

\textsuperscript{13} Air pollution (indoor and outdoor) is also responsible for a large percentage of preventable NCDs, though air quality in T&T is ranked second worldwide according to the Environmental Performance Index 2016. Hsu, A. et al. (2016)

\textsuperscript{14} World Bank (2017)

\textsuperscript{15} WHO (2010)

\textsuperscript{16} IDB (2017)

\textsuperscript{17} UNDP and WHO (2016)

\textsuperscript{18} Dates unclear from desk research, likely 2016 or 2017 through 2021.

\textsuperscript{19} World Bank (2017)
could be built upon, such as the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP), which provides many chronic disease drugs free of cost.  

An important concern is the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, especially as there is a growing prevalence of HIV among young people and laws restrict access of youths younger than 18 years to health services and procedures without parental consent. Furthermore, a lack of information disseminated to address their needs and the requirement for parental consent have limited youths’ awareness of key issues of sex and sexuality.

Access to Basic Utilities and Transportation

Presently, 70 percent of the population has continuous access to water during the wet season, but this drops to 50 percent in the dry season. The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) reports a rate of non-revenue water of 45 percent, meaning that 45 percent of pumped water is either lost through leakages, diverted illegally or provided free.

On the other hand, only 30 percent of households are connected to a sewerage system, while most houses depend on septic tanks, with little monitoring of leakages and consequent pollution of freshwater bodies and groundwater. Solid waste is managed only by dumping it into landfills, without appropriate treatment.

With respect to transportation, less than 1 percent of the population uses the public transport service. The main reasons cited to explain this very low rate of usage are: unreliability; concerns about safety; difficulties for the disabled, children and elderly; and a cultural stigma concerning perceived class position. In contrast, the country has 920,000 registered vehicles and heavy traffic chokes the major arteries at peak times. It is calculated that 30,000 people circulate per hour along the east-west corridor on the northern part of the main island of Trinidad.

Crime and Violence

A recent study indicates that crime is one of the most serious social concerns. When asked to indicate what is the most serious issue facing the country, the largest proportion of respondents (37.8%) indicated that violent crime was the most pressing concern, followed by the cost of food (13.5%), unemployment (10.3%), the cost of living (7.9%), access to health care (7%), property crime (5.5%), corruption (4.1%), housing (3.8%), insecurity (3.1%) and poverty (2.3%). The issue of crime and insecurity is particularly of concern for women. Rawlins (1998) estimates that one in four women in Trinidad and Tobago has experienced some form of domestic violence. Another study (UNDP 2012a)

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20 Healthy Caribbean Coalition (2014)
21 UNICEF (2010)
22 Ministry of Works and Transport of Trinidad and Tobago (2008)
23 Highways Division, Ministry of Works and Transport (2017)
24 CANSULT (2007)
25 Seepersad and Williams (2011)
suggests that from 1995 to 2004, 10.9 percent of homicide cases in Trinidad were classified as domestic violence.

The 2012 UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report (CHDR) entitled Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security, found that increasing cases of violent crimes, particularly among youth, coincide with negative economic and social indicators in the Caribbean. The murder rate in Trinidad and Tobago is far above the regional average and figures reflect an upward trend, with 410 murders recorded in 2015 as compared to 352 murders in 2011. Reported crimes related to sexual assault and domestic violence increased from 551 in 2013 to 825 in 2014. Conversely, detection rates are low. In 2016, of the 462 murders that took place, only 70 were ‘detected’. Child abuse is also of concern. Per the Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, during the nine-month period between May 2015 and February 2016, over 4,000 cases of children in need of care, protection and rehabilitation were filed.26 A summary of offences for 2015 and 2016, as reported by the Police Service and presented below, points to the need for action in a number of key areas:

Table 2. Offenses for 2015 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fraud Offences</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>1016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woundings and Shootings</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robberies</td>
<td>2469</td>
<td>2,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglaries and Breakings</td>
<td>2,111</td>
<td>2,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny Dwelling House</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Indecency</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping for Ransom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murders</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapes, Incest and Sexual Offences</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Larceny</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>1,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum=11,135  Sum=11,393

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26 Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (2016)
The 2012 CHDR also points to challenges in the administration of justice and the demands on the three arms of the criminal justice systems: the police, the judiciary and the prison service for increased efficiency and delivery, given the spiralling crime situation. While key agencies have been involved in reform activities, the scope for improved administration and access to justice remains evident. The slow administration of justice is one of the key challenges to improve national security.

2.3 Environmental Overview

Because Trinidad is separated from the mainland by only seven miles of ocean, it has comparatively high levels of biodiversity relative to other Caribbean islands. Habitats span from high rain-fed tropical rain forests in two hill ranges to semi-arid savannah, swamps, mangroves and other coastal ecosystems. The floristic endowment includes about 2,500 species of vascular plants. There are about 50 species of freshwater fish (plus 30 marine species occasionally found in freshwater) 400–500 marine fish species, 30 amphibian species, about 90 reptiles, 469 species of birds and 98 mammal species.

Environmental degradation remains a major issue associated with the production of a range of commodities, including, but not limited to, processed food, petroleum products, nitrogen, ammonia, urea, fertilizer, rum, soap, paint and wood products. Environmental threats include widespread pollution of waterways and coastal areas, illegal dumping of chemical wastes, deforestation, excessive soil erosion, fisheries and wildlife depletion. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Trinidad and Tobago is highly vulnerable to natural disasters like tropical storms, earthquakes, floods and droughts and is subject to the increasing negative effects of climate change such as sea level rise and sea temperature rise (UNDP 2017). The rich biological resources of Trinidad and Tobago are also under threat due to overexploitation and degradation. Species of animals, plants and ecosystems are at varying levels of risk; some invasive species populations have increased significantly, and ecosystems services are under threat of irreversible change.

Industrial waste and effluents, untreated sewage and frequent oil spills, with poor siting and management of dump sites and hazardous wastes compounded by pesticides and herbicides, are frequent sources of contamination of water courses and present environmental problems for human health and ecosystem sustainability. This has depleted and damaged natural resources and biodiversity, such as inland and coastal resources – wildlife, fisheries, mangroves, wetlands, beaches and coral reefs.

In Trinidad, the Caroni River and its tributaries are the recipients of discharges from industrial activities in the East/West Corridor, while the Gulf of Paria is affected by pollution related to intensive, offshore petroleum exploitation and exploration operations on the west coast. A recent assessment showed that 57 percent of Trinidad and Tobago rivers are considered perturbed in terms of heavy metal presence.28

Tobago is especially concerned about beach and ocean pollution from untreated sewage and seepage from waste dumps, into inland and coastal ecosystems, resulting in contaminated rivers and coastal areas as well as bacterial contamination of some of the bathing beaches. In fact, all major rivers and coastal sites used for recreation in the country exceed the international levels set for microbial

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27 UNDP (2012)
28 EMA (2007)
Livestock waste contributes to the faecal contamination of rivers and coastal areas. The latter exposes the local population to waterborne diseases such as gastroenteritis, dysentery and typhoid. Additionally, beach encroachment from recent large-scale tourist developments such as the rapid expansion of pleasure boat businesses around Chaguaramas (west of the capital) is giving rise to pollution problems.

Unsustainable land use such as hillside clearing for human planned and unplanned settlements, unregulated quarrying activities and unsustainable agricultural and logging practices have led to deforestation, which contributes significantly to slope instability leading to landslides, soil erosion and flooding. Forest surface has declined by 18 percent in the 1991-2010 period\textsuperscript{30} in Trinidad and 13 percent in Tobago for the same period. Additionally, biologically rich wetlands and mangroves and swamps stand at high risk of conversion to a variety of uses, including residential, industrial, port and waste disposal, and rice cultivation. The removal of mangroves and coastal wetlands has diminished the services provided by these ecosystems to people such as the provision of natural fish nurseries, water purification, flood control and protection from storm surges and winds; this exposes local populations to increased threats from natural hazards.

Noise, air pollution and littering are rising sources of pollution. Most noise-related complaints by people are linked to the operation of auto garages, paint shops, woodworking shops and bars. Air pollution arises from the activities of auto paint shops, landfill fires and the stench emitted by rendering plants and malfunctioning sewage treatment plants. The widespread littering of highways and byways, rivers and coastal areas is dominated by the inadequate disposal of beverage containers and bulky wastes. Car ownership has recently grown rapidly to become the highest per capita in Central America and the Caribbean (in Tobago, it has more than doubled in three years), increasing congestion and air pollution.

Moreover, the changing consumption patterns of an increasing and wealthier population have led to increased use of plastics (packaged items and disposable containers) without adequate policies for reducing, reusing, recycling and disposing plastic products. Consequently, the landscape of Trinidad and Tobago has been overwhelmed by disposable items such as beverage containers, polystyrene foam packaging and other forms of litter. During heavy rainfall, these items are transported to streams, where they clog watercourses and intensify the risk of flooding events. Litter eventually ends up on beaches and in near-shore coastal waters affecting marine life and recreational aesthetics.

Some of the environmental problems that the country confronts are global and require mitigation at the regional and international levels. The use of ozone-depleting substances, the generation of greenhouse gases, increasing trade in biological species, transboundary movement of wastes (including hazardous wastes) and rights to and ownership of genetic resources, have all led to negotiations among countries and the adoption of agreements in the form of conventions and protocols. Trinidad and Tobago is signatory to some of these conventions and protocols that place certain obligations on the country.

The National Environment Strategic Plan for the country, Management Authority—Strategic Plan 2010-2014 has identified the following environmental threats that it will address: air quality; water quality of

\textsuperscript{29} Idem.
\textsuperscript{30} EMA (2010)
inland and coastal waters; chemical spills and the unsafe handling and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes; conserve and/or restore selected ecosystems and species; balance environmental protection and economic development and facilitate the expeditious processing of Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) applications; manage the effects of noise; and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

### III. A Roadmap toward SDG Implementation in Trinidad and Tobago

Success in implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require that it be anchored in national priorities and realities. The Roadmap is clustered around six areas, considered critical success factors in achieving the SDGs.

1. **Alignment: The Rapid Integrated Assessment**

   The first step to localizing the 2030 Agenda is to review the level of alignment between national policies and planning documents with the SDGs at the target level. Landing the 2030 Agenda at the country level involves aligning plans with targets and making choices on the actions needed to meet the SDGs.

   An analysis of the current alignment (as of 2017) was undertaken in preparing this Roadmap, covering 33 policies and planning documents:

   **Table 3. Planning Documents Analysed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Long-term Vision</td>
<td>Vision 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public Sector</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Administration, Strategic Plans 0 through 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Planning</td>
<td>Ministry of Planning Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **From planning to action: Prioritizing SDG accelerators**

3. **Financing the agenda**

4. **Monitoring and reporting: Data ecosystem**

5. **Engagement: Vision 2030 Action Campaign**

6. **Coordination: Institutional mechanisms**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Energy</td>
<td>Ministry of Energy Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Environment</td>
<td>Environmental Management Authority Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Environment</td>
<td>Management of Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Environment</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Oceans</td>
<td>Coastal Protection National Policy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Oceans</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Mgt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Oceans</td>
<td>IMA Implementation Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Oceans</td>
<td>Watershed Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Living Conditions</td>
<td>Ministry of Community Development Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Living Conditions</td>
<td>Ministry of Housing Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Living Conditions</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Utilities Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Living Conditions</td>
<td>National Population Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Economy</td>
<td>Ecotourism Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vol. 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Climate Change</td>
<td>National Climate Change Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Climate Change</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago INDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. ICT</td>
<td>2012 - 2016 National ICT Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Health</td>
<td>National Sexual and reproductive Health Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The methodology used for the alignment exercise is to map the SDG targets against the targets of the national planning documents to determine which of the following four categories the SDG targets fall under:

- Not relevant for the country: The SDG target is not relevant to country policy development or it relates to governance issues that must be solved at the regional or global level. One-hundred-fourteen SDG targets were deemed relevant for Trinidad and Tobago.
- Aligned: There is a target in the national planning document that corresponds to an SDG target, not only in text, but also in scope and ambition.
- Partially aligned: There is a target in the national planning document that corresponds to an SDG target, but not completely in either scope or ambition.
- Not aligned: There is no equivalent target in the national planning document to the SDG target in question.

Each SDG contains two types of targets: ‘issue’ targets (identified with numbers) and means of implementation targets, identified with letters. Only the issue targets are analysed.
Table 4 summarizes the results of the analysis. One-hundred-fourteen SDG targets were considered as relevant for the country for the purposes of the analysis. In aggregate, Trinidad and Tobago was found to be aligned, either fully or partially, with 81 percent of them. When considering alignment only with Vision 2030 for Trinidad and Tobago, again fully and partially, the level of alignment falls to 37 percent. Figure 2 illustrates the alignment level for all sectoral plans.

Annex 1 presents the alignment of the SDGs to the sectoral structure of the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2015-2018. Annex 2 details the SDG Target Analysis. The SDG Scorecard identifies the target or closest equivalent text from the corresponding planning document that reflects the issues addressed in the related SDG target.

As shown in Figure 1, the SDGs are grouped into coherent areas or themes (5 Ps). When considering the level of alignment and the level of aggregation of all the planning documents, the following alignment was determined (Tables 4 and 5 and Figure 2):

Table 4. Percentage of Alignment to SDGs Of All Planning Documents Analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDG</th>
<th># TARGETS CONSIDERED</th>
<th># TARGETS ALIGNED</th>
<th>#OF ALIGNED TARGETS WITH INDICATORS</th>
<th>% ALIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No Poverty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Zero Hunger</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Good Health and Well-being</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quality Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gender Equality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Affordable and Clean Energy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decent Work and Economic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Industry, Innovation and</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reduced Inequalities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sustainable Cities and</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Responsible Consumption and</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Climate Action</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Life below Water</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Life on Land</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Peace, Justice and Strong</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Partnerships for the Goals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Percentage of Alignment to SDG Thematic Area Of All Planning Documents Analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>TOTAL TARGETS CONSIDERED</th>
<th>TARGETS ALIGNED</th>
<th>% ALIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperity</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Alignment of All Planning Documents Analysed with the SDGs
Main Gaps Identified

Two types of gaps were identified:

- SDG targets are not reflected in the national planning framework.

  The main gaps in terms of SDG targets that are not reflected in the national plans are around the areas of gender equality, reduction of inequality, and partnerships. For SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (reduce Inequalities), three of the five relevant SDG targets were not reflected in the national planning documents. For SDG 17 (partnerships), five of the 14 relevant targets were not reflected in the national planning documents.

- SDG targets are reflected, but the national targets scope and ambition are less than those of the SDGs.

  The analysis finds that 50 percent of the SDG targets related to people fall under this category. For example, for SDG 1 (Poverty Reduction), 75 percent of targets are partially reflected in the national development plans, while only 25 percent are fully reflected. For planet targets, 41 percent are partially reflected. Notably, for SDG 15 (Life on Land), 67 percent of targets are partially reflected in national development plans.

3.2 From Planning to Action: Prioritizing SDG Accelerators

Given the ambition and breadth of Agenda 2030 and national development objectives and the implementation constraints facing government and other partners – in terms of financial, technical and
human resources – prioritization is indispensable. This means that not all objectives and SDGs can be pursued in tandem with the same emphasis. Priority should be given to a set of catalytic measures to accelerate progress across goals and targets, considering the integrated nature of the Agenda and the specific national context and balancing economic, social and environmental measures. Such catalytic measures are defined as accelerators. Accelerators refer to priority areas that, when tackled, can directly affect multiple development priorities and have a multiplier effect across the SDGs. Accelerators are identified through consultations and review of empirical evidence, building a theory of change that determines the pathway through which an accelerator can have maximum impact across SDGs. An analysis of challenges – and interventions to overcome them – for every accelerator is also conducted, resulting in a COMBO of interventions for SDG acceleration.

Five accelerators are proposed to catalyse progress towards the national development objectives laid out in Vision 2030 and the SDGs in Trinidad and Tobago. These accelerators are: (i) improving the performance of the social protection system; (ii) increasing access to justice; (iii) greening infrastructure for sustainable development; (iv) strengthening competitiveness and productivity for inclusive growth; and (v) establishing an integrated land and coastal management system.

Each of these accelerators is directly associated with one of the five focus areas of Vision 2030, but they are conceived to affect the entire development agenda and to reinforce each other (see Figure 3 below). A strong, efficient and effective social protection system, for example, is necessary not only to protect people from poverty and to improve social outcomes, but also to increase the productivity of the labour force and to enable the establishment of globally competitive businesses. This is particularly so in times of economic downturn. Increased access to justice not only contributes to a more secure Trinidad and Tobago, but also to improving the business environment and the overall well-being of people, particularly the poorest. Similarly, greening infrastructure for sustainable development not only improves the quality of infrastructure, but is also critical for achieving the goals of environmental sustainability, improved productivity and putting people first. Strengthening competitiveness and productivity will lead not only to sustained economic growth, but also to job creation that improves the lives of people. Finally, an integrated land and coastal management system protects not only the environmental resources of the country, but also the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable.
Figure 3. Identified Accelerators for Trinidad and Tobago

**Improve performance of social protection system**

In the context of economic contraction and declining revenues from the energy sector, a comprehensive, cost-efficient and effective social protection system, operating per a rights-based approach, is a critical investment to prevent people from falling into poverty and experiencing deprivation as well as to combat the intergenerational cycle of poverty. This is particularly critical for children, since global data indicates the effects of crisis are particularly detrimental to children. By stabilizing household incomes and aggregate demand, thereby contributing to economic recovery, employment and social cohesion, social protection can act as a buffer, protecting the poor and vulnerable from the negative effects of economic downturns. Now more than ever in Trinidad and Tobago, the already extensive social protection network in the country needs to equip people, particularly those at risk, with coping mechanisms to prevent them from falling into poverty, in its multiple dimensions. Trinidad and Tobago needs an efficient, agile and lean social protection system that invests in the human capital of people and is fit to respond to the needs of the poor and vulnerable during the ongoing recession.

Trinidad and Tobago’s social protection ecosystem is composed of more than 200 programmes spread out across various line ministries and agencies. The system comprises contributory and non-contributory

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31 UNICEF, Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development – 2017. First meeting-Mexico City, 26-28 April 2017
schemes as well as universal health access through public health facilities. Programmes include school feeding, economic rehabilitation, old-age pension, housing subsidized by preferential rates, agriculture incentives, education, emergency housing repair, school supplies, uniform, clothing, emergency cases fund, funeral grants, hardship relief programme, house rent subsidies, legal aid, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, disability assistance, special child grants and a myriad of other social programmes. However, most of these programmes are small. Only about a dozen programmes reached more than 10,000 people in 2016, including the National School Dietary Service, HIV Counselling and Testing Programme, Police Youth Clubs, Disability Assistance Grant, Senior Citizen’s Pension and the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer (TCCTP). There are also large social employment programmes such as the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) and the Community-Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP).  

Social spending in social protection has been on the rise for the past decades. Between 2010 and 2015, it increased from 17.7 percent of GDP to 24.3 percent. This budget is allocated across various social sector ministries including Social Development and Family Services, Community Development and Culture, Education, Health, Housing and Development, Sports and Youth Affairs, and the Tobago House of Assembly.

Despite the impressive number of programmes and range of social issues that they aim to tackle, there is an overall sense among those consulted that a lack of coordination among programmes contributes to significant duplications in benefits and inclusion and exclusion errors; provides strong disincentives to exit the welfare system; and often results in high programme administration costs. There is also a lack of available evaluations of the social protection system. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services publishes a yearly Social Sector Investment Programme, which includes information on budgets and the number of beneficiaries reached by each programme. However, there are important data gaps in terms of the populations each programme serves, the poverty profile of beneficiaries and the length of time they receive benefits. It is also not clear whether the programmes achieve their intended objectives of reducing poverty, vulnerability and deprivation.

**Challenges**

The more than 200 social programmes in Trinidad and Tobago are fragmented, falling under the responsibility of different line ministries, public organizations and local governments and developed as a response to specific problems without building on or offering complementarities with other programmes or broader public policies. As a result, criteria definitions for beneficiaries to gain access for each programme are also fragmented.

The danger of fragmented programmes is that, even when successful at alleviating the immediate consequences of poverty at certain points in people’s lives, they fail to address the underlying causes of deprivation and exclusion and to ensure that individuals do not fall behind when transitioning from one stage in life to another or when shocks occur. In Trinidad and Tobago, fragmentation occurs at various levels, including (i) between programmes, (ii) across sectors and (iii) at different stages in the life cycle.

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32 Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (2017)  
33 Idem.
when the transition from one stage to another is left uncovered. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, coordination between education programmes and school-to-work transition process is weak, missing an opportunity to enable individuals to increase their productivity and accumulate the assets they need to escape poverty and deprivation in the long term. Work-based learning should be an integral part of education and training to enable individuals to acquire workplace experience to facilitate their transition to decent employment.

People often have multiple social protection needs depending on gender, age and disability status, which require a package of complementary services and transfers (such as food, education, and child support grants; income support and vocational training) that demand coordination between institutions from the policy development stage to the practical implementation of programmes. In Trinidad and Tobago, although programmes for most social objectives exist, these are not coordinated, and beneficiaries are not supported during transition periods as their needs change. Information systems for each of these programmes are not integrated and it is impossible to cross-reference information between programmes. It is also not possible to see how many programmes a single household is enrolled on and the length of time for which they have received benefits. Fragmentation is also costly to the beneficiary and to the government. Currently, every scheme requires the completion of separate application forms by beneficiaries and separate investigations by the implementing agency.

A lack of coordination of policies and integrated management systems also prevents policymakers from making evidence-based policy choices. It is difficult to expand or to contract any given programme, to adjust benefits or to design new interventions if there is no sense of what is working.

There is an overwhelming sense among policymakers and the private sector that social assistance, particularly in the form of transfers and subsidies, has distorts the labour market and creates dependency. For some programmes, transfers and subsidies exceeded minimum wage and market rate salaries, which creates disincentives for people to move from social assistance towards productive work. Even when programme benefits are set below market wages, the duplication in benefits gained by some beneficiaries, due to a lack of coordination between programmes, creates a strong disincentive to graduate from social assistance.

Additionally, the way programmes are structured seems to inadvertently prevent specific groups from gaining access to them, even when the situation of those groups is dire. One such group is women victims of domestic violence, who might not meet the income threshold for receiving benefits because they are still legally married, but nonetheless are homeless and often responsible for childcare. Another example is homeless people who might not be able to provide proof of residence and thus are left out of social programmes. There is also some cutting in social spending underway for specific programmes, such as the Adolescent Mother’s Programme, which will severely affect young women.

Interventions towards Acceleration

Trinidad and Tobago has the institutional and financial capacity to establish a much more efficient and integrated social protection system centred around a rights-based approach. Per information collected during consultations, bilateral meetings and from relevant literature, the following interventions could
strengthen the performance of the social protection systems so that it has maximum impact in achieving the country’s priorities and the SDGs.

- **Programme Consolidation.** A comprehensive review of Trinidad and Tobago’s social programmes, as well as the legal framework that governs them, with a view to enhancing their coordination and improving their effectiveness is necessary. Many of the 200 programmes that exist today have similar objectives and target populations. A proposal to consolidate existing cash transfer programmes into a Consolidated Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP), which would include the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer programmes (TCCTP), Public Assistance Grant, and Dietary, Clothing, Education and School Supplies Grants, to eliminate duplicate processing and multiple targeting criteria for entry, has already been developed (although not approved). A more extensive review of the existing programmes would be necessary for specific recommendations regarding what to consolidate, but the country can benefit from a more clearly articulated social protection strategy that would identify objectives, prioritize budget allocations, identify timeframes and define responsibilities for implementation.34

Programme consolidation should set the stage for the implementation of a universal social protection floor, a set of basic social security guarantees that ensure, as a minimum, that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security. This includes unemployment insurance, which requires the expansion of the coverage of the National Insurance Board.

- **Unified Social Registry.** Much is already being done to address fragmentation and lack of coordination. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) is implementing the Biometric Card System and making the first steps towards establishing an integrated information technology (IT) system. The objective of the system is to facilitate the modernization and effective delivery of social services. This is a welcome step.

Going a step further, a unified social registry that serves programmes from all relevant line ministries and agencies is recommended. A unified social registry would collect, record and store updated and historical information on individual and household characteristics and circumstances to determine eligibility for certain programmes. The data could be compiled and unified from the data collection of the several existing programmes.

At an operational level, a unified social registry would allow for coordination, reduce duplication of efforts (for example, of data collection), combat fraud (by keeping track of which beneficiaries are receiving which benefits), improve efficiencies (for example, common payment systems, monitoring and evaluation) and ease the transition of beneficiaries between schemes as circumstances change, thereby ensuring continuation of services as needed. A unified social registry can also improve targeting across programmes by minimizing errors of exclusion and inclusion and improving the

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34 The ILO’s Assessment Based National Dialogue ([http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=3825](http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=3825)) is an internationally accepted and tested tool that to review existing programmes and propose consolidation.
transparency of targeting mechanisms. It would also allow for monitoring and evaluation of programmes and for informed policymaking and could facilitate the establishment of grievance mechanisms greatly. Finally, a unified social registry could also respond to emergencies if designed to include records of households that are vulnerable.

- **Operationalize social worker force and active search.** Despite the large extent of the social protection programmes, poverty remains high and is estimated to be increasing, which means that not everyone qualifying for benefits is enrolled to receive them. Several reasons were cited to explain this, including lack of information, difficulty enrolling and changing family circumstances (such as domestic violence that forces displacement). Efforts to enrol those poor households that have not applied to programmes could have important impacts on poverty levels as well as human capital formation. One way to reach this group could be through an ‘active search’ model, such as that applied in Brazil or Chile, where social workers actively search for qualifying beneficiaries.

Trinidad and Tobago already has a cadre of social workers employed by different ministries and agencies. They often overlap with each other and work in parallel even when reaching out to the same communities. Social work, however, is not deemed to be a professional career and few programmes are offered for skill development and training in this area. A consolidated, active and energized social work force, empowered to carry out the mandate of social protection, can facilitate entry into programmes for eligible households and have important implications in reaching those that need to be reached.

- **Integrate training and skills development services as part of social protection system.** The issue of productivity is of concern in Trinidad and Tobago. Maintaining a close connection between education and training, employers and employment policies creates an effective bridge between the world of learning and of work and securing decent employment. Given the role of the National Training Agency (NTA), employment services, Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), tertiary institutions and other stakeholders, it is feasible for these institutions to coordinate, design and deliver programmes on the basis of demand and to issues these individuals industry-recognized certificates to facilitate their transition to employment. There is great concern in the country that youth graduating from the education system are not well equipped to enter the labour force in a productive manner. Social protection can help men and women transition towards productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. Building human capital and improving productivity should be an underlying theme of all social protection programmes. For some programmes, this is already the case on paper. For example, the TCCTP is supposed to be conditional on training and skills development. In practice, however, this conditionality is rarely enforced and training and skills development opportunities are infrequently available. Although supposedly a short-term assistance programmes, it is estimated that beneficiaries stay enrolled in the TCCTP for many years. This link between short-term assistance and productive employment needs to be strengthened and enforced. This is relevant for TCCTP, but also for the large social employment programmes such as the URP and CEPAP implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government. Social workers helping households transition
from one programme to the next can play a critical role in referring beneficiaries to the many employment services already available through the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services.

Beyond training, policies need to ensure that the right incentives are set for people to engage in decent employment. Thus, it is critical for social protection programme designs to include incentives for transitioning to productive employment where appropriate and to build the productive capacities of individuals. This is particularly relevant for the large employment programmes, such as the URP and CEPEP, which represent a large portion of social sector expenditure. These programmes could be refined to include explicit training objectives that transition beneficiaries towards paid and self-employment long-term opportunities. Similarly, caps on the number of days a person can be employed in such programmes and setting wages at or below minimum wage could also be considered to avoid disincentives and labour market distortions.

- **Design incentives for healthier behaviours.** The weak link between social protection programmes and other sectors is evident when it comes to health. Social protection programmes, in particular social assistance, when designed appropriately, can be an important catalyst for behaviour change towards healthier lifestyles. This is particularly relevant in Trinidad and Tobago, where NCDs are such a prevalent health issue and need to be addressed through prevention mechanisms. Programmes such as the TCCTP could be used as a point of entry for complementary intervention to achieve related health outcomes. For example, the programme could require beneficiaries, or people interested in enrolling, to attend awareness seminars on nutrition, substance abuse, family health practices and healthy lifestyles. These types of interventions, called ‘cash-plus’ interventions, are already being implemented in several countries such as Ethiopia, Mali and Cameroon, with significant positive results. More innovatively, the Food Cards, through which the benefits are distributed, could be programmed to reward purchases of healthy foods such as raw vegetables and fruit. Such ‘outside-the-box’ thinking when designing social protection programmes could ensure multiple positive impacts, improved overall outcomes in the target populations and more value for money.

- **Strengthen the Interministerial Social Policy Committee.** Coordination between programmes requires strong coordination between the ministries responsible for implementing them. Trinidad and Tobago has already established an Interministerial Social Policy Committee that is responsible for coordinating policy development and implementation, monitoring and assessment throughout the social sector. It functions under the purview of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. This Committee could be further empowered to carry out some of the reforms outlined in this section. They could, for example, be tasked with overseeing the creation and management of the Unified Social Registry, with programme consolidations and with developing a comprehensive social protection strategy.
SDG Impact

Improving the performance of the social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago not only is critical to achieve Vision’s 2030 goal of ‘Putting people first’, but also contributes towards the SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10. Beyond directly targeting social objectives such as reducing poverty and inequality, a fine-tuned social protection system can have important implications on economic growth (Goal 8) by improving the productive capacity of people through improved health, education and access to labour markets. It can build the resilience of the most vulnerable, ensuring that the ongoing economic downturn does not result in the permanent deterioration of sustainable development outcomes. Finally, a rights-based social protection system extends the social contract to the poorest and most marginalized groups, strengthens social cohesion and increases peace and security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Vision 2030</th>
<th>Impact on Agenda 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Improve Performance of Social Protection System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty eradicated</td>
<td>1. POVERTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social service delivery</td>
<td>2. EAT HEALTHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family protection services</td>
<td>3. SUSTAINABLE AGRI-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy lifestyles</td>
<td>4. EDUCATE LIFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive capacity</td>
<td>5. GENDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>8. DECENT WORK OCCUP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase access to justice

Vision 2030 has prioritized solving and preventing crime; reform of the criminal justice system; and improved law enforcement systems. While this is aligned with the traditional public security approach that focuses on persons and property from threats such as physical aggression, criminal violence and terrorism, the citizen security approach recognizes that violence and insecurity is a multi-causal phenomena.
Figure 4. Violence: A Multi-causal Phenomenon

The citizen security approach therefore is not just a simple reduction of crime indicators. It must include an improvement of living conditions, access to justice (in an efficient and quick manner), peaceful coexistence and rule of law.

As was observed in 2012’s UNDP publication ‘Caribbean Human Development Report: Human Development and the shift to better Citizen Security’, “If the purpose of development is to widen human choice, the elevated rates of violent crime in the Caribbean may be taken as evidence of problematic development paths that leave far too many behind. [...] Within the region, crime may thus rightly be regarded as a problem that is profoundly developmental.”

While the government is fully cognizant of the need, Trinidad and Tobago has not yet fully embraced a citizen security approach to deal with the root causes and risk factors that affect crime, victimization and protection of vulnerable groups. The report further identifies the main institutions responsible for the implementation of citizen security as the police, the judiciary and the prison service.

Challenges

Gender-based violence is an important dimension of human insecurity, where insecurity begins in the home. The cultural notion that males need to be aggressive fuels male-on-male violence and violence against women. Corporal punishment of children is sanctioned by law and religion. Children growing up in violent households and those growing up with poor single mothers also tend to be at risk of perpetrating violence in adulthood. Women living in poverty experience additional vulnerabilities, such as higher likelihood of experiencing violence, adolescent pregnancy and infant mortality. Children are also disproportionately affected by crime and violence, experiencing a range of physical, emotional and

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35 UNDP (2012)
36 UNDP CHDR (2012)
sexual abuse in homes and families, communities, schools and institutions. The high prevalence rate of sexual violence including adolescent girls contributes to adolescent pregnancies, serious health issues and related socio-economic pressures.\textsuperscript{37}

Severe case backlog is one of the institutional deficiencies of the Trinidad and Tobago judicial system. The slow movement of cases through the justice system has created many serious problems, including overcrowding in the remand prison. According to the US State Department Human Rights Report, pre-trial detainees or remand prisoners represented over 60 percent of the prison population.\textsuperscript{38} Most persons under indictment waited from six to 10 years for their trial dates in the High Court. When cases move at an unacceptably sluggish rate through the courts, the accused and the victim are denied justice and immense pressure is placed on the entire system. Officials cited several reasons for the backlog, including an understaffed and underfunded prosecutorial office, a shortage of defence attorneys for indigent persons and the burden of the preliminary inquiry process.\textsuperscript{39}

Several much-needed improvements have been recently implemented to the Trinidad and Tobago justice system to alleviate this problem. In 2016, the new Criminal Procedure Rules were implemented to improve case management as they institute penalties for those who fail to make timely submissions to the court. When their counterpart – the Civil Procedure Rules – were introduced, they reduced the average time a case spent in civil court from 10 to 11 years to one to two years. An amendment to the Legal Aid and Advice Act that will work in tandem with the Criminal Procedure Rules was also introduced. The new law will stipulate the mandatory assignment of a public defender to an accused person if that person’s chosen attorney repeatedly fails to appear. The government urged Judicial Legal Services to address understaffing at the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) office, to which 33 new lawyers were recruited to reduce the backlog of cases in the system. Finally, The Commissioner of Police together with a unit in the Ministry of the Attorney General and the judiciary is establishing a national prosecution management system that will help police prosecutors prepare their cases on a timely basis. Once officers are prepared, it will reduce the number of unnecessary adjournments that contribute to delays.

There is a robust institutional framework in Trinidad and Tobago for dealing with crime and violence; it includes a wide range of state and non-state agencies. Improving crime prevention requires increasing coordination among ministries and deliberate attempts to integrate crime and violence prevention and reduction into other sectoral programmes/initiatives, such as those for education, health and economic development. This would address the root and proximate causes of crime and violence; prevent cases from ever needing to enter the justice system; and promote sustained security that does not rest primarily on police action and the imposition of discipline by the state.

\textsuperscript{37} Wiltshire (2015)
\textsuperscript{38} United States Department of State (2016)
\textsuperscript{39} Trinidad and Tobago UNCT (2016)
While many agencies and actors are involved in crime control efforts, there is need for increased coordination among the various agencies with respect to the approaches taken. Much of the legislation that has been developed or is in development is suppressive and focuses on increasing penalties and criminalizing a wider range of behaviours.

Over 100 criminal gangs in Trinidad and Tobago are linked to crimes related to weapons smuggling, fraud and other organized criminal activities. Indeed, existing research correlates gangs, guns and illegal drugs as the primary causes of the high rates of murder and other violent crimes in Trinidad and Tobago and shows that male youth between the ages of 14 to 24 are the predominant victims and perpetrators of serious criminal offences. However, youth in conflict with the law have not been routinely dealt with in accordance with international norms established by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The age of criminal responsibility is seven years, rather than the international minimum age of 12 years. This means that, so long as an individual has attained this age, he or she can be charged for an offence, including murder. Indeed, the criminal justice system has been undermined by inefficiencies due to outdated laws based on a retributive rather than restorative justice system; limited community-based diversion programmes for young people; shortages of judges; and poor police practices resulting in case back logs and insufficient resources for the judiciary.

Another important challenge in Trinidad and Tobago is recidivism. The recidivism rate is approximately 50 percent.

**Interventions for Acceleration**

- **Further legislative reform.** While the Children’s Act 2012 has significantly advanced the legal protection and institutional responses to children affected by violence and who have offended, further reforms are required to bring legislation pertaining to children into greater compliance with international minimum standards.

- **Communication for development.** A comprehensive cross-cutting, evidence-based and participatory process to promote measurable behaviour and social change is integral to changing mind-sets and attitudes that tolerate some forms of violence against women and children. This should include facilitating community dialogue and analysis, framing positive public narratives and stimulating social non-acceptance of negative social factors, including gender inequities.

- **Enhanced capacity for prosecution and legal defence.** Strengthening the effectiveness of the justice system, particularly the criminal justice system, including enhancing efficiency of the courts system, prosecution, law enforcement and equitable access to justice in a key priority in the country.

Efforts such as the Juvenile Court Project,\(^{40}\) which strengthens the capacity of the judiciary to deal with juvenile matters using a rehabilitative and less retributive approach, need to be expanded. This programme aims to increase the number and quality of preventative and

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\(^{40}\) The Juvenile Court Project is a USAID/Trinidad and Tobago Government-funded project and is supported by UNDP.
diversionary programmes and to reduce the rate of repeat offending. The three components of the project are the development of a children’s court system, including two children’s courts; the conducting of a pilot peer resolution programme; and the conducting of a Public Education and Sensitization programme that improves awareness of and interest in juvenile reform initiatives. The project is at an advanced stage, with work to outfit two court buildings, one in south Trinidad and one in the north. Additionally, legislation has been amended; court rules, policies and procedures for handling juvenile matters have been developed; a table of equivalencies with the UN Office of Drugs and Crime has been developed; multi-agency and inter-agency protocols have been developed; an IT-based case management system is being developed; and capacity-building to support the juvenile court to manage cases has been undertaken. Adoption of this approach to reform and expansion of activities could strengthen the criminal justice system.

Greater efforts should also be made to strengthen policing and police investigative capacities. This includes the capacity to monitor and respond to gang-related violence, enhancing community policing to build trust and improving technology for crime investigation.

- **Criminal justice reform and increased coordination.** Coordination needs to be improved between the state and non-state agencies that deal with crime and violence. A prevention-focused approach to violence and crime will require a wide range of sectors, including health and education. The Citizen Security Programme (CSP), an initiative of the Ministry of National Security (MNS), is a step in this direction. The objective of contributing to the reduction in crime and violence in over 100 ‘high-needs’ pilot communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. It is a primary violence prevention programme whose methodology is based on three pillars: 1) combining community action; 2) assistance to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; and 3) institutional strengthening of the MNS. The programme’s methodology focuses on: addressing key identified risk factors based on the ecological approach to violence prevention; working with individuals, communities and the broader society across the country; and providing them with the tools, knowledge and support required to identify and deal with the risk factors related to violence.

The collection and sharing of data related to crime and violence need to be strengthened, especially with respect to gender-based violence, through legislation and by improving data-sharing systems. Currently, each agency and organization that deals with crime has the capacity to determine what data is useful to them and what aspects, if any, can be shared.

**SDG Impact**

Justice and security underpin the capacity of the state to implement policies to achieve the SDGs. Thus, the accelerator to increase access to justice not only contributes to SDG 16 on peace and justice, but can also improve gender equality and the sustainability of cities and reduce inequalities, as identified by the mapping of national goals and outcomes of the SDGs. Additionally, the proposed accelerator can contribute to education (Goal 4), poverty reduction (Goal 1) and economic growth (Goal 8) by altering
the current structure where people that have committed a crime have a very slight change of being reincorporated into society.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Vision 2030</th>
<th>Impact on Agenda 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficient and effective law enforcement</td>
<td>Increased access to justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good governance and service excellence</td>
<td>Safe and secure place to live, visit and do business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in the judiciary system</td>
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Greening infrastructure for sustainable development

The quality of infrastructure for water provision, waste management and transportation constitutes a key challenge for the economy. Service provision in these areas presently suffers from the following challenges:

1. Aging infrastructure
2. Suboptimal investment in and coverage of infrastructure
3. Inefficiencies in service delivery
4. Underpricing

Vision 2030 emphasizes the need for ensuring quality infrastructure and transportation. With urban areas expanding and populations concentrating around major cities, Trinidad and Tobago needs to ensure adequate investment in sustainable infrastructure to drive economic growth and sustainable development. The following interventions are required under this accelerator.

Enhance Service Delivery

Trinidad and Tobago needs to increase the efficacy and efficiency of the aforementioned public services. This could be done by streamlining institutional mandates, enforcing an updated regulatory framework and bringing in the private sector as a service provider.

Streamline institutional mandates to reduce overlap or gaps
Multiple institutions have mandates in the management of the water resources and solid waste, at times overlapping. In the case of solid waste management, 11 entities with different responsibilities are currently operating with different responsibilities\textsuperscript{41}, which result in fragmentation of service delivery and weak enforcement of waste legislation. The reasons is simple: as new pieces of policy and legislation were approved over time, new responsibilities were defined without adequate reference to previously established roles.

In other cases, there needs to be better coordination. For instance, in the case of water provision, WASA is charged with the utilization of the resource and the promotion of the management of the water resource. However, protection of watersheds is a responsibility of the Division of Forestry, a situation which results in lack of clarity as to the extent of WASA’s mandate. For example, there is limited current understanding of the relationship between water availability and watershed degradation, including deforestation and fire induced degradation. With declining reserves of freshwater resources per capita,\textsuperscript{42} increasing freshwater consumption and further pressures on the resource likely as a consequence of future climate change impacts,\textsuperscript{43} this situation needs to be remedied to secure the resource.

In this light, subsectors would benefit from a comprehensive assessment of institutional roles and responsibilities. Accompanying reform is needed to establish clear mandates across the different levels of government for service delivery and management of the resource. This will not only streamline service delivery, but also clarify accountabilities for service provision to the general population.

\textit{Update and strengthen regulatory frameworks and enforcement}

Pollution is a significant and growing problem in parts of the country. This is partly explained by the absence of adequate legislation – and thus enforcement – around waste and wastewater management.

While there is a national policy on solid waste, this is not accompanied by adequate umbrella legislation and regulations, which de facto prevents the setting and enforcement of standards for solid waste disposal and management. As the country simplifies institutional mandates, it should enact solid waste legislation, set standards, define contraventions and assign clear monitoring and enforcement responsibilities.

Similarly, legislation needs to be enacted for non-point sources of pollution – for example, agriculture – not addressed in the current legislation, i.e., the Water and Wastewater Act. This Act, passed in 1965, predates rapid industrialization of the country.

On the other hand, the law does try to tackle discharges from point sources, particularly through a pre-emptive permitting system. However, the Environmental Management Authority’s mandate is restricted in dealing with non-compliance. Long implementation and legal processes and the lack of authority to conduct ‘cease and desist’ or similar measures to address malfeasance weaken enforcement.

\textsuperscript{41} EMA (2011)  
\textsuperscript{42} Aquastat (2014)  
\textsuperscript{43} Trinidad and Tobago Second National Communication to the UNFCCC (2013)
In the transport sector, the Public Transport Service Act 1965 states that the Public Transport Service Corporation is the sole operator of the country’s commercial bus service, thus preventing the development of privately owned bus services. As new forms of service delivery are thought out and implemented, a clear regulatory framework delineating a space for the participation of the private sector is needed.

Public-private partnerships for service delivery

Private sector investment could facilitate the thrust towards more environmentally sustainable process and create jobs. This is especially relevant under the current financial constraints confronting the country, where it becomes clear that the state should not be the sole bearer of the costs of the country’s infrastructure. Getting the private sector to invest in infrastructure is a necessity and public-private partnerships will need to be explored to address service provision needs in the water, waste and transportation sectors.

One possible area of work is water treatment for household distribution. WASA has historically not been able to generate sufficient water supply to meet the national demand and therefore private providers could fill that gap through the construction and operation of water treatment plants.

Similarly, waste water treatment plants do not need to be operated by the public utility. Under a PPP, a private supplier can finance, install and operate a treatment plant in exchange for fees for effluent treatment.

Solid waste can also be utilized as a resource, improving environmental sustainability. Trinidad and Tobago has an average per capita waste generation rate of 1.5 kg / day, higher than the regional 1.1 kg/day level. During the consultations, it was mentioned that a recent survey in the context of public consultations around the National Environmental Policy indicated that 41% of the population would be willing to pay for recycling waste in the interest of protecting the environment. Also, there already exist a few private operators that collect waste in households for recycling upon payment of a fee. This context suggests there should be opportunities for recycling and re-using waste through PPPs.

In the transport sector there are several alternatives. For the investment in the much-needed expansion of the road network and maintenance, toll roads could be an option. Also, it is not necessary that buses are operated by the public sector as long as there are provisions that the private operators serve isolated communities. All cases should consider low emissions alternatives.

Modernize Infrastructure and Promote Investment

Implement innovative financial instruments

Scaling up infrastructure requires considerable investment and this presents a great challenge in the current economic context. For this very reason, it is essential that the government reshapes how infrastructure is planned and financed, strengthens partnerships between the public and private sectors.

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44 CAP-M research (2008)
45 EMA (2011)
46 World Bank (2014)
and considers the adoption of innovative financial instruments. Options such as green bonds, are covered in section 4.3 of this document. Private sector involvement in service provision will necessitate pricing reforms—and investors will need to secure a return on investment.

**Service Pricing Reform**

Fuel is inexpensive, solid waste disposal is free, and water and wastewater tariffs are outdated. As a result, the public has a distorted view of these goods and services—considering them to be free. Eliminating subsidies will enable market forces to shape the use individuals and enterprises make of these public services, contributing to rationalization and efficiency.

Reduction of fuel subsidies has already been covered, but it is worth to stress its importance. If subsidies are removed, then people will more likely use public transport demand quality and reliable service.

There needs to be a comprehensive review of the tariff system for water and waste water. WASA is financially unsustainable, only recovers 30 percent of their operation costs and has never made a profit in its 50 years of existence. This is not surprising, as WASA charges flat rates for households that range between 1.23 and 1.39 TT (approx. US$0.2) per cubic meter of water – a rate well below the regional average of US$1.65 per cubic meter. On the other hand, actual costs are considerably higher, ranging from 2.20 to 3.3.7 TT per cubic meter. The government needs to account for the true value of water and incorporate it in a tariff reform that considers formulas other than flat rates, such as volumetric or tiered rates.

Solid waste costs are entirely born by the national and local governments. Establishing a fee on waste disposal would help firms and households to internalize the cost of such services and thus encourage waste reduction. Other measures such as a deposit for recycled goods to be recovered by users can encourage higher recycling rates.

Pricing reforms of services that have traditionally been subsidized should be accompanied by important efforts around public awareness to change attitudes and behaviours towards proper water use, waste management and fuel utilization.

**Technological advancements**

Modernizing infrastructure also implies bringing into the country technological advances that allow for the enhancement of service delivery, reduce negative externalities (including greenhouse gas emissions) and spark economic opportunities.

For example, WASA receives an average of 3,500-4,500 reports of leaks each month, resulting in frequent disruptions in the water supply. As the country invests in replacing an aging water pipeline network, it should consider promoting high-end solutions that reduce costs, increase precision and allow for real-time monitoring of the service, such as smart network management. Enhancing the capacity of the planning actors is important; particularly in the water and transport sectors, adopting downscaled climate models to assess local vulnerability will be key.

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47 CAP-M Research (2008)
48 ECLAC (2013)
49 CAP-M Research (2008)
During the consultations, one of the most frequently cited reasons for the low usage of public transport services was safety, especially for women. A modernized transport infrastructure system should construct shelters for public transit customers and install cameras on buses. This would improve safety. Waste-to-energy operations could be an attractive option, particularly as more than 50 percent of average household waste is paper and organic material.\textsuperscript{50}

**SDG Impact**

Greening infrastructure for sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago is not only essential to achieve Vision’s 2030 goal of ‘Quality infrastructure and transportation’, but ensures that the environment is placed at the centre of development. Actions towards this accelerator can also contribute towards the SDGs 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Vision 2030</th>
<th>Impact on Agenda 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business innovation &amp; entrepreneurship</td>
<td>15 Life on land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient transport system</td>
<td>14 Life below water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive destination for investment</td>
<td>12 Sustainable cities and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve solid waste management</td>
<td>13 Climate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner and healthier environment</td>
<td>11 Sustainable cities and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Quality Infrastructure and Transportation</td>
<td>10 Reduced inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved public utilities</td>
<td>9 Industry innovation and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern technology</td>
<td>8 Clean energy access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy efficiency</td>
<td>7 Clean water and sanitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strengthening competitiveness and productivity for inclusive growth\textsuperscript{51}**

Trinidad and Tobago’s short- to medium-term macro-economic outlook is highly uncertain and subject to significant downside risks. During the commodities boom, expenditure increased steadily from 27 percent of GDP in 2004 to 37 percent in 2015. Transfers and subsidies accounted for nearly 70 percent of the expansion of public expenditure, rising from 12 percent of GDP to 19 percent in 2004-2015 and currently represent nearly half the government budget.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} EMA (2011)
\textsuperscript{51} This section includes contributions and input from the ILO Caribbean Regional Office.
\textsuperscript{52} IADB Country Strategy with Trinidad and Tobago
There is less evidence that this increased expenditure has yielded improvements in competitiveness or productivity. In some cases, it has masked underlying economic challenges and reduced incentives to adjust to new market realities. Additionally, despite the impressive number of support programmes to MSMEs, there are few evaluations of how these grant funds, preferential loans and other forms of subsidies and incentives have promoted business productivity, built productive capacity or created new businesses.

The government has begun to tackle the challenge of adjusting fiscal policy and, with the outlook for flat to zero growth, to intensify efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Central to this is to build a more competitive economy, one that improves productivity but also ensures that any growth is broad-based, jobs-rich and ‘green-enhancing’. The government has recognized this through establishing a goal of Building Competitive Business, as part of its vision for the country.

There is strong recognition of the need to change the economic model of Trinidad and Tobago to maximize the benefits from the remaining oil and gas endowment, but also to set up a more diversified and green-based economy. These challenges and reform proposals are well documented in Vision 2030, various government economic statements and recent country strategy documents from Trinidad and Tobago’s IFI partners, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)\(^1\) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).\(^53\)

In addition, several common themes were highlighted as being key to facilitating growth: 1) an effective diversification strategy based on improving the business environment and, where needed, supporting specific sectors. This included new policies and enabling government regulation that orientated towards fostering new businesses outside oil and gas, such as tourism, agribusiness, maritime, financial services and light manufacturing; 2) improved productivity – in Trinidad and Tobago, the challenges were described as being a poor work ethic, low productivity and high absenteeism, with the country having the fifth highest rate of workplace absenteeism in the world\(^54\); and 3) improving labour relations and dialogue between management and workers, particularly at the organization/company level.

Specifically, consultations highlighted the need to focus such a strategy on: 1) export orientation (and capacity to earn foreign currency); 2) job creation; 3) reliance on local resources and adding value to them; 4) support to micro, small and medium enterprises; and 5) promotion of a more harmonious industrial relations system, including labour law revisions; and 6) quality research and innovation.

Bringing more centrality to labour and employment through a well-articulated, decent work agenda can help link the goals of economic growth and job creation with the principle of putting people first. This places labour and employment at the centre of development solutions, which can also help break the slow growth trap and rekindle the desired virtuous cycle of increased investment, rising productivity and sustainable wage and consumption growth.

Within the government’s broad economic agenda, the roadmap considers the pursuit of a four-pronged approach to identifying a pathway to sustainable economic development and macro-economic stability. First, re-shaping its oil and gas policy and strategies to attract investment and improve the industries’ global economic competitiveness against the realities of the global oil and gas markets and prices.

\(^53\) Caribbean Development Bank (2017)
\(^54\) Quality Consultants Limited (2016)
(including greening the sector). Second, supporting new growth opportunities in non-oil sectors such as tourism, financial services and agriculture to diversify and reduce the shocks of oil price fluctuations on the economy. Third, implementing microeconomic reforms to improve business competitiveness through regulatory easing, infrastructure investments (such as roads and use of ICT) and measures to improve productivity (such as skills enhancement, personal and professional development, safe and healthy working conditions, fair income, equality of opportunity and treatment, and improved labour relations between employers and workers). Improving productivity will also require an improved firm-level dialogue between employers and workers (labour-management cooperation) and addressing the high rate of absenteeism, through such tools as building a more engaged workforce and improving organizational cultures by better management. And fourth, fiscal consolidation through policy actions to rationalize expenditure and improve current expenditure, maintain adequate levels of revenues and enhance public services. The improved targeting and efficiency of social expenditure (which is large relative to many other countries) could yield further social and economic dividends.

Within this broad economic reform agenda, the Roadmap considers several distinct strategies for prioritization that focus on accelerating competitiveness and productivity for inclusive growth.

- **Economic Diversification** – There is already a strong commitment to economic diversification. Research and analysis were already underway by the government, research institutes, international financial institutional partners and locally through the Economic Development Advisory Board. This analysis needs to evaluate policy action and programme interventions. A diversification strategy needs to address a number of areas simultaneously and could include a focus on attracting greater investment; promoting research and development; and incentivizing innovation and technology in the non-energy sector. There is untapped potential in the tourism and agribusiness sectors and significant potential to explore tapping into ‘green economy’ opportunities, including the more effective use of the Green Fund (with orientation toward greater results and capital investment). Cost benefit analysis, comparing the investments need and the potential added revenue for the country, would need to be conducted to assess the viability and profitability of the sector.

The government has an active programme to reform and overhaul its public procurement policies and processes. Well-designed public procurement policies can support economic diversification and inclusive growth and provide opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It must also be least distortionary and maximize the allocation of resources in the public purchase of goods and services. In this regard, many actions — such as set-asides for MSMEs; ensuring low entry/exit costs for MSMEs to participate in tenders; the application of domestic margins of preference, and domestic content requirements — can support MSMEs and economic diversification. Ensuring that regulations and processes maintain accountability but are simple and accessible to MSMEs, is critical to successful policy. Complementing procurement policy with practical support to MSMEs on 1) how to tender, 2) support for the development of partnerships to bring to scale tender bids, 3) the development of a platform for MSMEs to connect large and small private sector businesses and 4) dedicated support for MSMEs managed
by women or young entrepreneurs, are components that can increase the inclusiveness and impact of public procurement policies.

- **Enabling Environment** – A stable and strong macroeconomic environment is critical for business confidence and business risk-taking. It is clear that the country is in a process of tax and subsidy reform. Already, major decisions have been taken on VAT, income, fuel subsidies and property taxes. A continued review programme on taxes and subsidies will be necessary to test the economic and social rationale for the tax, subsidy or transfer, its efficacy in delivering on the stated objective, and its fiscal impact. This must accompany continual review of business legislation, competition rules and goods market regulation that balances efficiency, fairness, ease of entry and exit into markets, and entrepreneurship.

- **A Review of State-owned Enterprises (SOEs)** offers major opportunities to deliver better dividends to the government and citizens. A thorough resetting of the value proposition of SOEs’ contribution to national development through an overarching regulatory framework for SOEs could yield major dividends. This could be sequenced with a review of transfers and subsidies to SOEs, the development of financial performance benchmarks, clearer delineation of the economic and social purpose of SOEs, and accountability of boards.

- **Productive Capacity** – Vision 2030 recognizes that people are at the centre of development. While unemployment is still relatively low in Trinidad and Tobago, it is steadily rising and underemployment is an issue. There is also an increasing view that there is a mismatch between the current skills of the labour force and future needs. Additionally, a focus on productive capacity offers opportunities to grow business and to create new businesses and new and decent jobs. This all has strong links to international competitiveness. Specific policy interventions could include:
  - Implement a human capital development action plan that embeds detailed profiling of private and public sector (especially health) skills, including implementable, data-oriented mechanisms for skills anticipation.

- Reform of the labour administration system. This should build on current efforts such as the draft papers on the policy to amend the Industrial Relations Act and the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act, which were prepared on the basis of national consultations and discussion by a tripartite working group and were submitted to the Cabinet in January 2017 for consideration. The ongoing legislative agenda incorporates current consultations regarding the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Workmen’s Compensation Act, the Basic Terms and Conditions of Work (which would cover, inter alia, contract workers) and the planned consultations, including the private security officers’ legislation. Labour administration reform should improve industrial relations, labour legislation (including contract labour) and the economy’s performance in terms of occupational health and safety (number of accidents, monitoring system), labour courts (access, waiting time, effectiveness) and dispute settlement mechanisms that include increased awareness of rights and obligations towards and within the
workforce. Such reform will depend on building greater trust and transparency and, if successful, can substantially increase labour productivity.

- Tripartite discussions (based in NTAC and other tripartite bodies) to introduce changes in legislation, regulations and other policy programmes addressing key productivity enhancing elements in the public and private sectors, including flexible working time, telework, systematic results-based performance management, and the performance incentive system.

- Ecosystem for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises – Implementation of a results-based system of business support services. Within the broader context of enhanced public service delivery, after acknowledging that a number of services are provided by a number of agencies (in both Trinidad and Tobago), there is a widespread consensus that the results from the system are not up to speed with the needs. Several elements of concern have been highlighted: from inadequacy of loan applications from entrepreneurs; lack of awareness of existing incentives, services and products; limited accessibility of services from the most disadvantaged entrepreneurs; the need for more extensive consultations with the private sector; the need to prioritize export orientation and employment generation; the opportunity to promote cooperatives and social enterprises. Overall, a reform of the system of business support aimed at warranting effectiveness and impact is needed.

Supporting SMEs as driver for private sector expansion and economic diversification will be especially critical to building economic resilience for those parts of the population at risk of sliding back into poverty due to the economic downturn in the Trinidadian and Tobagoan economy. Indeed, there are several elements of the SME support eco-system that exist from the public and private sectors. The government’s commitment to SME development is evident through the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development within which the Enterprise Development Unit sits. The Trinidad and Tobago SME Policy of 2014 identifies five pillars necessary for supporting the development of successful small businesses – business development services, SME financing, market networks, business environment and governance and advocacy. Notwithstanding this policy, many challenges that SMEs experience could be addressed through a more joined-up business development eco-system. This will facilitate the formation and sustainability of SMEs in Trinidad and Tobago. Among the interventions that could be considered are:

- Formation of a Small Business Development Council that brings together the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Labour, NEDCO, IBIS, DFI, commercial banks, MFIs, green fund, Ministry of Planning, Tamana InTech Park and other relevant stakeholders. This will represent a major step in achieving a more coordinated, joined-up approach to SME development, support and expansion. It could also serve as an advisory mechanism to guide implementation of the 2014 SME policy. This will complement the role of the Enterprise Development Unit in the Ministry of Labour by positioning the unit as a central coordination platform for public and private sector initiatives.
• **Virtual Support System for SMEs (VSME)** – This type of electronic platform can support SMEs navigate the process of registration, obtaining licenses and payment of taxes. It can also be an access point to a register of government and private service providers such as NECO and IBIS. One possibility is to link the Single Electronic Window of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment with this VSME as a means of streamlining the work of the ministry insofar as MSME support and development is concerned. This will open to MSMEs many options for support and can be a basis for coordinating service providers. Administrative and legislative reforms to enable e-payments to government will be critical to improving the ease of doing business as a SME and, for that matter, the larger private sector. There is also an opportunity to integrate e-procurement and e-tendering options into a single e-platform to provide a one-stop shop for small businesses.

• Setting up of a **business innovations platform** that identifies growth-oriented MSMEs and link them to the financing and support services needed. This innovation platform should aim to link the work of the Arthur Lock Business School, the Tamana InTech Park and other related initiatives.

• **SME Financing** – Improving access to financing for SMEs is an urgent priority. Among the opportunities in this area are: better linkage between the green fund and SMEs, especially considering the plan of the enterprise development unit to launch a green enterprise development programme in the 2018 fiscal year. It would also be important to rationalize the work of the NEDCO to improve greater financing efficiencies, improving capacity of MSMEs through more targeted BDS to growth-oriented SMEs to enable access to government procurement opportunities. A key issue here is improving the credit worthiness of MSMEs, which will require more tailored support for preparing bankable proposals and identifying innovative group-guarantee mechanisms to reduce risk to financing institutions. The Enterprise Investment Fund can target those innovative SMEs that would otherwise find it difficult to access financing due their novel business ideas that render them ‘riskier’ and thus less attractive to commercial lenders. Development of a system to increase (fair) lending and insurance propensity of national private financial institutions. Loan guarantees, disaster insurance and extension of the customers’ basis to the perceived riskier share of customers – these are priorities to be addressed and that can generate significant ripple effect. Suitable schemes and, if needed, public private partnerships for sharing risks need to be considered and implemented.

**Incentives for MSMEs** – A clearer incentive regime could stimulate SME sector activities across the country. This could include taking stock of past experiences (in order not to repeat the same mistakes) imposing strict conditions on incentives that ought to replicate the criteria for a development strategy, i.e., export orientation, employment generation and environmental sustainability. In addition, we propose fostering greater access to public procurement for growth-oriented SMEs that locally produce products that can replace imports. This would significantly diversify the economy while creating incentives for business innovation. A thorough review of the incentives for MSMEs would be a reasonable starting point.
SDG Impact

Strengthening competitiveness for inclusive growth in Trinidad and Tobago is critical to accelerate progress towards Vision’s 2030 goal of ‘Building globally competitive businesses.’ Actions towards this accelerator can also contribute to the achievement of SDGs 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

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<th>Impact on Vision 2030</th>
<th>Impact on Agenda 2030</th>
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<tr>
<td>Macroeconomic stability</td>
<td>Strengthen Competitiveness and Productivity for Inclusive Growth</td>
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<td>Business environment for entrepreneurs hip</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Building Globally Competitive Businesses</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination for investment and trade</td>
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<td>Products and services for global market</td>
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Integrated land and coastal management

Trinidad and Tobago today experiences significant land and coastal degradation, reflected in forest cover loss and coastal erosion. The following umbrella challenges need to be addressed:

1- Environmentally unfriendly behaviour
2- Undervalued ecosystem services
3- Weak enforcement of environmental legislation
4- Fragmented land planning

Vision 2030 emphasizes the need to place the environment at the centre of social and economic development. The country needs to approach landscape management as an integrated approach that considers the linkages among land, water and forests in order to preserve ecosystem services, sustain livelihoods and foster climate resilience. The following recommendations, if accepted, can contribute to this vision and accelerate implementation of the SDGs.
Strengthen Protected Area System

The country has a small, fragmented and ecologically underrepresented protected area system. While there are 74 official protected area sites, covering an estimated 35 percent of total terrestrial surface area and 3 percent of total marine surface area, these have been created under around 30 policies and pieces of legislation that do not account for the needs of the system as a whole in order to ensure biogeographic representation and to protect ecosystem functions. Additionally, with a few exceptions, PAs are not staffed and there is no consistent monitoring and enforcement of legislation within them.

The country should conduct a nationwide assessment of the ecological values of all land and protect those areas which have the highest value for ecosystem services, such as provision of water or protection against disasters (including climate change-induced perturbation), as storehouses of biodiversity or as important areas for recreation and tourism, among others. Accordingly, there is a need to expand protected areas and consolidate all existing sites under a single protected area system.

A well-functioning PA management system needs clearly defined institutional roles and responsibilities. Currently, up to eight different institutions have mandates related to protected areas and interventions are not effectively coordinated. For instance, conservation is a responsibility of the Regional Cooperations, which lack the human and financial resources to undertake it. On the other hand, most areas fall under the supervision of the Forestry Division, which has a mandate not for conservation, but for timber management in state lands. A key recommendation therefore is to assess current mandates and define the authority for management of the protected area system.

For the PA system to function effectively and efficiently, it needs to have a business plan for its administration that considers its financial sustainability. In this light, it is important to consider options to generate revenue that help in financing conservation. One possibility involves establishing a fee system for the recreational use of protected areas and the services provided within them. A complementary measure directed to private landowners within PAs is defining a scheme of payment for ecosystem services or conservation easements in order to foster conservation.

Enhanced Land Planning System

The current process of land allocation does not take into account the value of ecosystem goods and services, which may have negative economic and social consequences. For example, evidence shows that many biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services are in decline. Flooding episodes have become more severe and occur more frequently in those areas that have experienced the most land degradation, such as western Trinidad.

Land allocation and the definition of the best use for particular land areas is a trade-off exercise. Valuing them would allow decision makers to identify the lands where these services are most critical and to take measures to protect those lands as critical natural capital while freeing other lands to be exploited.

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55 World Bank (2017)
56 EMA (2011)
57 EMA (2010)
for other uses. This trade-off is about unleashing the economic value of the environment and safeguarding ecosystem services while allowing economic activities.

The land allocation process would benefit from modern technological support. Land use planning is based on a series of variables that can be displayed spatially such as zoning, population density, soil type, forest cover, floodplains, etc. Geographic Information System (GIS) data is currently held by different institutions and is not pooled. Aggregating this information under a single roof and making it available to analysts can support land allocation efforts as well as other dimensions of development planning.

Land use planning would also benefit from better application of the mitigation hierarchy ‘Avoid-Reduce-Restore-Offset’ regarding biodiversity. The mitigation hierarchy is a best practice for risk management concerning biodiversity that signals that efforts should be prioritized to avoid impacts to biodiversity and then to reduce those impacts to a minimum, restore any possible adverse effects and finally offset or compensate for residual impacts to biodiversity.

Trinidad and Tobago is a small island development state and, as such, is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Sea level rise is of particular concern, especially considering the significant coastal erosion – up to 0.9 metres per year – in some parts of the coastal belt.\(^5^8\) Climate change scenarios need to be taken into account in land planning and measures to increase the country’s resilience and avoid losses. A recent study\(^5^9\) shows that losses due to tropical storms could increase between 17 percent and 63 percent in a return period of 50 years due to climate change effects.

This vulnerability provides additional justification for considering ecosystem services in the planning process. For example, restoration of coastal ecosystems such as mangrove forests, salt marshes or coral reefs will help buffer storm surges and saline water intrusion derived from sea level rise, protecting human settlements, infrastructure and freshwater reserves.

**Ensure Regulatory Enforcement**

Effective land management requires a strong regulatory enforcement framework. Currently, implementation and enforcement of certain laws is weak.

There are problems with occupation of state lands. In Nariva Swamp, for example, illegal large-scale rice farming has resulted in considerable ecological changes to the wetland.\(^6^0\) The Water and Sewerage Act establishes that riverine corridors belong to the state, but there is no authority to enforce this and infrastructure has been developed along riverbanks. Today, only the Commission of State Lands can act upon illegal land occupation and action takes years to take effect. This provides little disincentive against malfeasance.

There is also a need to improve interception and prosecution of polluters.

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\(^5^8\) Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (2013)

\(^5^9\) IADB (2014)

\(^6^0\) Institute of Marine Affairs (2015)
Promote Sustainable Land Use Practice

In the current context, economic diversification of the country will require that some difficult choices be made. Investment is guided by dividends, so the country needs to identify spaces of opportunity and adopt innovative models that allow participation of non-state actors.

The natural capital of both Tobago and Trinidad is an asset and opportunity to bank in terms of land use. Some experiences in the country are related to community-based tourism and eco-tourism from which lessons should be drawn and exported to the rest of the country. Nature-based tourism options are a potential niche that can be developed around terrestrial and marine ecosystems, including trails, bird watching, adventure options and scuba diving.

In other sectors, options include innovative agriculture and agro-processes focused on higher value biological assets such as cocoa or pepper, grown under ecologically sound practices; and sustainable fisheries, through the implementation of the country’s Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy Framework that considers the adoption of greener practices and technologies.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the country needs to share the costs of environmental protection with non-state actors. One option is to develop payment for ecosystem services schemes to enhance sustainable land use and protect and ensure availability of key resources such as water. However, if this type of system is expected to work, there needs to be a comprehensive pricing reform that reflects the true price of ecological services and sufficiently funds the process.

Working with the private sector to ensure offsetting of their activities is something that happens around the world more and more frequently. Trinidad and Tobago has positive experiences with Petrotrin, for example, working on environmental conservation at the local level. There is space for learning from this practice and for building good practices into national policies that enable the private sector to contribute to conservation.

SDG Impact

A healthy environment in Trinidad and Tobago requires an integrated land and coastal management that hinders degradation and erosion. A healthy environment is closely interlinked to the social and economic dimensions of the SDGs including on poverty reduction, access to water, economic growth and building sustainable cities and communities.
3.3 Integrating SDGs into Budgets and Financing the SDG Agenda

Achieving Trinidad and Tobago’s national development priorities and realizing the SDGs will require significant investments in an increasingly economically/financially unstable period. Public budgets alone will not suffice in the short term due to the austerity resulting from low revenues from oil and three consecutive years of recession. Despite challenges, financial austerity might create opportunities to re-orient public spending (e.g., fuel subsidies at 2 percent of GDP) and introduce smart taxation (e.g., taxation on tobacco, gaming and environmental externalities). A multifaceted financing strategy may accompany the identification of SDG accelerators to reduce the likelihood that public resource constraints will have a major impact on the country’s aspirations. Given de facto ineligibility to access traditional ODA, innovative solutions may be considered, as may be measures for better targeting public investment and increased effectiveness of social and environmental spending.

**Ways Forward**

As an energy-dependent economy, Trinidad and Tobago has experienced large swings in national wealth and its fiscal policies have been highly pro-cyclical. In recent years, Trinidad and Tobago has insufficiently saved and invested in its future, given the size of energy revenue windfalls, so there is now very little room to pursue countercyclical policy. While Trinidad and Tobago has a very sophisticated economy for a country of its size – embracing mineral extraction, agriculture, industry, tourism and services – it is also underpinned by a single commodity – oil – and has failed to invest sufficiently in expanding and diversifying non-energy revenue sources.
In the short term, the government is expected to modernize the budget process, strengthen accountability for public spending, establish medium-term fiscal planning and make tax administration more efficient by eliminating unnecessary compliance costs and introducing new technologies. The role of the private sector in financing public infrastructure is as a consequence being reconsidered. In the latest budget speech, the Minister of Finance proposed progressive and green forms of taxation, including a new tax bracket of 30 percent on income (individual) exceeding TT$1 million per annum and a new tax bracket on profits (companies) in excess of TT$1 million per annum. The measure is expected to generate an additional TT$560 million. The Minister has also proposed to increase the price of diesel by 15 percent following previous increases in 2015 and 2016.

The National Development Strategy (NDS-Vision 2030) contains several provisions to finance the country’s development aspirations. However, the strategy seems not to have been costed. There is instead a rough estimate of the costs of meeting the Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC) – set at US$2 billion – that is expected to be met partly through domestic funding and is conditional on international financing including through the Green Climate Fund. However, the costing may be disputable, given questions on the methodology.

The NDS refers to re-orienting the budget system as well as new provisions for setting priorities for public investment. It recommends introducing output-based budgeting and the preparation of a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF). The MTEF should – per the NDS – set fiscal targets and allocate resources to strategic priorities within these targets. As the NDS is aligned to the SDGs, it might be a good vehicle for justifying and prioritizing investments in the SDGs. The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) constitutes the capital expenditure component of the National Budget. A well-functioning PSIP framework should similarly align to national priorities. However, the PSIP is reportedly replete with proposals that are not sufficiently aligned to national priorities. The PSIP “will, therefore, be re-focused to comprise a core set of projects that is of high priority in terms of achieving the objectives of Vision 2030.” The strategy further states, “In selecting projects for implementation, these will be prioritized and ranked per their impact on achieving Vision 2030 goals.” Prioritization will take place at the Ministry of Planning and Development, which manages the PSIP, and at sector ministries. A draft template of this criteria as well as the score sheet are attached as Appendix III.

Financing for development in Trinidad and Tobago may be configured around three work streams that feature a scorecard for public SDG-investment, continued efforts in reforming and modernizing the public finance landscape (including with the introduction of smart taxation and the revision of subsidies), and the optimization of current spending. The last pillar includes scoping and identification for leveraging innovative finance instruments, e.g., green/blue bonds, impact investment and diaspora financing.

**Prioritization strategies and scorecards for SDG-investments**

The review of the role of the NDS in budget setting and prioritization is the starting point to design and operationalize an SDG scorecard to assess and identify priority investment. The government and the NDS already include provisions for such a prioritization and review, as contained in the Vision 2030 formulation. In addition to the NDS, the same tool may be applied to the PSIP to better guide public procurement and investments and to advance the SDGs. Options for developing guidelines for the new
Public-partner partnerships with the private sector should also be considered to leverage scarce public resources for development projects, particularly infrastructure.

Relevant recommendations contained in the NDS (Vision 2030):

- Refocusing of PSIP to comprise a core set of projects that is of high priority for achieving Vision 2030.
- Reprioritization of expenditure, curbing of unproductive spending and greater support for productive areas
- Increased investment in growth-enhancing infrastructure, including public transport, research infrastructure, green infrastructure (solar, water and wastewater facilities), climate-resilient infrastructure, and social infrastructure such as affordable (greener) housing
- Establishment of a Fiscal Council, which will be an independent body, to advise the government and the legislature on fiscal policy, its sustainability and effects; evaluate and validate the financial and macroeconomic assumptions of the budget; and assess the government’s medium-term fiscal strategy

**Smart taxation and public subsidy reforms**

The country is in the midst of tax and subsidy reform. This is an opportunity to introduce smart taxation to deliver multiple development dividends, i.e., revenue mobilization, internalization of externalities and promotion of sustainable behaviours. Critical contributions to the SDGs may be provided in the greening of energy and agriculture subsidies as well as in the review of the current revenue management regime in extractive industries. This could be done with the IMF and others; the IMF has conducted research and is lobbying in favour of it.

The government’s intention to introduce/revise taxes on tobacco, environmental externalities and games should be supported. These, for example, may include the review and introduction of:

- Taxes on fuel: sales tax on any individual or firm that purchases fuel for an automobile or home heating. Fuel taxes can reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions while generating public revenues.
- Taxes on pesticides and chemical fertilizers: taxes on certain pesticides and chemical fertilizers can mobilize fiscal revenues while mitigating the negative effects associated with their application and promoting sustainable agriculture practices.
- Taxes on renewable natural capital (water, timber): any fee, charge or tax on the extraction and/or use of renewable natural capital (e.g., timber or water).
- Taxes on tobacco: Excise taxes on tobacco products can raise fiscal revenues, improve health and well-being and address market failures.

**Optimization of public spending**

Public expenditure reviews of social and environmental spending should be undertaken to ensure that planned cuts are balanced and take into account vital social and environmental considerations. Considering the relatively high per capita spending in the country, there could be scope for identifying synergies and introducing measures to promote efficiency and effectiveness.
Linked to this – in the medium to long terms – the establishment of results-based budgeting and the formulation of the medium-term expenditure framework should be considered as milestones that build on thorough expenditure reviews. Such an approach provides countries facing fiscal space constraints with the tools to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of expenditures.

Given Trinidad and Tobago’s heavy reliance on energy income and the leakages of revenue typically associated with the extractive industries (though, e.g., tax avoidance, tax holidays, profit repatriation etc.), the government will need to take measures to reduce tax avoidance.

**Leveraging innovative finance**

Trinidad and Tobago is a relatively small economy, with a small population and tax base. As an upper middle-income country, it has limited access to concessional finance. In this context, it is important for the country to explore a menu of innovative development finance mechanisms, which can enhance the conditions of existing flows to frontload finance and add value by reducing risks. The following solutions might be considered.

i. Green and blue bonds to transition to a more sustainable economy

The Seychelles has recently capitalized on the emerging concept of the ‘blue economy’ to leverage finance from international capital markets at a discount with its ‘blue bonds’ initiative. Such approaches could be explored by other SIDS in the future, in particular those with a sovereign credit rating such as Trinidad and Tobago.

The term ‘blue economy’ is not well defined, but is increasing common and broadly understood to be economic activity that is in balance with the long-term capacity of ocean ecosystems to support this activity and to remain healthy and resilient. Blue economy activities can include offshore renewable energy, sustainable aquaculture, deep seabed mining, marine biotechnology, and ocean monitoring and surveillance, which all provide opportunities for economic growth and more diversity in the ocean economy. Blue bonds are modelled on successful ‘green’ bonds that have been issued by multilateral financial institutions, sovereign states and municipalities chiefly to fund investments in sustainable energy and clean transportation projects. Sometimes, an interest discount can be obtained from investors where there is a commitment to use the proceeds for specific socially or environmentally responsible investments.

To support the development of the green economy, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago can promote the roll-out of financing instruments such as green or blue bonds to finance projects or initiatives with environmental or climate change benefits. Blue bonds are financial instruments similar to conventional bonds, but commit the issuer to invest the proceeds exclusively in green projects. Usually, green bonds must follow third-party verification to establish that proceeds are indeed being invested in projects with environmental benefits.

The green bonds market (of which blue bonds can be considered a sub-category) was estimated in 2016 at US$118 billion. If non-certified green bonds are included, issuances are estimated at US$694 billion. Potential investor demand as well as the portfolio of unfunded projects are significant. Public and private financial institutions can issue green bonds in Trinidad and Tobago and or in foreign capital
markets. New issuances might also help to advance the country’s relatively small bond market. An in-depth analysis of the financial and other conditions required for development may be required to inform concrete action in this area, for instance, for the promotion of renewable energy and other sectors with potential economic and employment generation such as the ocean economy.

In particular, blue bonds can be used to fund the development of sustainable fisheries or other coastal and marine interventions that will generate a return on investment. The Seychelles, for example, plans to issue a blue bond valued at US$15 million over 10 years with guarantees from the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility to support the transition to sustainable fisheries. Looking forward, this model may be of interest to other SIDS, within a framework of an overall ‘blue growth’ strategy.

Trinidad and Tobago’s last international bond issuance, for a total of US$1 billion, was in 2016. Future bond issuances could explore whether to market a share of them as ‘blue’ or ‘green’ bonds to, on the one hand, obtain an interest discount and, on the other hand, support conservation efforts and a transition to more sustainable models of economic development. A pipeline of ‘green’ or ‘blue’ investable projects would be needed to support such an effort.

ii. Promote diaspora investments and engagement

The government’s NDS recognizes the potential contribution of the diaspora. The government will seek to engage not only the Trinidad and Tobago diaspora, but also the wider Caribbean diaspora. The NDS suggests measures encompassing analysis, research and financial and non-financial incentives to attract diaspora flows. Finally, the NDS mentions specific credit and insurance to provide incentives for trade and investment across the board, including options to establish new incentives or support institutions such as an import-export bank.

Trinidad’s Central Bank governor has repeatedly highlighted his interest in diaspora bonds as a creative financial instrument to enable Caribbean countries to borrow from their diaspora community. Recent research from the Inter-American Development Bank has looked at the feasibility and viability of this option for the Caribbean and concluded that there is some potential for certain countries in the Caribbean to use this financing modality – Trinidad and Tobago included.

Engaging the diaspora more proactively should certainly be further explored since it may contribute to long-term economic development. With diaspora investment and bonds, the main challenges are to understand the preferences of emigrants; make credible and full disclosures about the projects to be financed; assure the diaspora that the monies raised will be well spent and bond payments honoured; structure a viable deal assisted by technical experts; and, if necessary, obtain additional credit from multilateral and bilateral organizations or raise domestic resources (since funds raised from the diaspora are not likely to be sufficient to finance any large activity in full). The transaction costs associated with the exercise can therefore be substantial. Moreover, as the experiences of Israel and India have shown, the ‘patriotic discount’ – the difference between the market interest rate for government debt and the interest rate that diasporas are willing to accept – is often small and does not always materialize. While diaspora bonds have attracted considerable interest, there are also other measures that may help to foster increased diaspora investment ‘back home’. These include encouraging the diaspora to make available their intellectual capital and business networks to the home country through visits,
consultancies, mentorship and equity investments, etc. This would entail exploring financial incentives or innovative products to encourage the diaspora to invest, such as ‘SDG funds’ or ‘green funds’ – which could be co-financed by the diaspora with match funding from national authorities and/or donors for specific sustainable development interventions. Initiatives that connect the diaspora to local businesses could also be explored (such as BlueNet and Kiva.org initiatives).

In addition to diaspora bonds, the following mechanisms and strategies have been successful elsewhere and could attract investment from the Trinidadian and Tobagonian diaspora:

• Diaspora investment, insurance and pension funds: Financial vehicles that offer senders financial services such as shares in investment funds or pension packages. Established by governments or financial institutions, these funds can facilitate diaspora investment and retirement plans in the home country. Diaspora funds can invest in short-term debt securities and/or in equities. These types of funds are being experimented with in Kenya (Kenyans Abroad Investment Fund) and Rwanda (Rwanda Diaspora Mutual Fund and Global Diaspora Investment Fund). Social housing and real estate funds have also started to market their products to diasporas.

• Diaspora venture capital (and impact investing): Programmes that attract a country’s diaspora to fund the growth of small businesses while earning social and financial returns. These vehicles invest mostly, but not exclusively, in social enterprises – often SMEs – operating in health care, education, clean energy, financial inclusion and agriculture. An example is the India Investment Initiative established by the Calvert Foundation with the support of USAID.

• Insurance funds: Insurance products (i.e., health and life insurance policies) can be sold to members of diasporas. Overseas workers pay the insurance premiums to the benefit of family members living in the country of origin. To cover health costs, access to health insurance is more effective than direct transfers.

• Diaspora Direct Investment (DDI): In effect a form of FDI, DDIs are direct investments from companies connected to the diaspora in productive activities in the home country. DDIs are facilitated by top executives working in foreign firms in the diaspora or by entrepreneurs, owners and shareholders operating overseas. For example, with support from development partners, the Government of Moldova’s Programme for Attracting Remittances into the Economy (2010-2014) attracted US$4.6 million of non-reimbursable financing that was leveraged in US$10.2 million of investment in local enterprises.

• Securitization of future remittance flows: Banks can be allowed to leverage future remittance receipts to obtain capital. While no official data are available, estimates indicate that more than US$20 billion could have been raised by banks in Brazil, Mexico and Turkey using future remittances as collateral.

• Other services (diaspora banking): Financial products customized to members of the diaspora's needs, including special categories of deposit accounts in multiple currencies and transnational loans. For example, MFIC, a US-based financial services corporation, has partnered with microfinance lenders and remittance transaction operators in El Salvador, Guatemala and Bolivia to provide transnational mortgages to immigrants in the United States and Spain. If
held in the home country, diaspora banking saving products can expand the operations of local financial institutions.

iii. Impact investment to expand the available financial envelope and spur innovation

Impact investments refer to investments that seek a social and/or environmental return alongside financial returns. Impact investments may be made in companies, organizations and funds and may involve different asset classes such as fixed income, venture capital, private equity and social and development impact bonds. Private equity and debt are the most common instruments. In terms of the investees or receivers of capital, these can be for-profit or not-for-profit entities as long as a financial return to investment is produced. Intermediaries can help connect impact investors to impact-driven enterprises through the provision of a range of services such as research, impact measurement, etc. The government and financial development institutions can play a role by creating an enabling environment for impact investment to flourish and, in certain cases, providing incentives and co-financing. The global market for impact investment has been estimated at US$77.4 billion in assets, with expected growth of 17.7 percent in 2016. Impact investment traditionally includes venture capital, crowd-investing and social and development impact bonds, but could also encompass the review of investment strategies of mutual and pension funds.

Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) – In essence, a payment for success schemes; relies on impact investors to frontload private capital for social projects. The SIB constitutes a public-private partnership whereby the government engages a service provider to deliver social services and realize results, whereas investors from private sector or philanthropy provide upfront funding to finance the operation. Donors or the government repay investors only if and when outcomes are achieved and certified by an independent evaluator. Investors’ returns depend on the level of results, up to an agreed maximum. At the same time, if no results are achieved, investors are not paid. The emphasis on performance and results would also constitute an important value-added, given the gaps on impact evaluation identified in social programmes in the country.

Research indicates that SIBs can improve social service delivery, though experience so far equally underlines their complexity and the need of dedicated expertise and time to structure the market. Per Social Finance, of the 22 SIBs having reported performance, 21 have reported positive outcomes, 12 have made outcome payments and four have fully repaid investors. Identified trends related to the sectors for impact investments also have implications for SIB. For instance, expected market returns and volume of investments are smaller in social sectors than environment-focus investments, which require at least market return and command larger volumes.

Early discussions on Social Impact Bonds in Trinidad and Tobago

In 2016, the Trinidadian Parliament approached UNDP for advice on developing a ‘social impact bond’ in the country, potentially to fund interventions in the area of recidivism and to support education and social inequality interventions (where this approach has been used in the United Kingdom and United States). A webinar was organized with Social Finance USA to present the instrument to the assigned parliamentary committee.
Proposed next steps: a review of the most promising options and solutions related to innovative finance would be required along with a market assessment, inclusive of risk analysis. Immediate steps include feasibility studies for the solutions/products identified and capacity development for the relevant national partners.

3.4 Data, Monitoring and Reporting

The National Statistical System

Legal framework

The legal framework for the National Statistical System in Trinidad and Tobago dates back to 1952, when the Statistics Act was promulgated primarily to provide for the taking of censuses and related activities. The 1977 amendment of the Statistics Act formally established the Statistical Department, headed by the Statistician, whose tasks include collaborating with other departments of the government in the collection, processing and publication of official statistics. The Statistician is also generally tasked with organizing a coordinated national statistical system. The Statistics Act was last amended in 1980 and is supported by other subsidiary legislation, including the Statistics (Agricultural Census) Regulations, Statistics (Annual Land Returns) Regulations, Statistics (Births) Regulations, Statistics (Employment, Wages, Salaries and Earnings) Regulations, Statistics (Survey of Industrial or Business Undertaking) Regulations, and Delegation of Functions Notifications. These regulations further define, clarify and explain the functions and roles of the Statistician and those designated or employed to carry out the functions assigned him or her in the Statistics Act.

The Central Statistical Office

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) is the National Statistical Office (NSO) of Trinidad and Tobago. It is a Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development. The CSO has operated as a department of the government since the Statistics Act was enacted in 1952. The main functions of the Office are to conduct any census in Trinidad and Tobago and to collect, process and disseminate official statistics relating to the “commercial, industrial, agricultural, mining, economic, social and general activities and conditions of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.”

The CSO consists of eight divisions, namely: Population, Social and Vital Statistics; National Accounts; Economic Statistics; Agriculture; Census and Surveys; Computer; Census Management Planning; and Administration and Accounts. In addition to the specialized divisions, the CSO has an office in Tobago that oversees national data collection there.

Administratively, the CSO is headed by the Director of Statistics, who is supported by Senior Statisticians in the management of the office. The Director of Statistics reports to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development, who in turn reports to the Minister of Planning and Development.

61 Article 4. (1) (b) of the Statistics Act of Trinidad and Tobago
62 CSO (2017)
The First Schedule of the Statistics Act provides lists areas in which the CSO is mandated to provide official statistics. Table 6 lists surveys and publications of the CSO.

Table 6. Statistics produced by the CSO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey/Publication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Date last conducted/published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population and Housing Census</td>
<td>Decadal</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Crime and Victimization Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Budget Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)</td>
<td>Every five years</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Retail Sales</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>Third Quarter 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Retail Prices of Building Materials</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>Fourth Quarter 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import and Exports Monthly Trade Bulletin</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Atlas</td>
<td>Ad hoc</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Products Imported</td>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Products Exported</td>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Compendium of Environmental Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plans are underway to transform the CSO into an independent NSO, the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago. A task force set up to advise the government on the establishment of the new National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago has submitted its recommendations, which formed the basis of a policy and legislative brief approved by the Cabinet. Following the Cabinet’s approval, the Chief Parliamentary Council Department received instructions to draft a bill as the first step in the establishment of the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago. Once approved by Parliament, the new National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago will replace the CSO as the NSO of Trinidad and Tobago. It is critical that the CSO, as well as other organizations that produce data, have the necessary resources and autonomy to collect, analyse and disseminate data without political interference and influence.

Other official data producers

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63 Note that list is not exhaustive.
Many ministries, departments and agencies of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago produce statistics that, in the absence of a coordinated national statistical system, are by default regarded as official statistics. Although the Statistics Act specifically authorizes the CSO to publish official statistics relating to commerce, industry, agriculture, mining, economic, social and general activities, in reality, other ministries, departments and agencies serve as the official sources of data in these sectors. These include the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (macroeconomic data), the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (oil and gas data), the Ministry of Finance (government revenue and expenditure data), the Ministry of Health (health statistics), the Ministry of Tourism (visitor arrival data) and the Ministry of Public Administration.

Other ministries, departments and agencies and statutory bodies of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago – such and the Immigration Division, the Customs and Excise Division, and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service under the Ministry of National Security – generate a significant amount of administrative data that would constitute official statistics, but these agencies do not routinely publish official statistics.

**Statistical capacity**

Trinidad and Tobago ranks below average for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region in statistical capacity. The overall score of the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) was 61.1 (out of 100) in 2016, compared to an LAC average score of 78.2. This score decreased somewhat over the years, i.e., from 75.6 in 2008 to 61.1 in 2014. Trinidad and Tobago compares closely to the regional for LAC in the source of data sub-category (70 versus 76.1), but trails in the methodology (50 versus 69.4) and periodicity (63.3 versus 89.1) sub-components.

As a division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, the CSO does not enjoy autonomy in staffing and relies on the Public Service Commission for screening, hiring and posting of statisticians to the CSO. Therefore, the CSO is currently understaffed and has been unable to replace experienced statisticians who have retired from the civil service. Indeed, the CSO has not hired any statistician or statistical officer since 2008.

**Data dissemination**

The CSO disseminates data through paper and web publications, but these are not always timely. There is also no established data release schedule to which the CSO must to adhere. However, the CSO has well used technology to disseminate its 2000 and 2011 censuses data through REDATAM, a web-based application that enables users to query the census databases remotely to generate tables and cross-tabulations. The CSO’s website also provides many statistical indicators generated from surveys and administrative data. While this constitutes a significant step for the CSO in providing access to official statistics, these indicators are generally not current.

In supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) reporting, the CSO implemented cTTInfo, a data-sharing portal based on DevInfo, but customized for Trinidad and Tobago. However, the incompatibility of the platform with the Vista operating system created technical difficulties that led to its discontinuation.
Open Data

Trinidad and Tobago is part of the World Bank’s Open Data initiative and completed its National Open Data Readiness Assessment in 2015. The Ministry of Finance currently publishes budget statements on its website and this information is part of the World Bank’s Open Budget Portal. The government has a beta version of Trinidad and Tobago Open Data Portal, but the portal houses only one dataset on daily climate data from the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Services. The ICT platforms of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago could make more data openly available. One such platform is the e-portal called ttconnect for accessing government e-Services.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The National Performance Framework 2012-2015 represented the government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework tied to the Medium-Term Policy Framework 2011-2014. Predicated on a results-based management system, it was meant to facilitate an internal M&E system, timely and regular reporting on results, and the development of performance frameworks to support sectoral and ministerial development agenda. With the drafting of a new National Development Strategy (Vision 2030) underway, the development of a new National Performance Framework is expected as part of the M&E framework of Vision 2030.

SDG Monitoring

The Role of the CSO

Trinidad and Tobago, represented by the CSO, is a member of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians. The CSO participates in the SDG initiatives of these organizations to implement the global SDG indicators framework. The CSO participated in a recent workshop to define a core set of indicators to monitor the SDGs and SAMOA Pathway in the Caribbean jointly organized by the Small Island Developing States Unit of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, and the Caribbean Community Secretariat.

Gap analysis

The CSO has not performed an independent gap analysis of the SDG indicators and data requirements for Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad has also not participated in a survey conducted by ECLAC to assess the national statistical capacities for the production of the SDG indicators in LAC. In the consultation held with the CSO during the MAPS mission, it was pointed out that PARIS21 conducted a gap analysis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago prior to the finalization of the SDGs.

A review of the data ecosystem of Trinidad and Tobago conducted by UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, however, included a general gap analysis of the data ecosystem of the country. A more comprehensive SDG data gaps analysis should be conducted.

Challenges

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64 Located at data.gov.tt
Data quality

As employees at the CSO function in capacities above their levels of qualification or experience due to limited capacity, the quality of official statistics is concerning, a fact raised in the CSO consultation. However, the CSO offered assurances that, while the circumstances under which it must operate may have impacted the timeliness of its outputs, its quality control checks have not been affected. In the absence of a coordinated national statistical system, the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (CBTT) has become the *de facto* source of economic statistics on Trinidad and Tobago. Several ministries also produce annual reports containing national statistics that are then fed into international databases such as those maintained by the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization. The void created by the lack of a functional national statistical system also poses operational challenges for the CSO, as data produced by the ministries, departments and agencies for official statistics do not typically conform to international classification standards, thus requiring the CSO to devote significant time and resources to data-cleaning activities.

International and regional organizations have provided training and technical assistance to the CSO to ensure that high quality data are produced. The Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre of the International Monetary Fund has been actively providing assistance to the CSO in relation to national accounts. ECLAC has provided training and technical support in census data dissemination. ECLAC and UNFPA have also supported the CSO in population projection. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago is a beneficiary of Statistics Canada’s technical assistance under the Project for Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean.

Coordination

Although the Statistics Act suggests a coordinating role for the CSO within the national statistical system, the language of the Act is weak and the CSO does not have the power to compel other data producers to provide it with the necessary data that would allow it to produce official statistics in an ideal setting. The Statistics Act only requires other government departments to ‘collaborate’ in the collection, processing and dissemination of official statistics and does not go far enough to require them to provide the CSO with necessary information. Additionally, many of the data producers in Trinidad and Tobago that would form the national statistical system have newer legislation that supersedes the Statistics Act, giving them stronger legal backing than the CSO has. This has particular implications in limiting the CSO’s access to administrative records maintained by the MDAs.

The proposed establishment of the National Statistical Institute provides an opportunity to create a well-structured national statistical system with a clearly defined coordinating role for the National Statistical Institute and a systematic data-sharing mechanism among the agencies that constitute the national statistical system. Trinidad and Tobago does not have a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, although PARIS21 plans to complete one for the country.65 The lack of an NSDS further implies that statistical outputs are not produced within the context of a long-term strategy for the advancement of the country’s statistical infrastructure.

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**ICT Infrastructure**

GOTT has a central Information and Communications Technology (ICT) network called iGovTT. The iGovTT provides a single ICT platform for ministries, departments and agencies, including the CSO. Thus, the CSO does not have flexibility in choosing which ICT hardware or services it employs.

**Gender statistics**

The CSO does not produce a separate set of statistics on gender, but provides for gender disaggregation in its statistics. These statistics are mostly generated from the censuses, labour force surveys, other surveys and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. UN Women and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Community are collaborating on the collection of Gender Equality Indicators and these indicators can be used to monitor commitments on Beijing, CEDAW, the Samoa Pathway and the SDGs.

**Funding**

Funding for the CSO is provided by the government through budget allocation to the parent ministry, the Ministry of Planning and Development. Although the CSO has not been targeted for a hiring freeze, the general hiring freeze in the civil service hurts the CSO. To address this bottleneck, the CSO and the CBTT have used an arrangement to ensure that the production of economic statistics on which the Central Bank relies are produced promptly. This arrangement involved the hiring of 17 persons by CBTT who were then seconded to the CSO. The CSO has also received funding from the Inter-American Development Bank, with the fund managed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications.

**Recommendations**

**Coordinate**

The importance of a structured national statistical system coordinated by the National Statistical Institute, when established, cannot be overemphasized. Despite its high-income-level classification, Trinidad and Tobago is trailing the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean in statistical capacity partly because of the lack of coordination that has severely affected the methodological basis for production of official statistics and the periodicity of producing these statistics. The SDG indicator framework currently has more than 230 indicators across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and with many goals requiring data from different sectors of the economy. Monitoring the progress of SDG implementation in Trinidad and Tobago will require a more coordinated approach to national data collection and reporting.

**Prioritize**

A major accelerator in the monitoring of SDG implementation is an assessment of the capacity of the CSO and other data producers to provide data on the SDG indicators. It is suggested that the CSO and the Ministry of Planning and Development urgently perform a national gap analysis to ensure that the CSO is ready to implement the global SDG indicator framework. Given the capacity constraint facing the CSO, the office should also swiftly develop capacity in the production and/or collection of data for the core set of SDG indicators for the Caribbean currently under development.
**Standardize**

Data produced by ministries, department and agencies that feed into official statistics must follow applicable international classification standards. This ensures international comparability and eliminates duplication of efforts by the CSO to recode data that have previously been coded by the primary data producers.

**Align**

Trinidad and Tobago plans to develop a National Performance Framework for Vision 2030. This framework will define the targets and indicators for assessing progress toward national development goals. This provides a good opportunity to ensure the alignment of the National Performance Framework 2030 with the global SDG indicator framework. Such an alignment would facilitate the simultaneous monitoring and evaluation of Vision 2030 and the SDGs and promote efficiency in Trinidad and Tobago’s follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Sensitize**

The general public needs to be sensitized to the value of official statistics and the benefit of evidence-based policies. There is little statistical awareness in the populace and statistics do not appear to inform public opinions. Public awareness campaign should be organized around the SDGs and official statistics should inform these campaigns.

**Innovate**

The use of ICT to promote official statistics was deemed a necessity and the CSO has been making strides in using technology for data dissemination. It is expected that the release of micro data to researchers will contribute to data literacy and information dissemination beyond the remit of the CSO. To that end, the CSO should develop capacity in data anonymization techniques to facilitate micro data release.

**Partner**

The private sector is not a major source of data, but NGOs, academic institutions and CSOs continue to generate environmental data that the CSO could adopt for official statistics. Partnering with these stakeholders and the business community in big data could help generate data for SDG indicators in the Tier II classification.

### 3.5 Advocacy, Resources and Partnerships

Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a transformative and ambitious agenda that will require input and contributions from all of society. To do this, ownership, participation and collaboration of the whole of Trinidadian and Tobagonian society must be at the centre of all outreach efforts. The achievement of the aspirations in Vision 2030 and the SDGs is not a government-only responsibility, although the government can play a central and catalytic role. Outreach efforts therefore need to inspire and galvanize national, regional, local and community action around Vision 2030 and the SDGs.
The Roadmap suggests that two distinct tracks will need attention to achieve broad awareness, participation and support for Vision 2030 and Agenda 2030.

**Inspiring Action Through Awareness and Advocacy**

A critical initial and ongoing step towards implementation requires building public awareness of Vision 2030 – there is a very solid base for the country to have a national vision and plan, given the widespread knowledge of the previous Vision 2020 – and its benefits for national development among citizenry, communities, non-government actors, the private sector and government stakeholders. A common understanding of Vision 2030 – of what it is and what it is not – can provide a sustainable platform when decisions are implemented. Linking actions to a wider vision and rationale can foster the understanding of decisions, even when some are difficult or require citizens to adjust their behaviour.

There is strong recognition in Trinidad and Tobago of the need to ensure that all voices are heard, especially in those segments of society that have been left behind in economic and social changes or are particularly vulnerable. The church, academia, sports groups, youth groups and media represent avenues to galvanize action for development if they have the information and tools to adapt to meet the needs for their own constituencies. It would also be beneficial for SDGs to become part of the everyday language of Parliamentarians, given their role as leaders and influencers.

During consultations with key stakeholder groups, many ideas and action were suggested in the context of Trinidad and Tobago. They include:

- **Raising awareness** –
  - Partnering with the media to ‘create a common understanding of opportunities and challenges’, to explain Vision 2030 and the SDGs and their relevancy to local needs and to foster debate about policy actions
  - Host regular media briefings to increase knowledge of Vision 2030 and implementation progress
  - Host and sponsor events that raise the visibility of Vision 2030 and its goals
  - Consider an annual ‘scorecard’ that outlines progress and explains bottleneck or challenges

- **Changing behaviour** –
  - Public art, using public transport/buildings to convey new ideas, role of government regarding the role of communities and individuals
  - Messaging to promote sustainable use of resources; the value of conserving (the Reducing, Reusing and Recycling policy, for example) and linking it with national passion
  - Use eminent individuals and celebrities from different stakeholder groups

- **Reaching marginal or vulnerable groups** –
  - Consider campaigns or media that reach vulnerable groups, including working through support groups that can access vulnerable groups
  - Use caravans in communities to improve access to information

- **Inspirational messaging** – use media appropriate to the targeted audience
  - Speeches/functions for the private sector
Given the strength and size of the private sector in Trinidad and Tobago, the development of a public-private partnership platform, with participation of CSOs, the clergy, academia, sports figures, youth, etc., could develop ideas and actions during the implementation of Vision 2030. (In this regard, the Roadmap suggests having a dedicated working group on communications and advocacy within institutional mechanisms.)

In terms of tools and global resources, it would be possible to use the My World 2030 platform, a multi-stakeholder platform that enables users to engage, visualize and analyse people’s voices on sustainable development. My World 2030 allows people from around the world to tell what they are passionate about in the SDG agenda. This could be localized and include variants such as ‘pass on your passion’ (a concept seen as locally relevant from the stakeholder consultation) and connected with Vision 2030.

**Building Understanding for Change and Policy Actions**

There is much opportunity to engage citizens in the government’s public policy agenda. This is particularly important now, as a ‘business-as-usual’ approach is not viable in view of the very uncertain medium-term outlook for Trinidad and Tobago’s main income source – oil. Achieving Vision 2030 and the SDGs in Trinidad and Tobago will require significant resources and sweeping policy changes that the entire country will need to understand and support.

This will require challenging several norms that solidified over recent decades – and, indeed, over generations – due to an oil-dominated economy and expectations about the role of government and the services that government should provide. Some policy decisions therefore will be politically and socially challenging and will need strong leadership in all segments of society to understand the changes, impacts and how negative impacts may be mitigated and minimized.

For example, the approach to natural resources management and the value that citizens put on land, water and biodiversity as economic, social as well as environmental assets, will need to steadily adjust in the coming decades. This is also relevant for building support for a new compact between government and citizens on the role of government in the provision of public services and for ensuring financial support for business and social services.

There is a good understanding of and openness to change and to doing things differently. There is less consensus about what that change should be. There is opportunity for better articulation of why changes and reforms are necessary and how the public will benefit from those changes. What each part of society, government, the private sector, civil society, labour organizations and communities can do to manage changes also needs to be better articulated. This will require a continuing openness within government to work with media and key stakeholders to discuss policy actions, celebrate success, acknowledge challenges and be willing to adjust based on evidence and learning. Vision 2030 very much aligns with this objective.
3.6 Coordination: Institutional Mechanism

Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals and their draft National Development Strategy 2017-2030 – Vision 2030 – will require a fundamental change in the way policymaking, prioritization and investments are pursued for sustainable development. This requires an approach more geared toward multi-stakeholders; the greater use of data and evidence-based decision-making; stronger partnerships; and assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts of all policy choices. It is not only about coordination and alignment of strategies, plans and investment, but also about integration across government and among government, private sector, labour organizations and civil society.

The draft Vision 2030 suggests the following institutional mechanisms:

- A Vision 2030 Delivery Unit, to be in the Office of the Prime Minister and responsible for implementation and management of transformational projects and programmes
- A multisectoral advisory committee comprising representatives from public and private sectors, labour, academia and civil society
- A Secretariat to support the committee, from the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of Finance and representatives from the House of Assembly
- A multidisciplinary team under the Ministry of Planning and Development to appraise projects/programmes to ensure alignment with the Vision 2030 goals and to prioritize funding under the Public Sector Investment Programme

Translating Planning into Implementation

Trinidad and Tobago has sound national and sectoral planning and strategic frameworks and processes. The major challenge consists not in planning, but in translating these documents and strategic directions into agreed policy actions and programmes. This calls for a structure that will provide a framework for achieving:

- Inclusive engagement in discussing trade-offs, potential positive and negative impacts
- Decisions on prioritization
- Increased understanding of stakeholders on why policy actions are being recommended to ministers
- Clarity about who is accountable for advice, decision-making and implementation
- Monitoring of decisions and impacts

This may call for some slight adjustments in the proposed institutional mechanisms to bring in all stakeholders’ voices and to reinforce ‘a clear line of sight’ on where responsibility for decision-making lies. Adjustment on how the systems function is critically important and necessary. The management of the system in almost all ministries is too centralized in terms of decision-making. Directors who carry out the day-day technical work seem to have very limited authority to authorize implementation, take responsibility and be accountable. Such a bureaucratic approach to management always stifles implementation.
Drawing on Trinidad and Tobago’s draft Vision 2030 and looking to integrate some of the principles of the global Sustainable Development Goals/Agenda 2030 into national mechanisms, a proposed institutional framework is outlined below. The proposed institutional framework could draw on the following elements. These might require refinement to align with the governmental, institutional and political contexts of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Figure 5. An inclusive implementation-focused institutional framework**
**Political**

- High-Level Ministerial Sub-committee of Cabinet on Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. This political body would receive advice from the Vision 2030 Leaders’ Group and decide policy and programme choices for implementation by government agencies (supported by the private sector and civil society).

- Joint Select Committee of Parliament. There is strong support for a more bipartisan approach to sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago and engagement in national visioning. As the Agenda 2030/SDGs and Vision 2030 are long-term frameworks that span many electoral cycles, the Committee would provide continuity to a national vision while allowing incumbent government to function. Specifically, this Committee would enable parliamentarians to engage on national planning, access progress in meeting objectives and review implementation challenges.

**Technical/Advisory**

- Vision 2030 Leaders’ Group. This group would include multiple stakeholders. It would discuss recommendations from working groups that would inform advice for ministers and the Ministerial Cabinet Sub-Committee on Vision 2030. It would also look at communications and advocacy, financing, monitoring and impact and areas for acceleration (priority actions). Appropriate terms of reference could be developed to determine scope. The Secretariat’s function would be fulfilled by the Ministry of Planning and Development.

- Working Groups. These Groups would include participation across government, private sector, civil society, NCAT, Tobago and UN agencies. Membership could depend on the policy or programme under consideration. The Groups would:
  - Operate as advisory bodies to the Vision 2030 Leaders’ Group
  - Develop priority actions or accelerators and how to implement these, drawing on Vision 2030 and various sectoral strategies
  - Develop and support communications and advocacy on Vision 2030 and SDGs. Crucially, this would involve advocacy among stakeholders and the public regarding why change/new policy was needed and how it would support sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago.
  - Develop a national monitoring framework and an accompanying set of national indicators (for Vision 2030, SDG monitoring and other global and regional commitments)
  - Review results of policy actions and implementation and make recommendations on fine-tuning, opportunities and challenges
  - Discuss financing, including innovative financing options and the cost of policy actions, and ensure greater linkages and alignment between the national budget and planning priorities

Establishing such multistakeholder groups can facilitate objectivity and counterbalance the priorities of individual line ministries. In addition, it can build ownership, support and understanding for a policy or programme action at the outset among a wider set of stakeholders and seek support for assistance with implementation, advocacy and rationale.
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