



RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE TWENTY-NINTH REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

AUGUST 24, 2020

NATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM AUTHORITY

August 24, 2020

Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel

Clerk of the House

Office of the Parliament

Parliamentary Complex

Cabildo Building, St. Vincent Street

Port of Spain.

Dear Clerk of the House,

I refer to correspondence dated June 29, 2020: ***The Twenty-Ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Audited Financial Statements of the National Library and Information System of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS) for the financial years 2009-2011, and the Authority's Expenditure and Internal Controls for the years 2009 to 2018.*** Kindly receive the report from the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) with responses to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee for your attention.

Kindly regards,



Ms. Paula E. Greene

Executive Director (Ag)

NALIS

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE TWENTY-NINTH REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - NALIS

Item No.	ISSUES	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSES
1	Late Submission of Financial Statements for Audit	- NALIS should include the timely submission of financial statements for auditing as a performance standard for the officers responsible for the preparation of financial statements	Financial Statements are usually submitted in a timely manner by NALIS to the Auditor General Department. It should be noted that the Financial Statements in question for the periods ending 2016 and 2017 were submitted on time however NALIS could not locate documentary evidence of its submissions to the Auditor General Department. These were resubmitted in November 2019 shortly after the hearing. It should also be noted that the submission of Financial Statements is a performance standard for the officers responsible for their preparation.
2	Declining Library Visitations	- Despite a consistent increase in web traffic, a fall in walk-ins should not be taken lightly. If every person with library card chooses to go online as opposed to visiting the actual libraries, locations may need to be closed down. To attract more physical walk-ins, NALIS should: ▪ Partner with local organisations and companies to create a community space where people can gather to either find information, play games, eat and drink, relax or participate in exhibitions	NALIS continues to be proactive in its dissemination of information. As mandated by the NALIS Act 1998, the Authority provides a national library and information service, easily accessible to members of the public, to facilitate cultural, economic, educational, political and social development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Outreach Activities: NALIS has and will continue to hold many events to attract and retain its customer base. Over the last fiscal, some 15,466 free programmes were conducted at the Heritage Library, Public Libraries, and School Libraries nationwide with approximately 134,000 persons in attendance. Typically included in each library's calendar of events are: - Literary festivals; chess tournaments; board games; spoken word competitions; poetry month celebrations; read aloud sessions; spelling bees; storytelling sessions; exhibition and book launches; art exhibitions; panel discussions; United Nations' commemorative days' exhibitions and displays; national and religious festival commemorations; vacation camps; career fairs; craft shows; concerts; cultural shows; lectures; research workshops; panel discussions;

		▪ Create new spaces at the library that cater to a modern user's needs such as meeting rooms, conference areas, lounges, multimedia, cafes and other zones where people can openly interact and exchange knowledge ▪ Conduct outreach into the communities and offer its locations for community-based activities such as educational screenings, special needs screenings, fundraising events; and ▪ Hold at location events for persons of all ages as a way to create memorable experience and incentivise persons to visit the libraries	foreign language classes; book talks and club meetings; literacy classes; sign language classes; classes for the visually impaired; computer classes; movie hours; health sessions; and quizzes Stakeholder Partnerships: Over the years, NALIS has upheld its responsibilities to the national community and also leveraged stakeholder partnerships to create community spaces where people can gather to study, find information or relax. Collaborations with key stakeholders have served to expand NALIS' service offerings to underserved communities as well as improve its visibility. The following is a list of some of NALIS' major stakeholders with whom the organisation have partnered with over the years: - Local authors, calypsonians, icons and personalities: to host community-centric programmes and activities - Government Ministries/Agencies: Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts; Village Councils and Community Centres; Ministry of Education; Laventille/Morvant School Improvement Project; National Advisory Committee for Education in Trinidad and Tobago; Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities, Ministry of National Security's InterAgency Task Force-Hearts and Minds; MILAT Police Youth Clubs; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service; Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service; Ministry of Planning and Development; Ministry of Public Administration; Ministry of Social Development and Family Services; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Local Government - Regional Corporations; Tobago House of Assembly - NGOs and Rotary Clubs: Adult Literacy Tutors Association; Adult and Youth literacy programmes; Bocas Lit Fest Committee; Carnival Institute; Caribbean Kids and Families Organisation; Childline; Cyber TT; Circle of Poets;
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			Cotton Tree Foundation; Diabetes Organisation; El Socorro Wildlife; Emancipation Support Committee; Heal-a-Ton Foundation; Love to Read; Keylemanjahro and San Fernando School of Arts; K.I.N.D Foundation; Kiwanis Club; Nicer Foundation; Conflict Response Quays Foundation; Reach out and Touch Organisation; Soroptimist Trinidad and Tobago; St James Community Improvement Committee; Success Laventille Networking Community (SLNC); Roots foundation; Trinidad and Tobago Endometriosis Association; Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association; Trinidad and Tobago Resistance and Prevention Program (RAPP) - Embassies, Consulates and High Commissions: Promotion of culture via programmes, activities, and exhibitions. Embassies of Brazil, Dominican, Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, People's Republic of China, Peru, South Korea and Spain. The High Commissions for Australia, Jamaica, Japan and India - Women's/ Men's Groups, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Sporting Groups: Fatherhood Resource Centre, First Citizens Sports Foundation, G.I.R.L. Power Youth Club, Hindu Women's Organisation of T&T, Islamic Dawah Movement, Men Against Violence Against Women, Spiritual Baptist Faith Inc., The Council of Traditional Afrikan Chiefs of Trinidad and Tobago, Wand-Women in Action for the Needy and Destitute - Media: Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Radio Stations and Media houses - Other Agencies: Brasso Seco Chocolate Company; Cancer Society of Trinidad and Tobago; Cocoa Development Company; TT Hodder Education; Mohammed's Bookstore Association Limited; MovieTowne Multi-
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			Cinema Trinidad Limited; National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago; Optometrists Today; Prestige Holdings Limited; SuperPharm Limited; Tamana Mountain Chocolate; Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited; Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association; Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission; TUCO-Trinbago Unified Calypsonians' Organisation; Two-Cent Movement; UWI Cocoa Research; CEPEP At the National Library Building and other Public Libraries: Since the opening of the National Library Building (NLB) in 2004, an Amphitheatre, Audio Visual Room, News Media Room and Seminar Rooms have been available for rent through the Public Relations and Marketing Department. These spaces are also used for library programmes which cultivate and showcase creative expressions. Spaces are also rented at select public libraries: - A coffee shop at the NLB serves to provide patrons with coffee and light refreshments while they sit, use the WI-FI and share information - Also, at the Port of Spain Adult Library, study rooms are being constructed to facilitate small group interactions - It is expected that the layout of larger libraries in Mayaro, Chaguanas, Diego Martin and Toco will be redefined as above to increase foot traffic to the locations - NALIS has a longstanding arrangement with Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA) regarding the registration of new students at NALIS' Public Library locations every September, as well as the hosting of year-long literacy classes at the National Library and public libraries throughout the network - For our services to the visually impaired, NALIS was awarded the Prime Minister's Innovating for Service Award for Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired persons (VIP) in the society (2004). Persons who
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			are visually impaired utilise assistive technology at libraries across the country and NALIS has been named the Authorised Entity under the Marrakesh Treaty based on our history of providing such services to VIP patrons Co-location Project: During the last year, NALIS opened three Community Libraries under a shared space Co-location Project and has remodelled one existing Public library as a Community Library under this partnership initiative: 1. Mount Hope/ Mt Lambert Community Library - 2019 2. Barataria Community Library - 2019 3. Beetham Community Library - 2019 4. St Helena Community Library - 2020 Currently plans are underway to develop community libraries in other underserved areas in 2020 based on an assessment of community needs by NALIS' Research and Planning Department in collaboration with NALIS' Public Libraries and Educational Library Services Divisions National Heritage: It is noteworthy to mention that in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Black Power Revolution, NALIS' Heritage Library mounted the exhibition titled, "50 years on...Black Power the 1970 Revolution that changed our nation forever" with the National Workers Union, Kafa Kambon and the Roots Foundation at the National Library. NALIS collaborated with community organisations such as the Success Laventille Networking Committee (SLNC) to recreate a Yoruba Village for Emancipation 2019, creating an interactive experience showcasing all aspects of village life over a week long programme. NALIS also partnered with the Carnival Institute, Keylemanjahro and San Fernando Schools of Arts and Culture to successfully host the exhibition titled: Mokos in Motion for Carnival 2020.
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			NALIS was appointed as the Regional Preservation and Conservation Centre for the English speaking Caribbean since 2004 by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and NALIS' Preservation and Conservation (PAC) Lab, a Department of the Heritage Library Division was commissioned in 2013. In addition to numerous consultations with NALIS' regional counterparts, various Government Ministries, Agencies and Financial Organisations on the care, handling, preservation and conservation of their physical assets, the PAC Lab also conducted outreach activities in communities by hosting Family Heirloom Preservation clinics for the public and staff throughout the Public Library network. Online, Virtual and Social Media Services: With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, NALIS redirected some of its activities to an online platform to reach and keep patrons engaged. The creation of Facebook pages for the Heritage Library Division and each library in the Educational Library Services Division and Public Library Division have meant that the organisation was able to engage patrons in activities, programmes and events whilst building stronger connections with communities. This is demonstrative of NALIS' agility in responding to national and worldwide crises. The following is a listing of major online activities and engagements: - Author of Month - Biographies, videos, live read, and interviews are featured. Over 8,400 engaged - Spotlight on WI Author - Highlighting the works of local authors through the databases. Over 1088 engaged - Calypsonian of the Month - A mini-series on local calypsonians. Over 10,155 persons engaged - Let's Speak Spanish Video Series - A series to help all beginners learn the basics in Spanish. Over 1,028 persons engaged
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			- Positive People in Point and Environs – A series featuring personalities in the community. Over 7,535 engaged - Online Spoken Word Competition - This competition which was launched during the period of COVID-19 with the theme “Voices from Isolation “We Will Get Thru Dis” allowed our nation’s young adults to cultivate their creativity during this unprecedented experience. Over 30, 000 engaged - First Time Author’s Appreciation Programme - Since 2010, NALIS has formally acknowledged three hundred and ninety-eight (398) 1st Time Authors of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2019, forty-nine (49) First Time Authors were recognised and NALIS anticipates that approximately fifty-five (55) authors will be acknowledged in 2020. Given the current circumstances, new authors were introduced to Trinidad and Tobago via an online series. This event garnered 3493 views via social media																				
3	Staff Vacancies	- NALIS should provide a status update on the steps being taken to ensure that it has its entire complement of librarians by August 31, 2020	NALIS Staffing Complement: <table> <tr> <th>Category of Staff</th><th>#Created</th><th>#Filled</th><th>#Vacant</th></tr> <tr> <td>Library Permanent</td><td>829</td><td>612</td><td>217</td></tr> <tr> <td>Contracted</td><td>94</td><td>42</td><td>52</td></tr> <tr> <td>Admin. Permanent</td><td>164</td><td>130</td><td>34</td></tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td><td>1087</td><td>784</td><td>303</td></tr> </table> NALIS sought approval from Cabinet in 2008 to offer scholarships to its employees at both the postgraduate and undergraduate level with a view to addressing the need to fill vacant Librarian positions throughout the network. Cabinet by Minute No. 2823 dated October 9, 2008 granted approval for two	Category of Staff	#Created	#Filled	#Vacant	Library Permanent	829	612	217	Contracted	94	42	52	Admin. Permanent	164	130	34	TOTAL	1087	784	303
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			hundred and eighty (280) scholarships, broken down as follows: - Two hundred (200) scholarships for a period of three (3) years to be managed in two (2) phases (100 per year) at the undergraduate level, through distance learning tenable at the University of Aberystwyth, Wales - Fifty (50) scholarships for a period of three (3) years to be managed in two (2) phases (25 per year) at the undergraduate level for fulltime study at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica - Thirty (30) scholarships for a period of twenty-four (24) months to be managed in three (3) phases (10 per year) at the postgraduate level, through distance learning or fulltime studies, in Library and Information Science at accredited universities in the Caribbean, North America and Great Britain Also, in 2008 NALIS became responsible for the selection and administration for some scholarships. Cabinet by Minute No. 2823 agreed that NALIS would be given responsibility for the administration and management of the above-mentioned scholarships and NALIS was to forward the results of the selection process to the Scholarships and Advanced Training Division (SATD). Subsequently, discussions were held between NALIS and SATD which resulted in the agreement that: - NALIS would be responsible for the selection of candidates and the administration of the distance learning scholarships offered only to staff of the Authority under an in-house development programme. A total of two hundred and thirty (230) scholarships to be administered by NALIS - SATD to be responsible for the selection of candidates and the administration of scholarships offered to nationals of Trinidad and Tobago. A total of fifty (50) scholarships to be administered by the then Ministry
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			To date, NALIS has offered one hundred and fifty-five (155) scholarships, seventy-six (76) at the Undergraduate level and seventy-nine (79) at the post graduate level. Although some vacant positions have been filled by successful scholarship awardees, it is to be noted that the Authority still has one hundred (100) vacant Librarian positions to be filled at this time. In 2017, a directive from Cabinet was received as follows: Cabinet by Minute No: 348 – 2017/02/23 agreed inter alia, that: “(c) no further scholarships be awarded under the Scholarship Programme approved vide Minute No. 2823 of October 9, 2008, for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Library and Information Science administered by NALIS, until the Minister of Public Administration and Communications conducts a comprehensive review of the said Programme, the Minister to submit a report to Cabinet within three (3) months’ time with respect to the relevance of the Programme.” Said valuation report was submitted to NALIS’ line Ministry to go forward to Cabinet. It is anticipated that approval will be granted for NALIS to continue the offer of scholarship since a total of eighty-one (81) scholarships are still outstanding to be offered.
4	Payment of Pension Fund Arrears	- While the Committee commends NALIS for its continued payment of its contribution to the employees’ pension fund, NALIS should ensure that the withdrawals from the NALIS Fund to pay pension, arrears	Due to increasingly insufficient allocations to sustain the organisation over the years, NALIS has already made significant withdrawals from the NALIS Fund to maintain its Pension Fund Plan. Over time, NALIS informed its Board and wrote to the Ministry of Finance and to NALIS’ line Ministry to inform them of the status of the NALIS Fund and associated financial constraints and challenges. The NALIS Fund has been further depleted over several years due to inadequate Allocations from the Ministry of Finance for various line items under Recurrent Expenditure. Given the Authority’s current financial

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		does not leave a long and lasting effect on the NALIS Fund. The Authority should emphasize the financial distress the shortfall in allocation puts the NALIS Fund under to the Ministry of Finance	challenges, the NALIS Fund can no longer support Pension Fund payments.
5	Litigation Claims by Contractors	- NALIS should develop a dispute resolution mechanism where internal settlement through the means of negotiation, mediation or arbitration should be invoked thereby causing pursuit of litigation by a contractor to be a last resort; and; - NALIS should report to Parliament on the status of the development of this dispute resolution mechanism by August 31, 2020	NALIS has Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) clauses built into its contracts and follows same whenever there is an issue. Such clauses are detailed in the Contract agreement between the National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS) and NALIS and include Clause 18. "Settlement of Disputes" and Clause 19. "Independent Contractor" which specify the mechanisms and procedures for dispute resolution inclusive of but not limited to Sub-Clause 18.1 "Amicable Settlement" and Sub-Clause 18.3 "Constitution of a Dispute Resolution Panel". Clause 19 specifies the limit to and independence of MTS' authority to bind NALIS to any legal obligation. However, the particular matter spoken of by the Committee pertained to an Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) Project and this contract was between MTS (as NALIS' Cabinet appointed Project Manager) and the contractor it engaged. NALIS was not a party to the contract. Said contract includes mechanisms for Dispute Resolution by way of specific reference clauses as well as the FIDIC (International Federation of Consulting Engineers) terms and conditions which would include provisions for ADR. The FIDIC Conditions of Contract sub-clauses 20.2 to 20.5 specifies the mechanisms for the settlement of disputes amicably or by an appointed

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			Dispute Adjudication Board (DAB) agreed to by the parties to the Contract. Whereas FIDIC Sub-clauses 20.6 to 20.8 specifies the mechanisms for settlement of disputes by arbitration should parties disagree with amicable or DAB settlement. NALIS was not a party to the dispute before the Court until it was added as a Defendant by MTS. NALIS was not included in any ADR proceedings between MTS and the Contractor which may have preceded the Court action. Such was subsequently attempted after NALIS insisted on MTS holding to the terms of contracts in force.
6	Organisational Safety and Health Issues	- NALIS in consultation with the OSH Agency should formulate a procedure that best resolves safety and health issues tailored to libraries. The procedure should aim to ensure safety and health issues are resolved quickly and effectively before they become a disruption to the library system's standards operations. The Authority should provide an update on the development of same by August 31, 2020	NALIS' Health and Safety Unit policy position is guided by the OSH Authority's <i>Guidance in preparing a Safety and Health Policy</i>. It is noted however that the OSH Act was explicit on OSH's responsibility to develop said policy to govern NALIS' responsibilities towards employees i.e. hiring of safety practitioner. NALIS has under its employ three (3) Health and Safety Officers and has an established Health and Safety Committee to assist with compliance with the Act. Coupled with the above, NALIS continues to prioritise issues related to health and safety in all libraries. In addition, all visits from the OSH Authority are escalated and treated with immediately as far as is possible. To this extent, the Authority prioritised the use of the NALIS Fund for critical services that ensured NALIS' compliance with OSH inspections which had become increasingly frequent. These included areas such as rent, janitorial, electricity and security which if not addressed, threatened to shut down NALIS' operations. Despite the frequent visits from the OSH agency, NALIS assures that it has been able to satisfy OSH's concerns and purposefully worked on the issues the

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			Agency identified based on the availability of funds. Some of the major OSH issues facing public libraries included: - Building and infrastructure conditions (ground maintenance) - Pest Control - First Aid System/Procedure - Fire and Electrical Certification - Air conditioning (repair and service maintenance) - Provision of welfare items - Wastewater system repairs The existing procedures to resolve OSH issues are communicated to the OSH Agency on an ongoing basis, however, the major draw-back to resolve these issues remains the availability of funds or lack thereof. While the Authority notes that there is still room for improvement, it commends CEPEP and the Regional Corporations who have been lending assistance to NALIS from time to time so that the standards of operations remain consistent.
7	Integrated Library Network System	- NALIS should consult with the Ministry of Public Administration about the viability of implementing an integrated library network system that connects all public institutions and report to the Parliament on the feasibility of commencing such an initiative by August 31, 2020	NALIS commenced a comprehensive assessment of various Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) to determine their ability to function across its public, schools and special library network. It is however not feasible to commence such an initiative by August 31, 2020 given the complexity of such systems and the associated cost to implement given that vendors of such systems do not reside locally. Upon completion of NALIS' assessment of the various ILMS and the need to identify the most robust and cost effective solution that can function across the disparate Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) platforms that exists in the public sector, NALIS will then enter into discussions with the Ministry of Public Administration on the way forward for this nationwide initiative. This assessment is expected to be completed by October 2020.

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8	Project Management Issues	- NALIS should provide a status update on the recruitment of a Project Implementation Officer and an Assistant Project Implementation Officer by August 31, 2020; and - NALIS should provide a timeline for the restructuring and reengineering of the units that will comprise its new Project Management Department by August 31, 2020	According to Cabinet Note approval, the Project Management Department should be staffed as follows: - Project Manager - Project Engineer - Project Implementation Officer - Assistant Project Implementation Officer - Library Building Consultant - Administrative Secretary - Project Coordinator However, since the resignation of the last Project Manager in 2011, the Department had only one (1) officer, i.e. Project Engineer. Also, in the absence of a Project Manager, the office of the Deputy Executive Director of NALIS, supported by accompanying staff absorbed the responsibilities of the entire Department. During the hearing, representatives from NALIS informed that the organisation was at the time in the process of recruiting staff to enhance the capacity of the Project Department. At that time, the positions recommended to be filled due to funding constraints were a Project Implementation Officer, and an Assistant Project Implementation Officer. Restructuring and Reengineering of the Departments: Part of the challenge experienced with recruiting personnel to the Department was due to salaries not being attractive enough to attract the caliber of candidates to add value to the position and the organisation as a whole. Consequently, the Authority commenced a restructuring exercise aimed at reengineering the Project Management Department by merging it with other departments with synergies. At the time of the public hearing, NALIS' Board recently approved, in the first instance, a merger of the Projects and Facilities Departments into a single Department. Consequently, in
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			October 2019, the new Project Management and Facilities Department was created with plans for the new Department to be headed by a Project Manager. Recruitment of Project Implementation Officer and Assistant Project Implementation Officer: In January 2020, NALIS employed a Project Manager and an Assistant Project Implementation Officer and Cabinet approval is being sought for another contractual period for the position of Project Implementation Officer. The request for contract renewal is currently with NALIS' line Ministry. Once the relevant approval is granted and funding is available, the recruitment process will be engaged to fill the position of Project Implementation Officer.
9	Risk Management Policy	- NALIS should provide a timeline for the development, approval and implementation of its Risk Management Policy by August 31, 2020	In September 2015, a Committee consisting of heads of various departments/divisions within NALIS was established to identify gaps, review and draft policies in keeping with NALIS' agenda. The Committee has been expanded to include a designate from each department/division as well as a representative from the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) staff side. In addition to several other policies engaging the attention of the Committee, NALIS' Risk Management Policy has been added to the urgent agenda of the Committee. NALIS, through the Committee will as per normal procedure develop its overarching Risk Management Policy with a seven (7) week schedule for completion beginning October 1, 2020 as indicated by the Chart below. Concurrently, information on an enterprise wide Risk Management system will be investigated with a view to implementing said system throughout the organisation. This initiative will require the engagement of an external entity to undertake a comprehensive assessment of NALIS' functions since that expertise is not available in-house. NALIS' Procurement Department has been charged with gathering the relevant industry information, timeline for execution and associated cost for such a project and will advise Management

			accordingly. Chart I: Internal Risk Management Policy <pre> graph TD A[Identify Need] --- B[Draft Policy] B --- C[Draft Policy Submitted to Policy Review Committee] C --- D[Draft Policy Submitted to Legal Department] D --- E[Draft Policy Submitted for Feedback from Staff] E --- F[Policy Submitted to Management] F --- G[Policy Submitted to Board] G --- H[Implement Approved Risk Management Policy] A --- I[Two Weeks] B --- I C --- J[Two Weeks] D --- J E --- K[One Week] F --- L[Two Weeks] G --- L </pre> Implement Approved Risk Management Policy
10	School Librarian Shortages	- NALIS should submit a report on the initiatives it has undertaken to ensure that each school (primary and secondary) has both a library and staff competent enough to provide library services that meet the standards established by NALIS by August 31, 2020	The Educational Library Services Division (ELSD) is the administrative arm of NALIS charged with the responsibility for providing strategic and operational library and information services to the Ministry of Education (MoE). This service is offered to Primary and Secondary Schools and MoE Corporate Libraries. The ELSD is the largest Division within NALIS, with approximately five hundred (500) positions accounting for 66.6% of the staffing establishment. At present, its mandate includes service to one hundred and thirty-four (134) Secondary schools and four hundred and ninety-seven (497) Primary Schools. School Library Media Centres: In 2008, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago sought to prepare students

		to meet the challenges of the information age through the reform of the school curriculum. The transformation of the Secondary School libraries was identified as one of the critical success factors and the creation of the new millennium School Library Media Centres (SLMCs) in all Secondary Schools in Trinidad and Tobago was highlighted. This development was facilitated by a partnership between NALIS' School Library Services Unit and the MoE's Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on July 2008 between the Ministry of Education and NALIS and this defined the relationship and responsibilities of each entity. The MoE is responsible for the physical plant, facilities and budget, while NALIS is responsible for staffing and provision of a professional library and information service to the schools. Secondary School Library Services: NALIS' ELSD Secondary School Library Services Unit (SSLSU) is responsible for developing and managing the one hundred and thirty-four (134) Secondary SLMCs which are spread throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago. NALIS employs ten (10) Secondary School Library Supervisors (SLS), seven (7) at the level of Librarian III, and three (3) at the level of Librarian II. These officers are assigned in a two-tiered system to oversee the operations of the SLMCs in their respective educational districts, which collectively comprises of two hundred and ninety (290) members of staff. There are however, twenty-four (24) Library Assistant II and nineteen (19) Library Assistant I vacancies at present. There are seven (7) Districts in Trinidad and for each District, a Librarian III is assigned to administer the functions of the secondary school libraries. Each Librarian III stewards between eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) SLMCs and supervises on average sixty (60) employees. Each SLMC comprises one (1) Librarian I, one (1) Library Assistant II and one (1) Library Assistant I where
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		possible. However, approximately thirty-three (33) Secondary Schools are not always privileged to have an on-site Librarian I due to a shortage of professional Librarians in Trinidad and Tobago. To help remedy this situation, Librarian II positions were redeployed from fixed assignments in 2014 to serve a wider school community of five (5) schools to fill in the operational services in the SLMCs. In Tobago, the SLMCs are managed by one (1) Librarian II who is assigned by NALIS to the Tobago Library Services. Primary School Library Services: NALIS' ELSD Primary School Library Services Unit (PSLSU) currently has ten (10) members of staff (1 Librarian IV, 1 Librarian III, 5 Librarian II, 1 Library Assistant II and 2 Library Assistants I) to serve approximately five hundred (500) Primary Schools. It offers curriculum support to the MoE's strategic initiatives by providing professional guidance in the selection of relevant, reputable information resources and services appropriate for the 21st Century learner. ELSD PSLSU staff is presently responsible for monitoring eighty (80) completed Primary School libraries. Work is currently in progress at eleven (11) schools, Assessment/Evaluation reports have been completed for twenty-seven (27) schools and requests have been received from thirty-eight (38) schools to set up or upgrade the library. Other services provided by the PSLSU include but are not limited to, providing professional advice in setting up libraries, site visits, training to On the Job Trainees (OJTs) and other personnel assigned to primary school libraries, library orientation for Teachers and students, recommendation on information resources to school administrators, and programming activities to promote literacy and support the Curriculum. Currently however, NALIS' staffing complement is inadequate to serve the needs of the Primary School
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			sector. NALIS Scholarship Programme: NALIS recognise that the necessary approval to increase its staffing complement may not be obtained in the near future to meet the need for a full staffing complement to support the School System. However, the demand for NALIS' services to assist with the literacy deficit within schools at a national level continues to grow. The current Scholarship Programme therefore remains key as it provides NALIS with the opportunity to increase its pool of professional librarians required to meet the national mandate. At present, given that there is a total of eighty-one (81) scholarships in Library and Information Science still to be awarded, some recipients of these scholarships can therefore be earmarked to build capacity in the SSLSU and PLSU. If this is realised, NALIS' intervention at SLMCs would be greater as there would be more Librarians to partner with Teachers and school administrators to develop library and information programmes based on the literacy gap identified by the MoE. Staffing Model Given current economic conditions it may be impractical to have library staff at all Schools however, the use of OJTs is a temporary solution that can be addressed by the MoE through a request for dedicated library OJTs particularly for Primary School libraries. NALIS at present offers initial and continued training to the OJTs in library procedures based on international library standards and proposes to continue providing this service. In the interim, NALIS is examining the possibility of providing Library Assistant I positions at each school that fits the basic criteria for a library service.
11	The Quality of NALIS	- NALIS should thoroughly scrutinise its accounting	Accounting Processes, Policies and Procedures: NALIS' Financial Rules provide guidelines to address its accounting controls

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	Accounting and Auditing Systems	controls and processes to ensure that there are no gaps or faults to back up the claim that its internal auditing function does not need to perform special investigations: ▪ Ensuring duties are segregated; ▪ Developing adequate physical control of assets; ▪ Developing and implementing an enterprise risk management system; ▪ Correcting errors promptly; ▪ Developing written policies and procedures; ▪ Performing reconciliations regularly; ▪ Reviewing and approving processes/ transactions; ▪ Maintaining adequate supporting documentation; ▪ Providing adequate training to staff; and	and processes. NALIS is currently engaged in the revision of its Financial Rules with an aim to getting it aligned to current financial practices and to tighten internal controls. It is on the Finance Division's agenda as high priority and the revised draft is expected to be completed by December 2020. The Fixed Asset policy provides guidance for the control of NALIS' Fixed Assets, and the Finance Division's processes are generally adequate to recognise errors in a timely manner before they have any significant impact on the organisation. Any loopholes which may have allowed the errors to take place are usually addressed within a short space of time and verification at different levels is usually done in the processing of transactions. Reconciliations are also performed on a regular basis for the relevant areas in the Accounting function. NALIS' Financial processes usually involve review and separate approval for transactions, especially for payments and salaries. Additionally, Financial processes invariably require the relevant documentation for approval to take place. NALIS continues to train staff where such facility is available either in-house or through external training providers. Given however that funding for training from the Ministry of Finance has not be available in several prior fiscal years, the organisation has explored alternative avenues to ensure the professional development of staff. Consequently, through the facilitation of the Ministry of Public Administration, some staff members in the Finance Division were exposed to some of the relevant training required. There is also a provision of Divisional training facilitated by senior staff which takes place on an ongoing basis. NALIS' Internal Audit Department (IAD) also performs an annual risk assessment on all Divisions and Departments within the organisation to determine the level of risk exposure. Action is usually taken by each Division
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		▪ Performing a self-evaluation of the internal controls - NALIS should also submit a report to Parliament outlining the details of the improvements that need to be made to its accounting policies and procedures by August 31, 2020; and - NALIS should develop performance measures for the internal audit function (e.g. quality assurance reviews, post-audit debriefing) to which it can evaluate its own performance against agreed measures. This should be submitted to Parliament by August 31, 2020.	based on the discussions held with IAD to lower areas deemed high risk. The IAD has done several audits which examined different processes within the Finance Division. Recommendations made by the IAD are usually implemented on agreed issues after discussion between representatives from the Finance Division and IAD. On the development of a formal Risk Management Policy, NALIS will subsequently embark on the implementation of an Enterprise Risk Management System as advised. This system will focus to a large extent on NALIS Accounting and Auditing systems. This project will be contingent on the associated approval for funding to implement a project of this scope. Given the lack of comprehensive information to date on such an initiative, a timeline for implementation cannot be provided at this time, however, NALIS' Procurement Department has been charged with gathering the relevant industry information, timeline for execution and associated cost for such a project and will advise Management accordingly. Performance Measures for Internal Audit Functions: The performance measures for the internal audit function pertains to Follow Up Audits and the implementation of a Quality Assurance Improvement Program (QAIP) as per the IIA Quality Standards. Follow up Audits are done by the IAD, however, a QAIP is yet to be executed. The following is NALIS' proposed plan for the development and maintenance of a QAIP which will cover all aspects of the IAD activity: - The IAD will perform a comprehensive and fully documented self-evaluation of internal controls which should take approximately three (3) to six (6) months. This assessment will be discussed and agreed with the Audit Committee of the Board and at the end of the exercise, a Self-Assessment Report will be presented to the Audit Committee - The comprehensive and fully documented Self-Assessment would
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			involve reviewing completed Audit Projects retrospectively for one (1) year from the actual start date of the Assessment in October 2020 - Based on the ratings (i.e. Generally Conforms/Partially Conforms/Does not Conform) of the comprehensive Self-Assessment, NALIS' IAD may require another year to implement and improve upon weaknesses noted in the Report and to conform to the IIA Quality Standards. This would also be discussed and agreed with the Audit Committee. At the end of that year, another Self-Assessment will be done (which should take approximately three (3) months) with a Report indicating the ratings and presented to the Audit Committee - Based on the ratings in Year 2 above and any deficiencies, the IAD will address the deficiencies. This is expected to be completed within a further one (1) year period. At the end of this year, another Self-Assessment will be completed and presented to the Audit Committee. This would be discussed and agreed beforehand with the Audit Committee - Within two (2) to four (4) years, NALIS will engage an External Assessor to validate the last Self-Assessment Report which is required by the IIA Quality Standards To date, the IAD obtained quotations from two (2) qualified, independent, competent, and professional service providers: IIA International Quality Services and PricewaterhouseCoopers Trinidad, and consideration will be given to engaging one party when required and once funding is identified.
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