

Building State Capacity in the Caribbean

The State of the Civil Service in Trinidad and Tobago

Prepared for the Innovation in Citizen
Services Division by:

Joan H. Underwood

Institutions for Development
Sector

Innovation in Citizen
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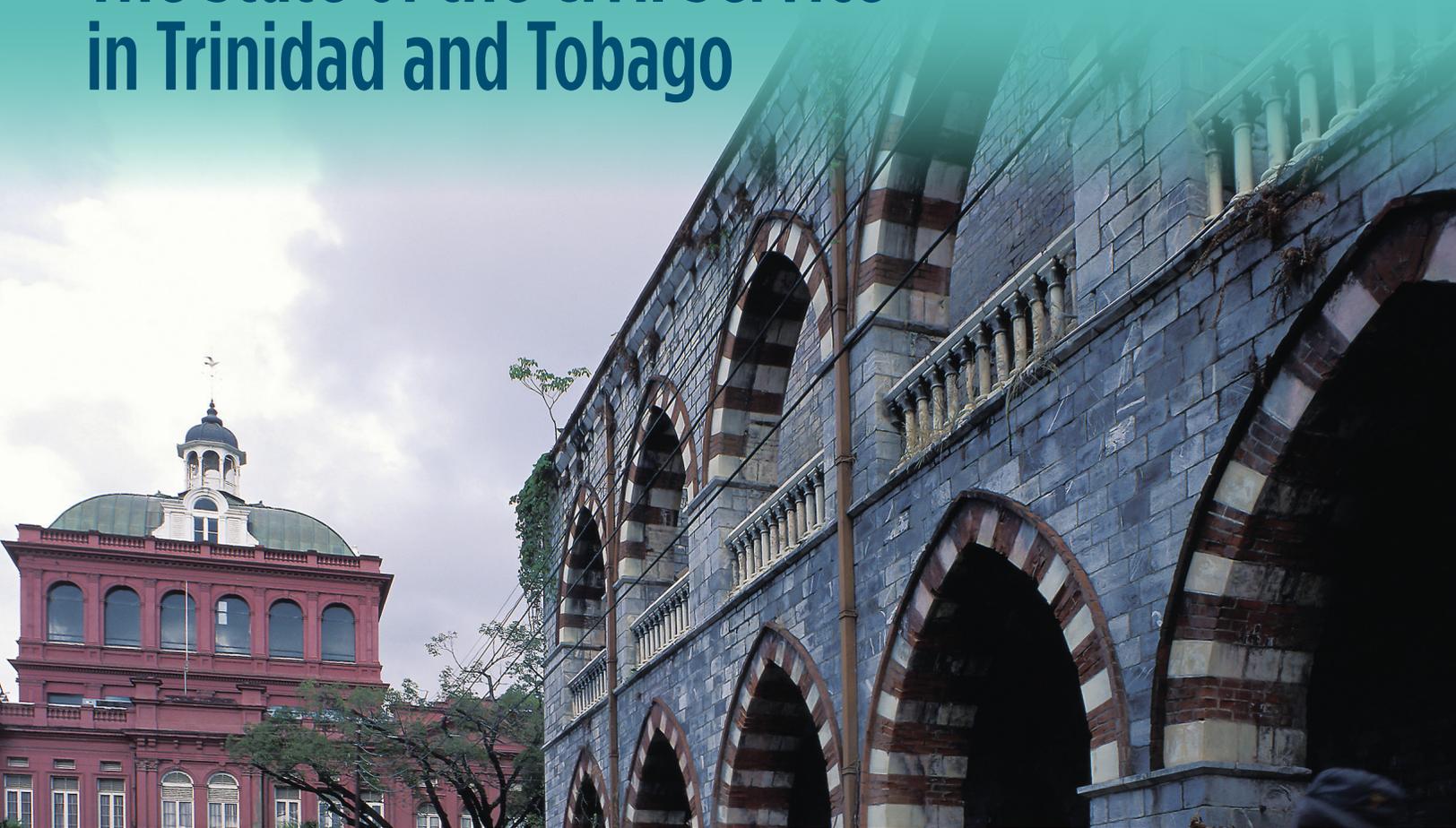
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BUILDING STATE CAPACITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

The State of the Civil Service
in Trinidad and Tobago



Abstract*

The potential of public policies and the services provided by any State are closely linked to the quality of its civil service. The ways in which the civil service is managed—in other words, the human resource planning policies, recruitment and selection, professional development, and the incentives for professionalization, among other factors—are critical conditioning factors when it comes to attracting, retaining, and motivating suitable staff to carry out these tasks. This report presents the main findings of the Trinidad and Tobago civil service diagnostic carried out in early 2018. It evaluates the efficacy of the human resource management (HRM) systems in the civil service. The analysis takes as reference the methodology used by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Latin American countries (Longo and Iacoviello, 2010) and the Charter for Caribbean Public Services led by the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD). This is the first evaluation for the country, and it contributed as an input to the series “Building State Capacity in the Caribbean: A Baseline Report of the Civil Service.”

JEL Codes: H10, H11, J45

Keywords: civil service, human resources, public employment, public management, Trinidad and Tobago

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Acronyms

CARICAD	Caribbean Centre for Development Administration	MPAC	Ministry of Public Administration and Communications
CPO	Chief Personnel Officer	NPF	National Performance Framework
CSR	Civil Service Regulations	NTAC	National Tripartite Advisory Council
DPA	Director of Personnel Administration	PAR	Performance Appraisal Report
DPS	Deputy Permanent Secretary	PD	Personnel Department
EDAB	Economic Development Advisory Board	PMAS	Performance Management and Appraisal System
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	PMCD	Public Management Consulting Division
FY	Fiscal year	PNM	People's National Movement
GATE	Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses	PS	Permanent Secretary
GDP	Gross domestic product	PSA	Public Service Association (Trade Union)
GNI	Gross national income	PSC	Public Service Commission
GoTT	Government of Trinidad and Tobago	RBM	Results-based Management
HRAC	Human Resource Advisory Committee	SCD	Service Commissions Department
HRIS	HR Information System	SHRMD	Strategic Human Resource Management Division
HRM	Human Resource Management	SME	Subject Matter Expert
lhRIS	Integrated Human Resource Information System, including Payroll	SRC	Salaries Review Commission
		THA	Tobago House of Assembly
		TOR	Terms of reference

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Executive Summary

Of the many factors that contribute to building state capacity, human resources are among the most important. The potential of public policies and the services provided by any State are closely linked to the quality of its civil service. It is civil servants whom we trust every day to carry out the tasks of public service in our countries.

The ways in which the civil service is managed—in other words, the human resource planning policies, recruitment and selection, professional development, and incentives for professionalization, among other factors—are critical determinants in attracting, retaining, and motivating suitable staff to carry out these tasks. Effective management of the State's human resources is also important because of the sheer volume of resources that taxpayers invest to finance this workforce.

In 2004, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) helped design and implement a methodology for measuring how the central government civil service operates in Latin American countries with respect to the reference points identified by the Ibero-American Charter. These assessments, implemented at different times in the last 14 years, helped generate a reform agenda and contributed to important progress in several countries (Cortazar, Lafuente, and Sangines, 2014).

In 2017 the IDB, persuaded of the importance of this subject, started an initiative to replicate this work in the Caribbean. The process began with the adaptation of the original methodology and analytical framework to align them with Caribbean realities and priorities.¹ In this regard, the Charter for Caribbean Public Services served as an essential reference point.

This report analyzes the management of the civil service in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It begins with an examination of the current status of the civil service along the parameters detailed in the adapted methodology. The analysis culminates in a report card on the level of efficacy of the HRM systems in the civil service of Trinidad and Tobago. For this diagnostic, the definition of the Public Service² is restricted to central government and specifically those officers appointed by the Public Service Commission

¹ Please see full details of the methodology in Lafuente and Molina (2018).

² The term civil service is also used in the report and has the same meaning. In the Caribbean context, it traditionally refers to the group of individuals hired by the Public Service Commission and tends to exclude those government workers hired on contract or by the political directorate.

(PSC) and excludes those workers whose services are retained via short-term contracts or those who are appointed by any of the other Service Commissions. The term civil service is also used in the report and has the same meaning. In the Caribbean context, it traditionally refers to the group of individuals hired by the PSC and tends to exclude government workers hired on contract or by the political directorate.

Good management of the civil service entails having in place solid workforce planning routines; reliable data on staff and pay; adequate organizational structures with updated and relevant job profiles; a merit-based system for recruitment, selection, and promotion with a reasonable level of flexibility; competitive and fair pay; a solid performance framework; career development opportunities for staff and good relations with staff associations, among others. In addition, having a high-performing organization in charge of the system is critical to make all this happen.

This report assesses 38 critical points to calculate aggregate scores for the 8 HRM subsystems³ and 7 quality indices.⁴ The maximum score for each HRM subsystem and quality index is 100. Higher scores are indicative of greater maturity, as evidenced by the degree of instrumentality (i.e., the availability of technical rules and instruments that enable the management practice established in the critical point to be developed), coverage (i.e., the extent to which the practice exists in the various public organizations in the country), and implementation (i.e., the degree of effective implementation and ultimately institutionalization of the practice). The following table summarizes the main results for Trinidad and Tobago.

The aggregated Civil Service Development Index enables both civil service development and degree of implementation of the CPS Charter to be measured. Countries can be classified into three levels of civil service development: (i) low, with scores between 0 and 39 points; (ii) medium, with scores between 40 and 59; and (iii) high or professional systems levels,

TABLE 1
Quality Indices and HR Subsystems

QUALITY INDICES	2017
Civil Service Development (aggregated index)	42
Efficiency	28
Merit	80
Structural Consistency	28
Functional Capacity	33
Integrative Capacity	30
Management Capabilities	53
Diversity Management	40
HR Subsystems	
Human Resources Planning	36
Work Organisation	20
Employment Management	53
Performance Management	47
Compensation Management	40
Development Management	20
Human and Social Relations Management	30
Organization of HRM Function	30

Source: Author's elaboration.

with scores above 60. A score of 42 out of 100 shows that Trinidad and Tobago has room for improvement.

The best-performing quality index was Merit, which evaluates the degree to which the civil service system incorporates guarantees regarding the application of the criteria of professionalism into its practices and policies, thereby safeguarding them from arbitrariness, politicization, and rent-seeking. The score on this index was 80. This signals the existence and implementation of policies designed to protect employees from

³ The subsystems in question are Human Resource Planning, Work Organization, Employment Management, Performance Management, Compensation Management, Development Management, Human and Social Relations Management and the Organization of the HRM Function.

⁴ The seven quality indices are Efficiency, Merit, Structural Consistency, Functional Consistency, Integrative Capacity, Management Capabilities and Diversity Management.

arbitrary managerial decision making. At the other end of the spectrum, Trinidad and Tobago's least mature quality indices were Efficiency and Structural Consistency. The Efficiency Index evaluates the degree to which investment in human capital has been optimized in the public service system, as well as its congruence with fiscal expenditure allocations and with the situation in the reference markets. Structural consistency evaluates the systemic soundness and integration of the civil service, paying attention to the degree of strategic coherence and process consistency. The score on these indices was 28.

Of the eight HRM subsystems, Trinidad and Tobago recorded the highest score for for Employment Management, which includes the flows of people entering, moving through, and exiting the system (recruitment and selection, development, dismissal, retirement, and others). The aggregate score of 53 reflects relatively sound instrumentality with medium levels of coverage and implementation.

The subsystems of Work Organisation and Development Management were identified as the least mature ones, with a score of 20. These scores are indicative of the fact that there is room for improvement in four primary areas: (i) job evaluation and classification; (ii) the development of a system-wide competency framework; (iii) effectiveness and quality of promotions; and (iv) effectiveness and quality of training.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations designed to help strengthen the less mature HRM subsystems and quality indices. Significant gains could be achieved by augmenting workforce planning and organization (including succession planning and job reclassification) and updating the legal and regulatory framework. The proposed interventions would enhance the overall efficacy of the HRM function and how internal and external stakeholders perceive it. However, the final determination on prioritizing the recommendations would need to be guided by the government's overall development agenda.

Context

Background

Trinidad and Tobago, officially the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, is a twin island nation situated off the northern edge of the South American mainland. It is 11 kilometers (6.8 miles) off the northeastern coast of Venezuela and 130 kilometers (81 miles) south of Grenada. The country gained its independence from Great Britain in 1962 and became a republic in 1976.

The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago consists of a House of Representatives with 41 elected members and a Senate with 31 members appointed by the President on the advice of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.⁵ Tobago has a separate House of Assembly (THA) which is responsible for the administration of the sister island and for implementing policies referred by the Parliament.⁶

The population as of 2016 was estimated at 1.365 million. Trinidad's gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$21.895 billion and gross national income (GNI) per capita of US\$16,240⁷ have earned it the distinction of being designated by the World Bank as a high-income country. This is due in large part to its oil and gas reserves. The recent downward trend in fuel prices has had

a significant impact on the country's economy, with a growth rate of -5.1 percent being recorded in 2015 and a growth of 0.3 percent in 2017.⁸

The September 2015 general elections heralded a change in administration, with Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley's People's National Movement (PNM) winning 23 of the 41 seats in the House of Representatives. Upon taking office, the PNM reduced the number of ministries from 32 to 21.

In April 2017, the Minister of Planning and Development presented Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030 to Parliament. This national development strategy identifies the following themes:

- **Theme I** – Putting People First: Nurturing Our Greatest Asset
- **Theme II** – Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence

⁵ Nine members of the Senate are independents.

⁶ THA is made up of 12 elected seats, 4 appointed Councillors, and a Presiding Officer who may or may not be an Assemblyman or a Councillor.

⁷ See www.data.worldbank.org/country/trinidad-and-tobago.

⁸ See www.data.un.org.

- **Theme III** – Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation
- **Theme IV** – Building Globally Competitive Businesses
- **Theme V** – Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development

Public sector reform is an integral component of Theme II. In fact, the plan asserts that by 2030 public institutions will be more capable, more professional, and more proactive in meeting the needs of citizens. The relevant long-term goal associated with Theme II is “high quality, modern public services,” while the short-term goal (i.e. by 2020) is to have modern, effective, and efficient public management systems.

Vision 2030 is complemented by a National Performance Framework (NPF) which covers the period 2017 to 2020. The NPF, which is also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, translates the five themes into outcomes, outputs, and indicators with responsibilities for them assigned to specific ministries, departments, and agencies. There are seven outputs which flow from the national outcome of modern, effective, and efficient public institutions, namely, increased capacity of independent institutions; strengthened results-based management (RBM) system in the public sector; enhanced management of the system of public procurement; improved revenue administration; strengthened public financial management system; restructuring and operationalization of the national statistical system; and a modern, safe, and conducive work environment for all public service organizations.

In addition to the elements of Vision 2030 and the 2017–2020 NPF outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the government’s Human Resource Management (HRM) policy agenda is informed by a 2011 green paper, “Transforming the Civil Service: Renewal and Modernization.”

This report is the result of a diagnostic conducted on the central public service in Trinidad and Tobago. The process began with a desk review and culminated with a country mission which was conducted in November 2017.

For the purpose of this diagnostic of the HRM functions, the definition of the Public Service⁹ is restricted to central government and specifically those officers appointed by the PSC and excludes those workers whose services are retained via short-term contracts or those who are appointed by any of the other Services Commissions.

Legal Framework

Trinidad and Tobago’s legislation and regulations remain oriented toward personnel administration, although the government has articulated its intent to adopt a more comprehensive HRM philosophy.

While the practice of HRM takes into consideration several pieces of legislation, the following table lists the primary laws, regulations, and directives which are germane to this diagnostic.

Institutional Framework

The HRM functions are distributed among five centralized agencies as well as HRM Units within the various line ministries. The specific entities along with their respective mandates are as follows:

Public Service Commission

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Chapter 9 Part I provides for the establishment of a Public Service Commission (PSC) and confers on that body the authority to make and confirm appointments on promotion and transfer, remove and exercise disciplinary control over people holding or acting in such offices, and enforce standards of conduct. The membership consists of a chairman, a deputy, and two to four other members. Commissioners are appointed by the president after consultation with the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.

⁹ The term civil service is also used in the report and has the same meaning. In the Caribbean context, it traditionally refers to the group of individuals hired by the Public Service Commission and tends to exclude those government workers hired on contract or by the political directorate.

TABLE 2
Relevant Legislation and Regulations

LAW/REGULATION/DIRECTIVE	SCOPE
Civil Service Act (1965) ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part II – Details structure, terms and conditions of employment and modes of termination/leaving the service • Part III – Establishes the Personnel Department and lays out its powers and duties • Part VI (28) – Regulations • Subsidiary Legislation – Civil Service Regulations
Constitution (1976)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 9 Pt I – Establishes the Public Service Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidiary Legislation – Public Service Commission Regulations • Subsidiary Legislation – Delegation of Powers Order • Legal Notice No. 105 – The Public Service Commission (Delegation of Powers) (Amendment) Order, 2006 • Ch 9 Pt II – Establishes the Public Service Appeal Board • Ch 11 – Establishes the Salary Review Commission
Cabinet Minute No. 600-1998/3/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Human Resource Management Divisions in Ministries and Departments
Freedom of Information Act (1999) Amended 2000 and 2003	Part III – Right of Access to Information
Equal Opportunity Act (2000) ^b	Part III – Discrimination in Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interpretation notes to the Act explicitly exclude sexual preference or orientation.

^a The most recent amendment was in 1981.

^b In a judgment issued in December 2016, the Court of Appeal ruled that discrimination by the State directly or through the Service Commissions indirectly is clearly prohibited under the Equal Opportunity Act.

The Services Commission is free from ministerial control and has the constitutional authority to regulate its own actions. Pursuant to that authority, it has established regulations which it describes as being based on the principles of fairness, equality, and justice.

Service Commissions Department

The PSC is supported administratively by the Service Commissions Department (SCD), which is managed by the Director of Personnel Administration (DPA). The SCD also functions as the Secretariat for the other Service Commissions, namely, the Police Service Commission, the Legal and Judicial Service Commission, and the Teaching Service Commission.

Personnel Department

This department was established by the Civil Service Act of 1965. Its functions are detailed in Section 14 of the Act and include responsibility for the classification of the Civil Service, terms and conditions of service, negotiation of collective agreements, and grievance handling. According

to the Personnel Department's summary of expenditure for 2017–2018 published by the Parliament, its original role has been expanded to include policy formulation in areas of HRM which are not within the purview of the Service Commissions; establishing and/or reviewing the legal and regulatory framework for HRM in the Public Service; and monitoring and auditing the practice of HRM within ministries and departments.

These services are provided with respect to 53,000 monthly-paid Public Service officers as well as 26,000 daily-rated workers employed in government ministries and departments, the THA, and various municipal corporations.¹⁰

The Department is currently structured along functional lines and comprises the following seven Divisions: Compensation Management, Benefits Management, Industrial and Labour Relations, Human Resource Policy Planning and Research, Human Resource Management Services, Legal Services and Corporate Services. It is

¹⁰ The PD also services 4,000 employees employed by the various statutory authorities.

headed by the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and reports to the Minister of Public Administration and Communications.

Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

The Public Administration arm of the Ministry is responsible for Public Management Consulting, Strategic Human Resource Management, Public Service Training and Public Service Transformation. In the Ministry's 2016 statement to the Standing Finance Committee, the following were identified as part of the focus for FY 2017:

- To work with the PSC and the SCD to strengthen and modernize the institutions
- To improve the staffing situation in the Public Service and build capacity to fulfill the Ministry's mandate
- To provide the training that meets the needs of the Public Service

Strategic Human Resource Management Council

The Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Council was established in 2012 to oversee the implementation of the 2011 Green Paper "Transforming the Civil Service: Renewal and Modernization." It is chaired by the Minister of Public Administration and Communications. Other core members include the following:

1. A Representative from the PSC
2. Permanent Secretary MPAC
3. Director Personnel Administration, SCD
4. CPO, PD
5. HRM Expert/Head SHRM Division, MPAC
6. Deputies DPA, SCD
7. Deputies CPO, PD
8. Deputy PS with responsibility for SHRM, MPAC

The Council's mandate is to:

- Achieve cohesion and alignment for HRM and HRM modernization through a shared vision

and the deployment of cross-functional teams at both the leadership and technical levels;

- Provide the strategic and policy direction for a more coordinated and effective HRM function ensuring participation and consensus;
- Guide the HRM Modernization program by prioritizing and appropriately sequencing projects, providing strategies and policy decisions as guided by a defined roadmap;
- Monitor the HRM function and the Modernization program to ensure desired results; and
- Provide accountability and transparency of the HRM function and the HRM Modernization program through timely and frequent reporting.

The Council is supported by the SHRM Division (SHRMD), which serves as its Secretariat.

Salaries Review Commission

The Salaries Review Commission (SRC) is established by Chapter 11 Section 140 of the Constitution. It consists of a chairman and four other members who are appointed by the President after consultation with the prime minister and leader of the opposition. The SRC is mandated to periodically review the salaries and other terms and conditions of service of stipulated officers. The officers within the SRC's purview include but are not limited to the president, ministers of government, parliamentary secretaries, top managers within the Public Service, and the holders of such other offices as may be prescribed.

HRM Divisions in Line Ministries

The HRM Divisions in the ministries and departments were established under Cabinet Minute 600 of 1998. In the absence of an HRM policy framework, the civil service regulations that were grounded in personnel administration still guide the HR practices today. However, the Minute in question described the establishment of the HRM Divisions as "a way to effect the transformation from Personnel Administration to Human Resource Management and to allow for the decentralization from Central Agencies to Line

Ministries and Departments through delegation of authority and devolution of responsibility.”

The staff complement in the various HRM Divisions depends on the size of the ministry. In the case of a large ministry such as the Ministry of Education, there is a DPS with responsibility

for HR, four Directors HR Services, six Senior HR Officers, and 27 HR Officers. For a small ministry such as Public Utilities, there is a Director HR Services, a Senior HR Officer, and two HR Officers. In each case, clerical staff support the HR Officers.

Analysis of HRM Subsystems

This diagnostic used 38 critical points organized under eight HRM subsystems. This section presents a definition, the associated critical points, and a narrative on the status of each subsystem. The findings are based on secondary research as well as a series of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and other consultations with internal and external stakeholders.

Human Resource Planning

This HRM subsystem addresses the degree to which the organization has the necessary human capital—both quantitative and qualitative—in place to effectively implement its strategy. This extends to the existence of appropriate HRM policies and procedures as well as the availability of information systems to enable management to gather, store, retrieve, analyze, and interpret staff-related information and use it to inform effective decision making.

Strategic Alignment

- **Critical point 1:** *Staff planning needs usually result from the organization's priorities and strategic orientation. The degree to which they are adjusted to one another tends to be high.*

Currently there is no systematic process at the central HRM level for ensuring that the size and skill base of the workforce are aligned with organizational needs based on the mandates contained in the national development plan. SCD officials reported that Vision 2030 does not affect how they execute their mandate to appoint and transfer officers. Likewise, the PD does not systematically review the national development plan to create a masterplan identifying the job roles that need to be created, expanded/upgraded, or retired. Rather, the onus is on ministries and departments to review the national strategy and to determine the quantity and quality of staffing required to fulfill their respective mandates. However, requests for additional staff may not be met due to budget or other constraints.

While members of the PS Board are aware of the Ministry of Planning's expectation that Vision 2030 would inform their staffing levels, they described a disconnect between plans and implementation. Less than a third of the people in attendance at the PS Board meeting indicated that their ministries/departments had active strategic plans. A majority indicated that their ministries lacked the necessary competencies to effectively execute their mandates. In this

TABLE 3
Overall Cost of the Public Service in Jamaica

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (est.)
Wages and salaries as % of GDP	5.1	6.5	6.7	7.3	6.4	6.5
Wages and salaries as % of revenues	16.4	21.6	28.1	29.8	25.6	24.2
Wages and salaries as % of expenditure	13.9	16.8	18.4	19.5	16.8	16.8

Source: IMF (2017a).

regard, it is noteworthy that an assessment of the lessons learned from Vision 2020 reported that only 18.5 percent of the planned activities were completed, while another 51.6 percent were ongoing.¹¹

Information-based Decision Making

- **Critical point 2:** *The HR information systems (HRIS) enable a reasonable awareness of the quantitative and qualitative resources available, now and in the future, in the different organizational areas and units.*

Generally, there is a lack of reliable and current data to inform managerial decision making. This challenge exists at both the national and sectoral levels. IHRIS is the government's HR information system. Each module of IHRIS was built using subject matter experts (SMEs) from PD (for the compensation management, performance management and grievance modules), SCD, heads of ministerial HRM units, MPAC and Public Service Academy (for the training module), and the Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD) (establishments and positions for the Workforce Administration module). However, over a decade after it was first introduced, most HR modules are still not operational. An officer from the Ministry of Finance described the current situation as "using a 21st century tool for HRM to manage 1960s HR (personnel function)." Another interviewee explained the failure to fully deploy the functionality by asserting, "We bought IHRIS, but we didn't sell it!" It is important to note, however, that the SCD and PD use internal databases to conduct their responsibilities.

Effectiveness of Planning

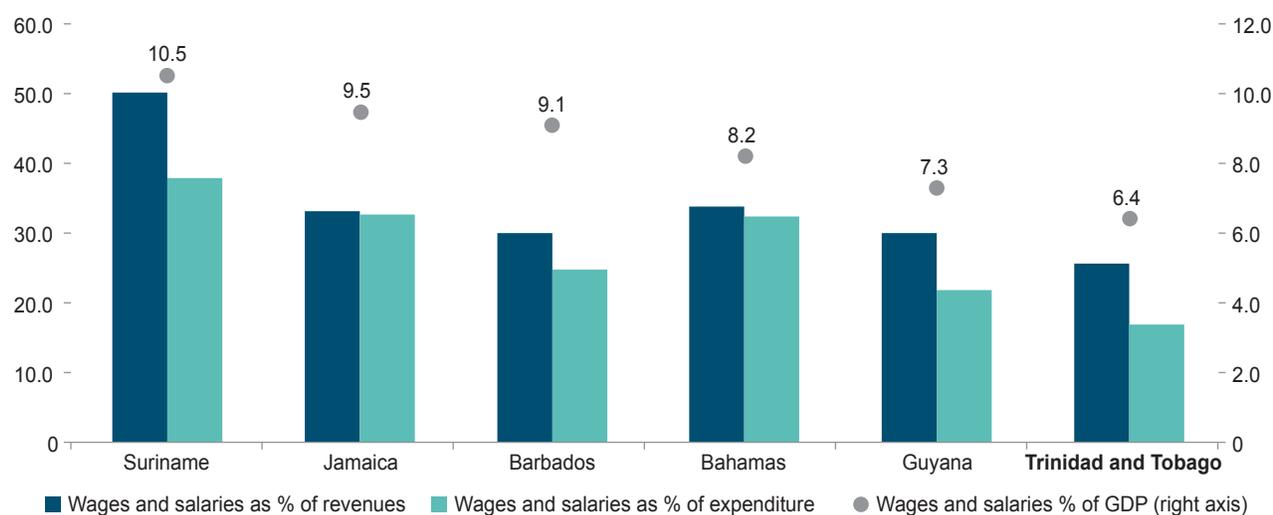
- **Critical point 3:** *In general, there are neither significant staff shortages nor overages.*
- **Critical point 4:** *The overall costs of civil service staff is maintained within reasonable parameters that are compatible with the country's economic situation.*
- **Critical point 5:** *The technical level of the workforce is commensurate with a knowledge-based society. Skilled labor represents a significant proportion of the workforce.*

During consultations conducted as part of the diagnostic, representatives from the centralized HRM agencies indicated that the professional levels within the Service are understaffed, necessitating the use of contract workers. Despite the reported shortage of technical staff, the overall staff count is higher than optimal due to excesses in clerical staff. The net result is a wage bill that is higher than optimal and trending upward.

Table 3 documents the increases in Trinidad and Tobago's wage bill relative to GDP and revenue for the period 2013–2016. As of 2017, the country shows a decrease in the growth of wages and salaries, revenues, and expenditure. Specifically, according to the IMF (2017a), the wage bill was 6.4 percent of GDP, 26 percent of revenues, and 17 percent of expenditure in 2017. Projections for 2018 estimate that the wage bill will represent 6.5 percent of GDP, 24 percent of revenues, and 17 percent of expenditure.

¹¹ Vision 2030: The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago.

FIGURE 1
Overall Cost of the Public Service in the Region, 2017



Source: Elaborated by the IDB based on government data and IMF country-specific Article IV Consultations.

TABLE 4
Labor Force by Employment Status and Type of Worker

PEOPLE WITH JOBS	2014	2015	2016	Q1 2017
Total number of employed people	636,850	623,375	613,050	611,100
Government public service/statutory board	150,975	146,825	141,475	143,000
Government state enterprise	21,125	19,050	17,325	18,300
Public service + state enterprise	172,100	165,875	158,800	161,300
Percentage of government jobs to total employment	27.0%	26.6%	25.9%	26.4%

Source: Data provided by the Central Statistical Office.

IMF (2017a) states that further expenditure reforms of at least 3.5 percent of GDP are needed.

Compared with other countries of the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago has the lowest ratio of wages and salaries to GDP, revenues, and expenditure (see Figure 1).

In 2015, a decision was taken to reduce the number of ministries from 32 to 21.¹² However, there was no material change in the size of the central government, as shown in Table 4. This was reportedly because the reductions were associated with the elimination of certain contract workers and/or vacant positions. Additionally,

while ministries were consolidated, they were not integrated to achieve efficiency gains.¹³

Trinidad and Tobago has a high rate of tertiary-level graduates due to the Government

¹² This decision was part of the new administration's thrust to rationalize functions and achieve greater efficiency. The media reported broad-based support for the decision. See <http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/2015-09-11/decision-cut-ministries-applauded>.

¹³ IMF (2014) references 48 ministries, departments, and agencies, which accounted for a quarter of all employment. Once again, despite reductions in the numbers of ministries, the relative number of public sector employees has not declined.

Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme.¹⁴ It was reported that the tertiary-level participation in 2015 was over the targeted 60 percent. Further, the prevalence of university graduates in the Civil Service is reported to be higher than in the private sector.

Strategic Human Resource Management

- **Critical point 6:** *The staffing policies, decisions, and practices in each area of HRM arise from intentions that are determined during the planning process.*
- **Critical point 35:** *Management proactively identifies mission-critical positions and builds capacity to fill those positions as incumbents transition out.*
- **Critical point 36:** *Senior civil servants go beyond managing day-to-day operations and craft strategies for taking the Service to the next level of performance and success.*
- **Critical point 38:** *Senior civil servants collaborate across ministries and sectors to secure coherence in policies and programs.*

All the centralized HRM agencies as well as the PS Board confirmed less than optimal levels of coordination, including the absence of comprehensive succession planning. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) recently issued a circular to ministries requesting that they submit succession plans. Several permanent secretaries opined that, due to the centralization of promotions and transfers, line ministries do not have the necessary independence to prepare and manage succession plans and that this should also be a centralized function.

In responding to the foregoing concern, the Service Commission indicated that positions may be designated as generic or specific to a ministry or department and that ministries have the autonomy to create succession plans for specific offices. However, the role of permanent secretary, which is vital to the success of the public service, is itself a generic position and therefore needs to be addressed from a centralized perspective. The

failure to date to do so has resulted in significant challenges following the retirement of cohorts of permanent secretaries.

During a meeting with the PS Board, only 20 percent of those in attendance indicated that their ministries had active strategic plans in place. This performance gap has an adverse impact on the implementation of government policy. In terms of the evaluation of the performance of ministries, there is a 2015 National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. However, representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Development pointed out that it focused primarily on financial metrics with little or no emphasis on the performance of projects and programs. They further indicated that some ministries are not aware of their responsibilities under the provisions of Vision 2030 and that there was a need to “projectize Vision 2030.”

Institutional frameworks exist for inter-ministerial and intersectoral consultation and collaboration on the formulation and implementation of policies and programs. Members of the PS Board pointed to the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC)¹⁵ and the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB)¹⁶ as examples of such institutional frameworks for securing stakeholder input.

¹⁴ GATE was established in 2004 and is credited for driving the tertiary education participation rate from 8 percent in 2002 to 65.23 percent in 2015. This result, combined with the fall in fuel prices, has led to a decision to introduce means testing and other measures geared toward reducing the cost of the program. See <http://www.trinidadexpress.com/20170724/news/education-ministry-responds-to-concerns-raised-on-gate-continuation>.

¹⁵ Prime Minister Rowley launched NTAC in March 2016. It is chaired by the Minister of Planning and Development and includes representatives from government, the private sector, and trade unions.

¹⁶ As an advisory body, the Board’s remit is to provide advice to the Prime Minister. During its operation, the Advisory Board maintains a strong focus on sound economic analysis, proper public sector management principles, and good governance; and co-opts people and resources from other disciplines as required. See: <https://edab.org.tt/about-the-edab/>.

Work Organization

This subsystem specifies both job content and the characteristics of the human resources required to effectively perform the various functions. The related critical points cover the validity of existing job profiles and the criteria used to grade positions within the organization.

Quality of the Structure of Job Profiles

- **Critical point 7:** *Job descriptions conform to managerial criteria rather than to legal considerations or collective agreements. The legal framework and the employment agreements are limited to establishing a broad framework in which work is organized in accordance with organizational needs.*
- **Critical point 8:** *Grading arrangements and job hierarchies result from rational criteria, which are adapted to each organizational environment.*
- **Critical point 9:** *Job profiles include the selection of competencies that in each case are considered key for the success of the job holder's performance.*

The job descriptions used by the Service Commission to fill established positions date back to the 1960s and do not include competencies. The 2015 PSC Report¹⁷ listed outdated job specifications as a significant challenge and pointed out that certain positions (e.g., maritime positions and brigade engineers) call for qualifications that are no longer available in the country. The report noted that the updating of the job specifications was the responsibility of the PD.

The PD concedes that many job specifications are obsolete. The Public Service Association (PSA)¹⁸ challenged a 2001 initiative to rectify the problem based on allegations of gender and managerial bias. Implementation was halted. The financial arrangements are currently being finalized to start another initiative. The Union was included in the evaluation committee. Therefore, the government is optimistic that they will

support this iteration of the project, which should commence in December 2017 and be completed within two years. Some 2,000 jobs are to be evaluated, impacting approximately 30,000 civil servants. For their part, the PSA website lists the agreement to conduct the job evaluation exercise as one of its major accomplishments.¹⁹

Jobs also need to be reclassified to secure internal equity. The reclassification of the HR function, which was mandated by Cabinet in 1998 along with the establishment of the HRM Units in line ministries, resulted in disparity between the grading of HR positions compared to various technical positions.

An additional factor that will need to be addressed to resolve existing deficiencies in workforce planning is the practice of utilizing sequential temporary contracts to retain consultants, some of whom provide services which are essential to the execution of the government's core functions. The formalization of such roles as part of the established civil service could also serve to enhance accountability.

Employment Management

This subsystem covers the employee lifecycle through recruitment and selection, transfers, promotions, and ultimately separation. Among the variables examined are the transparency and objectivity of decision-making, the existence and effectiveness of legal and regulatory safeguards, and the validity of the recruitment processes in assessing the competence of applicants

¹⁷ Retrieved from: <http://www.scd.org.tt/attachments/article/112/PSC%20AR%202015%20WEB.pdf>.

¹⁸ The PSA, which will celebrate its 80th year in 2018, has a membership of over 80,000 public servants. It is an extremely powerful force in the industrial relations climate in Trinidad and Tobago. As evidenced in this example, it has the power to halt major government initiatives. The union's mission statement asserts its commitment to provide "uncompromising representation" to its membership.

¹⁹ <http://www.psatinbago.org/who-we-are/our-achievements/>.

to perform in the job. Specific attention is also given to the how the system manages diversity and responds to evolving economic and functional realities.

Recruitment, Transfers and Appointments

- **Critical point 10:** *Hiring to fill vacancies is open, by right and in fact, to all candidates possessing the required qualifications. These are established according to suitability and technical considerations, not arbitrarily.*
- **Critical point 11:** *The necessary safeguard mechanisms and procedures are in place against arbitrariness, politicization, patronage, and clientelism throughout the entire hiring process.*
- **Critical point 12:** *Staff selection is based on competency profiles for the potential job holders.*
- **Critical point 13:** *The mechanisms for functional and geographic mobility respond flexibly to the demands of personnel redeployment.*

The Service Commission issues circulars for all vacancies, including those to be filled via promotions. Vacancy notices are also posted on the SCD's website with relevant job descriptions and downloadable application forms.²⁰ The postings identify whether the positions are restricted to existing public servants or open to the public. That determination is usually based on the experience requirement.

New applicants and candidates for promotion and transfers may be required to complete examinations as part of the selection process. In such instances, the examination results are used to create an order of merit list.

Interviews are another screening tool used by the SCD. Typically, the interview panel consists of the PSC Chairman or Deputy Chairman, an officer from the SCD, a representative from the relevant line ministry,²¹ and the Secretary to the Commission. No assessment could be made on the weighting of the various criteria.²²

An assessment center is used for selecting applicants at the level of deputy permanent secretary (DPS). The specific competencies that are assessed include:

- i. Strategic direction
- ii. Analysis and decision making
- iii. Leadership for results
- iv. Interpersonal and communication skills
- v. Learning and improving
- vi. Ethics and integrity
- vii. Professional knowledge and expertise

The mechanisms used included a group problem-solving, self-review, role-playing exercise and a competency-based interview. Consideration is being given to using psychometric assessments, but the cost has thus far precluded it.

It should also be noted that the level of rigor associated with the assessment center is not used for more junior managerial level positions, which also have responsibility for people management and managing for results.

In terms of geographic mobility, certain job roles (e.g., customs and immigration) may be transferred between Trinidad and Tobago. In terms of professional mobility, existing employees may apply for jobs when advertised. However, the onus is on the individual employee to identify and pursue opportunities for either lateral or upward mobility.

Terminations

- **Critical point 14:** *Dismissals or terminations of employment that affect professional positions are not motivated by a change in the government's political leanings.*

²⁰ <https://www.scd.org.tt/index.php/en/careers/112-employment-opportunities?layout=blog>.

²¹ This representative may be a technical subject matter expert or an officer from the HR Unit.

²² In response to a request for a sample of the decision matrix/weighting criteria used in interviews, SCD indicated that such a request would have to be submitted in writing to the PSC under the Freedom of Information Act.

- **Critical point 15:** *There is the possibility of terminating the employment relationship due to objectively verified technical, economic, or organizational reasons that justify workforce reductions.*

The Regulations identify the specific modes through which an officer may leave the service. The list includes abolition of the office. Therefore, it is conceivable that employment could be terminated for technical, economic, or organizational reasons. However, in the wake of the current administration's decision to reduce the number of ministries by 11, job loss was minimal.

The 2015 general elections did not lead to job losses associated with partisan affiliation. Employees hired by the PSC enjoy legal safeguards from such terminations.

Safeguards against Discriminatory Practices

- **Critical point 34:** *Men, women, minorities, and people from historically marginalized groups are treated fairly in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities.*
- **Critical point 35:** *Decisions related to hiring, promotion, compensation, discipline, and termination are free from institutional biases associated with variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, or place of origin.*

Following a 2014 appeal by the PSC against a High Court Ruling, a 2016 decision by the Court of Appeal held that the PSC is subject to the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act, which safeguards employees against discriminatory practices. The Civil Service Regulations (CSR) Chapter III Part I Section 14 contain a clause stipulating that married women may be recruited and that female officers who marry shall not be required to resign. While the original intention may have been to prevent discrimination, the continued inclusion of such a clause in the Act could be perceived as discriminatory since there is no comparable clause for male

officers. Further, the Act stipulates that women who marry while in the service must notify the PSC. Here again, there is no such requirement for male employees.

The CSR Chapter III Part I Section 17 also stipulates that the Prime Minister must approve the hiring of any person who is not a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. This stipulation may not be compatible with the country's obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.²³

The SCD is responsible for the recruitment of officers to fill vacancies in Tobago. The decision about where interviews are held in such instances depends on where most applicants reside. The SCD does not provide financial assistance to applicants who must travel from Tobago to attend interviews. Technology is not used to facilitate virtual attendance. The Regulations make provisions for officers who reside in one island of the twin-island nation and are appointed to serve in the other to receive allowances. There were anecdotal reports of an asymmetry of benefits due to cost-of-living differences in the two locations.

Performance Management

This subsystem covers the planning, support, and evaluation of an employee's performance on the job. As such it covers the establishment of performance objectives and monitoring actual performance against these objectives to identify any gaps.

Performance Planning and Monitoring

- **Critical point 16:** *Management normally defines guidelines and standards regarding expected personnel performance in accordance with the organization's priorities and strategy. Consequently, employees are aware of the aspects of their performance for which they will be evaluated.*

²³ In 1973, the Treaty of Chaguaramas established the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). In 2001, a revised treaty was signed thereby establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

- **Critical point 17:** *Throughout the management cycle, management monitors, observes, and supports improvements in employee performance, provides resources, and removes obstacles wherever necessary.*
- **Critical point 18:** *The organization evaluates employees' performance against expected performance standards.*

The NPF reflects the government's stated intent to focus on RBM by identifying targeted outputs and impacts. Ministries, departments, and agencies are then required to use that information to identify specific results and to measure and evaluate their performance relative to these results. The framework therefore provides the platform for institutional targets to be cascaded to departmental and divisional levels which can then inform individual performance objectives.

Chapter IV of the PSC Regulations stipulates that annual staff reports are to be completed for all officers and that the report should cover the officers' performance and conduct as well as prospects. The lHRIS performance management module is accessible to all ministries and is the platform to which PARs should be uploaded. In March 2014, the Director Personnel Administration cited suboptimal compliance with this requirement as a contributing factor to delays in appointments, promotions, and the effective management of disciplinary matters.

The Personnel Department has a three-day training workshop and manual designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to prepare position descriptions and performance standards and generally fulfill the performance reporting requirements. Nonetheless, compliance remains suboptimal. The PS Board identified challenges in defining jobs and coming up with definable standards that can be measured in an unbiased way as a contributing factor. Lack of accountability for failure to comply was also cited.

The failure to complete the mandatory performance reviews is symptomatic of a general lack of emphasis on monitoring and evaluation in the public service.

Another factor which was presented as a possible explanation of the low compliance levels was the span of control. Ministry of Finance personnel who manage lHRIS suggested that some managers may have too many direct reports to be realistically expected to complete quarterly and annual performance reviews.

Another gap related to this subsystem is the failure to officially identify a party responsible for assessing the performance of permanent secretaries. While there is a designated head of the Public Service, his mandate does not formally include reviewing the performance of the members of the PS Board.

Performance management is also featured in the Training/Learning Policy, with reference made to the supervisors' responsibility to complete performance appraisals, identify performance gaps, coach, and mentor, and provide opportunities for learning and development.

Compensation Management

This subsystem covers both cash and non-cash benefits. The goal is to achieve both internal and external equity. As such, there should be a clearly defined job classification system with rewards linked to either individual or group performance.

Competitiveness and Efficiency of the Compensation Policy

- **Critical point 19:** *The pay structure, including cash and non-cash components, is adequate for attracting, motivating, and retaining suitable people with the necessary competencies for the positions that the organization requires.*
- **Critical point 20:** *Pay levels, including cash and non-cash benefits, are not excessive compared with labor market costs for any similar sector or grade.*

- **Critical point 21:** *The compensation mechanisms encourage people to make more effort and stimulate individual or group performance, learning, and competency development.*
- **Critical point 22:** *Compensation policy is set according to previously established criteria and consistent with the organization's structural design parameters.*

Ultimately, the goal is to provide compensation that attracts and motivates suitably qualified workers and rewards them based on their actual performance. This must be done without introducing distortions into the labor market by exceeding salaries associated with comparable positions in the private sector.

The following table presents a comparison with private sector salaries for a sample of civil service jobs. Ideally, the salaries should be competitive and not excessive when compared with the private sector. Public sector compensation exceeded the private sector for HR managers. For all other benchmarked jobs, private sector compensation exceeded government salaries. However, in making this comparison, it is important to acknowledge the existence of other cash and non-cash elements of total compensation.

The 2017–2020 Green Paper on Transforming the Civil Service asserts that it has proven difficult to retain experienced professional and managerial staff. To overcome this challenge, certain technical positions (e.g., engineers and IT) have been granted ad hoc professional allowances. Fixed-term contracts with pay levels outside of the approved salary ranges/scales are also used. Both measures have contributed to distortions in internal equity. The reclassification of the HR positions associated with the establishment of HRM Units in line ministries is thought to have produced vertical inequity when compared to technical positions.

In addition to a base salary, the most senior officers receive several allowances. In the case of permanent secretaries, the approved allowances²⁴ total 63 percent of the base pay, resulting in an overall monthly package of TT\$53,460. No data were available to facilitate a comparison with private sector CEOs.

Vision 2030 acknowledges the absence of merit pay and asserts that wages should be less dependent on seniority and more aligned with productivity and performance.

²⁴ Allowances include duty, transportation, service, housing, and a telecommunication facility.

TABLE 5
Public versus Private Sector Salary Differentials (TT\$)

POSITION	PUBLIC SECTOR MEAN (2013) ^a	PRIVATE SECTOR MEAN (2017)	DIFFERENTIAL
Accountant I	9,071	16,273	-44%
Accountant II	9,998	16,273	-39%
Accountant III	11,658	16,273	-28%
Treasury Accountant I	14,685	16,273	-10%
Teacher I (Secondary)	11,891	15,886	-25%
Nurse	8,671	9,740	-11%
Electrical Engineer	11,658	13,171	-11%
EDP/IT Manager	15,468	18,170	-15%

Source: Ministry of Finance and the Economy Circular No. 3 of 2015 <https://www.payscale.com/index/TT/Job>.

^a The exchange rate as of November 24, 2017, was US\$0.15.

Development Management

This subsystem covers promotion policies, career paths, training and development, and succession planning. At its best, it ensures that employee development aligns with organizational development, thereby optimizing the likelihood of retaining high-performing talent.

Effectiveness and Quality of Promotions

- **Critical point 23:** *The promotion criteria and mechanisms link promotion to performance as well as to competency potential and development.*
- **Critical point 24:** *There are alternatives to positions that are strictly hierarchical, such as horizontal career progress or remaining in the same position, based on recognition of professional excellence without necessarily increasing the formal authority of those affected.*

As outlined in Section 2.3, applicants for promotions may be required to complete an assessment based on the job functions. PARs are also examined as part of the decision-making process. However, the low compliance rate for the timely and accurate completion of such reviews brings their validity and reliability into question.

Apart from promotions resulting from the employee applying to fill a vacancy, there are no institutionalized provisions for career progression based on job performance.

The Training/Learning Policy approved in September 2017 asserts that there is minimal planning toward learning and development in the Public Service. It describes training as ad hoc and not aligned with the government's developmental agenda. One of the measures proposed by the policy to rectify this deficiency is the establishment of an inter-ministerial learning and development committee chaired by the head of the Public Service. The policy also mandates the Public Service Academy to align its activities with Vision 2030 and calls for the full operationalization and utilization of lhris.

MPAC reported that permanent secretaries engage in coaching and developing directors under their remit and that the Public Service Academy administers an executive development program targeting emerging leaders (Range 54–65).

Effectiveness and Quality of Training

- **Critical point 25:** *Training supports the development of collective learning, thereby building organizational capacity to tackle problems and provide effective responses.*
- **Critical point 26:** *Investment in training is made through plans that are based on a needs assessment and designed to support the organization's stated priorities.*
- **Critical point 27:** *Training is subject to evaluation, which extends to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, the cost-results relationship, and the impact on the performance of people in the workplace.*

All ministries are required to conduct training needs assessments and to submit their requirements to MPAC. The latter also initiates training based on Vision 2030 and reports from Parliamentary Committees. While the Performance Appraisal Reports (PAR) should inform the identification of training needs, the low compliance rates for completing the appraisals renders that functionality unreliable.

The Learning/Development Policy mandates that there be no discrimination in awarding training opportunities and that opportunities be provided for job rotations and other forms of learning and development. However, there are some age restrictions based on the number of years left to mandatory retirement. Officers who feel that they have been aggrieved by decisions related to training may submit an appeal.

The training evaluation protocol envisions the measurement of reaction, learning, changes in behavior, and results (business impact and cost effectiveness). Based on interviews with staff of the Public Service Academy, this is aspirational. Attempts to measure learning and

behavior change are frustrated by lack of cooperation from both trainees and their supervisors/managers.

Human Resources and Social Relations Management

This subsystem focuses on the relationship between the organization and its employees. It covers industrial relations, employee engagement, the maintenance of organizational culture, and the overall impression of the HRM function.

Management of the Work Climate and Communication

- **Critical point 28:** *The organization makes efforts to learn about its work climate, using reliable instruments for periodic evaluation.*
- **Critical point 29:** *The organization has specific communication instruments that serve to reinforce the sense of belonging and the commitment of employees to the overall organizational project.*
- **Critical point 30:** *Labor relations are preferably and habitually oriented toward agreement and consensus building rather than confrontation and denigration of adversaries.*
- **Critical point 31:** *The degree of labor conflict is not excessive in terms of either the number of conflicts, their effects, or the forcefulness of the means employed.*

The PSA represents over 80,000 government employees. Its membership is drawn from over 100 government agencies. In keeping with its stated commitment to go beyond member representation to include membership development, the services offered by the PSA cover collective bargaining, grievance handling, dispute resolution, health, safety and the environment, educational services, social services and public policy and governance.

In December 2016, PM Rowley announced his intention to set up a process for government,

labor, and businesses to collectively address issues related to the country's economy in the wake of falling oil prices. By early 2017, the unions had pulled out of the arrangement. However, the Prime Minister was able to get them to re-engage. Among the concessions made was a commitment that there would be no job cuts prior to the end of 2017.

In mid-November, industrial action disrupted operations at the Immigration Department at the Piarco International Airport. The President of the PSA made public pronouncements in which he opined that the sick-out, which was not sanctioned by the Union, represented only one symptom of a larger problem related to national and organizational politics.²⁵

Most ministries maintain websites which can be used to disseminate information to staff. They also feature a Contact Us option. Some ministries also produce periodic newsletters. The MPAC conducted Public Service Employee Surveys in 2004 and 2008, but due to budgetary constraints, no more surveys have been conducted since then.

Organization of the HRM Function

This subsystem covers the centralized structure for the management of the HRM function as well as how the rest of the Public Service views them.

- **Critical point 32:** *Managers take responsibility and appropriately exercise their responsibilities as managers of the personnel within their sphere of formal authority.*
- **Critical point 33:** *The central civil service agency responsible for the system is viewed by the rest of the organization as a department that adds value to the achievement of the common goals.*

²⁵ See: <http://i955fm.com/chaos-at-piarco-airport-as-immigration-workers-stage-sickout/>.

Public Service Commission, Service Commissions Department, and Personnel Department

IMF (2017a) includes the following statement on the performance of the centralized HR agencies:

The Public Service Commission Department and the Chief Personnel Officer are overwhelmed, leading to extraordinarily lengthy delays in personnel decision making, in turn increasing ministries' and public bodies' reliance on contract labor. Staff urged the government to streamline bureaucratic requirements for hiring, promoting, and firing personnel. In this regard, the removal of the Ouster Clause has subjected the Public Service Commissions to excessive litigation that greatly ties up their resources. In addition, the Commissions need institutional strengthening, including regarding electronic record-keeping.

IMF (2014) also cited shortcomings in the centralized HRM agencies. In addition to the bureaucratic bottlenecks, specific mention was made of the fragmented nature of the administration of the various HRM functions.

At the same time decision making is highly fragmented among those centralized agencies. The Chief Personnel Officer sets the terms and conditions of employment, conducts wage negotiations for public service positions, and advises the government on human resources management policies. The Service Commissions Department appoints, promotes, and disciplines staff. Finally, the Ministry of Public Administration is responsible for restructuring of ministries and departments, training, and development. Coordination is poor among the agencies, including due to limited information sharing. The fragmented nature of administration also makes accountability very

low, so it is extremely difficult for line ministries and agencies to identify where bureaucratic bottlenecks reside.

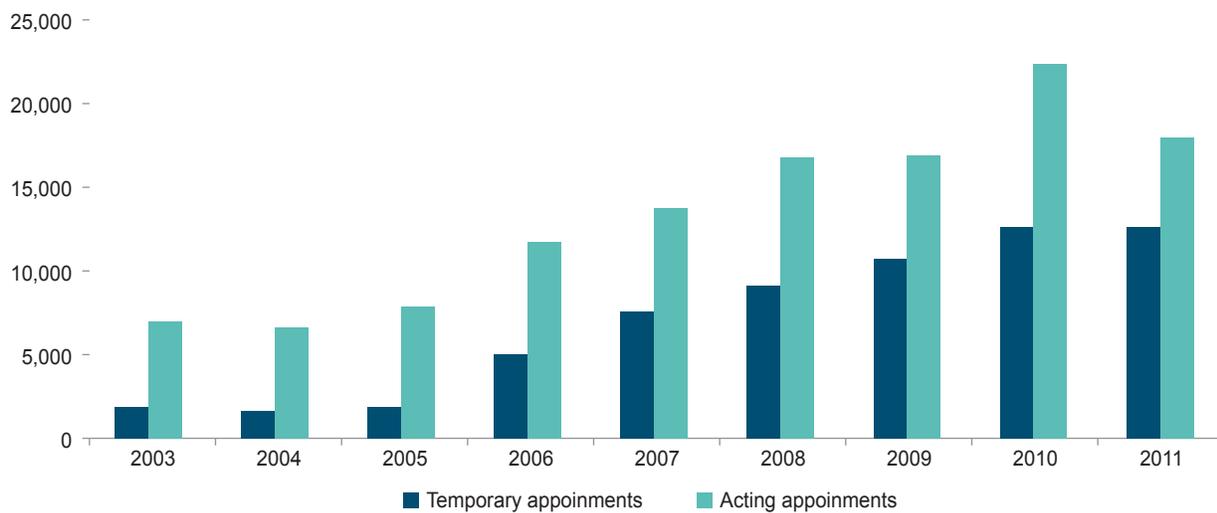
Both permanent secretaries and HR personnel conceded that there is a lack of coordination in the formulation of HRM policies. Extreme delays in the processing of appointments were also mentioned. SCD reports that their time to fill vacancies ranges from a best-case scenario of three to five months to as long as two years. While contributing factors include a poor response rate for certain positions and the failure to attract suitably qualified applicants, the SCD's workload has a major impact on the time to fill vacancies. This is exacerbated by the large volume of applications received for some vacancies. Delegated authority is used to help alleviate this challenge. Guidelines have been issued, and there is a monitoring system in place to ensure compliance. The Public Service Commission's Annual Report 2015 revealed that 20 percent of the cases where Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Department exercised delegated authority in the first quarter of 2015 were noncompliant. Some ministries have also been challenged in the courts over their exercise of delegated authority.

In support of concerns about the fragmented nature of the centralized HRM functions and the resultant inefficiencies, one interviewee mentioned securing help from PMCD to create a new position. Upon completion, the matter was then referred to PD where a determination was made that it could not be actioned.

Ministry of Public Administration and Communication

SHRMD within MPAC has responsibility for the collaborative development or revision of legislation and regulations, policies, guidelines, standards, business processes, and structures related to HRM. The SHRM Council has a mandate to achieve cohesion, alignment, and transparency of the HRM function and provide strategic and policy direction for HRM and the HRM Modernization Programme. The Council is chaired by the Minister of

FIGURE 2
Temporary and Acting Appointments in Ministries and Departments



Source: Trinidad and Tobago PSC.

Public Administration and Communications, and members include a representative of the PSC, the CPO, Director of Personnel Administration (DPA), PS MPAC, and their deputies. The terms of reference stipulate that the Council is required to meet monthly. There is strong consensus that the Council is not fulfilling its mandate. PS MPAC stated that the closing of this performance gap would be an area of focus starting in 2018.

Human Resource Management Divisions in Line Ministries

Despite the previously mentioned Cabinet Minute dating back to 1998 which established the HRM Units in the line ministries, IMF (2014) found that line ministries and departments have little autonomy in the management of their establishment (non-contracted officers) human resources and that the centralized HRM agencies retained control for decisions related to hiring, promotion, and discipline.

The specific functions which were recommended to be adopted by the HRM Units included employment and organizational planning, HR information management, recruitment, training administration,²⁶ performance management, grievance procedures, and discipline. Almost 20

years later, this stated intent has not been realized. However, in acknowledging the delays in their processing of hires and promotions, the PSC authorized line ministries to process temporary hires and promotions. The exponential increases in the use of that delegated authority as depicted in the following chart are symptomatic of the magnitude of the existing inefficiencies.

As outlined in previous sections, most managers in line ministries are not currently meeting their people management obligations as evidenced in the low compliance rate for the completion and submission of PARs.

To rectify this deficiency, a two-year program for executive development was introduced in 2016. Topics include human interaction, strategic management, leadership for results, analysis and decision making, leading change, and ethical decision making. To date, 40 officers have completed the program. While it is intended to be a prerequisite for promotion to executive level positions, this has not yet been implemented.

²⁶ Line ministries are required to conduct learning needs assessments. Compliance with this requirement is suboptimal.

Analysis of the Civil Service Quality Indices

This diagnostic uses the five quality indices of the methodology the IDB applied in Latin America, along with two additional indices, namely, Management Capabilities and Diversity Management, which have been developed specifically for the use in the IDB's Caribbean Civil Service Diagnostics. These seven quality indices contribute to the Civil Service Development Index (aggregated index).

Countries can be classified into three levels of civil service development according to their Civil Service Development Index: (i) low, with scores between 0 and 39 points out of 100; (ii) medium, with scores between 40 and 59; and (iii) high or professional systems levels, with scores higher than 60.

A score of 42 points presents important opportunities for improvement in human resource

management in the public sector. Trinidad and Tobago presented a high level of performance in the Merit Index, medium level of development in management capabilities and diversity management, and a low level of development in the other four quality indices (see Table 6).

The sections below describe each of the quality indices and present Trinidad and Tobago's scores per critical point under each of them. Scores of critical points go from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest).²⁷

²⁷ See Lafuente and Molina (2018) for a detailed analysis of the methodology and a description for each level per critical point.

TABLE 6
Trinidad and Tobago's Civil Service Development Scores, by Quality Index (2017)

Civil Service Development (aggregated index)	42
Simple average of the following indices. Measures the overall development of HRM in the civil service	
1. Efficiency	28
Reflects the degree of optimization of the organization's investment in its human capital	
2. Merit	80
Reflects the extent to which the organization has well-established policies designed to safeguard employees against arbitrary actions and favoritism in managerial decision making	
3. Structural Consistency	28
Reflects the level of strategic coherence, management, and process consistency existing in the organization's HRM systems	
4. Functional Capacity	33
Captures the degree of provision, development, and encouragement of relevant competencies in the organization along with the effectiveness of existing performance incentives and overall flexibility/adaptability in the face of changing organizational priorities	
5. Integrative Capacity	30
Measures the extent to which management, employees, and other key stakeholders experience a sense of belonging and the absence of conflict	
6. Management Capabilities	53
Covers the spectrum from Transactional Management to Transformational Leadership	
7. Diversity Management	40
Measures the extent to which opportunities in the Civil Service may be curtailed due to differences associated with race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and others	

Efficiency

This index measures the civil service system by considering the degree of optimization of investment in human capital, as well as the relationship of this investment to fiscal policy and its reference markets. It links the results obtained by the

civil service system with the resources invested in its operation, as well as other considerations, such as expenditure efficiency in decision-making processes.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Efficiency	3	In general, there are neither significant staff shortages nor overages.	0
	4	The overall cost of civil service staff is maintained within reasonable parameters that are compatible with the country's economic situation.	2
	20	Pay levels, including cash and non-cash benefits, are not excessive compared with labor market costs for any similar sector or grade.	4
	27	Training is subject to evaluation, which extends to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, the cost-results relationship, and the impact on the performance of people in the workplace.	1
	35	Management proactively identifies mission-critical positions and builds capacity to fill those positions as incumbents transition out.	0

Merit

This index measures the guarantees of professionalism in the way that the civil service system works, placing a value on impartiality in decision making in each management subsystem.

Specifically, it measures the degree of effective protection against arbitrariness, political capture or clientelism, and the different ways that interested groups or sectors engage in rent-seeking.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Merit	10	Hiring to fill vacancies is open, by right and in fact, to all candidates possessing the required qualifications. These are established according to suitability and technical considerations, not arbitrarily.	4
	11	The necessary safeguard mechanisms and procedures are in place against arbitrariness, politicization, patronage, and clientelism throughout the hiring process.	4
	14	Dismissals or terminations of employment that affect professional positions are not motivated by a change in the government's political leanings.	4

Structural Consistency

This index measures the civil service's systemic soundness and integrity, considering the basic structural elements of which it should be composed. It includes the development of

fundamental management processes, their coherence with other management systems, and the development of senior management.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Structural consistency	1	Staff planning needs usually result from the organization's priorities and strategic orientation. The degree to which they are adjusted to one another tends to be high.	1
	2	The HR information systems enable a reasonable awareness of the quantitative and qualitative resources available, now and in the future, in the different organizational areas and units.	1
	6	The staffing policies, decisions, and practices in each area of HRM arise from intentions that are determined during the planning process.	2
	8	Grading arrangements and job hierarchies result from rational criteria, adapted to each organizational environment.	1
	22	Compensation policy is set according to previously established criteria and consistent with the organization's structural design parameters.	1
	26	Investment in training is made via plans that are based on a needs assessment and designed to support the organization's stated priorities.	2
	32	Managers take responsibility and appropriately exercise their responsibilities as managers of the personnel within their sphere of formal authority.	2
	33	The central civil service agency responsible for the system is viewed by the rest of the organization as a department that adds value to the achievement of the common goals.	1

Functional Capacity

This index measures the system's capacity to positively influence the behavior of public employees. It includes professional qualifications, the

quality of incentives for good performance, and pay flexibility.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Functional capacity	5	The technical level of the workforce is commensurate with a knowledge-based society. Skilled labor represents a significant proportion of the workforce.	4
	7	Job descriptions conform to managerial criteria rather than to legal considerations or collective agreements. The legal framework and the employment agreements are limited to establishing a broad framework in which work is organized in accordance with organizational needs.	1
	9	Job profiles include the selection of competencies that in each case are considered key for the success of the job holder's performance.	1
	12	Staff selection is based on competency profiles for the potential job holders.	2
	13	The mechanisms for functional and geographic mobility respond flexibly to the demands of personnel redeployment.	1
	15	There is the possibility of terminating the employment relationship due to objectively verified technical, economic, or organizational reasons that justify workforce reductions.	2
	16	Management normally defines guidelines and standards regarding expected personnel performance in accordance with the organization's priorities and strategy. Consequently, employees are aware of the aspects of their performance for which they will be specifically evaluated.	2
	17	Throughout the management cycle, management monitors, observes, and supports improvements in employee performance, provides resources, and removes obstacles wherever necessary.	2
	18	Employees' performance is evaluated by the organization and compared to the expected performance standards.	3
	19	The pay structure, including cash and non-cash components, is adequate for attracting, motivating, and retaining suitable people with the necessary competencies for the positions that the organization requires.	2
	21	The compensation mechanisms encourage people to make more effort and stimulate individual or group performance, learning, and competency development.	1
	23	The promotion criteria and mechanisms link promotion to performance as well as to competency potential and development.	2
	24	There are alternatives to positions that are strictly hierarchical, such as "horizontal" career progress or remaining in the same position, based on recognition of professional excellence without necessarily increasing the formal authority of those affected.	0
25	Training supports the development of collective learning, thereby building organizational capacity to tackle problems and provide effective responses.	0	

Integrative Capacity

This index measures the effectiveness of the civil service system in harmonizing the expectations

and interests of the different actors, increasing the sense of belonging, and reducing conflict.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Integrative capacity	28	The organization makes efforts to learn about its work climate, using reliable instruments for periodic evaluation.	1
	29	The organization has specific communication instruments that serve to reinforce the sense of belonging and the commitment of employees to the overall organizational project.	1
	30	Labor relations are preferably and habitually oriented toward agreement and consensus building rather than confrontation and denigration of adversaries.	2
	31	The degree of labor conflict is not excessive in terms of either the number of conflicts, their effects, and the forcefulness of the means employed.	2

Management Capabilities

This index covers the spectrum from Transactional Management to Transformational Leadership. Transactional managers are concerned with the status quo and day-to-day progress toward goals. Transformational leaders operate at a more

strategic level as they work to enhance the motivation and engagement of followers by directing their behavior toward a shared vision. The lower the score, the more transactional the nature of the current approach to management.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Management capabilities	32	Managers take responsibility and appropriately exercise their responsibilities as managers of the personnel within their sphere of formal authority.	2
	36	Senior civil servants go beyond managing day-to-day operations and craft strategies for taking the Civil Service to the next level of performance and success.	2
	38	Senior civil servants collaborate across ministries and sectors to secure coherence in policies and programs.	4

Diversity Management

This index provides information on the extent to which worker's access to employment and/or advancement opportunities in the Civil Service

may be curtailed due to differences associated with race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and others.

INDEX	NO.	CRITICAL POINT	SCORE
Diversity management	34	Men, women, minorities, and people from historically marginalized groups are treated fairly in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities.	2
	37	Decisions related to hiring, promotion, compensation, discipline, and termination are free from institutional biases associated with variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, or place of origin.	2

Recommendations

The seven quality indices, along with the associated critical points and high-level recommendations, are presented in the following subsections.

Efficiency

#	CRITICAL POINTS	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
3	In general, there are neither significant staff shortages nor overages.	<p>The efficiency index reflects the degree of optimization of the organization's investment in its human capital. The primary areas for improvement relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shortages/overages – A manpower audit and workforce planning should be conducted to ascertain the optimal staff complement for each ministry and department. • Training evaluation – The monitoring and evaluation provisions of the 2017 Training/Learning Policy should be implemented. • Succession Plan – Centralized HRM agencies/SHRM Council should take the lead and work in close collaboration with the PS Board.
4	The overall cost of civil service staff is maintained within reasonable parameters that are compatible with the country's economic situation.	
20	Pay levels, including cash and non-cash benefits, are not excessive compared with labor market costs for any similar sector or grade.	
27	Training is subject to evaluation, which extends to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, the cost-results relationship, and the impact on the performance of people in the workplace.	
35	Management proactively identifies mission-critical positions and builds capacity to fill those positions as incumbents transition out.	

Merit

#	CRITICAL POINTS	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
10	Hiring to fill vacancies is open, by right and in fact, to all candidates possessing the required qualifications. These are established according to suitability and technical considerations, not arbitrarily.	The merit index reflects the extent to which the organization has well-established policies designed to safeguard employees against arbitrary actions and favoritism in managerial decision making.
11	The necessary safeguard mechanisms and procedures are in place against arbitrariness, politicization, patronage, and clientelism throughout the entire hiring process.	Measures that could be taken to improve the merit index include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity of Job Profiles – The planned job evaluation and classification exercise should be completed, and competency-based job descriptions should be prepared with at least general competencies for all established positions, allowing for the phasing in of technical competencies over time. • Transparency – Consider publishing the decision matrix with associated weighting scheme used by the PSC in filling vacancies. • Access – The use of ICT should be explored to facilitate virtual interviews for applicants for whom travelling to Port of Spain may present a challenge.
14	Dismissals or terminations of employment that affect professional positions are not motivated by a change in the government's political leanings.	

Structural Consistency

#	CRITICAL POINTS	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1	Staff planning needs usually result from the organization's priorities and strategic orientation. The degree to which they are adjusted to one another tends to be high	This indicator reflects the level of strategic coherence, management and process consistency existing in the organization's HRM systems.
2	The HRIS enable a reasonable awareness of the quantitative and qualitative resources available, now and in the future, in the different organizational areas and units.	This quality index could be significantly improved through a number of targeted interventions. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and Regulatory Framework – The amendment of the Civil Service Act and the Public Service Commission Regulations require urgent attention to replace the personnel administration focus with an HRM approach. • Workforce Plan – All ministries should prepare workforce plans aligned with Vision 2030. • SHRM Council – The Council should be revitalized and existing deficiencies rectified in coordination with the centralized HRM agencies and HRM Units within ministries. • lHRIS – The pending upgrade of hardware and software should be completed and the system relaunched with the goal of securing full utilization of all HR modules. Ensure HRM SME and end-user engagement are secured to achieve full implementation. Stakeholder engagement is essential as is accountability for noncompliance. • Job Grading: The planned job evaluation and classification exercise should be completed. • Pay Policy – Salary scales should be reviewed completion of the reclassification exercise. • Training: The 2017 Training Policy should be fully implemented. • Monitoring & Evaluation: The National Performance Framework should be fully implemented.
6	The staffing policies, decisions, and practices in each area of HRM arise from intentions that are determined during the planning process.	
8	Grading arrangements and job hierarchies result from rational criteria, which are adapted to each organizational environment.	
22	Compensation policy is set according to previously established criteria and consistent with the organization's structural design parameters.	
26	Investment in training is made via plans that are based on a needs assessment and designed to support the organization's stated priorities.	
32	Managers take responsibility and appropriately exercise their responsibilities as managers of the personnel within their sphere of formal authority.	
33	The central civil service agency responsible for the system is viewed by the rest of the organization as a department that adds value to the achievement of the common goals.	

Functional Capacity

#	CRITICAL POINT	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5	The technical level of the workforce is commensurate with a knowledge-based society. Skilled labor represents a significant proportion of the workforce.	<p>This index captures the degree of provision, development, and encouragement of relevant competencies in the organization along with the effectiveness of existing performance incentives and overall flexibility/adaptability in the face of changing organizational priorities.</p> <p>Required interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Profiles – Coordinate MPAC’s planned preparation of a system-wide competency framework with PD’s planned job evaluation and reclassification exercise. • Performance Standards – Conduct capacity building to enable supervisors and managers to develop performance standards. • Performance Management – Fully implement existing system and introduce accountability measures to ensure compliance. • Compensation – Explore mechanisms for linking pay to performance. Union engagement should be secured from the outset to mitigate against subsequent legal challenges.
7	Job descriptions conform to managerial criteria rather than to legal considerations or collective agreements. The legal framework and the employment agreements are limited to establishing a broad framework in which work is organized in accordance with organizational needs.	
9	Job profiles include the selection of competencies that in each case are considered key for the success of the job holder’s performance.	
12	Staff selection is based on competency profiles for the potential job holders.	
13	The mechanisms for functional and geographic mobility respond flexibly to the demands of personnel redeployment.	
15	There is the possibility of terminating the employment relationship due to objectively verified technical, economic, or organizational reasons that justify workforce reductions.	
16	Management normally defines guidelines and standards regarding expected personnel performance in accordance with the organization’s priorities and strategy. Consequently, employees are aware of the aspects of their performance for which they will be evaluated.	
17	Throughout the management cycle, management monitors, observes, and supports improvements in employee performance, provides resources, and removes obstacles wherever necessary.	
18	Employees’ performance is evaluated by the organization and compared to the expected performance standards.	
19	The pay structure, including cash and non-cash components, is adequate for attracting, motivating, and retaining suitable people with the necessary competencies for the positions that the organization requires.	
21	The compensation mechanisms encourage people to make more effort and stimulate individual or group performance, learning, and competency development.	
23	The promotion criteria and mechanisms link promotion to performance as well as to competency potential and development.	
24	There are alternatives to positions that are strictly hierarchical, such as “horizontal” career progress or remaining in the same position, based on recognition of professional excellence without necessarily increasing the formal authority of those affected.	
25	Training supports the development of collective learning, thereby building organizational capacity to tackle problems and provide effective responses.	

Integrative Capacity

#	CRITICAL POINT	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
28	The organization makes efforts to learn about its work climate, using reliable instruments for periodic evaluation.	<p>Integrative Capacity measures the extent to which management, employees and other key stakeholders experience a sense of belonging and the absence of conflict.</p> <p>Possible interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tripartism – Formalize and solidify the relationship initiated by PM Rowley in 2016. • Employee Engagement – Ensure that all ministries and departments use traditional and new media channels to keep employees apprised of happenings and solicit their input re same.
29	The organization has specific communication instruments that serve to reinforce the sense of belonging and the commitment of employees to the overall organizational project.	
30	Labor relations are preferably and habitually oriented toward agreement and consensus building rather than confrontation and denigration of adversaries.	
31	The degree of labor conflict is not excessive in terms of either the number of conflicts, their effects, or the forcefulness of the means employed.	

Management Capabilities

#	CRITICAL POINTS	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
32	Managers take responsibility and appropriately exercise their responsibilities as managers of the personnel within their sphere of formal authority.	<p>This index covers the spectrum from Transactional Management to Transformational Leadership. Transactional managers are concerned about the status quo and day-to-day progress toward goals. Transformational leaders operate at a more strategic level as they work to enhance the motivation and engagement of followers by directing their behavior toward a shared vision.</p> <p>Upon the completion of the new competency framework, job match assessments should be introduced for all candidates for managerial level positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership – Ensure that the competency profiles developed for senior positions reflect their responsibility to leverage the polarities associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operational and strategic management; and • task and people focus • Accountability – Ensure that the principles of performance management that are applied to line staff are extended to managerial level officers. This should include the identification of those responsible for ensuring that specific performance goals are established, monitored, and evaluated and active individual development plans for managerial staff.
36	Senior civil servants go beyond managing day-to-day operations and craft strategies for taking the Civil Service to the next level of performance and success.	
38	Senior civil servants collaborate across ministries and sectors in order to secure coherence in policies and programs.	

Diversity Management

#	CRITICAL POINTS	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
34	Men, women, minorities, and people from historically marginalized groups are treated fairly in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities.	This index provides information on the extent to which workers' access to employment and/or advancement opportunities in the Civil Service may be curtailed due to differences associated with race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and others.
37	Decisions related to hiring, promotions, compensation, discipline, and terminations are free from institutional biases associated with variables such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, or place of origin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and Regulatory Framework – Review and amend as warranted to eliminate any clauses which are not compliant with the country's obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas or which reflect a bias based on gender or any other demographic variable.

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Workshops and Interviews

1. **Public Service Academy:** Cheryl Ramroom – HRA III Ag; Malika Lyons-Best – HRA II Ag; Ajodia Raitamsingh – HRA III Ag; Denise A. Phillip – Director Public Management; Roland G. Baptiste – Consultant.
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3. **Strategic Human Resource Management Division:** Carol Abder; Curtis Bobb – HR Specialist; Margaret Joseph – HR Specialist.
4. **MPA HRM Division:** Laura Daniel – Director HR; Lean Hanoomali-Boodram – SHRO; Angela Ramlagam – SHRO.
5. **Public Service Appeal Board:** Justice Annes-tine Sealey – Chairman
6. **Service Commissions Department:** Prabha-watie Maraj – Director, Personnel Administra-tion; Marcia Pile O’Brady – Director, Personnel Administration; Coomarie Goolabsingh – Deputy Director, Personnel Administra-tion; Margaret Morales – Executive Director, HRM; Ramdai Sookdeo – Executive Direc-tor, HRM; Martel Waldron – Executive Direc-tor, HRM; Helen Warner – Executive Director, HRM; Allison Hughes – Director Corporate Services; Tamara Roy – Manager Corporate Communications
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12. **Ministry of Finance – HRM Division:** Lesann Bagoo-Seebaran; Senior Human Resource Officer; Jacqueline Gomez – Senior Human Resource Officer Ag.
13. **Ministry of Finance – Treasury Division:** Re-anne Baldeo Senior Human Resource Officer Ag.; David Sammy – Human Resource Officer III Ag; Keith Jackson – Transforma-tion Manager, IGP/IhRIS; Everis de Freitas – Functional Specialist, IGP/IhRIS Production Team, Annmarie Andrews – Business Special-ist, IGP/IhRIS Production Team;
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16. **National Transformation Unit;** Erica Fortune Senior Planning Officer, Socio-Economic Pol-icy Planning

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