



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Chief Personnel Officer

Valpark Building, 76-78 St Vincent Street, Port of Spain. Tel. No. 623-1621-5 Fax No. 624-2640

PD (HRPPR): 4/1/17 Vol 1

February / , 2019

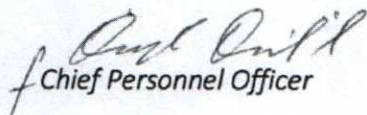
Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Levels G-9, Tower D
The Port-of-Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Mrs. Sampson-Meiguel

The Fifteenth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on the Examination of the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheets and other Financial Statements of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) for the financial years 2008 to 2014

I refer to the matter at subject and forward, for your attention, written responses of the Personnel Department, in respect of your letter dated December 11, 2018.

Yours faithfully


Chief Personnel Officer

Human Resource Policy, Planning and Research Division/Legal Services Division - ABMA BUILDING, LEVEL 3, 55-57 ST. VINCENT STREET, POS Tel. Nos. 623-7125, 623-9425 Fax: 624-2406/623-3934

Compensation Management Division - 39 FREDERICK STREET, PORT OF SPAIN Tel. Nos. 625-7115, 9664, 624-7534 Fax: 623-0397

Human Resource Management Services Division - PARK PLAZA, LEVEL 1, COR. PARK & ST VINCENT STREETS, PORT OF SPAIN Tel. Nos. 623-6784, 625-4703, 625-1753 Fax: 623-8149

Corporate Services Division/Industrial and Labour Relations Division/Benefits Management Division - VALPARK BUILDING, 76-78 ST VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN Tel. Nos. 623-1621, 623-7384

Fax: 625-0982(CSD), 627-1151(ILRD), 625-1070(BMD)

Our Vision: To be the model provider of contemporary human resource management and industrial relations solutions in the public sector.

Response to the recommendation of the Fifteenth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on the Examination of the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheets and other Financial Statements of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) for the financial years 2008 to 2014

The following response is submitted in respect of a recommendation contained in the Fifteenth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee

Issue raised by the Committee:

The processes used for granting allowances to employees

The Committee observed an expansive list of persons who were in receipt of staff of benefits. Sixty - seven (67) employees received transport allowances and eighty - two (82) persons received cell phone allowances.

According to Appendix C of the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, cellular phones are to be issued to Government Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Deputy Heads of Departments, Heads of Divisions and such employees deemed by the Permanent Secretary/Head of Department/Statutory Authority to require the use of cellular phones based on demonstrated need and job function. However, it was noted that YTEPP's projects assistants, purchasing assistants and project drivers were beneficiaries of staff allowances.

Committee's Recommendation:

The YTEPP Limited should seek the advice and approval of the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) for the allowances granted to these members of staff no later than January 30, 2019.

Response:

The Chief Personnel Officer by letter dated July 11, 2011 was requested by the Permanent Secretary of the former Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, to submit for the consideration of the Ministerial Committee, compensation proposals for Full-Time and Part-Time / Contract staff / Tutors of the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) Limited for the period October 2010 to September 2013.

The Personnel Department, headed by the Chief Personnel Officer, served as Secretary to the Ministerial Committee (a Sub-Committee of Cabinet established to monitor salary and wage negotiations and remuneration arrangements in the public sector). As the Committee's Secretary, the Chief Personnel Officer was required to provide the Ministerial Committee with advice and technical support, analyse proposals and counter proposals received from public sector entities through their respective line Ministries/Departments, formulate recommendations for the consideration and approval of the Committee and disseminate guidelines on the decision taken by the Committee.

The Chief Personnel Officer in reviewing, analysing and recommending to the Ministerial Committee, Terms and Conditions of Employment for staff of YTEPP for the period October 2010 to September 2013, noted the following in respect of Transport Allowance and Cell Phone Allowance:

Transport Allowance

Transport Allowance existed for Managerial Staff (Grade 7 – 8) and other employees who are required to travel in the performance of their duties. With regard to Technical Supervisors, the Allowance was approved effective October 1, 2004 for a period of three years. YTEPP in justifying the continuation of the Allowance stated that *"In the performance of their duties, each Technical Supervisor is required to visit the YTEPP Centres throughout their assigned regions at least twice per month. There are three Regions - North (including the East/West corridor and extending to Chaguanas in the south) South (covering the entire area beyond Chaguanas) and Tobago".* YTEPP had advised that *"from time to time a Technical Supervisor may have to service an additional Region in the event that the Region does not have a Supervisor."* Additionally, Directors (Grade 9) were also in receipt of Transport Allowance. However, this Allowance was approved by the Board of YTEPP.

Cell Phone Allowance

With regard to Directors (Grade 9), YTEPP administratively provides a cellular phone and meets expenses (including access charges). However, in respect of other staff members, YTEPP advised that the organization proposed to introduce a Cell Phone Allowance for certain positions ranging from Grade 1A to Grade 8. YTEPP indicated that *"due to the locations of the YTEPP's Centres, (in Public Schools) it was unable to acquire land-lines for its offices. Since it is critical to provide some form of direct communication to the Centres, the organization is proposing the payment of a Cell Phone Allowance to Centre Managers. The Technical Supervisors are field officers and need to have contact with the relevant persons to fulfil their duties effectively"*.

However, the Chief Personnel Officer, from research into the payment of the Cell Phone Allowance at YTEPP, advised the Ministerial Committee that:

- (a) YTEPP had been paying a Cell Phone Allowance to Centre Managers and Technical Supervisors from April 2004 to 2012;
- (b) YTEPP proposed the introduction of various rates of Cell Phone Allowances for specified positions in Grade 1A to Grade 8. The Company subsequently advised verbally that due to the challenges it encountered with communication, the payment of the Cell Phone Allowance had been introduced, in some instances, with effect from 2004;
- (c) it was of concern that YTEPP instituted these allowances without first seeking approval of the Ministerial Committee, and only when questioned, did they admit that the allowances were already being paid. Further, the rationale for the payment of the allowance to

employees in some of the positions identified as Accounting Officer and Payroll Officer, was not clear;

- (d) YTEPP be reminded of the established procedure and the need to obtain appropriate approval prior to implementing revised remuneration arrangements;
- (e) given that the provision had already been established as a term and condition of employment, it ought not to be removed unilaterally; and
- (f) the existing arrangement should be maintained, however, there should be no increase in the rate of the existing allowance.

The Ministerial Committee at its meeting held on November 12, 2012 approved, inter alia, Transport Allowance and Cell Phone Allowance for certain positions at YTEPP, inclusive of Project Assistants, Purchasing Assistants and Drivers. Subsequently, the Chief Personnel Officer, as Secretary to the Ministerial Committee, disseminated to the Permanent Secretary of the former Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education guidelines for Terms and Conditions of Employment for staff of YTEPP for the period October 01, 2010 to September 30, 2013

Additionally, The Chief Personnel Officer in providing guidelines to YTEPP, advised that prior approval of the Ministerial Committee responsible for monitoring remuneration arrangements in the public service is to be sought and obtained before instituting new compensation arrangements.

Given that the approval of the Ministerial Committee included the payment of Cell Phone Allowance to Project Assistants, Purchasing Assistants and Drivers, there is no need for YTEPP to seek further approval.

A copy of the letter reference **PD (ILR): 22/3/11 Vol. V** dated November 27, 2012, issued to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, is attached.

Personnel Department
February 1, 2019