

Response from the National Information and Communications Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) to the Second Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) of the Tenth Parliament

Observations/Findings

IgovTT has noted the observations of the Committee of the country's low ratings by the World Economic Forum in its 2009/10 Global Information Technology Report, with Trinidad and Tobago ranking 79 out of 136 countries in the Network Readiness Index. *This ranking has since improved considerably in the 2010/11 Report with Trinidad and Tobago now being ranked at 63 out of 138 countries.*

In the nine pillars of the index, we were also able to see improvements in seven of these areas, as listed below:

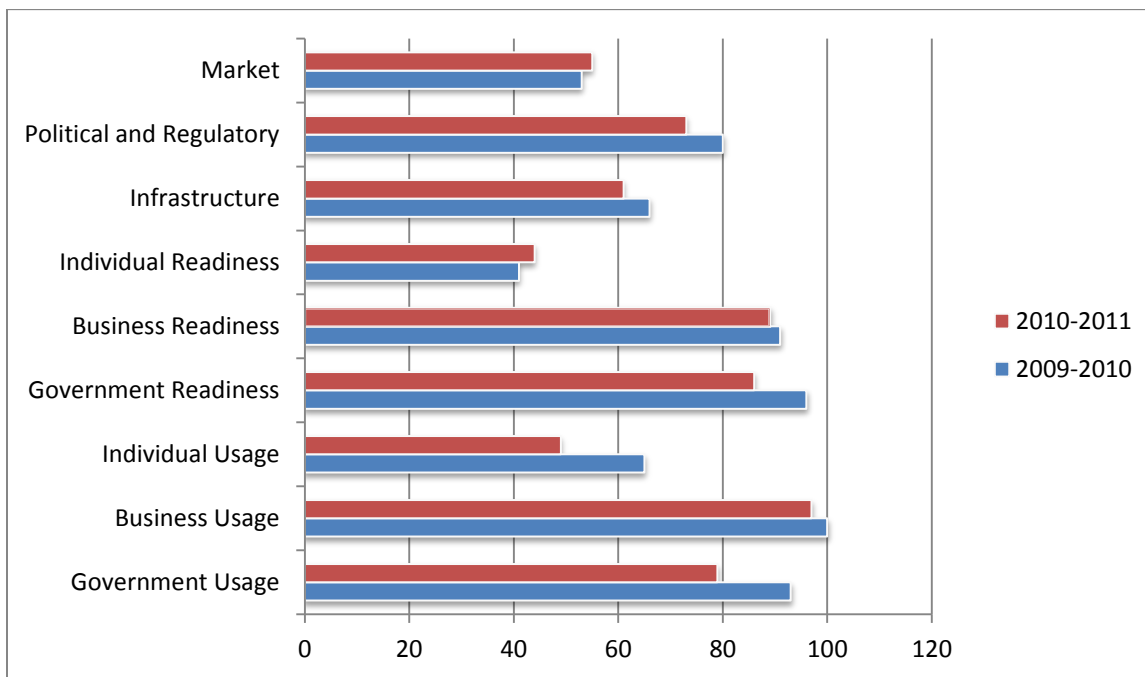


Figure 1: Networked Readiness Index Comparison 2009-2010

It is important to note that the government backbone has been a critical component of the GovTT ICT architecture, providing the infrastructure to connect ministries and agencies for shared ICT services (e-mail, Internet access, Voice over IP, video-conferencing and other applications) to

improve employee productivity and realise cost savings. It also provides the platform for its client-based service offerings through the ttconnect portal, which is intended to spearhead the implementation of electronic services to improve citizen satisfaction on service delivery and reduce the transaction costs per service offered.

Additionally, the Data Protection and Privacy Act has been passed and the Electronic Transactions Act has been passed and partially proclaimed which now give legal protection for electronic transactions and should build citizen confidence in the use of ICT for services. One of the first operational streams of GoRTT enabled by this legislation will be ttBizLink, the Single Electronic Window which intends to decrease the time and complexity of Government to Business (G2B) and Government to Citizen (G2C) business transactions. This project, executed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry will be operationalized in 2012.

The company has completed its Strategic plans over the 2011-2014 period, which provides a comprehensive approach to the execution of its mandate as the central ICT agency for GoRTT. This is aligned to work that is on-going on the National ICT Strategy which would include a well-defined e-Government strategy to ensure that all of GoRTT understands and implements ICT programmes and projects that will maximise the return on investment of its ICT assets.

Recommendations

The areas listed for focus have been addressed as follows:

- (a) Implementing initiatives in the area of business process re-engineering within the public sector, which can be achieved through the networks already existing with IT professionals in public agencies

For all electronic service initiatives, business requirements and processes are identified and process improvements recommended. iGovTT has a Business Transformation team that works with government ministries and agencies to identify business process requirements and optimize these processes as part of the re-engineering efforts. The capacity for Business Process Re-engineering is also being strengthened through the engagement with IDA-I, as part of the iGovTT's organizational development effort with training being conducted and knowledge transfer through exercises with actual ministry engagements. iGovTT also partners on engagements with the Public Services Transformation Division (PSTD) of the Ministry of

Public Administration which has responsibility for process improvements in the delivery of public services.

(b) Guiding organizational culture change in order to complement the re-engineering efforts.

This may be pursued through the employment of additional administrative staff with specific focus on developing strategies to promote this change sector wide

Change management is one of the functional areas that is included in the Business Transformation area so that technology initiatives are understood and accepted by the client ministries and agencies. iGovTT has employed professional staff in its Business Transformation unit who are required to have competency in change management. Additionally, all programmes and projects have a change management/communications element built into them as part of the project management methodology.

The Ministry of Public Administration also pursues change management in its business process re-engineering initiatives for the public sector.

(c) Developing awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public about online facilities offered on GovNett to encourage use of the services, and to increase the levels of citizen comfort and trust in the available technology

Several initiatives were undertaken during 2011 which included:

(i) Print advertising of ttconnect Express' scheduled visits to rural communities. Flyers were also distributed within these communities.

(ii) ttconnect Express visited fifty (50) communities to bring awareness of the availability of/access to Government Services and Information as well as to provide services to citizens

(iii) Special visits were made to nineteen (19) communities to fulfil requests made as part of Health/Education Fairs or other community activities designed to advise and educate the residents on the availability of/access to Government Information and Services.

iGovTT is in the process of finalising a multi-faceted campaign for the ttconnect suite of channels which will be rolled out during the course of 2012.

(d) since the eCAL project is to be ongoing, giving additional attention to strategies (i) to address the length of time for procurement (ii) to reduce instances of user negligence (iii) to increase security features of the laptops

(i) *The eCAL project, which was started in 2009/10, had a procurement time of 35 days in its first year which measures the date the tender was published through to the date the contract was signed. In 2010/11, this process time took 43 days, the extra time allowed to the potential bidders to submit their proposals. The procurement methodology was changed in the second year, opening the bids to suppliers instead of manufacturers which allowed for more flexibility in negotiation while still maintaining the transparency and integrity of the process. The distribution of the laptops was able to be accomplished significantly shorter in the second year with all of the machines being delivered to the schools in thirteen (13) days, whereas in the previous year the same process took approximately four (4) months.*

(ii) *The Ministry of Education has the responsibility for the creation of user policies and guidelines as well as training and user manuals for the students, the parents and the educators as part of the distribution for the laptops*

(iii) *In 2010/11, the laptops were affixed with a sticker which clearly identified them being issued by the Ministry of Education as part of the eCAL programme and the assigned student's name, as part of a non-removable asset tag. The machines have again been equipped with a tracer programme (Computrace) that would allow for a stolen unit's approximate geographic location to be identified once the user logs on to the Internet, which assists with the recovery of the machine.*

(e) expanding the ttconnect mobile services to Tobago before the end of this year

There is an initiative to have the ttconnect Express bus visit the Tobago island at least twice per year, in collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly. It is anticipated that the ttconnect Express will conduct its first visit to Tobago in June 2012. Additionally, in the 2011/12 budget estimates there is an allocation for the acquisition of two (2) additional buses of which one could possibly be solely for Tobago services. However, the cost of outfitting the buses exceeds the budget estimates, and iGovTT is exploring partnership with Ministries to defray the costs.

(f) fast-tracking the governance arrangements for iGovTT, noting that the models have been prepared by the Ministry of Public Administration and are under consideration by Cabinet *Cabinet has approved by Minute #70 of January 13, 2011 the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to oversee and accelerate the Information and Communication Technology Agenda of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The ICT portfolio has since been re-assigned from the Ministry of Public Administration to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education who will now chair the committee. As part of the committee's mandate, a policy framework will be developed for Governance as part of the connected Government initiatives.*