



Consultative Document on a Proposed

Policy Framework for e-Business in Trinidad and Tobago

Digitizing Trinidad and Tobago's Economic Activity

Version 0.50, July 2008

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1.1 Document Name:

Consultative document on a proposed Policy Framework for e-Business in Trinidad and Tobago (2008).

1.2 Target Audience:

This document is targeted to the policy planners and strategists in the public and private sectors with particular interest in facilitating the development of ICT infrastructure and a robust e-Business environment in Trinidad and Tobago.

1.3 Scope of Application:

This policy framework will impact all agencies currently involved in the development of the information/knowledge based economy. These include;

- Tobago House of Assembly (THA);
- Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- Ministry of Finance;
- Ministry of Public Administration;
- Ministry of Information;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Legal Affairs;
- Ministry of National Security;
- Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Central Tenders Board (CTB);
- Evolving Technologies and Enterprise Development Co. Ltd (e Teck);
- National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO);
- Business Development Company Limited (BDC);
- Chambers of Commerce Industry and Commerce;
- The e-Business Roundtable;
- The Bankers' Association;
- The Securities and Exchange Commission (TTSEC);
- Academia;
- CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

1.4 Aim:

To develop a vibrant and sustainable e-Business environment that will contribute to the transformation of Trinidad and Tobago's economic paradigm towards one that has a significant knowledge base, through:

- Strengthening the nation's e-infrastructure;
- Clarifying marketplace rules;
- Developing networks;
- Increasing participation;
- Developing the nation's human resources; and
- Developing the nation's R&D and innovation capacity.

1.5 Objectives:

This policy framework intends to identify actions that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) will need to take in order to create an economic, infrastructural and human resource environment in which e-Business opportunities can thrive. These actions will be taken in collaboration with the private sector, academia, NGO's and citizens.

In this regard, the proposals herein are structured to minimize the direct intervention of Government in taking these proposals forward. This is to encourage increased competitiveness of the ICT sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

1.6 Context:

This policy framework will function in conjunction with associated policies, strategies, and action plans developed by GoRTT. These include;

- Trinidad and Tobago's National Strategic Development Plan (Vision 2020);
- The National e-Commerce Secretariat (NeCS) Committee Report (2003);
- **Fastforward** - Trinidad and Tobago's National ICT Plan (2003 – 2008);
- The Report of the e-Commerce Working Group (1999);
- The Electronic Transaction Policy (2005);
- The Data Protection Policy (2005);
- The Computer Misuse Act (2000);
- Electronic Funds Transfer (Crime) Act (2000);
- Copyright Act (1997) as amended
- Telecommunications Act (2001) as amended; and
- The National Broadband Action Plan (2007).

1.7 Document Owner

Ministry of Public Administration
Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
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1.8 Policies of Other Governments:

Policies of other governments that have influenced the development process of GoRTT's consultative document on e-Business are;

- Barbados' e-Commerce policy
- New Zealand's e-Commerce policy and strategy
- Canada's e-Commerce Policy

2 Introduction

In an effort to achieve the Vision 2020 Agenda, Trinidad and Tobago's National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy, *fastforward*, calls for a transformation of Trinidad and Tobago to a knowledge-based society. Critical occurrences for this transition include the propagation of ICTs in business to support e-Commerce, e-Government and the increased use of related ICT services in business, thereby driving greater economic competitiveness. Towards this end, the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) has identified the urgent need for a collaboratively created, finely-tuned medium-term policy and strategy for the creation and development of a robust electronic business (e-Business) environment.

e-Business holds great potential and opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago. Besides access to new and bigger markets, e-Business can help to bring about reduced costs and faster turnaround times by streamlining and integrating processes along the entire business value chain.

This document outlines a proposed framework through which Government may achieve these ends. The issues addressed are those that deal with market place rules, public and private sector leadership, research and development, e-Business user confidence, infrastructure development and innovation.

3 Definitions of e-Business and e-Commerce

E-Commerce in its purest sense is defined as:

'All electronically mediated information exchanges between an organization and its external stakeholders'

Thus a company which posts information on a brochure website is not engaging in e-commerce. However a company which accepts requests for additional information about specific products and provides that information interactively via their website is engaging in e-commerce. Financial information of course is included in this definition but the concept is broader than the realm of strictly finance.

E-Business may be defined as:

'All electronically mediated information exchanges, both within an organization and with external stakeholders supporting the range of business processes'

E-Business is said to occur when a business has fully integrated ICTs into its operations, *both internally and with external stakeholders*; potentially redesigning its business processes or even reinventing its business model. Thus, an organisation can be engaging in e-commerce, through its ability to electronically interact with its customers on-line, but it may not be an e-business because it has not implemented the back-office functions and business processes which electronically and organisationally support that interaction.

Although the above is a pure definition of e-Business, the intention of Government more broadly is to accelerate the uptake of ICTs within local businesses and lay the foundation for the transformation of the economy towards a knowledge-based paradigm. As such the policy recommendations have this overarching goal in mind.

Question 1: Do you agree with the definition/interpretation of the term 'e-Business' as outlined in (section 3) of this policy document?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how it can be improved or stated.

4 The Need for an e-Business Policy for Trinidad and Tobago

e-Business is seen as a critical component in the development of Trinidad and Tobago, however there has been less than ideal uptake of ICTs within the economy, particularly among MSMEs. In order to achieve the aspirations of Vision 2020, the development of a robust e-Business culture is a key determinant to success. Certain barriers also now exist (such as the financing of knowledge based businesses as well as ICT human capital development), which require policy attention at the level of the State to be adequately addressed.

Key Benefits of ICT in Business:

Market and Competitive Intelligence

The ability to quickly gather and analyze publicly available information from the global marketplace (through electronic exchanges, market reviews, industry reports, requests for service - incl. RFP's, etc) resulting in the uncovering of unmet market needs and the ability to forecast future marketplace developments. The insights so gained can drive real-time competitive decision making and be embedded into products, services and investments.

Customer Service

The ability to provide quicker service response times and flexible dispute resolution by automating front-line customer service. This will enable Customer Service Representatives (CSR) to give greater attention to more complex or consequential matters.

Opportunity Recognition and Market Exploitation

The ability to access information on a global scale and use the power of ICTs to find and capture new markets and niches in which local businesses have a comparative advantage to compete.

Price Discovery

The economies of the Caribbean have traditionally been and are largely still exporters of primary agricultural or mineral goods. With ICT it is now possible to follow these products up-market and understand the price-level escalation dynamic closer to the end consumer. Informed business cases can then be made to deepen processing capability in order to sell directly into end user markets and as such capture the full value and rents available along the product/industry value chain.

Enhancing Transparency

Public business to business electronic exchanges, Government e-procurement and other types of electronic marketplaces add an additional level of transparency to economic activity while decreasing average transaction costs. This type of infrastructure and economic climate can be a key factor / motivator for investment by international firms as the decreased level of corruption also lowers their cost of doing business and enables them to link local operations to their global activity.

Cost Competitiveness

The ability to gain competitive advantages by leveraging the benefits of ICTs, namely the ability to provide/access immediate information, easier logistical coordination, real time and asynchronous communication and cost effective processing ability.

Question 2: Do you agree that the stated list of benefits of ICTs in Business (Section 4) can result from their effective/competent employment in business?

If not explain why and provide 1-3 suggestions on how the list can be improved or stated.

5 Policy Framework

Building on the May 2003 Status report of the National e-Commerce Secretariat (NeCS), the National e-Business Policy Framework focuses on the following:

- **Strengthening the Infrastructure:** Ensuring that telecommunications and other networks support the growth of e-Commerce within a convergence environment and allow for inter-operability across networks.
- **Clarifying Marketplace Rules and Building User Confidence:** Clarifying and developing electronic business market rules. These rules may be encoded in legislation, agreed to by contract or encouraged as general good business practice, in order to increase consumer and business confidence and uptake.
- **Developing Networks:** Working through regional and international organizations such as the ITU, ICANN, CARICOM and Common Wealth ICT Organisations, to establish norms for the inter-operability of networks and universal communication.
- **ICT-Enabled Clustering / Infrastructure Sharing:** Actively participating in developing groups of geographically (and otherwise) interconnected companies so as to:
 - give rise to external economies;
 - favour the emergence of specialized technical, administrative and finance services;
 - create conducive ground for the development of inter-firm cooperation and specialization;
 - foster cooperation among public and private local institutions to promote R&D, innovation and collective learning; and
 - produce training and workforce synergies.
- **Human Capacity R&D and Innovation:** Fostering training and development activities directly related to the current and anticipated market opportunities, thereby transitioning a traditionally energy-based economy into one which is based on knowledge and innovation.
- **Leadership, Communication and Increasing Participation:** Promoting transparency, synergy, goodwill and uptake, through joint leadership and collaboration of both the public and private sectors as well as Academia and NGO's.

*Question 3: Do you agree that the stated focus areas of the policy framework are those that are currently most pertinent to developing a robust e-Business environment in Trinidad and Tobago?
If not please give 1- 3 suggestions.*

5.1 Strengthening the Infrastructure

From a policy perspective it is imperative that concerned state entities and other stakeholders promote mechanisms and initiatives which move toward ubiquitous citizen and consumer access to the internet, logistics and other e-business. In this regard GoRTT considers the following steps as key:

- 5.1.1 The pursuit of initiatives, in collaboration with the private sector and the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT), that facilitate the **widespread availability and affordability of Broadband internet access and Hosting facilities**. GoRTT is already acting in this regards vis-à-vis the Broadband National Action Plan 2007.
- 5.1.2 The development of a telecommunications environment where there is **competition between carriers and convergence between technologies** so as to provide a foundation for market growth and investment.

GoRTT is already acting to facilitate these requirements by proclaiming the Telecoms Act (2001) - with subsequent amendments - by establishing the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, whose mandate is to oversee the orderly liberalization and development of the Telecommunications Sector and via the mandates of the Broadband National Action Plan 2007

Question 4: Do you believe that these measures have been successful / adequate?

If not, please identify additional actions that you would like be taken in this regard.

- 5.1.3 Seek to outline a strategy that facilitates the **expeditious movement of goods to and/ or from overseas markets**. These mechanisms will involve efforts to speed up customs procedures to facilitate the quick export of locally manufactured goods.

Question 5: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue policy recommendation 5.1.3, to facilitate the expeditious movement of goods to and/or from overseas markets, or should this be left entirely up to the market?

The National e-Commerce Policy Committee (1999) recommended the acquisition and management of overseas warehousing infrastructures.

Question 6: Do you agree that this could be a key enabler of e-business in the import / export sector? If so, how do you think that this framework could be executed?

If not please explain why.

5.1.4 Facilitation of the on-line matching of international market / investment opportunities and local exporters' offerings through **the promotion and expansion of digital marketplaces** such as the Business Development Company's (BDC) SMEXchange and the National on-line B2B MSME marketplace, EnterpriseNeTT, as well as the development of sector specific electronic exchanges.

5.1.5 **Encouraging the identification and exploitation of synergies, business opportunities and benefits from the large use of computing power in the financial services and energy services sectors**, some of the biggest users of computing power in the world. Operators and their suppliers would be required to build the digital infrastructure to support their work with local suppliers, using open standards and formats that enable other businesses and sectors to leverage the network to support the country's ongoing transformation to a digital economy.

Question 7: Do you agree with the proposed policy actions/recommendations outlined in Section 5.1?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how this section can be improved or re-stated.

5.2 Clarifying Marketplace Rules and Building User Confidence

The growth of e-Business in Trinidad and Tobago would be considerably hindered unless the market rules in certain key areas are seen to be as transparent as the existing rules for traditional business transactions. GoRTT's aim is to enable businesses to trade confidently with local and overseas partners over electronic networks. GoRTT considers the main areas of focus to be:

5.2.1 **Developing a Robust Intellectual Property Rights Infrastructure** that seeks to protect the rights of our artists, innovators, creators in the digitized environment. GoRTT in collaboration with all stakeholders will:

- Review existing copyright mechanisms to determine and implement recommendations for reforming, strengthening and/or monitoring the copyrights of indigenous online content.

- Ascertain whether Internet Service Providers, as distributors of material, should be held liable for the content that they host.

GoRTT is already acting in this regard vis-à-vis the passage of the Copyright amendment Act 2008 and the provisions outlined in the Electronic Transactions Policy (2006) respectively

Question 8: Do you believe that the measures within the amended act and e-Transaction Policy are sufficient?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what additional actions will be necessary to promote the protection of intellectual property rights and e-marketplace confidence.

- Educate the public on the proper online use of trademarks, logos, national symbols and emblems.

5.2.2 **Developing domestic on-line content strategies** for addressing the issues such as the promotion of offensive or highly objectionable content, (such as racism and paedophilia), on local websites. These strategies would include legislative action to avoid unnecessary barriers to the development and use of the Internet and of e-Commerce. GoRTT would also seek to ensure that the international image of the country and the general interest of citizens is promoted on-line.

5.2.3 **Establishing a Better Business Bureau (BBB)** to monitor and self regulate Trinidad and Tobago e-Businesses under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Such an institution will seek to foster better relationships between business and consumers through self-regulation and education. It would provide dispute resolution services including mediation and arbitration between companies and consumers and report on how well companies protect consumers, among other things.

GoRTT is already acting in this regard through plans to establish a Fair Trading Commission.

Question 9: Do you believe that such a measure will result in a level playing field for businesses and increased confidence on the part of consumers?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what alternative or additional actions will be necessary to facilitate clarification of e-marketplace rules and promote efficient and amicable dispute resolution.

- 5.2.4 **Trade/Tax fiscal issues:** GoRTT will focus on creating an e-business enabling environment with regard to financial issues such as taxation, tariffs, financial services and markets by:
- Developing a framework with respect to the issues of cross-border taxation, tariffs and customs duties, as well as, financial services and electronically delivered products.
 - Ensuring the institutional capacity upgrading of the Board of Inland Revenue, the Customs and Licensing Office, the Consumer Affairs Division and other relevant state bodies, to better enable them to proactively respond to the realities of an increasingly electronically driven trading environment and economic system.
- 5.2.5 **The Establishment of a National Data Commissioner** as a credible, expert and independent institution to advise GoRTT on the implementation of marketplace rules, as well as to determine issues of compliance and redress.
- 5.2.6 **Pursuing the institution of a Cyber-Crime Unit** through which strident efforts will be made to detect and prevent cyber-crime. This special unit will be set up within the Ministry of National Security and will be trained to deal with e-Commerce crimes and computer misuse.
- 5.2.7 **Consumer Education:** A consistent public relations campaign will be conducted to inform the public of the developments and plans with respect to ICTs and their effect on economic life. As with any type of commercial transaction, there are risks associated with electronic commerce that may not be easily resolved by an updated regulatory scheme or with technology. Consumer education will be critical to enabling consumers to make informed decisions.

*Question 10: Do you think that the actions outlined in Section 5.2 are sufficient to **clarify market place rules and build user confidence** in e-business?*

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what actions will be necessary.

5.3 **Developing Networks**

GoRTT will seek to protect and promote Trinidad and Tobago's interests in international forums. Working with like-minded countries and organisations is seen by GoRTT as necessary in order to achieve:

5.3.1 **International alignment of law and coordination of regional interoperability frameworks** through institutions such as the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), CARICOM Secretariat; International Telecommunications Union, ICANN, and Common Wealth ICT Organisations, among others;

5.3.2 **Agreement on updated approaches to privacy** among CARICOM Governments under the following headings:

- Minimum standards for electronic signatures
- The establishment of CARICOM Certification Service Providers
- The establishment of regional Payment Service Providers

Question 11: Do you agree that co-operation among CARICOM nations to facilitate e-commerce and e-business in the region should be a priority for Government? Do you agree with the Mechanisms suggested to achieve this?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what other activities might better achieve this goal of leveraging ICT to facilitate regional trade.

5.3.3 **The development of international research networks**, through partnerships with other Governments, the private sector and multi-lateral institutions. Additionally GoRTT will support initiatives such as the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN) and redCLARA (the Latin American equivalent), to enable industry, Government entities and researchers to collaborate on a platform of high-speed information exchanges;

5.3.4 **The development of a CARICOM Automated Clearing House (ACH) network** to facilitate electronic funds transfer (EFT) across the region. GoRTT will investigate the feasibility of pursuing a regional ACH Network as a processing and delivery system that will provide for the distribution and settlement of electronic credits and debits among CARICOM financial institutions. The ACH Network will be governed by operating rules and guidelines, which will be developed by the actual users of the system, and administered through a series of agreements among financial institutions, customers, trading partners, and ACH operators;

5.3.5 **The implementation of regional / international treaties and agreements** such as eLAC 2010 (the e-agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean) or the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas 2002, which states in ARTICLE 52 that "Member States undertake to establish and maintain appropriate macro-economic policies supportive of efficient production in the Community particularly in respect of:

- Effective payment mechanisms;
- The avoidance of double taxation;

- The harmonisation of legislation in relevant areas;
- The elimination of bureaucratic impediments to deployment of investments in industrial enterprises; and
- Communications systems.

*Question 12: Do you agree that pursuing the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.3 (**Developing Networks**) is in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago e-business?
If not please give reasons why and provide 1-3 suggestions on how best Trinidad and Tobago's international interests can be met.*

5.4 **ICT-Enabled Clustering / Infrastructure Sharing**

The development of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) clusters has been a key factor in the acceleration and success of multiple ICT initiatives globally. Such clusters are groups of interconnected companies that are associated with strong research education institutes with active industry ties, knowledgeable and participative venture (early stage risk) capital as well as in many cases one or more high-tech anchor companies. These Clusters are usually in a particular geographic location faced with common opportunities and threats. With regard to the formation and development of clusters in Trinidad and Tobago, GoRTT sees the following steps as key:

- 5.4.1 **Attracting locally domiciled global Anchor Companies** so as to take advantage of the potential of supply relationships which give local firms, access to global supply chains markets and networks.
- 5.4.2 **Encouraging the formation of business clusters and networks** in specific strategic areas, to allow Trinidad and Tobago to stamp its mark within the global ICT arena, such as ICT Energy Services and Health Care Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).
- 5.4.3 **Facilitating the development of technology parks**, such as the Tamana Intech Park, to provide shared spaces and services for corporate R&D work, academic technology transfer, venture capital support, and the collaborative development and commercialization of technology-enabled products.

Question 13: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.4?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how best ICT Clustering and Infrastructure sharing can best be facilitated.

5.5 **Human Capacity R&D and Innovation**

Caribbean economies have traditionally only operated in the production realm. Innovation however requires that the productive system have a deep understanding of the market into which it's good or service is being sold. Innovation also requires the ability to insert those insights into the productive process, and to use them to develop the nation's stock of human resources. To this end, the following steps are seen to be necessary:

5.5.1 Explicitly articulating a unifying **National Innovation Strategy**.

5.5.2 **Making learning and innovation among the explicit goals of FDI promotion policies** by creating deep equity relationships and knowledge transfer arrangements between local firms and FDI firms. This will be done by ensuring that the foreign investor who comes into Trinidad and Tobago enhances indigenous technology capability by devising a detailed and comprehensive plan which addresses the capabilities needed to be developed over the long term, as well as specific technologies that the foreign firm may contribute immediately. These must be implemented to systematically develop local capabilities to the fullest extent through spread effects and supplier linkages.

Question 14: Do you agree that FDI firms should be asked to partner in the process of upgrading indigenous technological capacity? as outlined in Section 5.5.2?

If not please explain what role (if any) foreign firms should play in this process.

5.5.3 **Supporting and facilitating the increased funding and linkages between local research institutes** (eg. CARIRI, NIHERST, UTT, UWI, and the PRDI – Policy Research and Development Unit - Tobago); Such funding would be required to enable research houses to afford the equipment and human resources needed to carry out a broader range of higher value added services to industry firms, both local and foreign and as such begin to build a reputation of world class centres of research excellence.

The importance of directly relating training and development activities to current and anticipated market opportunities, as well as country development priorities has been noted. The following are the proposals for meeting this issue:

5.5.4 **Supporting public/ private research projects** involving, the business community and academia, in order to determine those areas which are deficient, and/or those industry-academia linkages which have yet remained unexploited. The outputs of this activity will inform GoRTT's strategies to:

- Partner with Industry and International Business to make industry specific, technical and strategic business training available locally which addresses critical current human capacity shortfalls.
- Facilitate Executive and Board-level training and coaching on the value and modalities of incorporating ICTs into core and strategic business processes.
- Establish new education, training, re-training centres / programs / courses relevant to e-Business.

5.5.5 **Connecting with the Caribbean Diaspora** in order to attract skills and capital by facilitating the re-entry of skilled ICT professionals, while facilitating conversation and interaction with those domiciled abroad through a Diaspora skills and opportunities portal.

Question 15: Do you agree that leveraging the Diaspora is a key element in achieving Trinidad and Tobago's V2020 aspirations?

If so please explain some tangible and specific ways in which we might maximise the benefit that skilled nationals living abroad can be to the development of Trinidad and Tobago and the broader Caribbean.

5.5.6 **Showing leadership in the education sector**, through, increasing the use of ICT as the communication and learning tool of choice by:

- Ensuring that all **teachers in both secondary and tertiary institutions are equipped with the skills to use ICT in the learning situation**. This will be facilitated through the provision of on-the-job enhancement training and qualifications and the promotion of the integration of ICTs across the curriculum as integral to teaching and learning practices.
- Facilitating the development of an **online library of learning resources for access by educators and students** (shared learning facilities/infrastructures).
- Working to ensuring that **career information advice and guidance recognises the opportunities for careers in ICT** and new economy industries.

- 5.5.7 The collection and **provision of the highest quality data, statistics and information** specific to ICT, through the enhancement of the capacity of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and delivered on-line through Government sites, or that of the e-Business Roundtable, e Teck, TATT and other relevant agencies.

Question 16: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.5?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how it can be improved or stated.

5.6 **Leadership, Communication and Increasing Participation**

Leadership will be required to stimulate the use of e-Business business models in Trinidad and Tobago and its uptake by consumers. The proposal is that the Cabinet appointed e-Business Roundtable, which is a private sector led partnership with GoRTT, champion the development of the e-Business-driven sectors of the economy and take a prominent role in the coordination and execution of the National e-Business effort in concert with the Government. Launched in October 2006, the Roundtable should be allowed to continue to carry out its critical mandate to:

- 5.6.1 **Influence Government's ICT policy** and facilitate the development of an ICT Driven Economy in Trinidad and Tobago.
- 5.6.2 **Provide guidance** with respect to the identification and promotion of new domestic, regional and international business opportunities.
- 5.6.3 **Work with the various Industry Associations to explore the potential for ICT as a sector-level catalyst** for the enhancement of foundation industries such as, Financial services, Energy, Tourism.

Question 17: Do you agree with the roles of the e-Business Roundtable as outlined in 5.6.1, 5.6.2 and 5.6.3?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what the role should be or what additional institutions or measures might be required, in collaboration with Government's own efforts, to seriously promote and drive the uptake of ICTs in Business in Trinidad and Tobago.

The e-Business Unit of GoRTT will be upgraded to, on behalf of central Government, facilitate business to Government collaboration and interactions within the area of ICT, e-Commerce and e-Business. This Unit will guide policy and will take an active role, together with public, private and state sector stakeholders, as well as the e-Business Roundtable to:

- 5.6.4 **Develop Business Incubation Facilities/ Enterprise Development Centres.** Firms need tools, advice, training, and industry specific consulting and access to best practices to make the jump into the ICT age. Especially in developing economies, accurate and timely information on current and planned activity and on the potential for increasing the national share of value-added is crucial. GoRTT will support the creation of a series of Enterprise Development Centres which would provide Small Businesses with the specific advice and consulting services needed to allow them to upgrade business models and gain *sector specific*, relevant and current information on local and global market trends, multinational contractor requirements and changing international standards. Such a centre would also provide access to the tools and incentives necessary to encourage innovation, foster new thinking and bolster overall industry competitiveness.
- 5.6.5 **Propose Incentives for MSMEs and e-Businesses** to make the leap from primary goods production to knowledge-based business. Businesses in general need different models of financing and access to risk capital. The Government through its special purpose organs and trade support agencies [such as the Business Development Company (BDC), Evolving Technologies and Enterprise Development Co. Ltd (e Teck) and the National Enterprise Development Company (NEDCO)] intend to provide coordination and a rallying point for angel investors, venture funding, mezzanine and subordinate debt, private equity etc. Incentives would be given to encourage businesses through start-up, growth and expansion and for the use and leveraging of e-commerce and ICT by:
- Encouraging, working with and providing seminars and workshops for financial institutions vis-à-vis **risk assessment in non-traditional / intangible investments** such as those in intellectual property, innovation and the knowledge-based sectors;
 - **Providing niche tax incentives** to ICT firms [e.g. for exporters of software/high value final products, for ICT start-ups, etc];
 - **Pursuing Capital market reforms** through public and private organisations, to develop the local capital market and to enable efficient use of the stock market and Initial Public Offerings (IPO's) as a viable means for technology firms to raise expansion capital; and
 - Building local networks of business e-commerce mentors.
- 5.6.6 **Pursue the establishment of a Government 'one card'** as well as other alternative payment mechanisms (for e.g. through mobile phones), to facilitate the purchase of Government services electronically. This infrastructure might also be leveraged and extended to encompass the purchase of goods and services from the private sector as well.

Question 18: Do you agree with the proposed role of the e-Business Unit of Government and the policy recommendations outlined in section 5.6?

If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what alternative structures, roles or institutions might be required to coordinate the e-Business agenda on behalf of the State and what specific other policy recommendations do you see as critical to e-business development in Trinidad and Tobago?

Question 19: Do you agree with the focus areas of the policy framework? Is the scope of the policy a) to broad b) to narrow c) about right?

If a) or b) please explain why, and provide suggestions on how the scope could be made more appropriate.

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6 References

Barbados' e-Commerce policy:

- 6.1.1 Government of Barbados 2005, **Commerce Today** (March, Volume1, Issue Ministry of Commerce, Consumer affairs and Business Development.
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- 6.1.3 <http://www.lowtax.net/lowtax/html/jbsecom.html>

New Zealand's e-Commerce policies and strategies:

- 6.1.4 Towards World Class E-Commerce, Final Report from the Electronic Commerce Action Team, June 2003.
- 6.1.5 <http://www.ecommerce.govt.nz/ecat/report/report.pdf>
- 6.1.6 E-commerce: Building the Strategy for New Zealand Progress Report, One Year On. November 2001. <http://www.med.govt.nz/upload/29774/progress2001.pdf>
- 6.1.7 Ministry of Education, New Zealand: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/>
- 6.1.8 Tertiary Education: <http://www2.minedu.govt.nz/Step>
- 6.1.9 Te Kete Ipurangi: <http://www.tki.org.nz>

Canada's e-Commerce policies and strategies:

- 6.1.10 The Canadian Electronic Commerce Strategy. [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inecic/ceac.nsf/vwapj/ecom_eng.pdf/\\$file/ecom_eng.pdf](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inecic/ceac.nsf/vwapj/ecom_eng.pdf/$file/ecom_eng.pdf)
- 6.1.11 Principles of Electronic Authentication: A Canadian Framework (May 2004). [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inecic/ceac.nsf/vwapj/Authentication.pdf/\\$file/Authentication.pdf](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inecic/ceac.nsf/vwapj/Authentication.pdf/$file/Authentication.pdf)
- 6.1.12 The Office of Consumer Affairs. <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ca00863e.html>

7 Appendix

7.1 Example of a Consultation Response Form

Name	
Organisation	
Postal Address	
Telephone/ Fax	
Email Address	
Website (if applicable)	
Title of Consultative Document	
Response	
Section No.	(maximum 500 words)

7.2 GoRTT's Consultation Principles

- 7.2.1 Public Consultation involves the exchange of information between the Ministry and its stakeholders to facilitate a shared understanding of the issues under consideration. It is an open and accountable process whereby individuals and groups can contribute to decision-making processes and influence outcomes.
- 7.2.2 Consultation will be seen as an integral part of the policy formulation and implementation process which is the initiation or revision of policies, programmes and projects. It is also view as a mechanism to assess, monitor and evaluate the success of the delivery of Government services.
- 7.2.3 Stakeholder analyses will be conducted to accurately identify those interest groups and associations that have significant and legitimate interests in a specific issue or policy area.
- 7.2.4 The consultation material will be concise, easily understandable and widely accessible. Each document must have an executive summary that covers the main points under review, this will ensure that the relevant stakeholders are in a position to read the appropriate documents related to his/her interest.
- 7.2.5 The relevant Government Ministry remains the key policy-adviser on matters within its portfolio and will be the final determinant as to the contents of any particular policy or strategy and will make the appropriate recommendations to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

7.3 Consultation questions

- 7.3.1 **Question 1: Do you agree with the definition/ interpretation of the term 'e-Business' as outlined in (section 3) of this policy document? If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how it can be improved or stated.**
- 7.3.2 **Question 2: Do you agree that the stated list of benefits of ICTs in Business (Section 4) can result from their effective/ competent employment in business? If not explain why and provide 1-3 suggestions on how the list can be improved or stated.**
- 7.3.3 **Question 3: Do you agree that the stated focus areas of the policy framework are those that are currently most pertinent to developing a robust e-Business environment in Trinidad and Tobago? If not please give 1- 3 suggestions.**
- 7.3.4 **Question 4: GoRTT is already acting to facilitate these requirements by proclaiming the Telecoms Act (2001) - with subsequent amendments - by establishing the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, whose mandate is to oversee the orderly liberalization and development of the Telecommunications Sector and via the mandates of the Broadband National Action Plan 2007. Do you believe that these measures have been successful / adequate? If not, please identify additional actions that you would like be taken in this regard.**
- 7.3.5 **Question 5: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue policy recommendation 5.1.3, to facilitate the expeditious movement of goods to and/ or from overseas markets, or should this be left entirely up to the market?**
- 7.3.6 **Question 6: The National e-Commerce Policy Committee (1999) recommended the acquisition and management of overseas warehousing infrastructures. Do you agree that this could be a key enabler of e-business in the import / export sector? If so, how do you think that this framework could be executed? If not please explain why.**
- 7.3.7 **Question 7: Do you agree with the proposed policy actions/ recommendations outlined in Section 5.1? If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how this section can be improved or re-stated.**
- 7.3.8 **Question 8: GoRTT is already acting in this regard vis-à-vis the passage of the Copyright amendment Act 2008 and the provisions outlined in the Electronic Transactions Policy (2006) respectively. Do you believe that the measures within the amended act and e-Transaction Policy are sufficient? If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what additional actions will be necessary to promote the protection of intellectual property rights and e-marketplace confidence.**

- 7.3.9 **Question 9: GoRTT is already acting in this regard through plans to establish a Fair Trading Commission. Do you believe that such a measure will result in a level playing field for businesses and increased confidence on the part of consumers?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what alternative or additional actions will be necessary to facilitate clarification of e-markeplace rules and promote efficient and amicable dispute resolution.
- 7.3.10 **Question 10: Do you think that the actions outlined in Section 5.2 are sufficient to clarify market place rules and build user confidence in e-business?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what actions will be necessary.
- 7.3.11 **Question 11: Do you agree that co-operation among CARICOM nations to facilitate e-commerce and e-business in the region should be a priority for Government?** Do you agree with the Mechanisms suggested to achieve this? If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what other activities might better achieve this goal of leveraging ICT to facilitate regional trade.
- 7.3.12 **Question 12: Do you agree that pursuing the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.3 (Developing Networks) is in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago e-business?** If not please give reasons why and provide 1-3 suggestions on how best Trinidad and Tobago's international interests can be met.
- 7.3.13 **Question 13: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.4?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how best ICT Clustering and Infrastructure sharing can best be facilitated.
- 7.3.14 **Question 14: Do you agree that FDI firms should be asked to partner in the process of upgrading indigenous technological capacity? as outlined in Section 5.5.2?** If not please explain what role (if any) foreign firms should play in this process.
- 7.3.15 **Question 15: Do you agree that leveraging the Diaspora is a key element in achieving Trinidad and Tobago's V2020 aspirations?** If so please explain some tangible and specific ways in which we might maximise the benefit that skilled nationals living abroad can be to the development of Trinidad and Tobago and the broader Caribbean.
- 7.3.16 **Question 16: Do you agree that GoRTT should pursue the policy recommendations outlined in Section 5.5?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on how it can be improved or stated.
- 7.3.17 **Question 17: Do you agree with the roles of the e-Business Roundtable as outlined in 5.6.1, 5.6.2 and 5.6.3?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what the role should be or what additional institutions or measures might be required, in collaboration with Government's own efforts, to seriously promote and drive the uptake of ICTs in Business in Trinidad and Tobago.

- 7.3.18 **Question 18: Do you agree with the proposed role of the e-Business Unit of Government and the policy recommendations outlined in section 5.6?** If not please provide 1-3 suggestions on what alternative structures, roles or institutions might be required to coordinate the e-Business agenda on behalf of the State and what specific other policy recommendations do you see as critical to e-business development in Trinidad and Tobago?
- 7.3.19 **Question 19: Do you agree with the focus areas of the policy framework? Is the scope of the policy a) to broad b) to narrow c) about right?** If a) or b) please explain why, and provide suggestions on how the scope could be made more appropriate.

8 Glossary

B2B	Business to Business. This term is used to refer to electronic commerce transactions between business as opposed to those between business and other groups, such as consumers or governments.
BDC	Business Development Company Ltd is a Trinidad and Tobago Government state company which focuses on improving the sustainability of local and regional enterprises.
CA	A Certificate Authority or Certification Authority is a Trusted Third Party entity which issues digital certificates for the purpose of secure data communication between other parties, using Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) cryptography techniques.
CARIRI	Caribbean Industrial Research Institute. A State run research institution, the mandate of which is to provide technical and industrial services to public and private industrial enterprises and to engage in industrial research programmes related to the need of Trinidad and Tobago and regional industries.
e-Business	Electronic Business. This refers to all electronically mediated information exchanges, both within an organisation and with external stakeholders that support the range of business processes.
e-Business Roundtable	The Trinidad and Tobago e-Business Roundtable (e-Business Roundtable) is a private sector led partnership with government that aims to map out a strategy for Trinidad and Tobago's economic growth and success by focusing on leadership, opportunity recognition, innovation and revenue generation through the use of ICTs in business
e-Commerce	Electronic Commerce. This refers to all electronically mediated information exchanges between an organisation and its external stakeholders.
EnterpriseNeTT	This is a secure electronic doorway to the global e-marketplace, which provides Trinidad and Tobago organisations with business opportunities and the tools needed to conduct business on the web. EnterpriseNeTT matches Trinidad companies and their products with thousands of opportunities by domestic and foreign companies and governments.

FDI	Foreign direct investment may be defined as "investment made to acquire lasting interest in enterprises operating outside of the economy of the investor."
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas.
GoRTT	Government of The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.
ICT	Information and Communications Technology.
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration.
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
NEDCO	National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited. This is a State owned company established to assist citizens in the start-up or expansion of a small and micro enterprise.
RFP	A Request for Proposal is an invitation for suppliers, through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service.
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMEXchange	Small and Micro Enterprise Exchange is an online Business-to-Business (B2B) Portal ,that is facilitated by the Business Development Company (BDC) Ltd, where buyers, sellers and other stakeholders post and exchange products and services.
STTE	The Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education
TATT	Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago is an independent regulatory body, with responsibility for the liberalisation and regulation of the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors of Trinidad and Tobago.
TTedu-online	
TTIT	Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of The West Indies