



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

04 July, 2017

Ms. Keiba Jacob

Secretary

Public Administration and Appropriation Committee

Level G-7 Tower D

The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre

1A Wrightson Road,

Port of Spain.

Dear Ms. Jacob,

Re: The Third Report of the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee, Second Session, Eleventh Parliament, on an Examination of the System of Inventory Control within the Public Service

I refer to your letter referenced Parl.: 5/7/22 dated 26 May, 2017 and received 08 June, 2017, with respect to the Report at caption.

Consistent with standing orders 100 (6) and 110 (6) of the Senate and House of Representatives respectively, the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government submits the attached written responses, to the recommendations/comments contained in the report.

You may contact the office of the Permanent Secretary at Sbrathwaite@gov.tt or call Ms. Sandra Brathwaite at 622-7410/622-1979 Ext. 3207, should any further clarification on information be required.

Respectfully,

Desdra Bascombe

Permanent Secretary

Office of the Permanent Secretary

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BACKGROUND

The Third Report of the Public Administration and Appropriation Committee for the Second Session of the Eleventh Parliament, outlined the details of the examination of the System of Inventory Control within the Public Service and focused on the following issues –

- ☐ Procurement and Disposal of Assets;
- ☐ Inventory Control Management;
- ☐ Policy for the Acquisition and Use of Motor Vehicles;
- ☐ Review of the Exchequer and Audit Act and the Financial Regulations;
- ☐ Filling Public Service Vacancies/Establishing Positions and Offices; and
- ☐ Training of Public Service Officials.

The Committee's comments and recommendations respectively with respect to the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government as reflected in pages thirty two (32) and thirty three (33) of the report are:

Comments:

I. Proper Maintenance of the Inventory Register:

- The last instance in which the register was checked for accuracy to ensure that information was up to date was in 2013/2014
- The persons in the department were not sufficiently skilled to update the Inventory Registry. Given the scope, demands and increasing expectations surrounding inventory issues, additional staff was also required to further support the maintenance of the register.

II. Tagging of the Ministry's Inventory:

- Items at the Ministry were not tagged due to the computerized Asset Management System not being monitored and the contracted personnel departing the Ministry. The Ministry was working towards re-introducing the previously used system.

Recommendations:

- The Ministry should introduce a schedule whereby the Inventory Register is checked monthly to ensure that information listed is up to date.
- The Minister should liaise with the Service Commissions Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications to determine the most effective method to fill the vacancies throughout the Ministry and also source the requisite training for staff and also provide a status update to the committee on the progress made in this regard by July 01, 2017.

The Ministry should provide a Status Report to the Committee on the progress made in re-introducing the computerized Asset Management System by June 30, 2017.

RESPONSES

Comments:

1. Proper Maintenance of the Inventory Register:

- The last instance in which the register was checked for accuracy to ensure that information was up to date was in 2013/2014

The Inventory Register has been updated to Fiscal year 2016-2017.

- The persons in the department were not sufficiently skilled to update the Inventory Registry. Given the scope, demands and increasing expectations surrounding inventory issues, additional staff was also required to further support the maintenance of the register.

Requests have been made to fill available vacancies with suitably qualified persons and in the interim, measures have been implemented for part time inventory duties to be performed by existing staff. Efforts are also being made to recruit temporary staff who would be suitably trained to perform the necessary duties until the available vacancy is filled.

11. Tagging of the Ministry's Inventory:

- Items at the Ministry were not tagged due to the computerized Asset Management System not being monitored and the contracted personnel departing the Ministry. The Ministry was working towards re-introducing the previously used system.

The IT Department and the General Administration Departments are working with Delta Dynamics towards the reactivation of the Computerised Asset Management System. Untagged items would now be tagged in accordance with the system requirements once initialized and would be added to the existing database of tagged items.

RESPONSES

Recommendations:

- The Ministry should introduce a schedule whereby the Inventory Register is checked monthly to ensure that information listed is up to date.

The Ministry has introduced a schedule to ensure that the Register is checked and updated monthly by the temporarily assigned staff.

- The Ministry should liaise with the Service Commissions Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications to determine the most effective method to fill the vacancies throughout the Ministry and also source the requisite training for staff and also provide a status update to the committee on the progress made in this regard by July 01, 2017.

A position of Records Manager II (Range 46D) whose overall responsibility is Inventory Control and Asset Management, exists on the Staff Establishment of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MRDLG). Several unsuccessful requests have been made to date to the Service Commission Department to fill the position that has been vacant since October 2010.

The Ministry has been consistently liaising with the Service Commissions Department to fill the position of Records Manager II with a proposed recommendation by memorandum RDLG: 40/5/2 Sub. 6 Vol. VI dated March 8, 2016. Several reminders have been sent to no avail ending with memo dated January 24, 2017. However, to date, the post remains vacant. In the absence of the Records Manager II, an Administrative Officer II and a Clerk IV have been assigned in addition to their full time portfolio, the part time responsibility of maintaining the Inventory Register, until a suitable officer can be recruited.

The Ministry has serious challenges in operating at its maximum capacity without the Records Manager II, as other officers outside of this discipline when trained, are soon transferred or promoted out of the Ministry.

The Ministry will continue to liaise with the Service Commissions Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication to fill the vacancies throughout the Ministry and also to source the requisite training for staff.

In the interim a request has been made for the assistance of On the Job Trainees, who would be trained when recruited, to assist in the Asset Management and Inventory Control Computerised system.

- The Ministry should provide a Status Report to the Committee on the progress made in re-introducing the computerized Asset Management System by June 30, 2017.

Status Report on the Re Introduction of the computerised Asset Management System at the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MRDLG)

The computerised Facilities Maintenance Management Software "WebTMA Enterprise" was procured and implemented at MRDLG, Kent House in 1999. Initially, data on all equipment and furniture were collected, tagged and entered into the system. Selected persons at the Ministry were trained and certified as End-Users.

The system gradually became dormant due to human resources constraints namely staff mobility, scarcity and the resultant absence of a dedicated person responsible for the project. The support contract for the system thus lapsed.

The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MRDLG) is presently pursuing the option of re-introducing the WebTMA Enterprise software, as part of its Computerised Asset Management System. The local agent for the product, Delta Dynamics was contacted and completed an assessment of the existing WebTMA Server, as well as the original database with all previously tagged equipment.

Delta Dynamics has advised that the server is operational and the integrity of the data is sound. Arrangements are being made to reactivate the licenses which have lapsed at a cost of \$60,417.00 TT.

*In considering other options, the Ministry has also collaborated with the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and noted their **VimBiz** Asset Management System. While this System has been successfully implemented at the Parliament, its cost of implementation seven (7) years ago was \$480,000.00 TT which is prohibitive.*

Another option considered was the Asset Management Software being designed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications (MPAC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the Auditor General's Department. The Ministry's ICT personnel were contacted and have advised that the system is still in its final stages of development and would not be ready for use by other Ministries, Divisions or Agencies in the immediate future (4Months -6Months)

The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government will continue to pursue the option of re-activating the WebTMA licenses for one (1) year. This process has already been initiated as indicated above and should be completed within the next three months.

The database will be updated for fiscal 2017 and when the Asset Management System from the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications is ready and available, the updated database will be migrated onto this System.