



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

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November 15, 2017

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Parliament
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Level G -8, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Mrs. Sampson-Meiguel,

**Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on
Examination of the System of Internal Audit within the Public Service**

I refer to your letter Parl: 5/7/50 dated October 4, 2017 on the subject at caption and am pleased to submit for your attention and that of the Senate and House of Representatives the attached response of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to the comments and recommendations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee.

Respectfully,

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Angela Siew (Mrs.)
Permanent Secretary

Response of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to the Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on Examination of the System of Internal Audit within the Public Service

Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) acknowledges the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee as a critical entity within the Parliament and reiterates that the work of the Committee is foundational to ensuring good governance and sound public administration within our public institutions. The comments in the Fourth Report of the Committee were insightful and the implementation of the recommendations relating to the MALF, in particular, can result in a more efficient and effective internal auditing system in the Ministry.

Recommendation

The Accounting Officer should develop a training programme for Internal Audit Staff to ensure compliance with updated International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and submit to the Committee, a Report on the progress made in training internal audit staff by November 30, 2017

The MALF notes the comments of the Committee that the Ministry's Internal Audit staff has not received training to ensure compliance with the updated International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. In this regard, the MALF has liaised with the Institute of Internal Auditors (Trinidad and Tobago Chapter) and the Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications with the aim of developing a training programme for its Internal Audit staff to ensure compliance with updated International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

The Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications has indicated that within the first quarter, two (2) courses, that is *Audit Report Writing* and *Fundamentals of the Internal Audit Function* will be offered to interested employees. The MALF has already identified two (2) employees for the former and four (4) employees for the latter. These programmes will start in December 2017.

Further, the Ministry will be engaging a Consultant for a period of three (3) months to not only impart theory but also to work closely with employees of the Internal Audit Unit ensuring standardisation and efficiency. The training programme will be implemented before the end of November, 2017.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries should seek to separate the administrative duties from the Internal Audit Function and acquire the services of the administrative staff to assist the Internal Audit Unit by November 30, 2017

The MALF acknowledges that its Internal Audit staff perform administrative roles and consequently the staff assigned to the Internal Audit Unit may have less time to focus on the auditing of systems and control. In order to address this issue, discussions have been held with the Head of the Internal Audit Unit and the Director of the Human Resource Management Division of the Ministry in order to determine the requisite staff to perform administrative duties. Two (2) members of staff will be assigned within November 2017 to perform administrative duties.