



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Procurement in Trinidad and Tobago – The New Regulatory Framework

*Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries
(TTCSI)*

REMARKS

MS FRANCES SEIGNORET
AG PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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Good morning

Let me take this opportunity firstly to congratulate the recently appointed President and Members of the Board of the TTCSI and to wish them every success in their endeavours.

As this is the first occasion that I have had to meet with Mr Lalchan since his appointment as Procurement Regulator, I also wish to extend congratulations to him and the team at the Office of Procurement Regulation.

It is indeed a pleasure to bring greetings on behalf of the Ministry of Trade and Industry at this session entitled “Procurement in Trinidad and Tobago – The New Regulatory Framework”. As the national umbrella body for the services industry, the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries must be commended for organizing this event to enlighten its membership on the requirements of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act.

The information shared today will undoubtedly facilitate a better understanding of the measures being put in place for the fair, transparent and competitive process envisaged for the use of public funds. While public sector and private sector procurement share some similarities, the private sector exercises greater flexibility in the procurement of goods and services. Public procurement, however, involves expenditure of tax payers’ dollars and therefore requires greater consideration of cost, time and impact.

Changes introduced by the new legislation, as you will learn, have implications for all organisations and individuals providing goods, services and works to any public entity. As stakeholders, therefore, the information to be disseminated is of great relevance.

Ladies and gentlemen, according to Central Statistical Office data, in 2016 the services sector contributed 57.2 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2016, services employed approximately 80 percent of the total labour force. This large and varied market for services, makes it imperative that, as service providers, you be familiar with the new legislation and its implications for your day-to-day interface with the State.

With the aim of placing Trinidad and Tobago firmly on the road to recovery and stability, the Government is implementing the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 (Vision 2030) which is predicated on five developmental themes. Of particular importance to this morning’s discussion is Theme II: Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence. This area inherently addresses the need for democratic institutions to operate on principles of transparency, value for money, accountability, morality, equity and integrity in public life in order to achieve social stability and economic progress.

In terms of economic development, the Ministry of Trade and Industry is responsible for growing business, trade and investment in Trinidad and Tobago; this includes support for

manufacturing; expansion of the film, fashion and music sub-sectors of the creative industry and the maritime sector of which yachting is an integral component.

Our local creative industry is reporting meaningful progress with the implementation, or continuation, of projects such as the Live Music District, the Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme and the Production Expenditure Rebate Programme, by the Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company Limited and its subsidiaries.

The country's commercial maritime and yachting industries are benefitting from several projects being pursued by the Standing Committee for the Development of the Maritime Sector: A National Yachting Policy, outlining strategies for the sustainable development of the leisure marine industry, is being implemented. Guidelines have been created for the expansion of transshipment and cold stacking of vessels; work is ongoing towards a National Maritime Policy.

Additionally, TTBizLink, the country's Single Electronic Window (SEW) supports the activities of local entrepreneurs digitally as the Government continues to improve the business and trading environment.

TTBizLink is the first Single Electronic Window in the Caribbean that allows 24/7 access to applications for various trade and business-related government services including business, VAT registration, national insurance and import concession applications among others.

Public procurement encompasses a range of different sectors inclusive of those previously mentioned. The initiatives which are being implemented present many opportunities for the country's service providers. Collaboration/partnership with the private sector is essential in the provision of goods and services – for example - to build hospitals, construct roads, secure information technology services and purchase basic supplies. Once public procurement is conducted within the framework of the new Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act, it can be a driver of innovation and growth. It can generate business opportunities for the private sector and result in the delivery of more effective and efficient public services.

The role of the private sector is thus vital in providing high quality services and promoting value for money, as well as ensuring an efficient and transparent procurement process. I am confident that the work being done by the Office of Procurement Regulation will result in a more informed citizenry ready to give effect to robust procurement standards.

I thank you.