

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

33RD Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Status of the Implementation of the Recommendations on ICT Governance and General Controls as stated in the Reports of the Auditor General on 2017, 2018 and 2019 Public Accounts

Written response by the Ministry of Health

September 18th, 2020

7. Implementation of Recommendations by the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing the Committee recommends that:

The Ministry of Health should submit an update to Parliament on the completion of the following measures in response to the recommendations of the Auditor General by August 30, 2020:

- i. the finalisation of a standardised structure for ICT Units;**
- ii. the development of an ICT Service Continuity Plan;**
- iii. the recommendations for information systems auditing training; and**
- iv. the implementation of a Logistics Management System.**

i. Update on the finalisation structure for ICT Units:

The ICT Division, Ministry of Health and the ICT Departments of the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), through their monthly meetings of the Health ICT Managers' Committee, developed the standardized structure to fulfil their respective mandates. Final consultations are being held with key senior executive team members of the RHAs and thereafter will be forwarded in the first instance, to the Boards of the RHAs and secondly, to the Ministry of Health for approval. This should be completed within the 1st quarter of 2021.

ii. Update on the development of an ICT Service Continuity Plan:

During July 2020, the ICT Division, Ministry of Health requested assistance from iGovTT to develop a Service Continuity Plan.

By letter dated September 2, 2020, iGovTT has indicated that due to the extensive scope of the project, it does not have the requisite complement of resources to adequately undertake the project and has recommended that an external consultant be sourced.

The Ministry of Health is currently developing the Terms of Reference to hire an external consultant. It is expected that the Consultant for the development of the Service Continuity Plan will be hired and work should commence within the 1st quarter of 2021.

iii. The recommendations for Information Systems Auditing Training:

The Ministry of Health submitted a request to the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) local chapter for information on upcoming Certified Information System Auditor (CISA) training. However, due to the closure of these facilities as part of the COVID-19 restrictions, the training could not be facilitated at this time.

iv. Update on the implementation of a Logistics Management System.

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is developing and implementing a Logistics Management Information System (SALMI) to improve the management and operations of pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals. The system will be able to:

- monitor the stock levels at any point in time at each health facility;
- re-order stock based on current and expected usage levels within the system; and
- send automatic alerts about medicines which are about to expire in order to take timely action thereby reducing the impact and cost burden of having to discard expired medicines among other benefits.

During 2019, the focus had been given to develop the SALMI solution for Health Facilities for all levels of care with several versions being developed to respond to the user's needs.

To this end, a pilot implementation of SALMI was completed at the North Central Regional Health Authority's Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex in September 2019. The locations included the St. Joseph Enhanced Health Centre and the Mount Hope Women's Hospital In-Patient and Outpatient Clinics.

In December 2019, implementation was extended to the Eastern Regional Health Authority's Cumuto Community Outreach Health Centre and South-West Regional Health Authority's Todd's Road Health Centre.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the project, resulting in delays in the implementation schedule at the Health Facilities and the national warehouse at NIPDEC Central Stores.

In July 2020, the SALMI solution was further customized with updates to improve its efficiency and performance at the current sites where it was implemented for use.

Currently, the national warehouse module was developed and is being further customized to meet the requirements of its users.