

Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute
REPORT ON ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD MAY 2005 TO JUNE 2006
(Prepared for the 7th AGM held on the 28th of June 2006)

1.0 Institution–Building Programme

Under the 2004–2006 Strategic Plan there is a programme of active search for human and material resources to support the Institute’s operations and projects.

1.1 Membership

During the period May 2005 to June 2006 the Institute gained 3 new individual members and lost 11. Of the latter, 10 had their membership terminated for being two or more years in arrears with their membership fees. No new corporate members joined us and two resigned. Currently we have 63 individual and 17 corporate members.

The main reason for this poor showing is that, at the end of the first month, for lack of funds, the Institute had to relinquish its lease on the office at Bretton Hall and place most of its equipment and records in storage generously provided free of charge by Mr. Fred Chin Lee at premises of his on Boundary Road, San Juan. The Secretary, working out of his home, was able to provide free of charge administrative services in very limited office space.

Under these conditions it was not easy for him to get a handle on the accounts from January to April and there were details of earlier accounts that required the assistance of the auditors to be clarified. As a result, it was not until a few months ago that the Finance Committee was able to prepare a budget for 2006 and begin to plan the continuation of our interrupted Membership Drive. In July 2005 the Institute was able to print and eventually distribute 1000 copies of an updated version of our Membership Drive Brochure. In April 2006 we printed 2000 copies of a further updated version.

The *Finance Committee* comprised the Treasurer, Mr. Victor Hart (Chairman), Mr. Boyd Reid (Secretary), Mrs. Sandra Perkins, Mr. Emile Valere and Mr. Audley Walker.

1.2 Financial Resources

We were able to undertake one income–earning activity during the period. This was the training of public servants in the Ethics of Public Procurement carried out under the Public Procurement Reform Programme (see 2.1 below).

At the end of the period under review the Institute’s finances are much stronger than they were at the beginning. With an anticipated increase in membership fees we should be in a position, by the end of 2006, to re–establish a staffed office for the support of our work.

2.0 Public Procurement Reform Programme

The Strategic Plan also envisages a programme that involves:

- creating a framework for and facilitating national discussion of public procurement reform;
- developing specific proposals for the reform of legislation governing public procurement including its extension to the operations of all entities entrusted with public funds;
- advocating and monitoring the adoption, in major public investment projects, of TI’s Integrity Pact.

Since May 2005 we have been able to:

- continue to contribute to *policy formation* by serving on the *committees* that produced the *White Paper* on the Reform of the Procurement Regime and drafted a *Public Procurement and Disposal of Property Bill*; the Secretary, Mr. Boyd Reid, was our representative on these committees;
- participate in the *implementation of the reform* by the *training of public servants* in the Fundamentals of Public Procurement, our contribution being in the field of ethics. Fr. Henry Charles, Mr. Victor Hart and Mr. Boyd Reid gave their services for this.

Among the *inputs to Government policy* on procurement reform that we were able to make was the recommendation by the White Paper of the *concept of TI’s Integrity Pact* for corruption prevention in major publicly funded projects. This should open up opportunities in the future for further contributions by TTTI to public contracting reform.

Another opportunity arises from the new procurement legislation. that will implement the new policy. This will establish an *Independent Procurement Regulator* assisted by an *Advisory Council* appointed by the President from Civil Society and the Private Sector. TTTI is the only local Civil Society organization dedicated to corruption prevention and so stands a very good chance of being asked to serve on the Council.

3.0 Public Education Programme

Another programme required under the Strategic Plan involves seizing the opportunities that arise to educate the public on the forms corruption takes and on how individuals and groups can combat it; paying particular attention to the issues of political party funding, executive accountability and appropriate constitutional reform; methods of communication with the public to include public statements, regular articles in the press, discussion forums and radio and television appearances.

The Board established a *Public Education Committee* comprising Mr. Ric Hernandez as Chairman, Mr. Boyd Reid as Secretary, Mr. Anson Humphrey, Mrs. Sonah Nagassar and Mrs. Nan Gosine–Ramgoolam.

3.1 Media Campaign

The Committee planned a *media campaign project* consisting of the production and delivery of a series of messages in the electronic and print media that would aim at raising awareness of corruption issues and promoting integrity in national life.

A funding request submitted to the local office of the UNDP was received with interest. We understand that the UNDP is considering associating our project with a ‘high-level’ seminar on governance to be held later in the year. This seminar would provide a forum to help key stakeholders understand the key issues affecting accountability and transparency in Trinidad and Tobago, in the context of the global scenario.

3.2 Public Statements

Since May 2004 the Institute has issued the following media releases.

2005:

6 May	announcing the new Board of Directors;
10 June	calling for the withdrawal of the Judicial Review (Amendment) Bill;
5 September	calling for a commission of inquiry into the 1990 attempted coup;
17 September	calling on Government to ratify the UN Anti-Corruption Convention;
7 October	asking whether the new ‘Special Purpose’ State Enterprises can be kept free of corruption;
18 October	on the 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and T&T’s place on it;
3 November	on the UN Oil-for-Food Inquiry findings;
29 November	emphasising that UDeCott is not outside the new public procurement regime;
7 December	for International Anti-Corruption Day: calling again on Government to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC);

2006:

6 January	calling for more information on exemptions from asset declaration granted by the Integrity Commission;
31 January	on TI’s Global Corruption Report 2006: valuable lessons for Trinidad and Tobago;
2 June	alarm at UDeCoTT’s reported statement that it is not a State enterprise and that its four member board is its tenders committee;
8 June	expressing pleasure at Government’s ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption and calling for vigorous implementation.

3.3 Media Conference on the CPI

TTTI, in common with many other TI chapters around the world, released the 2005 CPI at a media conference on the 18th of October.

3.4 Appearances on Radio and TV

Throughout the period, on several occasions, particularly after media releases, our representatives appeared on television and were interviewed for radio and the print media.

3.5 Newsletter

We managed to publish one issue of our newsletter, *TTTI Update* — in July.

3.6 E-mail Communication

In August 2005 we began e-mailing to *members* material of interest to the anti-corruption movement. In November we extended the e-mailing list to include *media people* and *other non-members*. There are currently over 170 such recipients and the list continues to grow.

3.7 Web Site

We have recently acquired a domain name and, with the generous help of graphic artist Mr. Ian Reid, have designed a home page. We expect the site to be launched within a month’s time.

3.8 International Anti-Corruption Day

In addition to issuing a press release for International Anti-Corruption Day, the 9th of December 2005, we distributed a 30 second TV spot produced by TI to four television stations requesting that they air it free of charge on and after the day.

4.0 Private Sector Corruption Prevention Programme

The Strategic Plan sees us, in this programme, conducting workshops and other forms of discussion aimed at getting companies to adopt TI's Business Principles for Countering Bribery (BPCB) and generally promoting risk prevention, especially in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

In March we began a project with the T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce to hold a *workshop for the Business Community on the BPCB* facilitated by Washington, DC-based TI Programme Officer, Susan Côté-Freeman. TTTI members active on the organizing committee have been Mr. Boyd Reid, Mr. Victor Hart and Fr. Henry Charles.

Originally carded for the 21st of June, the workshop has been postponed to the 28th of September.

5.0 Other Activities

5.1 Relations with Government

The Chairman and Secretary held two meetings with the *Attorney General*, the first in November at our request and the second in May at his. They assured him of our commitment to collaborating, wherever possible, with the Government in fighting corruption and discussed the corruption prevention measures that should be given priority.

For his part, the AG assured them of his commitment, as the Cabinet Minister primarily responsible for the Government's anti-corruption efforts, to the fight against corruption and of the Government's willingness to work with TTTI.

Soon after the second meeting the *Government ratified the UNCAC*.

5.2 Relations with the Opposition

The Chairman also held discussions on issues of corruption with members of the Opposition, namely, the Political Leader of the United National Congress and the Chairman of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee of Parliament.

5.3 Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

We have been actively encouraging the Government through discussion with the relevant ministers to honour the commitment it has made to implement the EITI.

The Chairman participated in a conference at the UWI that dealt, among other things, with transparency or the lack thereof in the local energy sector.

5.4 UNATT Youth Rally

We manned a booth at the Youth Rally organized by the United Nations Association for the 2005 United Nations Day.

5.5 Diplomatic Missions, International Funding Agencies and Business Organizations

We held discussions with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, a First Secretary in the Japanese Embassy and the head of the EU delegation as well as with the local heads of the UNDP and the IADB. We also met with representatives of the T&T Manufacturers' Association, the T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Tobago Chapter of the Chamber as well as with the Director of the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business.

5.6 The Integrity Commission

In June 2004 the Chairman and Secretary met with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Integrity Commission.

Despite the urging of some members, the Board decided not to apply for the Institute to be heard in the High Court matter in which the Integrity Commission has sought the Court's determination of, among other things, whether judges and magistrates are persons in public life subject to the Integrity in Public Life Act.

5.7 The Media

In September the Chairman and Secretary met with representatives of the media to discuss how we could improve relations for our mutual benefit.

5.8 Strategic Planning

A Special General Meeting of members to launch the new Strategic Planning exercise, scheduled for the 4th of April, did not achieve a quorum. However, those present had a useful discussion in which ideas and suggestions for future programmes and projects were pooled. The exercise is expected to resume early in the life of the new Board.

5.9 TI's International Conference and Annual Meeting of Members

Thanks to the generosity of some of our corporate members, namely, CCN, Spancrete, VEMCO and WITCO, the Institute was able to send the Secretary as our representative to TI's International Conference and Annual Meeting of Members held in Berlin in November 2005. One of the benefits of this was a deepening and strengthening of our relationship with the TI Secretariat which, during the period under review as in the past, provided us with essential support.

5.10 The Board of Directors

The Board elected at the 6th AGM on the 28th of April 2005 comprised Reginald Dumas (Chairman), Henry Charles (Vice-Chairman), Boyd Reid (Secretary), Victor Hart (Treasurer), Ricardo Hernandez, Anson Humphrey and Sonah Nagassar.

During the period under review the Board held 14 meetings with an average attendance of 75%. St. Patrick's Church, Newtown, Port-of-Spain kindly made a room available for these meetings.