



*Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities,  
Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA)*

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**Summary of Proceedings  
Public Hearing**

Held on Wednesday November 06, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.

**Venue:** Linda Baboolal Meeting Room (in public), Parliamentary Complex, Cabildo Building, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

**Topic:** An inquiry into the Operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards

**Objective of the Inquiry**

The objectives of the inquiry are as follows:

1. To examine the performance of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) in fulfilling its mandate of ensuring that citizens of Trinidad and Tobago have access to quality goods and services.
2. To assess the performance of the TTBS in promoting and ensuring the quality of locally manufactured products.
3. To evaluate the status of the National Quality Infrastructure in achieving its objectives, especially with regards to:
  - a. contributing to the development of the national industry and a strong export market.
  - b. providing support for environmental protection.

**Committee Members**

The following Members were present:

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|------------------------|-----------------|
| • Ms. Sunity Maharaj   | Chairman        |
| • Mr. Esmond Forde, MP | Vice - Chairman |
| • Mr. Laurence Hislop  | Member          |



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- Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial-Ramdial Member

The following Members were excused / absent:

- Ms. Khadijah Ameen, MP Member
- Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian, MP Member
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP Member
- Mrs. Renuka Sagrarsingh-Sooklal Member

**Witnesses Who Appeared**

The following officials appeared before the Committee:

**Ministry of Trade and Industry**

- Mr. Randall Karim Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Ava Mahabir-Dass Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Candice Lackhansingh Director, Policy and Strategy
- Mr. Dennis Scott Business Development

**Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards**

- Mr. Lawford Dupres Chairman, Board of Directors
- Mr. Jose E. Trejo Executive Director
- Ms. Nadita Ramachala Manager, Standardisation Division
- Mr. Gerard Maxwell Manager, Implementation Division
- Ms. Karlene Lewis Manager, Lab Accreditation

**Key Issues Discussed**

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the **Officials from the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS)** and the **Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)**:



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**TTBS Review and Restructuring Exercise**

- i. There are currently 168 employees at the TTBS.
- ii. At the TTBS there are 44 vacant positions. However, 13 of these were being actively filled.
- iii. There is a need to make changes to the organisational structure.
- iv. Currently, the recruitment of staff for vacant positions at the TTBS is on hold until the completion of its Manpower Review and restructuring exercise, as some of the positions on the establishment are antiquated.
- v. The restructuring exercise will continue for the next six months.
- vi. The TTBS can recruit contract workers; however, the value of the compensation packages provided by the TTBS is disputed.
- vii. There is a high staff retention within the TTBS, especially among inspectors.

**Modernisation of the TTBS**

- viii. The TTBS is in the process of digitising the organisation via the Digital Transformation Strategy.
- ix. TTBS has engaged the local company *Syntegra* as a consultant to assist in modernising the governance framework at a cost of \$800,000 TTD. The consultancy's timeframe is approximately nine months.
- x. The Strategic Projects Management Office (SPMO) was not officially established, but it is currently included in the Strategic Plan for 2024-2029.

**Building Quality Culture**

- xi. The TTBS received \$450, 000 TTD from the European Union (EU) to assist with building a 'quality culture' in Trinidad and Tobago.
- xii. Creating a culture of standardisation for product and services within the various sectors in Trinidad and Tobago will assist this country to be better aligned with ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems).
- xiii. Companies can receive up to \$500,000 TTD in grant funding to assist in becoming compliant with standardisation practices for export.



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**National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) / National Quality Policy (NQP)**

- xiv. The National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) / National Quality Policy (NQP) requires an integrated implementation approach with a wide cross-section of the public and private sectors, including stakeholders in the energy, fashion, construction, manufacturing and electrical sectors.
- xv. The TTBS received an allocation of approximately \$15.1 M for the implementation of the National Quality Policy (NQP) for the period 2021-2024.
- xvi. Funding has been a challenge for implementing the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) as it covers several sectors with either small, medium or large businesses.

**Foreign Exchange**

- xvii. The nationwide shortage of Forex has created challenges for the TTBS in procuring critical equipment, including the maintenance and calibration of equipment in metrology, proficiency testing and the tensile testing for carbon fibre metals for the construction sector.
- xviii. The TTBS needs on average \$ 100,000 USD per month to execute their projects.
- xix. MTI is liaising with the Ministry of Finance to assist with the TTBS's issues with receiving Forex for its PSIP projects.

**Public Awareness Role and Function of TTBS**

- xx. The need to increase awareness of the TTBS and its services amongst the public.
- xxi. The TTBS has a marketing team but needs to establish a communications team or unit.
- xxii. The need to extend the reach of the TTBS to educate Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and the public regarding the standardisation or packaging of items and exporting of items.
- xxiii. The use of social media content to promote the TTBS' work and ensure that the information on the social media platforms is consistent and understandable by the general citizenry.



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**Accreditation of Labs:**

- xxiv. There have been six (6) labs since 2018, who have applied and benefited from the accreditation funding for labs.
- xxv. There are currently eight (8) labs that are accredited. However one lab, Kaizen Environmental Sciences Trinidad Limited, was suspended from accreditation due to gaps in the criteria to meet the accreditation standards.

**The performance and output of TTBS' Inspectorate Division**

- xxvi. The TTBS' Inspectorate comprises 35 inspectors. However, the ideal complement will be 50.
- xxvii. The TTBS highlighted the process for the selection of a product for mandatory or voluntary standards certification.
- xxviii. The TTBS uses standards for imported products and certification for locally manufactured products such as concrete and bleach.
- xxix. The TTBS indicated that the inspection of foreign-used tyres was one area in which they have excelled. When a shipment of tyres arrives at ports of entry, a team of inspectors are dispatched to conduct the necessary inspections. Should any tyres be assessed to be not 'roadworthy', they are destroyed on-site.
- xxx. The TTBS has targeted new products and services for a product certification programme. For example, Cleaning Agents.
- xxxi. National Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force comprises representatives from the MTI, TTBS and the MBs and other relevant stakeholders.

**Presence in Tobago**

- xxxii. The Bureau's presence in Tobago is multifaceted. Members of staff visit Tobago twice weekly; on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Recently, a permanent office that provides metrology services was opened. The TTBS' Certification Division also visits Tobago to conduct certification exercises for Hotels and Tour Guides.
- xxxiii. The TTBS aims to hire an additional officer at its Tobago Office to strengthen its capacity to serve the island.



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The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhiM2oS29rw>

**Contact the Committee's Secretary**

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at [jsclasasc@ttparliament.org](mailto:jsclasasc@ttparliament.org) or 624-7275 Ext. [2277/2627/2282](tel:227726272282)

*Committees Unit  
November 27, 2024*