

Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD JULY 2008 TO JUNE 2009

(Prepared for the 10th AGM held on the 25th of June, 2009)

1 Introduction

This report outlines the activities of the Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI), the national chapter of *Transparency International (TI)*, undertaken in the twelve-month period between the 9th and 10th Annual General Meetings of the Institute.

These activities were carried out, for the most part, under programmes specified in the *Strategic Framework 2007-2009* in fulfilment of TTTI's *vision* of a world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption and *mission* to work towards a country and region that are free of corruption.

In Sections 2 to 12 below, for each of the programmes in which there was activity during the period, there is a brief description of what we planned followed by a summary account of what we actually did.

Other activities carried out during the period are described in Section 13.

2 Political Party Funding and Regulation Programme

- *Wherever opportunities arise, advocate reform.*
- *Join with other organisations in proposing the inclusion of provisions for party funding and regulation in any revised Constitution.*

2.1 Support for Parliamentary Debate

Chairman Victor Hart had meetings with Senator Ramesh Deosaran and former senator Mrs. Mary King with a view to launching public awareness activities related to political party funding and regulation reform prior to a debate on a motion urging reform that had been filed in the Upper House by Senator Deosaran. Eventually the Senate debate started before anything could be arranged. Consideration is being given to launching a public awareness campaign depending on the outcome of the Parliamentary motion.

3 Public Contracting Programme

- *Continue efforts at getting the government to implement fully its Reform of the Public Sector Procurement Regime, especially by the introduction of new legislation.*
- *Monitor the implementation process and the performance of the regulatory body that is eventually established under the new regime.*
- *Assist the regulatory body in its work.*
- *Advocate and monitor the adoption of TI's Integrity Pact and the wider use of public consultation for major public projects.*

3.1 Anti-Corruption Forum Project

In October 2007 TTTI began a project to facilitate the establishment in Trinidad and Tobago of an *Anti-Corruption Forum (ACF)* along the lines of the UK Infrastructure ACF that had been founded in 2004 as an alliance of business associations, professional institutions and companies with interests in the infrastructure, construction and engineering sectors. The purpose is co-operatively to develop and implement effective industry-led actions to help reduce corruption.

This project continued during the period under review and arranged the following activities.

3.1.1 Training in Preventing Corruption in Construction Projects

Three training workshops were conducted by *Mr. Neill Stansbury*, co-founder and director of the UK based Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC) and Co-ordinator of the UK ACF.

The first, for 60 stakeholders, was held on the 16th of September, 2008. It was hosted jointly by the *Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce* and TTTI at the Chamber Building, Westmoorings.

The second workshop, for senior public officers, was hosted in Port-of-Spain by the *Public Service Academy* on the 17th of September.

The third, sponsored by the *Caribbean Procurement Institute*, was held on the 29th of April at the Normandie Hotel, St. Anns, for 25 stakeholders.

3.1.2 Formation of an ACF

In September Neill Stansbury met with a small *group of heads of companies in the infrastructure/construction sector* to explore the formation of a local ACF. It was agreed to continue discussions. TTTI would provide a Co-ordinator for the ACF in formation which was assured of the UK ACF's support.

At a subsequent meeting of the group, it was agreed that the launching of the ACF should be preceded by a *survey of corruption in the construction industry* to be conducted by TTTI (see 3.2.2 below).

At a meeting in April the group was visited by Mr. Stansbury and plans were made for continuing the process.

3.2 Construction Sector Enquiry Project

With funding from the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), TTTI undertook a project to assist the ongoing *Commission of Enquiry into the Construction Sector*.

3.2.1 Submissions and appearances to date

To date our Chairman has made written submissions providing:

- an *independent analysis of the public sector procurement regime and the public sector procurement processes* operating in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- *recommendations* for ensuring free and fair competition, full participation and access for all citizens in the public procurement process and for improving the integrity and transparency in public procurement practices.

Mr. Hart participated in a round-table discussion before the Commission on the *White Paper on the Reform of the Public Sector Procurement Regime* and presented at a public hearing the recommendations previously submitted.

TTTI engaged the services of *Mr. Neill Stansbury* of the GIACC (see 3.1.1 above) to give evidence before the Commission on *Preventing Corruption on Construction Projects*.

It became necessary for the Chairman to make a further written submission on *the Independence of TTTI* that corrected some inaccurate and possibly misleading statements related to TTTI's independence and to his credibility that had been made to the Commissioners by a Government minister. He was given an opportunity answer questions on this at a public hearing.

3.2.2 Survey of Corruption in the Construction Industry

During for three-weeks during March and April, 359 members of the construction industry professional associations were invited to respond to an anonymous on-line survey of their *perceptions and experiences of corruption issues* in the industry. The response rate was 18%. The results are currently being analysed. We will publish a report which we will disseminate among stakeholders and we will promote discussion of the survey findings. We hope that, as well as assisting the Enquiry, the report will act as a catalyst in the formation of a local ACF. (See 3.1.2 above.)

3.2.3 Further submissions

Still to be provided to the Commission, at its request, is a written submission on those *elements of the White Paper* that TTTI considers to be essential to any adequate reform of public procurement.

Finally, we will be providing the Commission with a submission on *the results of the corruption survey*.

4 Private Sector Corruption Prevention Programme

- *Work with business and professional associations and firms to facilitate the adoption by local companies of TI's Business Principles for Countering Bribery.*
- *Develop approaches for tackling corruption in sport.*

4.1 Collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTIC)

In September, as already mentioned (see 3.1.1. above), TTTI joined with the TTIC to host a training workshop on preventing corruption in construction projects.

4.2 Collaboration with UWI's Graduate School of Business (GSB)

In January representatives of the Institute met with representatives of the GSB to explore possibilities of collaboration. There was specific interest in *TI's Business Principles for Countering Bribery*. Subsequently our Chairman undertook to deliver a *lecture* at a GSB Accountability and Transparency Workshop to be held at the end of June. Discussions on further collaboration are to continue.

4.3 Collaboration with the South Trinidad Chamber of Industry and Commerce (STCIC)

During the period under a review TTTI deepened its working relationship with the STCIC. Our Chairman headed the panel of judges for the Chamber's 2008 '*Commitment to Transparency Award*' that was made in September. In April it was agreed that for 2009, the award would be renamed the '*STCIC – TTTI Commitment to Transparency Award*' and a TTTI-led panel would take responsibility for the judging. In May TTTI was represented and received special mention at the formal launch of the 2009 CSR Awards programme.

5 Public Education Programme

- *Continue to seize the opportunities that arise to educate the public on the forms corruption takes and on how individuals and groups can combat it.*
- *Continue efforts to undertake public education campaigns.*
- *Advocate the inclusion in school and teacher training syllabuses treatment of ethical questions of integrity and openness.*
- *Promote the observance of International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD).*
- *Disseminate information via e-mail to a continually increasing number of recipients and, by mid 2007, through a web site.*

5.1 Public Statements

During the report period we wrote *letters to the daily newspapers* concerning, among other things, the scope of the Commission of Enquiry into the Construction Sector and the fear that its report might never be published.

Seven *media releases* were issued. Topics included information on TTTI's activities, the launch of TI's 2008 *Bribe Payers' Index* (see 5.6 below), *Corruption Perceptions Index* (see 13.2 below) and *Global Corruption Barometer* as well as a call to the Senate to reject proposed *amendments to the Integrity in Public Life Act*.

5.2 Press, TV and Radio Interviews

We were interviewed by the *print media* several times during the period of this report. One interview was featured on the front page of one newspaper. We made 18 *TV appearances* and were interviewed several times for *radio*. In most cases we were called upon to comment or topical issues from the perspective of an organisation dedicated to fighting corruption through systemic reform.

5.3 Speaking engagements

During the period of the report, represented for the most part by our Chairman, we undertook six local speaking engagements at the invitation of such bodies as the *Integrity Commission*, the *Crime and Justice Commission*, the *UWI*, *ICATT* and *T&T CAN*. Topics included ethics and governance, TI's Corruption Perception Index, the work of TTTI, integrity education for youth and preventing corruption in the financial services industry.

5.4 Newspaper and Magazine Articles

We had 2 articles published, one dealing with the work of TTTI and the other with transparency in the construction sector.

5.5 Online Communication

Our *website*, www.transparency.org.tt, came on stream early in the period under review. We will be enhancing it considerably under our Capacity Building Project. (See 12.2 below.)

We now have a list of over 450 persons to whom we regularly send *e-mails* with information on TI and TTTI activities and concerns.

5.6 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD)

TI marked the IACD (December 9th, 2008) with the launch of the *2008 Bribe Payers' Index (BPI)*. We distributed to the media our own release (see 5.1 above) along with TI's global release, the BPI report and related explanatory documents. We were interviewed on television and, assisted by one of our members, Emile Elias and Company Limited, we placed an advertisement in the newspapers marking the occasion.

5.7 Integrity Education for Youth

During the period under review TTTI has sought ways and means of promoting integrity education for youth. We have been considering the example set by a comprehensive project carried out by TI-South Korea. This was the subject of discussions with the Chairman of the Crime and Justice Commission and ongoing consultation with TI-South Korea.

6 Access to Information

- *Undertake a critical evaluation of the Freedom of Information Act, 2001, looking at the legislation's effectiveness in satisfying the public's right to know.*
- *Establish an Annual Transparency Award for Investigative Journalism in Trinidad and Tobago.*

6.1 Investigative Journalism Award Project

Throughout the period we sought sponsorship for the project but were not successful. We planned to announce the first winners of the *Transparency Award for Investigative Journalism* on the 9th of December 2009 (IACD; see 5.6 above). We are now aiming to launch the award on December 9 this year and announce the winners on IACD next year.

6.2 Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) Workshop for Journalists

TTTI has worked throughout the period under review with the CBA to arrange for a pilot workshop to be held in August in Port-of-Spain for Caricom journalists. Entitled '*Investigative Journalism and Corporate Governance*', it will be facilitated by *Andrew Jennings*.

7 International Conventions Programme

- *Monitor the implementation by Trinidad and Tobago of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC) and of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).*
- *Advocate TI's recommendations regarding the implementation of these treaties and the signing of other international treaties and conventions.*

7.1 Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC)

We are at present negotiating a funding agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank to produce an independent report on Trinidad and Tobago's fulfilment of some of its obligations under the IACAC to be presented in August to the OAS Committee of Experts in the Third Round of the follow-up mechanism of the Convention (MESICIC III).

7.2 United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

In December we wrote to the then Attorney-General, Senator Annisette-George, calling on Government, at the discussions that were to take place that month in Vienna, to support the *enhancements to the UNCAC review mechanism* advocated by TI and ensure that the Convention had a strong and well-resourced monitoring system that promoted full respect of the agreed commitments. We also took the opportunity to renew the request for a meeting that we first made in January, 2008.

In April we forwarded to the office of the Attorney-General a document from TI on *recommendations for a follow-up mechanism for the UNCAC* published in view of the 3rd Conference of States Parties that is due to be held in November 2009.

8 Public Integrity Programme

- *Seek to promote the increased effectiveness of the Integrity Commission as an anti-corruption agency.*
- *Advocate the introduction of whistleblower protection in the public service and address issues of public sector management reform.*
- *Explore ways of supporting corruption prevention in the Protective Services.*
- *Continue ethics training in Government departments and seek to extend this to State Enterprises.*

8.1 Integrity Commission (IC)

In September our Chairman addressed the IC's *Conference on Integrity, Ethics and Leadership*. His topic was TI's Corruption Perceptions Index.

We have begun discussions with the Delegation of the European Commission exploring the possibility of obtaining funding for a *public stakeholders' conference* to make recommendations for the *reform of the Integrity in Public Life Act* and to assist the IC to become *a more credible and effective anti-corruption agency*.

9 Constitutional Reform Programme

Continue to work with the Constitution Reform Forum (CRF) and other bodies engaged in constitutional reform.

9.1 Constitution Reform Forum (CRF)

No work was done on constitution reform during the period under review. We did, however, collaborate with the CRF on general civil society mobilisation and, in particular, on *preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas* (see 13.4.1 below).

In April 2008 the Chairman participated in a *Civil Society Mobilisation Forum* organised by the CRF. Since then he has continued to maintain contact with CRF on this and related matters and will be participating in further CRF activities related to civil society mobilisation.

10 Research Programme

Establish a Research Committee that will support the development of effective anti-corruption strategies and, where possible, collaborate with universities and research institutes.

Research activities during the period were directed at completing our contribution to TI's 2009 *Global Corruption Report* (see 13.1 below) and in analysing the results of the *construction industry corruption survey* (see 3.2.2 above). Collaboration with UWI and the Graduate School of Business was deepened (See 4.2 above).

11 Regional Activities

- *Hold discussions with stakeholders on having CARICOM declared a corruption-free region.*
- *Assist, wherever possible, in the establishment of TI chapters in other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.*

11.1 TI in the Caribbean

Previous to the period under review we had held preliminary discussions with representatives of the *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)* on the possible funding of a project to promote the establishment of TI chapters in the English-speaking Caribbean.

In July our Chairman was invited to a consultation in Jamaica on the Canadian government's '*Caribbean Governance and Accountability Programme*'. He was able to present ideas on how TTTI might participate in the programme which were well received by participants but learned privately that no funding was likely to be available before the approval of the 2010 Canadian Budget.

Subsequently we learned from the Canadian High Commission that the Canadian government minister responsible for the programme had ruled TTTI out as a participating organisation because we were not regional.

We have maintained contact with the groups in *Barbados* and *Guyana* that have shown interest in becoming national chapters of TI. We are exploring with TI the possibility of establishing multi-national rather than national chapters among small states such as the *members of the OECS*.

12 Organisational Strengthening

- *Seek, by September 2008 at the latest, to have sufficient recurrent income to employ a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and, eventually, one or more Programme Officers/Project Officers.*
- *Review and, if necessary, amend our By-Law and Code of Ethics.*

12.1 Office space and staff

In August 2008 we moved from the one-room office that we had started renting in November 2007 to a larger one situated next door in the same building at 137 Eastern Main Road, St. Augustine. We continued to outsource the post of part-time Administrative Assistant to Educare Ltd.

12.2 Capacity Building Project

Under a funding agreement with the *Canadian High Commission* signed in December 2007 we had undertaken a two-phase project to build our capacity to maintain professional and technical staff on a permanent basis and put in place financial management and communications systems necessary for the achievement of our mission.

In the *first phase* of the project we engaged a consultant to carry out a diagnostic assessment of our organisation and design the second phase of the project. We received the consultant's report in July 2008.

In the *second phase*, which began in August, we have, with the assistance of consultants, sought to increase recurrent revenue to the level capable of sustaining operation of the office with employment of, at least, a part-time executive officer and a full-time administrative assistant. This is to be achieved mainly by increasing membership and securing donations to build an endowment fund.

The targets set were an increase in annual revenue receivable from members' subscriptions of \$50,000 by the 30th of April and of \$200,000 by the end of 2009. The increase achieved over the past twelve months by all activities undertaken by TTTI, including those of the project, is \$25,900.

Activities to be undertaken for the remainder of the second phase include:

- production and distribution of printed promotional material;
- advertising;
- mass e-mailing;
- enhancement of our website, including development of an electronic newsletter;
- exploring the use of social networking; and
- continued personal approaches to selected companies and individuals.

12.3 Amendment of our Code of Ethics

We have included a *Membership Policy* in our Code of Ethics. It states that:

1. Membership of TTTI is open to any person, company or other organisation that supports and observes the Guiding Principles set out in Section IV [of the Code] and is deemed by the Board of Directors not to be engaged in any activity which may undermine the independence of TTTI.
2. Membership is not open an individual or organisation that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, is publicly perceived to be identified with and/or an active supporter of a political party or other organisation that has political aims and objectives in whole or in part or in any of its decisions.
3. Membership of TTTI should not be construed as an endorsement by TTTI of any member's activities or stated opinions.

12.4 Membership

During the period 22 June 2008 to 24 June 2009 individual membership increased by 30% to 96. Corporate membership increased by 23% to 27.

13 Other Activities

13.1 TI's Global Corruption Report (GCR)

In March 2008 we had entered into an agreement with the TI Secretariat to produce a *Country Report on Trinidad and Tobago for GCR 2009* which has as its theme *Corruption and the Private Sector*. We completed and submitted our contribution in November 2008.

13.2 Launch of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2008

On the 23rd of September 2008 TTTI joined with the TI Secretariat and many other TI chapters around the world in launching the 2008 CPI with a media conference and several radio and TV interviews.

13.3 TI's Annual Meeting of Members (AMM) & International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC)

Our Chairman represented us in Athens, Greece, at TI's 2008 AMM from the 25th to 29th of October followed by the 13th IACC from the 30th of October to the 2nd of November.

13.4 The Fifth Summit of the Americas (SoA)

13.4.1 Civil Society Mobilisation

From the beginning of the period under review, TTTI, mainly through the efforts of the Chairman, took a very active part, in coalition with other Civil Society organisations (CSOs), in the preparation for and participation in the *Civil Society Forum* of the 5th SoA held in April 2009. This involved participation in several meetings, including a conference of Caribbean NGOs.

13.4.2 TI's Participation

TTTI assisted the Americas Department of TI in the preparation and printing of a *report* on fulfilment to date of corruption-related Summit mandates by the countries of the Hemisphere. This was distributed at the Summit by the *TI delegation* that comprised Alejandro Salas and Zoe Reiter, Head and Programme Officer respectively of the Americas Department as well as National Chapter representatives from Argentina, Chile and Guatemala. The delegation used the forum as an opportunity for *networking* and Alejandro Salas made an important *contribution to a panel discussion on governance*.

TTTI representatives worked with the delegates at the Forum and saw to their relaxation and entertainment after hours.

13.5 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Chairman attended a meeting at the National Summit Secretariat of CSO representatives with a Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Foundation to discuss the planning of the *Commonwealth People's Forum* in November 2009.

13.6 Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Project

In January, with funding obtained through the TI Secretariat, TTTI began a project aimed at getting the Government to make Trinidad and Tobago initially a 'Candidate Country' and eventually a 'Compliant Country' under the EITI.

To this end we have almost completed a *survey* of the companies engaged in the exploration and production of oil and gas and of relevant business and professional organisations to ascertain their commitment to supporting our call on Government for full implementation of the EITI.

We will be preparing:

- a *submission to Government* based on the survey findings and other feedback with a request to implement EITI fully without further delay; and
- a *brochure* detailing the results of the survey for dissemination among survey participants, relevant Government agencies, other interested parties and the media.

While in Athens, Greece, to attend the TI 2008 AMM and the 13th IACC (See 13.3), the Chairman took the opportunity to meet with two directors of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) during the EITI Board of Directors meeting to discuss the efforts being made by us to have government re-apply to join EITI.

13.7 International Organisations

The Chairman and Secretary held meetings with the Heads of the local offices of the EU, UNDP and IDB to discuss possible areas of co-operation.

13.8 The Board of Directors

The Board elected at the 9th AGM on the 26th of June 2008 comprised Mr. Victor Hart (Chairman), Mr. Brian Lewis (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Boyd Reid (Secretary), Ms. Pastora Brown (Treasurer), Ms. Diana Clyne, Dr. Bishnu Ragoonath and Ms. Margaret Rose.

In March Ms. Brown resigned and the Secretary was asked to act as Treasurer.

During the period under review the Board held 9 meetings with an average attendance of 69%.

14 Conclusion

The Board of Directors submits this report to members, confident that we have substantially implemented the programmes specified in the Strategic Framework 2007-2009. The incomplete programmes will be rolled over into, and new ones added to, the Strategic Framework 2009-2011 that will be prepared by the new Board. We are satisfied that TTTI is on a sound footing and growing from strength to strength and we thank you for your continued support.

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