



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
**Ministry of Public Utilities**

Fifth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs on a  
Critical Assessment of the Waste Management Policies and Initiatives of the State (with  
specific focus on Solid Waste)

Ministerial Responses 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019

## **MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT**

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### **OBJECTIVE 1: TO EXAMINE THE LEVEL OF WASTE PRODUCTION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

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#### **Recommendation A:**

**The Ministry of Public Utilities must engage the technical assistance of the relevant regional or international organisations to conduct another waste characterisation study for this country. Funding for this initiative may be sourced through private sector engagement and the Green Fund.**

#### **Ministerial Response:**

The Ministry of Public Utilities pursuant to its responsibilities for solid waste management, will continue to seek to leverage support, including technical assistance, from relevant regional and international organizations for Government's efforts at fostering improvements in the system of solid waste management in the country.

The need for an updated Waste Characterisation Study for the country is recognized, and in May 2019, SWMCOL issued a Request for Proposal to engage a consultant with the following terms of reference:

- A Comprehensive Solid Waste Quantification and Characterization Study at three (3) landfills
- A Comprehensive Waste Centroid Study for Trinidad
- An assessment all current public and private waste separation at source and recovery and recycling programmes existing throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The Study will be funded through budgetary appropriation under the Public Sector Investment Programme.

As stipulated by the Green Fund (Amendment) Regulations of 2011, SWMCOL, as a company incorporated under the Companies Act, is ineligible for funding under the Green Fund.

#### **Recommendation B:**

**Legislation or a policy document should prescribe a fixed period for the execution of national waste management studies in Trinidad and Tobago.**

### **Ministerial Response:**

The proposed Deposit Refund System will require polluters to provide data on waste generated in keeping with international practice.

### **Recommendation C:**

**The Ministry of Public Utilities in collaboration with SWMCOL and other stakeholders must institute permanent arrangements to more effectively collect data on waste generated on an ongoing basis. In this regard, the Committee suggests that this benchmark may be achieved in the short to medium-term through the implementation of policies to facilitate:**

- a) **The segregation of solid waste at the domestic and commercial level;**
- b) **The accurate measuring of solid waste entering landfills;**
- c) **Mandating manufactures and industrial producers to provide data on the amount of products sold and their estimated waste generation potential.**

### **Ministerial Response:**

The Ministry of Public Utilities is cognizant of the importance of reliable, timely and accurate information, particularly with respect to waste characterization and quantification, for informing policy decisions with respect to solid waste management. This will be addressed via a combination of policy, regulation, and by working closely with the private sector and civil society in strategic partnerships.

With respect to the segregation of waste, both the Integrated Solid Waste/Resource Management Policy 2014 and the National Waste Recycling Policy 2015 have as their main objective, the establishment of a system for curbside source separation of recyclable and reusable materials. To this end, the Ministry of Public Utilities in collaboration with SWMCOL and several Regional Corporations has been implementing several initiatives to facilitate the attainment of this objective.

In relation to (b) above, SWMCOL currently collects data on waste entering the landfills through the conduct of physical onsite checks of vehicular loads entering the landfills. It is envisioned that in the medium term, the existing landfills managed by SWMCOL will be rehabilitated and serve as transfer stations and material facilities to sort and transfer non-recyclable wastes to the proposed new sanitary engineered landfill to be located at Forres Park. This engineered landfill will be equipped with Best Available Technology (BAT), including a weighbridge to measure amounts of waste disposed at the landfill.

The Ministry of Public Utilities in collaboration with SWMCOL and EMA is currently implementing policies and regulation(s) to treat with the recommendation outlined at (c). The intention is to initially develop appropriate policies and/or regulations for each recyclable waste stream that will be managed through the National Recycling Programme, such as beverage containers, electronic wastes and waste tyres. These subsidiary policies will be developed in the context of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Policy and the National Waste Recycling

Policy, as well as, commitments made by Government under various waste-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory, such as the Basel Convention, and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The core principles of the sector policies that will guide the development of the subsidiary policies will be:

1. **Extended Generator Responsibility** - where generators are required to pay the true cost of managing waste and assuming responsibility for the effects of their waste disposal decisions.
2. **Product stewardship** - where the intent is that Government will place a greater reliance for the management of wastes, particularly those that are recyclable, on the generators of such waste. In this regard, those that produce, import, sell, and use products will be required to assume responsibility for the management of those products at the end of their useful lives. This approach will be supported by legislation where necessary.

#### **Recommendation D:**

**We recommend that the objective of “Improving national environmental data/ information management” as set out in the Draft NEP (2018) be given priority as policy formulation and implementation must be driven by credible data.**

#### **Ministerial Response:**

Proper management of environmental data is a pre-requisite to sound planning and decision-making. SWMCOL will continue to accord priority to initiatives to achieve this objective.

#### **Recommendation E:**

**In addition to the Green Fund Levy, the state should explore other arrangements to ensure that commercial entities whose products generate significant amounts of solid waste (such as food and beverage companies) contribute to offsetting the costs incurred by the State in managing such waste.**

#### **Ministerial Response:**

The Ministerial Response with respect to C (c) above is relevant.

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**OBJECTIVE 2: TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
REGULATIONS AND POLICIES DIRECTED AT WASTE  
MANAGEMENT**

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**Recommendation F:**

**The Ministry of Public Utilities must engage the technical assistance of the relevant regional or international organisations to conduct another waste characterisation study for this country. Funding for this initiative may be sourced through private sector engagement and the Green Fund.**

**Ministerial Response:**

The Ministerial Response in A is relevant.

**Recommendations G:**

**The Ministry of Public Utilities shall, no later than sixty days (60) after this report is first laid, submit a status report on the following:**

**Ministerial Response:**

A status update as requested is attached as Appendix A.

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**OBJECTIVE 3: TO ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AND  
INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF  
WASTE**

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**Recommendation I:**

**A Draft Policy for the segregation of solid waste at the domestic or residential level be formulated within the next 6 months by SWMCOL in collaboration with the line Ministry.**

**Ministerial Response:**

The overarching National Waste Recycling Policy 2015 provides for the separation of solid waste at the domestic or residential level. This is being operationalized through the development of

subsidiary policies for the various waste streams with an emphasis on recyclables or reusable waste as outlined in Ministerial Response C (c) above.

**Recommendation J:**

**In keeping with the 2020 targets (relative to Vision 2030) to “Establish one (1) landfill meeting internationally recognized standards”, arrangements should be made to procure and install weighing scales at least one landfill in Trinidad.**

**Ministerial Response:**

The Ministerial Response with respect to C (b) is relevant.

**Recommendation K:**

**The State should seek to establish partnerships with existing solid waste processors in the Private Sector with a view to:**

- **developing a more effective system for the recovery of recyclables;**
- **expanding the range of recyclables that is recovered for processing;**
- **achieving knowledge transfer to the State sector;**
- **expanding access to foreign markets.**

**Ministerial Response:**

Partnership and collaboration with the private sector and civil society is fundamental to Government’s approach to the developing of the recycling industry in Trinidad and Tobago. In this regard, SWMCOL has been collaborating with solid waste processors to further process or recycle the recovered recyclables both locally and internationally from countries such as India, US, Honduras and Holland. Additionally, SWMCOL has invited Expressions of Interest from appropriately qualified and experienced local and/or foreign proponents for the operation of SWMCOL’s recycling facilities, including a Polyethylene Terephthalate Washplant, as well as, the establishment of a composting facility through a Public-Private-Partnership arrangement. SWMCOL is currently engage in discussion with the preferred proponent.

**Recommendation L:**

**Consideration should be given to developing a robust and reliable mechanism to acquire feedback from commercial waste management entities**

**Ministerial Response:**

SWMCOL considers feedback from all stakeholders in the waste sector to be essential to the planning process and for informed decision making, and is committed therefore to the development of an effective system for facilitating such feedback, including from commercial waste management entities. This is being done as a matter of priority.

**Status report as recommended by the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs on a Critical Assessment of the Waste Management Policies and initiatives of the State (with specific focus on Solid Waste)**

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**Objective 2: To Assess the effectiveness of regulations and policies directed at waste management**

**A Drafting of appropriate legislation to support waste recycling regulations as a critical component to the waste management strategy.**

**Status Update:**

The Government's intent is to develop enabling legislation for each waste stream as necessary. In this regard, the Government has identified beverage containers as the first waste stream and is currently preparing Regulations to effect a deposit refund system for beverage containers.

**B Establishment and staffing of a Waste Recycling Management Unit within SWMCOL to undertake some of the functions of the proposed Waste Recycling Management Authority.**

**Status Update:**

(i) Cabinet by **Minute No. 464 dated March 22, 2018** approved the establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Unit within SWMCOL to undertake some of the functions of the proposed Waste Recycling Management Authority. The Unit comprises two (2) functional areas of Policy, Planning and Strategy, and Programme and Technical Services to facilitate the Company's expanded mandate. In this regard, eighteen (18) permanent positions have been created in SWMCOL as follows:

- Head Policy, Planning and Strategy
- Head Programme and Technical Services
- Two (2) Administrative Assistants
- Solid Waste Specialist
- Economic Policy Analyst
- Financial Analyst
- Two (2) Planning Specialists
- Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist
- Research Analyst

- Project Manager
- Systems Engineer
- Two (2) Project Officer
- Two (2) Technical Officers
- Accounting Assistant (Programmes)

The Positions are being filled on a phased basis, and as at May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 twelve (12) of the positions were filled. The following remaining unfilled six (6) positions are expected to be filled before the end of Fiscal Year 2019:

- Systems Engineer
- Two (2) Project Officer
- Two (2) Technical Officers
- Accounting Assistant (Programmes)

**C. Establishment and implementation of a deposit-refund system for beverage containers.**

**Status Update:**

Cabinet by **Minute No. 101 dated January 17, 2019** approved the revised Beverage Containers Deposit Refund Policy for Trinidad and Tobago. Since that time, the Ministry of Public Utilities, SWMCOL and the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) have been working with the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, on the drafting of appropriate Regulations to effect the deposit refund system.

**D. Establishment of the Waste Recycling Management Authority.**

**Status Update:**

Cabinet by **Minute No. 518 of March 23, 2017** expanded the mandate of SWMCOL to include the functions envisioned by the proposed Waste Recycling Management Authority. Subsequently, Cabinet by **Minute No. 464 dated March 22, 2018** approved the establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Unit within SWMCOL to undertake some of the functions of the proposed Waste Recycling Management Authority. The Unit comprises two (2) functional areas of Policy, Planning and Strategy, and Programme and Technical Services to facilitate the Company's expanded mandate.

**E. The successes and limitations observed in the implementation of the Public Sector Recycling Programme (PSRP).**

**Status Update:**

The PSRP was launched on January 30, 2018 it is intended to recover and divert recyclable wastes such as paper, cardboard, beverage containers and electronic wastes from Government Ministries which generate significantly large volumes of these categories of waste. It is anticipated that the implementation of the PSRP across all Ministries would significantly contribute to achieving the national waste diversion target of reducing the volume of recyclable waste entering the nation's landfills by 50.0 percent over a period of ten (10) years, as articulated in the Waste Recycling Policy and the National Integrated Solid Waste Management Policy.

### **The Success of the PSRP**

To date, the PSRP has been successfully rolled-out to nineteen (19) Ministries and State Enterprises. Phase 2 of the Project was launched in February 2019 and will be rolled out to seventeen (17) Government Ministries.

SWMCOL has included the PSRP in its Development Programme under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for FY2020 to continue the implementation of the project. Over the period FY2020 and FY2021, fifty-six (56) wholly and majority owned State Enterprises will be targeted for the implementation under this Initiative.

### **The main limitations on implementation of PSRP**

- (i) The delayed responses from targeted Ministries in providing the required waste assessment data to determine the volume of waste generated by the Ministry and the number of waste receptacles to be installed onsite;
- (ii) The unavailability of waste receptacles from the sole manufacturer in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- (iii) Untimely releases in requested funding.

## **F. The Workplace Waste Reduction and Recycling Programme (WRAP)**

### **Status Update:**

The Workplace Waste Reduction and Recycling Programme (WRAP) is a voluntary national effort led by the Ministry of Public Utilities and SWMCOL. The project aims to introduce sustainable environmental practices in the workplace and is a continuation of the Ministry's drive of "Leading by Example", to increase awareness of waste reduction, recycling, and proper disposal habits. The objective is to actively promote a change in the attitude and behaviour of society towards waste generation, recycling, and disposal.

WRAP was launched with the 'WRAP Partner', the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. As at May 29<sup>th</sup> 2019, several companies across the banking, insurance and manufacturing sectors, the restaurant chains and academic institutions etc. have expressed an interest in becoming a WRAP Partner. Unlike PSRP where the purchase of waste receptacles is

funded by the State, and the recyclables are collected free of charge, private companies interested in joining WRAP are required to acquire or provide their waste receptacles and collection services are provided by SWMCOL at a fee. This has proven to be a main limitation to implementing WRAP. However, as an incentive, SWMCOL waives the collection fee for the first year.

**G. Partnerships between SWMCOL and other Municipal Corporations subsequent to the pilot curbside recycling campaign partnership with the Tunapuna/ Piarco Regional Corporation.**

**Status Update:**

SWMCOL continues to partner with the Municipal Corporations on the curbside recycling campaign. As at May 2019, the pilot project has been successfully implemented in the following Municipalities:

1. Tunapuna/Piarco;
2. Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo;
3. San Fernando; and
4. San Juan/Laventille

**The Pilot Project is ongoing in the following Municipalities:**

1. Arima
2. Point Fortin
3. Port-of-Spain

**The following Municipalities are in the planning stage or discussions are ongoing with SWMCOL to rollout the pilot project:**

1. Siparia;
2. Chaguanas;
3. Sangre Grande;
4. Diego Martin;
5. Penal Debe;
6. Mayaro/Rio Claro; and
7. Princes Town.