



**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
ANNUAL STATEMENT ON THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) 1999**

**UPDATED PUBLIC STATEMENT OF
THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES 2012**

In compliance with Section 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999, the Ministry of Public Utilities is required to publish annual statements on its mandate for the benefit of the public.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999, was assented on November 4, 1999 and came into full effect on August 30, 2001 to “give members of the public a general right (with exceptions) of access to official documents of public authorities and for matters related thereto”. The Act provides members of the public with:

1. A legal right for each person to access information held by the Ministry of Public Utilities;
2. A legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/her amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading;
3. A legal right to obtain reasons for adverse decisions made regarding applicant’s request for information under the FOIA;
4. A legal right to complain to the Ombudsman and to apply to the High Court for Judicial Review to challenge adverse decisions made under the FOIA.

Section 7 Statements

Purpose and Function of the Ministry of Public Utilities

The Ministry’s strategic framework establishes the context within which its goals and objectives are recognized and pursued. It is defined by the following:

Mandate

To provide effective and efficient leadership and governance in the delivery of Public Utilities Services to the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

Vision

To become an organization dedicated to excellence in the delivery of Public Utilities Services for the sustainability of our country and an improved quality of life of its citizenry.

Mission

To facilitate the effective delivery of efficient, affordable and quality Public Utilities Services through a committed, resourceful team of professionals in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

Core Values

The Ministry of Public Utilities is guided in its operations by the following core values:

- Integrity
- Service Excellence

- Transparency
- Trust and Mutual Respect
- Accountability
- Partnership

Reporting

The Honourable Minister of Public Utilities has oversight for the Public Utilities Sector, together with his Management Team and dedicated staff who has responsibility for the delivery of Public Utilities to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. This is coordinated through the efforts of two (2) Divisions, one (1) Statutory Body, and three (3) State Enterprises. In addition, the Ministry is also responsible for the administration of the National Social Development Programme and the Utilities Assistance Programme in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry of Public Utilities has a staff of three hundred and sixty three (363) employees and is accountable to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in the areas of: electricity and electrical inspections; telecommunication services; postal services; and government printing services.

The Minister of Public Utilities has responsibility for:

- Visioning and policy direction
- Leadership
- Securing budgetary requirements
- Public accountability

As such, the Minister reports to the Cabinet and Parliament on matters relating to these areas.

Ministry Structure

Head Office

- The Office and Secretariat of the Minister of Public Utilities
- The Office and Secretariat of the Permanent Secretary
- The Office and Secretariat of the Deputy Permanent Secretary
- The Human Resource Services Division, which is comprised of:-
 - The Human Resource Management Unit
 - The Administrative Support Services Unit
 - The Finance and Accounts Unit
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
- The Economic Research, Policy and Planning Division, which comprises:-
 - The Research Unit
 - The Communications Sector Management Unit
 - The Electrification Sector Management Unit
- The National Social Development Programme (NSDP)
- The Sectoral Programmes and Projects Unit

UPDATED PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES 2012

- The Customer Service Unit
- The Communications Unit
- The Legal Services Unit
- The Information Systems/ Information Technology (IS/IT) Unit; and
- Internal Audit

Divisions of the Ministry

- The Electrical Inspectorate Division
- The Government Printery Division

Statutory Bodies

- The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC)

State Enterprises

- The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (TTEC)
- The Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPost)

Majority Owned Enterprise

- The Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TSTT)

Responsibilities of Internal Divisions and Units (Head Office)

Human Resource Services Division

The primary objective of the Human Resource Services Division is to provide timely and efficient support to the internal clients of the Ministry by offering Financial, Administrative and Human Resource Services through its Human Resource Management Unit, Administrative Support Services Unit and the Finance and Accounts Unit.

Economic Research, Policy and Planning Division

The Economic Research Policy and Planning Division (ERPPD) is the technical arm of the Ministry charged with overall policy directive, research and planning. This Division conducts its work through three (3) Units, namely:

- The Research Unit
- The Communications Sector Management Unit

- The Electrification Sector Management Unit

Monitoring and Evaluating Unit

This Unit is responsible for developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation systems for the Ministry, consistent with the Government's Mandate to provide effective and efficient delivery of public utilities to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The Unit's primary function is to track the progress, outcomes and impact of projects, programmes and policies, evaluate the Ministry's performance and report on its activities.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit is responsible for ensuring that the system of accounting as prescribed by the Ministry of Finance is established, implemented and maintained in the Ministry. The Department's primary aim is to ensure that all financial records of the Ministry are complete and accurate, and that the assets of the Ministry are safeguarded and can be properly reported.

Legal Services Unit

This Unit is responsible for providing legal advice to the Ministry, liaising with other legal counsels in the public and private sectors with respect to the Ministry's legal business, advancing the Ministry's legislative agenda and providing information to the Chief State Solicitor and the Solicitor General on Court matters pertaining to the Ministry.

National Social Development Programme (NSDP)

The National Social Development Programme (NSDP), which began in 2002, is a Government-funded intervention programme designed to deliver water, sanitary plumbing and electricity to underserved, low-income and disadvantaged communities and individuals throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Sectoral Programmes and Projects Unit (SPPU)

This Sectoral Programmes and Projects Unit is responsible for monitoring the implementation of sectoral programmes and projects (including capital projects), risk management and project reporting.

Customer Service Unit

The Customer Service Unit is responsible for ensuring that there is greater efficiency in the Ministry's service delivery system. The function of this Unit includes, responding to Parliamentary Questions, addressing requests under the Freedom of Information Act, processing of Standby Generator Licences, addressing complaints/queries pertaining to the utilities and the administration of the Utilities Assistance Programme (UAP).

Information Technology Unit

The Information Technology Unit is responsible for managing the Information Systems (IS) and Information Technology (IT) portfolios of the Ministry, as well as providing the necessary IT support to the Ministry.

Communications Unit

The primary responsibility of the Communication Unit is to develop and implement the Ministry's communication strategy in support of Government's plans, programmes and initiatives.

Responsibilities of External Divisions

Electrical Inspectorate Division (EID)

The Electrical Inspectorate Division's (EID) primary responsibility is to provide inspection and certification of electrical installations in Trinidad and Tobago in accordance with accepted codes and practices of both local and international standards. The EID is also charged with issuing and renewing wireman's licenses, in addition to investigating fires that may occur due to electrical faults, upon the request of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services, Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) and Insurance Companies.

Government Printery

The Government Printery's primary function is the printing and sale of official Government Publications that are required by law to the Public, including the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette, Acts of Parliament, Bills, Legal Notices, official Government Forms and road and city maps. In addition, they are also responsible for the printing and/or binding of books, forms and other documents to be used by the Parliament, Government Ministries, Department and Divisions.

Impact of Functions of the Ministry of Public Utilities on Members of the Public

The services which are provided by the Ministry of Public Utilities, such as electricity and electrical inspection, postal, telecommunications, and printing services, positively impacts the lives of all citizens in the country as well as all sectors of the economy, since these services contribute to the basic infrastructure upon which all human and economic development is based, measured and sustained.

UPDATED PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES 2012

Categories of Documents in the Possession of the Ministry of Public Utilities

The following documents are in the possession of the Ministry of Public Utilities, in accordance with Section 7 (1) (a) (ii) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999:

- Files: Administrative, Human Resource Management, financial, procurement, legal, conferences/seminars, programmes, projects, Cabinet, boards, committees, meetings, technical assistance, local/regional/international organisations, and utilities.
- Financial Records: Financial and accounting statements and operational documents.
- Documents: Copies of legislation, laws, legal notices, bills, regulations, orders, Gazettes, brochures, bulletins, reports from Government agencies.
- Digital media: Photographs, CDs, DVDs, diskettes, videos and tapes pertaining to the Ministry's work.

Material prepared for publication or inspection

The Ministry produces the following documents which are available to the public:

- The Ministry's Quarterly Newsletter "Focus on MPU"
- National Social Development Programme (NSDP) brochures
- Utilities Assistance Programme (UAP) brochures

Members of the public can also visit our website for additional information at www.mpu.gov.tt

Literature available by subscription

Section 7 (1) (a) (iv)

This section is not applicable.

Procedure to be followed when accessing a document from the Ministry of Public Utilities

The following are the procedures to be followed when accessing documents from the Ministry of Public Utilities, in accordance with Section 7 (1) (a) (v) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999:

(a) General Procedure

The Ministry's policy is to respond to all requests for information, both oral and written. However, in order to exercise the rights under the FOIA (for example the right to challenge a decision if the request for information is refused), the applicant must make the request in writing.

The applicant must, therefore, complete the appropriate form (Request for Access to Official Documents) available at the Ministry's Library and the Customer Services Unit, for information that is not readily available to the public.

(b) Addressing Requests

To facilitate prompt handling of the request, please address it to the Designated Officer of the Ministry (see Section 7 (1) (a) (vi))

(c) Details in the Request

Applicants should provide details that will allow for ready identification and location of the records that are being requested. If insufficient information is provided, clarification will be sought from the applicant. If the applicants are unsure of how to write their request or what details to include, communicate with the Ministry's Designated Officer.

(d) Requests not handled under the FOIA

A request under the FOIA will not be processed to the extent that it asks for information which is readily available to the public, either from this Ministry or from another public authority, e.g. brochures, pamphlets, reports etc.

(e) Retrieving Documents

The Ministry of Public Utilities is required to furnish copies of documents only when they are in its possession or can be retrieved from storage. Information stored in the National Archives or other storage centres will be retrieved in order to process the requests.

(f) Furnishing Documents

An applicant is entitled to copies of information the Ministry's has in its possession, custody or power. The Ministry is required to furnish only one copy of a document. If a legible copy of a document cannot be released, the Ministry may not attempt to reconstruct it. Instead, the Ministry will furnish the best copy possible and note its quality in our reply. Please note the Ministry is not compelled to do the following:

- Create new documents; or
- Perform research for the applicant.

(g) Time Limits

The FOIA sets a time limit of thirty (30) calendar days for determination of a request for access to documents. The Ministry is required to grant the

request for access to information as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days as required by Section 15 of the FOIA. If a decision is taken to grant access to the information requested, the applicant will be permitted to inspect the documents and/or be provided with copies.

Should the Ministry fail to meet this deadline, the FOIA gives the applicant the right to proceed as though the request has been denied. The Ministry will diligently seek to comply with the time limit. If it appears that processing the request may take longer than the statutory limit, the Ministry would acknowledge the request and advise the applicant of its status. Since there is a possibility that requests may be incorrectly addressed or misdirected, the applicant may wish to call or write to confirm that the Ministry has received the request and to ascertain its status.

(h) Fees and Charges

Section 17(1) stipulates that no fee shall be charged by a public authority for the making of a request for access to an official document. However, where access to an official document is to be given in the form of printed copies or copies in some other form, such as on a tape, disk, film or other material, the applicant will be required to pay the prescribed fee incurred for duplication of the said material. Similarly, where documents in the public domain are made available to a member of the public, the Ministry may charge duplication fees in accordance with its normal replication policy.

Designated Officers in the Ministry of Public Utilities

The following are the Designated Officers charged with the responsibility for obtaining documents on request by the public in accordance with Section 7 (1) (a) (vi) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999.

UPDATED PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES 2012

The Designated Officer:

Mauricia Pegus
Customer Service Manager
#2 Elizabeth Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain.
Phone: 628-9500 Fax: 628-0105
Email:

The Alternate Officer:

Anniesa Butkoon
Technical Research Assistant
#2 Elizabeth Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain.
Phone: 628-9500/Fax: 628-6067
Email:

These Officers are responsible for executing the following functions:

- The initial receipt of an action upon notices under Section 10,
- Requests for access to documents under Section 13, and
- Applications for correction of personal information under Section 36 of the FOIA

Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees, and other bodies (where meetings/minutes are open to the public) Section 7 (1) (a) (vii).

There are currently no Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees and other Bodies at this time.

Library/Reading Room Facilities

The Ministry of Public Utilities currently has a Reading Room/Library in accordance with Section 7 (1) (a) (viii) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999. The Reading Room/Library is located on First Floor, #2 Elizabeth Street, St. Clair, Port-of-Spain. It is open to the public from Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 8:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Policy of the Ministry of Public Utilities for the provision of copies of documents which are readily available to the public

Members of the public may:

- (a) Indicate the form in which the copies are to be made available e.g. soft or hard copies, and must take into consideration, the possibility that the copies may not be available in the form required.
- (b) Be required to supply copying paper for hard copies in instances where requests require large amounts of paper.

Section 8 Statements

Section 8(1) (a) (1) pertains to documents utilized by the public authority for its use and guidance. These documents contain interpretations or particulars of written laws or schemes administered by the public authority, the following pieces of legislation as amended apply:

- Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission Act Chapter 54:70
- Electricity (Inspection) Act Chapter 54:72
- Electrical Installations (Buildings) Act Chapter 54:71
- Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation Act Chapter 47:02
- Regulated Industries Commission Act Chapter 54:70
- Public Service Regulations
- Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago Chapter 1:01
- Exchequer and Audit Act Chapter 69:01
- Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01
- Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 22:02
- Companies Act, 81:01
- Central Tenders Board Act, Chapter 71:91
- Interpretation Act, Chapter 3:01
- Industrial Relations Act, 88:01
- Telecommunication Act Chapter 47:31

Also, there are other documents which guide the operations of the Ministry of Public Utilities. These documents can be purchased from the Government Printery, while others may be accessed on-line via www.ttparliament.org or www.ttconnect.gov.tt. The following applies:

- Legislation, laws, regulations and orders
- Trinidad and Tobago Gazette
- Hansard Reports relating to Debates in the Senate and House of Representatives
- Circular memoranda from the Ministry of Finance, Comptroller of Accounts, Chief Personnel Officer, Director of Public Administration and other Departments.
- Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP)
- Reports of Government Agencies
- Annual Budget Documents of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Policies of Agencies within the purview of the Ministry
- Guidelines for Programmes within the Ministry

- Estimates of Expenditure, Recurrent and Development Programme
- Procurement Policies and guidelines
- Financial Regulations and Instructions
- Health and Safety Guidelines

Section 9 Statements

In accordance with Section 9 (1) (a)-(m), the following reports are available at the Ministry's Reading Room/Library, located on the First Floor, #2 Elizabeth St, St. Clair, Port of Spain:

- The MPU's Strategic Plan (2011-2015)
- The MPU's Annual Administrative Reports
- The MPU's Statistical Digest (2006-2010)
- The MPU's Quarterly Newsletter
- The MPU's Monthly Internal Newsletter
- Social Sector Investment Programme (SSIP) Reports
- Annual Reports and Financial Statements of Agencies of the MPU
- Reports on Feasibility Studies for major water projects
- TTPost Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey 2000
- Final Determination for the Regulation of Electricity Transmission and Distribution 2006-2011
- Newsletters/Magazines of Agencies of the MPU (e.g. "Watts Happening" and "RIC News")
- Contact Magazine prepared by the T&T's Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- Linkage Magazine prepared by the American Chamber of Commerce
- Newsletters of Other Ministries and Agencies (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environmental Management Authority (EMA))



*Integrity, Service Excellence, Transparency, Accountability,
Trust and Mutual Respect and Partnership*