

Ministerial Response to the 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)

Recommendations:

- 10. Based on the foregoing, the committee submits the following recommendations:**
- B. Legislation or a policy document should prescribe a fixed period for the execution of national waste management studies in Trinidad and Tobago.**
 - 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.**

Response:

Section 55 of the EM Act states that the EMA shall investigate the environment to ascertain volume and nature of wastes. The Draft EMA Waste Management (Registration and Permitting) Rules will facilitate this through the registration of generators of waste above prescribed quantities. The registration system under the Rules will characterize waste generated by commercial entities. The manifest system under the Rules will improve waste tracking and record keeping.

It is suggested that the Municipal Corporations assist with any assessment of household waste generation given their significant role in the collection and transport of waste. The EMA may consider amending Section 55 of the EM Act to include a frequency for investigations.

Findings:

Page 35. iv. The establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Unit in SWMCOL is expected to provide some impetus to the implementation of recycling initiatives. Given that the EMA is currently coordinating the leading solid waste recycling programme *icare*, consideration should be given to reassigning such programmes to SWMCOL. Thus, relinquishing such responsibilities from the EMA, whose statutory responsibilities seemed to be aimed at fulfilling its regulatory and policy formulation functions.

Response:

The EMA is championing the Green Fund funded project entitled Recyclable Solid Waste Collection Project (RSWCP), also known as iCARE, which commenced in June 2015. SWMCOL does not qualify for Green Fund funding. The primary objective of RSWCP is the infrastructural and logistical preparation of the country for the passage of the EMA Waste Management Rules and other relevant legislation with respect to a deposit and refund system for beverage containers. Simultaneously creating a heightened awareness of the purpose and benefit to all stakeholders. The EMA's role includes project management, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, contracts and technical assistance, capacity building, research and development and public education and awareness. RSWCP is collaborating with the other stakeholder Agencies, responsible for waste collection such as SWMCOL and Regional Corporations to structure a cohesive approach to national waste management. At the end of this project all the facilities will be passed over to SWMCOL who at present is the Government Agency identified to handle recycling in Trinidad and Tobago.

Recommendations:

26. The committee recommends that:

- C. The Ministry of Planning and Development shall, no later than sixty days (60) after this report is first laid, submit a status report on its consultations with Ministries on the following:**
 - i. Reduction by 50% of the quantity of waste requiring final disposal;**
 - iii. Reduction by 35% of the quantity of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) released.**

Response:

A formula should be developed/used to calculate the proposed reduction of waste and POPs, which is stated as 50% and 35% respectively. It is also suggested that there be clear deadlines and targets, noting the present infrastructure and the improvements required to achieve the targets.