TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2017 estimate): 1,353,895:

AREA (UN 2006): 5,130 sq km

CAPITAL: Port of Spain

CURRENCY: Trinidad and Tobago dollar (TT\$)

HEAD OF STATE: President Paula-Mae Weekes

HEAD OF COVERNMENT: Prime Minister Keith Rowley

FORM OF GOVERNMENT: parliamentary republic

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: bicameral

STATE STRUCTURE: unitary

LANGUAGES: English (official)

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NATIONAL ELECTIONS: last: 2015, turnout: 69.9%; next: 2020

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2015): 31.0% (representatives) 29.0% (senators)

LOCAL ELECTIONS: Trinidad municipal corporations: last: 2016, turnout: 34.3%; next: 2019

Tobago House of Assembly: last: 2017, turnout: 49.7%; next: 2021

WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2016): 30.4%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2015/16: 7.0%

SUMMARY

Trinidad and Tobago is a unitary republic with two levels of government: national and local. There is no specific constitutional provision for local government; however, the Tobago House of Assembly is enshrined within the constitution. The Municipal Corporations Act 1990 and the Tobago House of Assembly Act 1996 comprise the principal legislation governing local government. The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government oversees local authorities on Trinidad whilst the Tobago House of Assembly reports directly to the Office of the Prime Minister. The structure of local government comprises a single authority in Tobago and 14 municipal corporations in Trinidad, comprising two city corporations, three borough corporations and nine regional corporations. Following the 2016 election, 30.4% of councillors and 32.0% of mayors/chairpersons were women. In the 2015/16 financial year, local government expenditure was 7.0% of total government expenditure. All cities and boroughs will regain revenue-raising power when the repeal of the current legislation is finalised. National government makes significant contributions, especially to the Tobago authority. However, the Tobago House of Assembly governance structure is devolved in its functions except in the case of national security, revenue generation and international affairs. The local authorities have devolved responsibility for a wide range of functions from policing to primary health and education.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Trinidad and Tobago is a unitary republic with a bicameral parliament. The head of state is the non-executive president, who is elected by the members of both houses for a five-year term. Parliament comprises an elected house of representatives and an appointed senate. The 41 members of the house of representatives are directly elected for a five-year term by the first-past-the-post system. The president appoints the 31 senators 16 on the advice of the prime minister, six on the advice of the leader of the opposition and another nine at the president's own discretion. Following the 2015 national election, 31.0% (13/42) of elected representatives and 29.0% (9/31) of senators were women.^{47.1b} The prime minister is appointed by the president and is usually the leader of the majority party in the house of representatives. The prime minister appoints a cabinet from the members of both houses.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

Local government is not enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, but, the Tobago House of Assembly is enshrined in Chapter 11A of the constitution.^{471a}

2.2 Main legislative texts

The Municipal Corporations Act 1990^{472b} is the principal legislation governing local government in Trinidad, while Tobago is principally governed by the Tobago House of Assembly Act 1996.

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

The 2016 government document titled Transitioning of Local Government Policy (TLGP) is guiding a wide-ranging revision of local government legislation, including the Municipal Corporations Act 1990. As the remit of municipalities expands, some of the key legislative changes being considered, and which are outlined in the TLGP 2016, include:

- the term of office for councils to be revised to four years
- councils to have effective executive authority, and councillors and aldermen to become full-time, salaried postholders
- the Integrity in Public Life Act and other relevant legislation to be amended to apply to chief executive officers, deputy chief executive officers and other senior management staff
- the amendment of legislation so that local government bodies may collect and retain for use property taxes and fines as identified
- an expansion in the number of standing committees within municipalities, to facilitate the inclusion and management of additional responsibilities by local government bodies;
- a review of the legislation governing the Municipal Police Service to give effect to its expansion as stated in national government policy,
- entrenchment of the decentralisation of social service delivery as a key function of local government
- review of the relevant sections of the Public Health Act
- a review of sections of the Act governing the Building Inspectorate, to give rise to the Municipal Planning Department
- confirmation of the role of disaster management units within local government as first responders and provision for strengthening these units so they can respond effectively
- amendment of the Burial Grounds Act and related Acts to allow for relevant functions currently carried out nationally to transfer to local councils.

2.4 National urban policy

The National Spatial Development Strategy^{472c} (NSDS) is an overarching framework that spatially represents the sociocultural, economic and environmental priorities of Trinidad and Tobago. These strategies and policies articulate the government's vision of sustainable development and aim to describe in broad terms the nature and location of future development in the country.^{47.2d} As a spatial development strategy, distinct from a physical development plan, the NSDS provides a strategic national framework, based on spatial planning principles, and guidance to be followed when the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and municipal corporations are reviewing or preparing detailed local spatial development plans and when decisions are being made on specific development proposals. It also provides a broad spatial development context for key infrastructure and investment decisions.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 3.1 Local government within the state

Local government is single-tiered in both Trinidad and Tobago, with Trinidad divided into 14 municipalities/regional corporations and Tobago having a single House of Assembly.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government^{47.3b} (MRDLG) is headed by a cabinet minister who is responsible for the policy directives of the ministry. Under Section 269 of the Municipal Corporations Act 1990 the minister can give general or specific directions to municipal councils in relation to government policy on any matter. The minister is also tasked with promoting an effective and equitable partnership between national and local government in the development of socioeconomic growth, balanced sustainable development and social welfare; and also acts as adjudicator in cases of disputes between municipal corporations. The ministry's fundamental functions in relation to the corporations include: monitoring, evaluation and adjudication; technical services engineering and project management; drafting legislation relevant to local government; developing policy frameworks; and oversight of financial transfers from national government.

3.3 Council types

There are two types of local government: municipalities on Trinidad and a single House of Assembly on Tobago.

3.3.1 Trinidad municipal corporations: The 14 municipal corporations are of three types: two city corporations, three

borough corporations and nine regional corporations. All have the same powers and responsibilities and are empowered to make policies and by-laws in relation to their functions for the local area. The council is headed by a mayor in a city or borough, and a chairperson in the regional corporations. Each council also has a deputy mayor/vice-chairperson. Municipalities must set up committees for finance, personnel, public health and infrastructure. Each of the four committees must have a minimum membership of 51% of the council and be headed by a committee chairperson who maintains close contact with officers of the corporation to supervise service delivery. Statutory meetings are held towards the end of each month to ratify the business of the committees, making their recommendations binding. Further discretionary committees can include leisure, civic amenities, planning development and security. Committees can set up and appoint sub-committees. The mayor or chairperson can form an executive committee or cabinet and appoint members of the council to it. The council's instructions on its policies and programmes are formally received by the chief executive officer (CEO) at council meetings. The day-to-day work of the council is carried out by its administrative arm, which is headed by the CEO and supported by administrative, technical and skilled workers.

Trinidad and Tobago	Municipal corporation/ parish/House of Assembly	Local areas (electoral wards)	Population (2011 Census)	Population (2017 estimate)	% rural (2010)
Trinidad	Arima	7	33,606	na	na
	Chaguanas	8	83,516	na	na
	Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo	13	178,410	na	na
	Diego Martin	10	102,957	na	na
	Penal-Debe	9	89,392	na	na
	Point Fortin	6	20,235	na	na
	Port of Spain City	12	37,074	na	na
	Princes Town	9	102,375	na	na
	Mayaro/Rio Claro	6	35,650	na	na
	San Fernando City	9	48,838	na	na
	San Juan-Laventille	13	157,258	na	na
	Sangre Grande	8	75,766	na	na
	Siparia	9	86,949	na	na
	Tunapuna-Piarco	15	215,119	na	na
Total Trinidad	14	134	1,267,145	na	na
Tobago House of Assembly	1	12	60,874	na	na
TOTAL	15	146	1,328,019	1,353,895	19.9

Table 47.1a Distribution of councils and population

Source: TTALGA communication with CLGF and the 2011 census^{47.3a}

3.3.2 Tobago House of Assembly:

An executive council is responsible for carrying out the functions of the assembly. It comprises the chief secretary, deputy chief secretary and up to five secretaries drawn from amongst the assembly members and appointed by the president on the advice of the chief secretary. The assembly can also set up committees; it decides their composition and terms of reference. The responsibilities of the assembly are carried out through divisions, each under the direction of one of the secretaries. The divisions are: agriculture, marine affairs and the environment; community development and culture; education; youth affairs, sport and energy; finance and planning; health, infrastructure and public utilities; tourism; transportation; enterprise and settlement.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

The latest elections⁴⁷⁴ for municipal corporations in Trinidad were held in 2016 with a turnout of 34.3%, down from 43.5% in 2013 and from 39.5% in 2010. The most recent elections for the Tobago House of Assembly were held in 2017 with a turnout of 49.7%, down from 70.1% in 2013 and 56.4% in 2009.

4.2 Voting system

In Trinidad and Tobago local government elections use the first-past-the-post system. Councillors in Trinidad are elected for a three-year term, while in Tobago it is for a four-year term.

4.3 Elected representatives

4.3.1 Trinidad's municipal corporation councillors are elected for each municipality using the first-past-the-post system, followed by a secondary election where councillors elect aldermen from a pool of candidates who have 'demonstrated knowledge, expertise or experience in professional or vocational occupations suited to the development focus of the municipality'. The number of aldermen varies depending on the size of the council. Mayors and chairpersons are indirectly elected from among the aldermen and councillors for a threeyear term. A total of 134 councillors and 31 aldermen were elected in the 14 municipal councils, including five mayors in the cities and boroughs and nine chairpersons in the regional corporations.

4.3.2 The Tobago House of Assembly

has 12 elected assemblymen plus four appointed councillors (three appointed by the chief secretary and one by the leader of the opposition). The assemblymen elect a chief secretary, who is leader of the assembly, and a deputy chief secretary.

4.4 Women's representation

Following the 2016 election, 30.4% of councillors were women, down from 37.1% of councillors following the 2013 elections. The number of female mayors/chairpersons was 32.0%, up from none in 2013, whilst the percentage of female deputy mayors/ chairpersons was 16.7%, the same as after the 2013 election. A quarter (25%) of aldermen following the 2016 election were women, down from 37.5% after the 2013 election (see Table 47.1b).

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 5.1 Legal requirement

Provision is made in the Municipal Corporations Act 1990 for the appointment of sub-committees, as well as advisory committees of persons who are not members of a council. These provisions could be used to promote community involvement in decisionmaking at the local government level. There is no specific legal provision for community involvement in the decisions of the Tobago House of Assembly; however, consultation with citizens is normally undertaken for major development matters, including budgets.

5.2 Implementation

Municipal council statutory committee meetings are open to the public.

Stakeholders, including leaders of various religious institutions, community groups, village councils and other special interest groups can be called upon by a corporation to sit on various committees on issues that relate to their specific areas of interest.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

The ministry's strategic plan includes e-government; this is partly implemented and video conferencing is now used. E-government is facilitated through ttconnect, a major platform for the ministry. A complaints management software system (CMSS) is being commissioned for use by all municipalities to receive and log complaints, which will also be used to give citizens the opportunity to share ideas for community development and obtain real-time information on issues affecting their communities.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 National local government association The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities (TTALGA) was established by the Municipal Corporations Act 1990. Membership is automatic for municipal councillors on Trinidad and voluntary for members of the Tobago House of Assembly.

Table 47.1b Women councillors and mayors following election 2003 to 2016

Election	20	03	20	800	2	010	2	013	2	016
Councillors	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female councillors	na	~27	na	na	na	29.5	na	32.0	na	30.4
Male councillors	na	~73	na	na	na	70.5	na	68.0	na	69.6
Total councillors	na	100.0								
Mayors/chairpersons	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female mayors/ chairpersons	na	~5	na	na	na	18.2	na	0.0	na	32.0
Male mayors/chairpersons	na	~95	na	na	na	81.8	na	100.0	na	68.0
Total mayors/chairpersons	na	100.0								
Deputy mayors/ chairpersons	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female deputy mayors/ chairpersons	na	na	na	na	na	9.1	na	16.7	na	16.7
Male deputy mayors/ chairpersons	na	na	na	na	na	90.9	na	83.3	na	83.3
Total deputy mayors/ chairpersons	na	100.0								
Aldermen	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female aldermen	na	na	na	na	na	29.2	na	37.5	na	25.0
Male aldermen	na	na	na	na	na	70.8	na	62.5	na	75.0
Total aldermen	na	100.0	na	100	na	100.0	na	100.0	na	100.0

Source: MRDLG correspondence with CLGF 2017

The association is funded by member subscriptions and government subvention and its main activities include promoting effective and efficient management by local government bodies, and acting as a communication link between local government bodies and the national government and its agencies. The association is also responsible for developing a code of ethics to which all members must adhere.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Direct contact between national government and the Trinidad municipal corporations is through the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, and regular meetings are held between corporations and the minister and permanent secretary. The meetings usually focus on implementation of projects, management and operational issues. The chief secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly may, at the invitation of the prime minister, attend meetings of the national government cabinet to provide information on decisions that have been taken by the House of Assembly or to represent Tobago on matters that affect it. Additionally, the Tobago House of Assembly Act 1996 set up a dispute resolution committee to intervene in any dispute between the government and the assembly on budgetary allocations. This committee comprises two appointees from the Tobago House of Assembly, two government appointees and the ombudsman (or similarly qualified person) as chairperson.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

The auditor general, the ombudsman and the Joint Select Committee of parliament all have the power to call municipal corporations in to explain their actions. A Tobago unit of the Office of the Ombudsman was set up in 2002.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES 9.1 Local government expenditure

In 2015/16, local government expenditure was 7.0% of total government expenditure, down from 7.7% in 2009/10. This includes transfers to the Tobago House of Assembly (4.2%), as well as total expenditure of the Trinidad municipalities (2.8%).

9.2 Locally raised revenue

Municipal corporations are responsible for collecting revenues; however, the majority of funding comes from grants from national government. The present administration is currently considering the reintroduction of land and building taxes based on a different model to that used previously.

9.3 Transfers

National government provides substantial general and specific grants to municipal corporations, for example via its public-sector investment programme and road improvement fund. The Tobago House of Assembly receives a large part of its income from national government (4.7% of the national budget).

Table 47.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for municipalities 2015/16

Income	2015/16	Expenditure by type	2015/16
Centre-local transfers	TT\$m	Administration	TT\$m
Restricted	1,649.30	Staff	336.61
Unrestricted		Other administrative costs	535.28
Locally raised revenue		Equipment purchase	7.69
Property taxes	0.00	Current transfers	30.03
Other income	16.85	Services	
		Local public health	324.09
TOTAL INCOME	1,666.15	Roads	204.78
		General administration	86.53
		Buildings/grounds	38.32
		Markets/abattoirs	12.28
		Cemeteries	6.60
		Other	2.43
TOTAL INCOME	1,666.15	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,585.64

Source: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government 2017

There is a commitment to 'the regional and municipal corporations having a direct relationship with the Ministry of Finance [..] to ensure adequacy of funding, and they should be given the autonomy to develop and implement their own regional policies, plans and programmes, within the framework of national policy'.

9.4 Loans

No information available.

9.5 Local authority staff

The Statutory Authority Service Commission and Public Service Commission within national government are responsible for recruiting professional staff. Local authorities only recruit those employees on daily rates.

9.5.1 Trinidad municipal mayors and chairpersons and their deputies are considered part-time salaried posts. There is also a pay structure for councillors and aldermen. The Salaries Review Commission, a national government body, determines remuneration. Staff in the regional municipalities are paid directly by national government. Municipalities must have a chief executive officer, a corporation secretary, a treasurer, an engineer and a medical officer of health. All municipalities have similar staffing structures, with the chief executive officer as head of the paid service and a tier of chief officers reporting to him or her. All chief executive officers report to the permanent secretary of the ministry.

9.5.2 Tobago House of Assembly members are paid a monthly allowance to cover the cost of office facilities and staff. The Salaries Review Commission sets the level of this allowance. The chief secretary is a full-time, salaried position including allowances and other benefits, similar to that of a state government minister. It is a statutory requirement for the assembly to have a chief administrator to head the administrative set-up, and a clerk to be responsible for legislative matters. There is also provision for the secondment of staff from other statutory bodies for up to five years.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of service delivery

The minicipalities in Trinidad and the Tobago House of Assembly have differing service delivery responsibilities.

10.1.1 Municipalities in Trinidad:

These have statutory responsibility for: policing; street management; nurseries and childcare; homes for the elderly; bus and taxi shelters; maintenance



Table 47.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure

	2009/10 TT\$m	2015/16 TT\$m
Total government expenditure	44,355	55,728
Total local government expenditure	3,437	3,920
of which Trinidad municipalities	1,168	1,586
of which Tobago House of Assembly	2,269	2,334
Local government expenditure as a percent of total government expenditure	7.7%	7.0%

Source: MRDLG correspondence with CLGF, national budget statements

and management of street markets, slaughterhouses and common and recreation grounds; waste removal and management; and corporation cemeteries and crematoria. They have discretionary powers for: libraries; management and improvement of the physical environment, including parks, open spaces, recreation areas and monuments; other crematoria and burial grounds; and development, trade fairs and events.

10.1.2 Tobago House of Assembly:

The Tobago House of Assembly has delegated powers over finance and other matters. Since the 1996 Act the assembly has powers to take on a wide range of responsibilities including: finance; customs and excise, licensing and valuation; state lands, public buildings and infrastructure; highways and roads; health services and social welfare; agriculture, fisheries and food production; environment, forestry, housing and marine parks; sports, culture, arts and tourism; and education, museums and libraries.^{4710a}

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

The 2016 Transitioning of Local Government Policy document suggested how ICT can improve service delivery and its recommendations are expected to be implemented incrementally. These include: capacity to store and retrieve information electronically. reducing the need for paper-based options and speeding up exchanges of information; real-time access to information on the ground, to allow councils to make quick decisions and respond to the needs of citizens in a timely manner; remote access capability, allowing end users to access data from their council regardless of geographic location; roll-out of a dedicated online complaints management system to all municipal corporations establishment of a network of internet service hubs within community centres to provide internet access for residents. The hubs

will provide guidance on and access to local and national services. Residents will be able to access information on current community-based projects and programmes. as well as agricultural, health, political, community development and educational resources and information. The hubs will also enable municipalities to automate several services such as accounting, asset management, document and procurement management.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Trinidad and Tobago Draft National Development Strategy (NDS) Vision 2030^{47,10a} document, along with the National Spatial Development Strategy^{47.10b} (NSDS), have aligned national development goals with the UN's SDGs as the Draft NDS Vision 2030, setting short, medium and long-term goals and objectives, projects and programmes to achieve the SDGs.^{47.10c} Localising the agenda means the SDGs will be integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of local government policies, development plans and programmes of work. Municipal corporations will be the drivers of this initiative and municipalities will strive to deliver people-centred development. The SDGs provide an opportunity to develop a regionally relevant approach, and to achieve this the national government.is promoting extensive devolution of functions to local aovernment.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 47.1a National government portal www.ttconnect.gov.tt
- 47.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union http:// archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 47.2a Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago www.ttparliament.org/ documents/1048.pdf

- 47.2b Municipal Corporations Act 1990 http://rgd.legalaffairs.gov.tt/laws2/ alphabetical_list/lawspdfs/25.04.pdf
- 47.2c National Spatial Development Strategy www.planning.gov.tt/ OurTnTOurFuture/documents/ Executive_Summary_web.pdf
- 47.2d Draft National Development Strategy (NDS) Vision 2030 www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/ files/Vision_2030_Draft_National_ Development_Strategy.pdf
- 47.3a Population and Housing Census 2011 Demographic Report http:// cso.gov.tt/census/2011-census-data
- 47.3b Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government https://rdlg.gov.tt
- 47.4 Elections and Boundaries Commission www.ebctt.com
- 47.5 No reference for this section
- 47.6 Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities www.facebook.com/Trinidadand-Tobago-Associationof-Local-Government-Authorities-386372844750417
- 47.7 No reference for this section
- 47.8 No reference for this section
- 47.9 Based on figures of TT\$1,586m for total expenditure for municipalities (see Table 2), TT\$2,334m for transfer to Tobago
- Assembly, and a total expenditure of TT\$55,728m outlined in the national budget statement for 2017. www.finance.gov.tt/ wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ Estimates-Expenditure-2017-Final-Book-Numbered.pdf
- 47.10a Tobago House of Assembly www.tha.gov.tt
- 47.10b PNM Manifesto 2015 page 53 www.pnm.org.tt/images/pdf/ PNM Manifesto 2015.pdf
- 47.10c GoRTT and UN collaborate for first SDG Vision 2030 Mission in Trinidad and Tobago www.news. gov.tt/content/gortt-and-uncollaborate-first-sdg-vision-2030mission-trinidad-and-tobago
- 47.11a UN statistics surface area http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ demographic/products/dyb/ dyb2006/Table03.pdf
- 47.11b Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/ knowledge-hub
- 47.11c UNDP HDR Trinidad and Tobago country profile http://hdr.undp. org/en/countries/profiles/TTO



Annex 47a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Trinidad and Tobago

Services	National government Trinidad municipalities Tobago House of Assembly			Remarks	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION					
Police					
Fire protection					
Civil protection					
Criminal justice					
Civil status register					
Statistical office					
Electoral register					
EDUCATION	_				
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)					
Primary		_			
Secondary					
Vocational and technical					
Higher education	-				
Adult education					
	-		-		
Family welfare services		_			
Welfare homes					
Social security	•		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
	-				
Primary care					
Hospitals					
Health protection		•			
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING					
Housing					
Town planning					
Regional planning	•				
TRANSPORT					
Roads					
Fransport	•	•			
Urban roads					
Urban rail					
Ports					
Airports					
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION					
Water and sanitation					
Refuse collection and disposal					
Cemeteries and crematoria	10 A		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		
Slaughterhouses	10 A				
Environmental protection					
Consumer protection					
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS					
Theatres and concerts					
Museums and libraries					
Parks and open spaces					
Sports and leisure facilities					
Religious facilities	—	—			
JTILITIES			-		
Cas services					
District heating	-				
-					
Nater supply					
Electricity	-				
	-		_		
Agriculture, forests and fisheries					
ocal economic development/promotion					
Frade and industry	■ _		-		
Tourism	•				

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service

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