

Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) on East Port-of-Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC)

Draft Response for the Honourable Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development to present to each House on the recommendations/ comments contained in the Report

Notation

Gazette No.120 of July 6th 2012, Vol: 51 gave the Senator Dr the Honourable Bhoendradatt Tewarie Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development responsibility for the East Port-of-Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC).

The following therefore reflects the response to the recommendations/comments as highlighted on Pages 20 to 23 of the Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, with a view to the action being undertaken by the EPOSDC since being placed under the stewardship of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Specific Comments with respect to the Observations/ Recommendations of the JSC

1.0 Mandate – dissonance between mandate expressed by the Company and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy

Recommendation – clarification of mandate, including roles and responsibilities effective alignment to the most appropriate Ministry and the strategic initiatives

RESPONSE

In 2005, the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC) was established with the mandate *“to develop and redevelop a zone of East Port-of-Spain... to improve the economic, social and physical environment of those areas.”*

In pursuit of that mandate, the Company indicates that it embarked on an agenda to achieve the mandate. The funding constraint limited the ability of the Company to embark on non-infrastructure activities.

The 2011 Budget cemented this mandate even further by creating the facilitating role for the EPOSDC to lead the development of the East Port of Spain area as one of the five (5) Growth Poles.

Government's vision for the Growth Pole development is that the area designated as growth poles will become a centre for investment and development in industry and economic activity, creating jobs for citizens in the surrounding communities. It is anticipated that each Growth Pole would be aligned to the diversification agenda, the seven (7) areas identified are – Energy, Food Sustainability, Culture and Creative Industries, Maritime Industries, Tourism, Financial Services and Information and Communications Technology. In the case of East Port of Spain, the natural assets of the area will facilitate the creation of the proposed industries aligned to construction and the creative industries such as culture, heritage, fashion and arts and craft.

Consequently, several initiatives and programmes are being undertaken in collaboration with Government, private sector and multilateral agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank as follows:

- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) assisted Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESCI) which includes initiatives in East Port of Spain;
- The establishment of a High Level Expert Panel on Arts and Culture for cultural intervention with a view to long-term sustainability of the sector, with a specific thrust towards establishing creative industries with implications for East Port of Spain;
- The Heritage City Initiative;
- The Draft Harmonization Report (2012) of the Ministry of Local Government on the Harmonization of Land Use Proposals and Classifications as part of its Municipal Development Plans (MPD) to embark on a number of transportation improvements and village upgrades in East Port of Spain;
- The Final Draft Development Plan: A Strategic Planning Framework for Metropolitan Port of Spain, undertaken by the Port of Spain City Corporation; and
- Commencement of a short-term consultancy for the preparation of a National Spatial Development Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago.

These initiatives will determine the areas for intervention and will facilitate the development of projects for which various funding sources and agencies can be targetted, in addition to the funding allocated under the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF).

Prior to the alignment of the EPOSDC to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, and the Ministry of Local Government informed a new area of focus for the Company consistent with the allocation of funding under the IDF– Physical Infrastructure. However, given the mandate of EPOSDC this does not allow the company to be strategically positioned to have maximum impact in the communities given their social and economic needs. With the support of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Company will be able to undertake an integrated developmental approach to building the communities of East Port of Spain. It will also give them the ability to work with the agencies/ contractors in the area which would allow for the coordination and achievement of development objectives.

2.0 Strategic Development Plan -

2.1 Data is outdated and therefore the profile of the community may be different

2.2 Inconsistencies in land use planning for the area

2.3 Approval from Cabinet for the Strategic Development Plan

Recommendation – approval of the Strategic Plan and review of the Plan to ensure that there is removal of constraints to implementation

RESPONSE

The East Port of Spain Strategic Development Plan was drafted by the EPOSDC in 2009, based on census data collected by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) in the 2000 census. In 2010, the EPOSDC submitted the Plan to the Ministry of Local Government and later to Cabinet for approval; the Plan however, has not yet been formally accepted by Cabinet.

The 2011 Population Census data is now available and has provided the basis for an updated analysis of the population in the East Port of Spain area.

Evidence based planning would be more impactful taking into consideration varying factors such as demographic profiles, infrastructure requirements, and quality of life conditions (health, education and income).

In 2012, in a partnership between the CSO and the United Nations Development Programme, Trinidad and Tobago produced its first Human Development Atlas 2012, providing valuable information on Human Development in a number of areas including: education, household income, poverty and crime and violence. This Atlas provides both comparative data by administrative areas and serves as a baseline for analysis of conditions and projections for the basis of improved conditions. The Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development is using this information to also develop community profiles as subsets of the administrative areas. The aim is to understand the unique conditions being experienced at the community level, with a view to improve the overall conditions of persons in the community. The development of profiles of the communities in the areas targetted as growth poles is a priority of the Ministry.

The alignment of the development of the area in-keeping with the Medium Term Policy Framework 2011-2014 'Innovation for Lasting Prosperity' will also be a priority when reviewing the plans for the area. More specifically, the proposals being developed by the Economic Development Board for the East Port of Spain Growth Pole must be in alignment to the work being undertaken. Inter-agency coordination is equally critical for the achievement of the various proposals to achieve coherence in initiatives for development outcomes articulated for the area.

The Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development endorses the view that specialised data being developed through agencies such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Security and the CSO on recent statistics in education, crime and employment for East Port of Spain should be utilised by EPOSDC in the continuous review in its planning for the area.

In addition, the Strategic Development Plan highlights several key initiatives for developing East Port of Spain through rehabilitation, settlement upgrading, and redevelopment and conservation projects. It should be noted that the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, through the Town and Country Planning Division, is currently developing a National Spatial

Development Strategy that will inform initiatives identified in the Strategic Development Plan developed by the EPOSDC. The EPOSDC should also review its current developmental agenda for duplication of efforts as it relates to the National Spatial Development Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development has been working towards institutionalising monitoring and evaluations systems across the public sector with the objective to assess the outcomes and impacts of interventions. As such, the EPOSDC is expected to adopt this practice within its own development planning. The adoption of the methodologies used by the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development such as the ‘standard results chains’ and the ‘logic model’ will facilitate an accurate mapping of activities to be undertaken not only by the EPOSDC, but other agencies working in this area. This would assist in the alignment of initiatives, reduction in duplication of interventions, proper utilisation of resources and achievement of impacts.

3.0 Funding - Challenges being faced by the restrictions of IDF

Recommendation – Funding to be aligned to the Company’s mandate, timeliness of payments and greater coordination between Ministry of Finance and the Economy and line Ministry.

RESPONSE

The Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development supports the view that there is need for proper alignment of the Company’s mandate with its funding. There are no statutory barriers to prevent partnerships with other agencies, Government Ministries or the private sector. It is anticipated that such a dialogue and development of proposals will become the thrust of the Company.

Cabinet has agreed that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy in collaboration with line Ministry (Planning and Sustainable Development) will review the level of Management fees to be paid to the Company to ensure its liquidity.

4.0 Inter-Agency collaboration – the need for a collaborative response to the development of the area

Recommendation – collaboration is necessary for successful impact of projects for the area. Strengthened relations between the line Ministry and the Company must be facilitated to ensure progress of the work of the Company

RESPONSE

Institutionalising the cluster approach as articulated in the National Performance Framework (2012-2015) is a good model to be adopted by the Company and to ensure the proper alignment of the work of the various agencies in the area. Through the Cluster Approach identified in the National Performance Framework, the EPOSDC will engage in discussions with other Agencies to establish roles, identify resources and determine contributions towards achieving specific goals within each community. The difficulty of collaboration arises because of the territorial approach of Ministries and sometimes, agencies under their charge. The EPOSDC's efforts can be made more effective by genuine collaboration.

As the Ministry responsible for the EPOSDC there is on-going collaboration between the Company and the Ministry to monitor the progress of the Company's work as well as to support in any area that would assist the Company to achieve its greatest success.

5.0 Development Projects – greater impact could have been achieved through collaboration

Recommendation – Expand the range of communities for these projects

RESPONSE

The Company should focus in 2013 on completing the projects and programmes within its Strategic Development Plan that focus on other communities outside of Beetham such as:

- Port of Spain East- St. Paul Recreational Facilities;
- Laventille/Trou Macaque- Sogren Trace Recreational Facilities; and
- Laventille- Packages 9, 10 and 11.

Further, the EPOSDC is a key partner in the successful implementation of the parts of 'Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative' partially funded by IDB. Through collaboration with the Port of Spain City Corporation, and various agencies of Central Government the three (3) main strategic pillars of this programme will be addressed, namely:

- Environment and Infrastructure
- Cultural Heritage Restoration and
- Social and Economic Development

The EPOSDC is poised to play a key role in development of East Port of Spain and can do more if given the mandate and supported through cooperation, collaboration and partnership.