



Final Report

Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Local Area Economic Profile

March 11, 2016

Local Area Economic Profile

Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Municipality

Final Report

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Permanent Secretary

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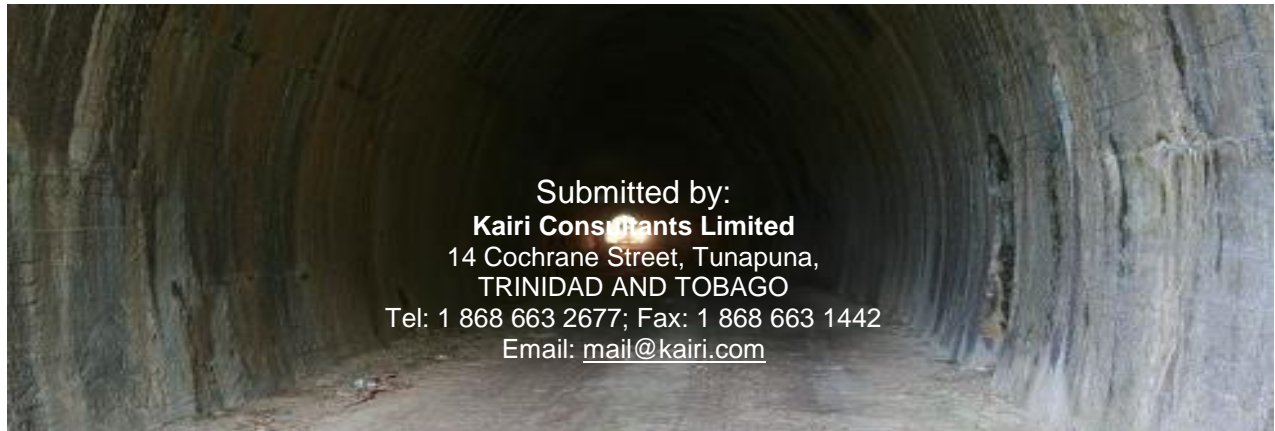


Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vi
Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
1 Introduction	9
2 Area Information and Demography	10
2.1 Location.....	10
2.2 Geography.....	11
2.3 Population and Demography	11
2.3.1 Population and Household Size	11
2.3.2 Population Density.....	12
2.3.3 Age Profile and Dependency.....	12
2.3.4 Ethnicity	14
2.3.5 Religious Affiliation	14
2.4 Educational Attainment	15
2.5 Living Conditions in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo	18
2.5.1 Crime	21
3 Land Use and Land Resources	24
3.1 Land Use and resources.....	24
3.2 Freshwater and Forest Resources.....	24
3.3 Coastal and Marine Resources.....	24
4 Municipal Physical and Social Assets	25
4.1 Physical Infrastructure.....	25
4.1.1 Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure	25
4.1.2 Storm Water Management and Coastal Protection	25

4.1.3	Transportation	26
4.1.4	Water Supply and Distribution.....	26
4.1.5	Electricity	26
4.1.6	Wastewater Management	26
4.1.7	Solid Waste Management	26
4.2	Social/Cultural Infrastructure.....	26
4.2.1	Dwelling and Building Stock.....	26
4.3	Social Facilities	27
4.3.1	Education.....	27
4.3.2	Health	27
4.3.3	Disaster Management	27
4.3.4	Social Services and Community Development	28
4.3.5	Recreation, Sports and Entertainment.....	28
5	The Area Economy	29
5.1	Gross Domestic Product of Trinidad and Tobago	29
5.2	Key Economic Drivers (Activities).....	30
5.3	Employment and Unemployment Trends	32
5.4	Key Business Activity	33
6	Municipal MSME Profile	35
6.1	Municipal MSME Survey (2015)	36
6.1.1	General Characteristics.....	36
6.1.2	Size of Enterprise	37
6.1.3	Legal Status.....	38
6.1.4	Primary Business Activities	39
6.1.5	Markets and Annual Sales	41
6.1.6	Financing and Investment	42
6.1.7	Use of Internet.....	43
6.2	Partners in Local Area Economic Development in Trinidad	44
6.2.1	The Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSED).....	44
6.2.2	The National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO).....	44
6.2.3	Micro-Enterprise Loan Facility.....	45
6.2.4	The FairShare Programme.....	46
6.3	Other Stakeholders	46

6.3.1	Employers' Consultative Association	46
6.3.2	Trinidad and Tobago Manufactures Association.....	46
6.3.3	Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce.....	47
7	Local Government System in Trinidad and Tobago and the CARILED Model	48
8	Promoting Local Economic Development: Issues and Recommendations	50
8.1	introduction.....	50
8.2	Strategic Sectors.....	53
8.2.1	Energy	53
8.2.2	Agriculture and Food	53
8.2.3	Eco and Cultural Tourism and Creative Industries	54
8.2.4	Commerce and Distribution.....	55
8.3	Proposed Projects and Implementation Plan	56
8.3.1	Establishing Institutional Structures within the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation.....	56
8.3.2	Recommended Sectoral Initiatives.....	59
8.3.3	Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Implementation Plan	60
8.4	Conclusion.....	1

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Location of the Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo illustrating the distribution of Communities.....	10
Figure 2.2: Age/Sex Composition of the Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, 2000, 2011	13
Figure 2.3: Ethnic Composition of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo’s Population.....	14
Figure 2.4: Religious Affiliations in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, 2011	15
Figure 2.5: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Educational Attainment.....	16
Figure 2.6: National Human development Index 2008/2009 by Administrative Regions	18
Figure 2.7: Inequality-adjusted National Human development Index 2008/2009 by Administrative Regions.....	19
Figure 2.8: Police Divisions of Trinidad and Tobago	22
Figure 2.9: Share of Serious Crimes by the Type of Crime in Central Police Division, 2010	23
Figure 5.1: Registered MSMEs in Operation 2000 – 2007	32
Figure 6.1: Distribution of MSMEs by Ethnicity.....	37
Figure 6.2: Male Ownership of MSMEs	38
Figure 6.3: Female Ownership of MSMEs	38
Figure 6.4: Length of Time in Operation	38
Figure 6.5: Distribution of Registered Versus Unregistered MSMEs	38
Figure 6.6: Distribution of MSMEs by Primary Business Activities.....	39
Figure 6.7: Annual Sales for MSMEs	41
Figure 6.8: Amount Invested in Plant Equipment and Other Assets	43
Figure 6.9: Reported Uses of Internet and Category of Business	44

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Changes in Non-institutional Population and Household Characteristics in Trinidad and Tobago, and Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo 2000-2011	12
Table 2.2: Population Density of the Borough of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, 1990, 2000 and 2011 ..	12
Table 2.3: Percentage Distribution of Total Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Ethnic Group, 2011	14
Table 2.4: Percentage Distribution of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo's Total Population by Religious Affiliation, 2011	15
Table 2.5: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Age Group and Educational Attainment	16
Table 2.6: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Age Group and Highest Qualification.....	17
Table 2.7: Various Statistics on Living Conditions in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo	20
Table 5.1: Trinidad and Tobago Selected Economic Indicators	30
Table 5.2: Enterprises by Sector and Size.....	31
Table 6.1: Domestic Definition of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	35
Table 6.2: Criteria Used to Define Mini-Micro, Micro and Small-sized Businesses	36
Table 6.3: Category of Business by Age of Respondent.....	36
Table 6.4: Category of Business by Sex of Respondent	37
Table 6.5: Length of Time in Operation by Size of Business.....	39
Table 6.6: Legal Status of MSMEs by Size of Enterprise	39
Table 6.7: Key Business Activities by Size of Enterprise.....	40
Table 6.8: Key Business Activities for MSMEs by Sex	40
Table 6.9: Primary Markets for Goods and Services by Size of Enterprise	41
Table 6.10: Business Exporting/Not Exporting Products and Category of Business	42
Table 6.11: Country Exporting To and Category of Business	42
Table 6.12: Key Suppliers of Financing for MSMEs by Size of Enterprise.....	42
Table 6.13: Businesses Reporting Routine Use of Internet and Category of Business	43

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDC	-	Business Development Company
CAPA	-	Crime and Problem Analysis Unit
CARILED	-	Caribbean Local Economic Development Project
CARIRI	-	Caribbean Industrial Research Institute
CBOs	-	Community Based Organisations
CBTT	-	Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CARICOM	-	Caribbean Community
CSO	-	Central Statistical Office
CSEC	-	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSME	-	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
ECA	-	Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago
EDD	-	Enterprise Development Division
EIF	-	Enterprise Investment Fund
ETIIC	-	Entrepreneurial Training Institute and Incubation Centre
GCE	-	General Certificate of Education
GORTT	-	Government of (the Republic) of Trinidad and Tobago
HDC	-	Housing Development Corporation
HDI	-	Human Development Index
HSC	-	Higher School Certificate
IBIS	-	National Integrated Business Incubation System
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IFF	-	Innovation Financing Facility
INHDI	-	Inequality-adjusted National Human Development Index
LABIDCO	-	La Brea Industrial Development Company
LAEP	-	Local Area Economic Profile
LARPDU	-	Local Area and Regional Planning and Development Unit
LATT	-	Lake Asphalt Company of Trinidad and Tobago
LED	-	Local Economic Development
LEDO(s)	-	Local Economic Development Officer(s)

LEDU(s)	-	Local Economic Development Unit(s)
MCD	-	Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts
MDP	-	Municipal Development Plan
MEL	-	Micro Enterprise Loan
MIC	-	Metal Industries Company Limited
MLG	-	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government
MOLSED	-	Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development
MOOCs	-	Massive Open Online Courses
MSE(s)	-	Micro and Small Enterprise(s)
MSM	-	Micro, Small and Medium
MSME(s)	-	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
MTI	-	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NEDCO	-	National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited
NESC	-	National Energy Skills Centre
NGC	-	National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd
NGO(s)	-	Non-Government Organisation(s)
NHDI	-	National Human Development Index
OJT	-	On-the-Training
PLIPDECO	-	Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited
Petrotrin	-	Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago
SC	-	School Certificate
TCPD	-	Town and Country Planning Division
THA	-	Tobago House of Assembly
TLA	-	Trinidad Lake Asphalt
TT	-	Trinidad and Tobago
TT\$	-	Trinidad and Tobago Dollar
TVET	-	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
US\$	-	United States Dollar
UTT	-	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	-	The University of the West Indies
WASA	-	Water and Sewerage Authority

1 Introduction

The Local Area Economic Profile (LAEP) for the Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was prepared with a view to build on the existing Municipal Development Plan and to introduce the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation¹ to the Local Economic Development (LED) approach. The LED approach was introduced to Trinidad and Tobago by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities through its Caribbean Local Economic Development (CARILED) project in collaboration with the Caribbean Forum of Local Government Ministers, the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. The LED approach aims not only to enhance the economic capacity of a local area for the purpose of improving living conditions but also strives to develop a business-friendly environment in which micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) could prosper. This approach has been advocated by the Local Area and Regional Planning and Development Unit (LARPDU) since it creates a framework through which local government, civil society, the private sector and the local community could collaborate to improve the local economy.

The profile for Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo² was developed with the aid of quantitative and qualitative methodologies proffered by the LED approach and which captured vital information from all stakeholders in the municipality. The methodologies consisted of the following:

- A review of secondary data for the Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo including the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation Spatial Development Plan, the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Municipal Investment Plan and the Medium Term Policy Framework 2011 – 2014;
- 2 Capacity Workshops to train and sensitise the Local Economic Development Officer (LEDO) about the approach to preparing a LAEP;
- The conduct of a survey of MSMEs (120 enterprises);*
- The conduct of discussions with the Municipal Council to glean useful insights into opportunities for LED within the communities of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo;
- The conduct of focus group discussions with micro, small and medium entrepreneurs; and
- The conduct of interviews with the State Agencies, Private Sector Agencies and NGOs

This draft LAEP report will profile the MSME sector and its physical and social assets in as great detail as data permit.

¹ *Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation means the body corporate constituted by the Chairman, Aldermen, Councilors and electors of Regional Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo to which the Municipal Corporation Act (Act No. 21 of 1990) applies.*

² *Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo (also called the Regional Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo) refers to the geographic area (whose boundaries as applied under Section 4 of the Municipal Corporation Act (Act No. 21 of 1990)).*

2 Area Information and Demography

2.1 Location

The region holds a west central location in Trinidad and is surrounded by the Chaguanas Borough and the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation in the north, the Sangre Grande and Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporations in the east, the San Fernando City Corporation and the Princes Town Regional Corporation in the south, and the Gulf of Paria in the west (Figure 2.1). The primary means of access to the region from areas in north and south Trinidad are the Uriah Butler and Solomon Hochoy Highways and the Southern Main Road. Also, a route between Chaguanas and Rio Claro, in the form of the Caparo Valley Brasso Road and the Tabaquite Rio Claro Road, runs diagonally through the region. There is no strong road link with areas to the east of the region. Access is also possible by sea through existing industrial port facilities at Point Lisas, and there are plans to establish a water taxi dock at the port. The national helicopter service is also based at Camden in Couva. The region is roughly rectangular in shape and covers an area of approximately 71,964 hectares, which represents the third largest region after Sangre Grande and Mayaro/Rio Claro. It averages 25 kilometres in a north-south direction and 30 kilometres in an east-west direction and has a coastline of approximately 25 kilometres.

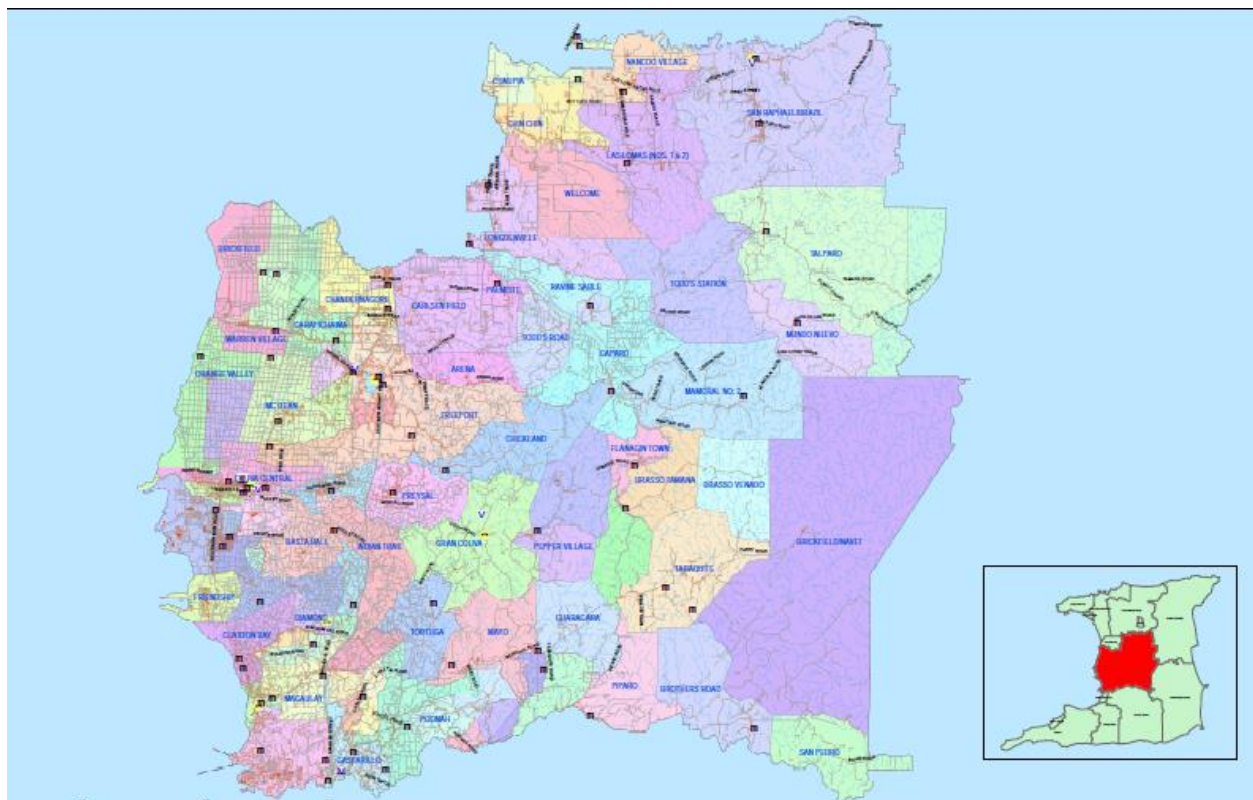


Figure 2.1: Location of the Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo illustrating the distribution of Communities

2.2 Geography

The west coastal area of the region is generally flat and rises gently to the Solomon Hochoy Highway in the east. Areas east of the Highway are generally undulating; however, the Central Range is a very complex landform feature in this part of the region with moderate to steep slopes and a maximum elevation of 198 metres

The region is drained by a series of river systems which generally originate on the Central Range and flow in a radial pattern through the region. Other key environmental features in the region include forest reserves, mangrove swamps, and reservoir impoundments. The Region comprises ninety-three (93) separate communities which for planning purposes have been aggregated into fourteen (14) development zones based on their natural and historical links.

Trinidad has two easily distinguishable seasons; a dry and wet season. Like the rest of the country, the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo has a tropical climate with two distinct seasons due to its proximity to the equator. The dry season, the period from January to May, is characterised by a tropical maritime climate with moderate to strong low level winds, warm days, cool nights and showers due to daytime convection. A modified moist equatorial climate characterised by low wind speeds, hot humid days and nights, a marked increase in rainfall which results mostly from migrating and latitudinal shifting in equatorial weather systems, symbolises the wet season during June to December. Trinidad's geographical location puts it on the southern periphery of the North Atlantic hurricane basin.

Although the wet season is generally warmer than the dry season, Trinidad and Tobago's daily temperature cycle is more pronounced than its seasonal cycle. The long term mean (1971 - 2000) annual maximum and minimum temperatures are 31.3 °C and 22.7 °C respectively with a mean daily temperature of 26.5 °C. Trinidad's rainfall pattern displays a distinct bi-modal behaviour with June and November rainfall season maxima. Trinidad's primary rainfall mode occurs in June.

2.3 Population and Demography

2.3.1 Population and Household Size

According to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, the population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo stood at 178, 410 persons, representing some 13.4 percent of the national population of 1,328,019 persons. Between 2000 and 2011, the population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo grew by 9.6 percent. The population is almost equally distributed in terms of gender, with a female population of 87,614 (49.1%) and a male population of 90,795 (50.9%).

The 2011 census revealed that an average of 3.4 persons lived in the 51,817 recorded private households in the region (Table 2.1). The number of households increased by 23.5 percent, which was more than the growth in the number of households observed in Trinidad (16.1%). The faster rate of household increase relative to the rate of population increase resulted in a decline in the size

of the average household since the 2000 Census of 0.5 persons, down from 3.9 persons per household.

Table 2.1: Changes in Non-institutional Population and Household Characteristics in Trinidad and Tobago, and Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo 2000-2011

Country/Region	Non-Institutional Population		Number of Occupied Private Households		Average Household Size		Average Annual Rate of Growth in Population	Average Annual Rate of Growth In Households
	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	2000-2011	2000-2011
Trinidad and Tobago	1,322,546	1,250,652	401,382	343,180	3.3	3.6	0.5%	1.5%
Trinidad	1,261,812	1,197,426	381,257	328,000	3.3	3.7	0.5%	1.4%
Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo	178160	162,259	51,817	41,941	3.4	3.9	0.9%	2.0%

Source: CSO 2011 Population and Housing Census

2.3.2 Population Density

Table 2.2 highlights that In 2011, the region of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was the tenth most densely populated area of Trinidad and Tobago with a density of 247 persons per square kilometre. As its population rose slightly, the population density of the region increased correspondingly from 225 persons per square kilometre in 2000. From 2000 to 2011, Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo maintained its population density position relative to the other corporations.

Table 2.2: Population Density of the Borough of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, 1990, 2000 and 2011

Year	Density (Per Sq. km)	Population
2000	225	162,779
2011	247	178,410

2.3.3 Age Profile and Dependency

Figure 2.2 shows the region's age and sex pyramids for 2000 and 2011, reflecting the changing structure of the population over time. The 2011 pyramids for both the male and female population show growth in the youngest age group (0-4 years). A similar widening of the older age groups is also noted and reflects an aging population.

The population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo is relatively young, with more than half of the population (54.3%) under 35 years of which 21.8 percent is between 0 and 15 years. The age group between 10 and 19 years, the majority of whom make up the secondary school age population, accounts for 13.8 percent of the corporation's population. Persons, 65 years and older, made up 7.3 percent of the total population (Figure 2.2).

The population of dependent groups (all persons aged 0-14 years and 65+ years) decreased from 30.9 percent of the total population in 2000 to 27.7 percent in 2011. Conversely, the working-age population (persons between 15 and 64 years) increased from 69.1 percent in 2000 to 72.3 percent in 2011.

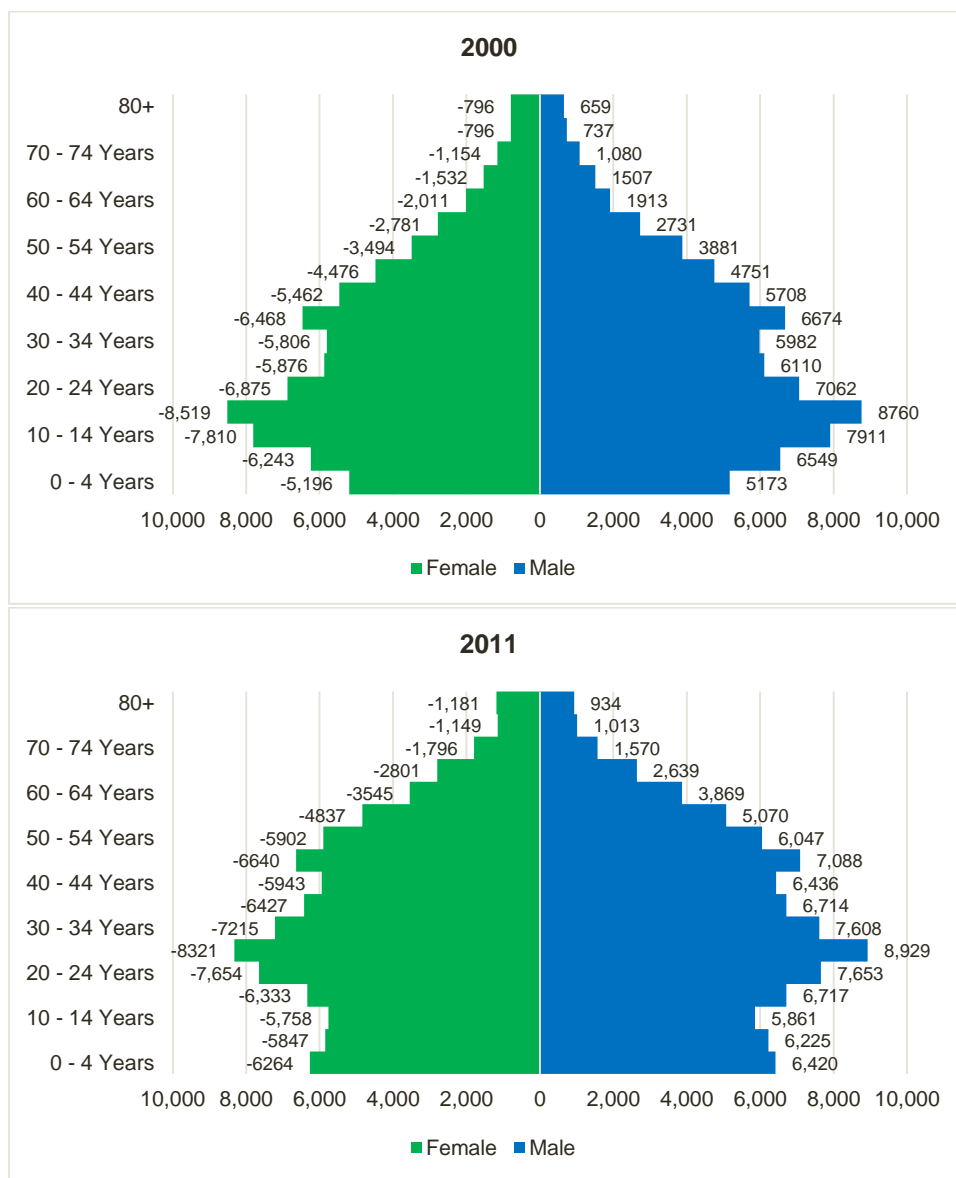


Figure 2.2: Age/Sex Composition of the Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, 2000, 2011

The age dependency ratio (the ratio of the population between 0 and 14 years and 65+ years to the working-age population, between 15 and 65 years) for Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo in 2011 stood at 38.4 percent; below the national ratio of 41.9 percent and this was due primarily to growth in the working-age population. This ratio for Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo represents an improvement compared to the 2000 figure of 44.8 percent. The child dependency ratio in 2011 was estimated at 28.2 percent, and elderly dependency at 10.1 percent.

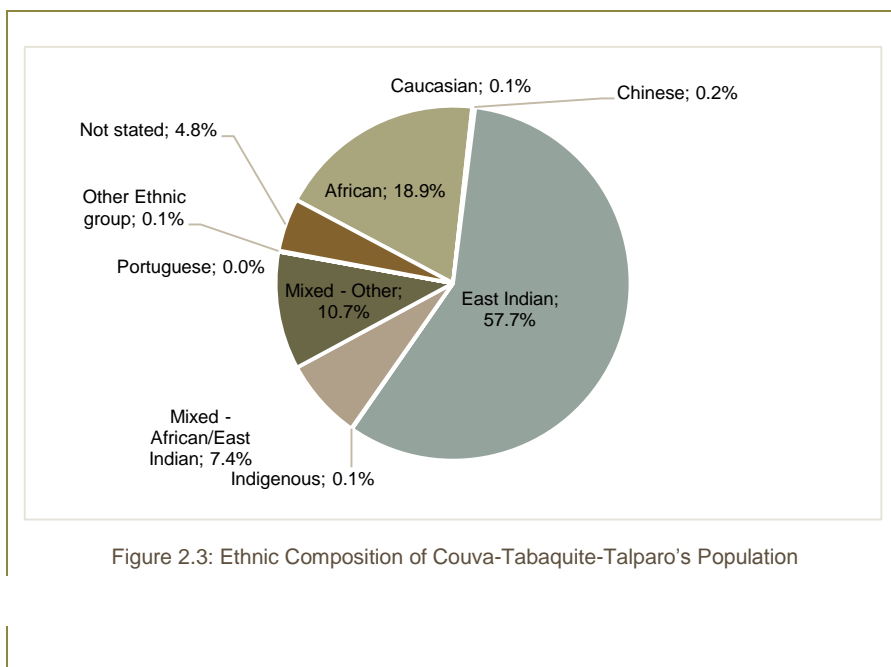
2.3.4 Ethnicity

Although Trinidad and Tobago as a country, is a plural society, the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo's population remains homogenous in terms of ethnic composition (Table 2.3). East Indians, with 57.7 percent of the total population, are the predominant ethnic group in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, followed by Africans who made up 18.9 percent and the 'Mixed-Other' group, which accounted for 10.7 percent (Figure 2.3).

Table 2.3: Percentage Distribution of Total Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Ethnic Group, 2011

Ethnic Group	Percentage
African	18.9%
Caucasian	0.1%
Chinese	0.2%
East Indian	57.7%
Indigenous	0.1%
Mixed - African/East Indian	7.4%
Mixed - Other	10.7%
Portuguese	0.0%
Syrian/Lebanese	0.0%
Other Ethnic group	0.1%
Not stated	4.8%

Source: CSO 2011 Population and Housing Census



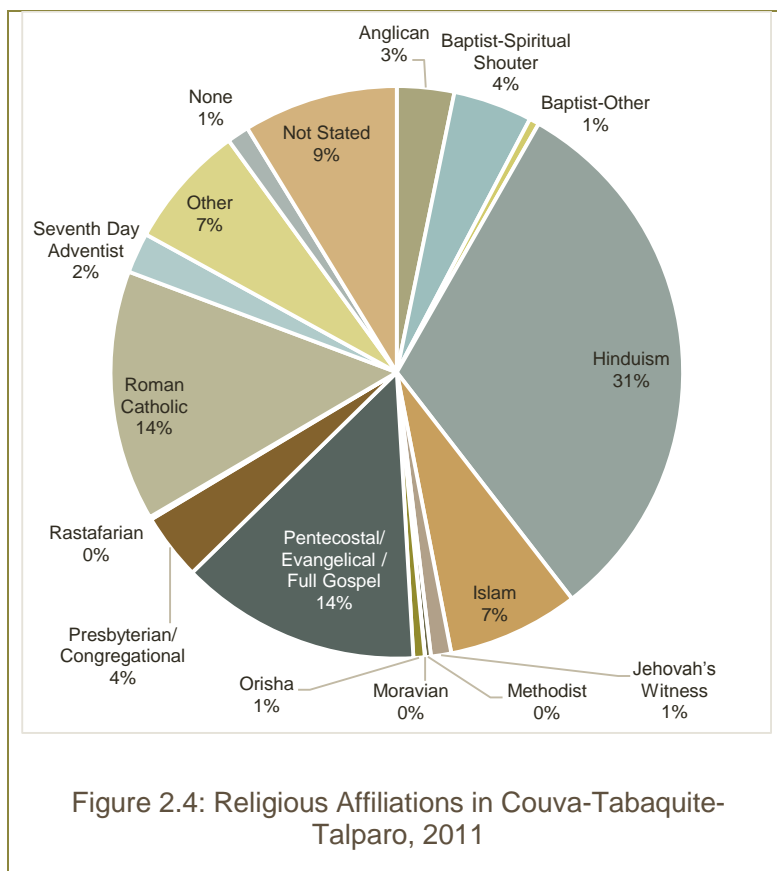
2.3.5 Religious Affiliation

In 2011, Hinduism was the largest single religious grouping in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo (31.3% of the population), followed by Roman Catholic (14.2%), Pentecostal/Evangelical/Full Gospel (13.6%) and Islam (7.4%). Interestingly, the groupings 'Other' and 'Not Stated' constituted a significant proportion of the population. Figure 2.4 gives a distribution of the population by religious affiliations based on the 2011 Population and Housing Census, while Figure 2.4 shows the distribution of the population for the religious groupings.

Table 2.4: Percentage Distribution of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo's Total Population by Religious Affiliation, 2011

Religious Group	Percent
Anglican	3.2%
Baptist-Spiritual Shouter	4.5%
Baptist-Other	0.6%
Hinduism	31.3%
Islam	7.4%
Jehovah's Witness	1.1%
Methodist	0.3%
Moravian	0.0%
Orisha	0.6%
Pentecostal/Evangelical/ Full Gospel	13.6%
Presbyterian/Congregational	3.7%
Rastafarian	0.2%
Roman Catholic	14.2%
Seventh Day Adventist	2.3%
Other	7.0%
None	1.2%
Not Stated	8.7%

Source: CSO 2011 Population and Housing Census



2.4 Educational Attainment

According to the 2011 Census, 32.3 percent of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo's population had attained primary-level education which is higher than the national figure (Figure 2.5). Forty four percent of population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo had attained secondary and post-secondary, making it 0.1 percent higher than observed with the national population. Tertiary non-university level educational attainment stood at 5.8 percent and 7.1 percent for those who attained tertiary university-level education. Males outnumbered females up to the primary and secondary levels. However, the number of females who attained tertiary level education was greater than the number of males. Table 2.5 shows the educational attainment of the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo population by age group.

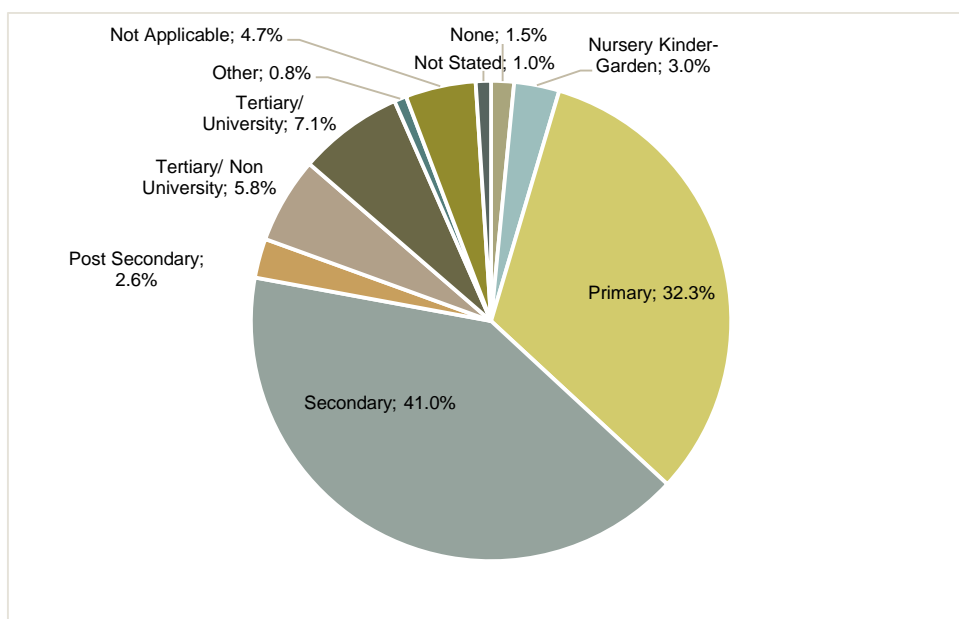


Figure 2.5: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Educational Attainment
Source: CSO Population and Housing Census, 2011

Table 2.5: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Age Group and Educational Attainment

Age	Total	None	Nursery/ Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary	Tertiary/ Non University	Tertiary/ University	Other	Not Applicable	Not Stated
Couva/ Tabaquite/ Talparo	178,160	2,746	5,423	57,548	73,069	4,709	10,341	12,597	1,460	8,441	1,826
0 - 4	12,681	-	4,180	60	-	-	-	-	-	8,441	-
5 - 9	12,056	223	884	10,856	-	-	-	-	-	-	92
10 - 14	11,580	118	186	5,836	5,357	-	-	-	-	-	83
15 - 19	13,026	91	10	726	10,097	628	660	624	118	-	71
20 - 24	15,299	83	10	906	8,931	635	1,727	2,696	194	-	117
25 - 29	17,245	127	7	2,309	9,685	641	1,910	2,237	182	-	147
30 - 34	14,817	142	9	2,237	8,398	499	1,486	1,760	159	-	127
35 - 39	13,135	109	9	2,230	7,573	413	1,203	1,334	105	-	158
40 - 44	12,369	135	8	2,911	6,865	389	840	963	110	-	147
45 - 49	13,709	220	22	5,098	6,120	402	701	846	123	-	179
50 - 54	11,928	186	18	5,776	3,827	418	683	715	143	-	162
55 - 59	9,891	176	24	5,145	2,800	308	516	631	139	-	151
60 - 64	7,402	176	15	4,360	1,736	189	311	401	81	-	133
65 - 69	5,423	245	13	3,653	896	100	168	205	54	-	90
70 - 74	3,354	219	9	2,418	402	46	67	105	23	-	66
75 - 79	2,150	200	11	1,534	241	22	39	49	16	-	38
80+	2,095	294	8	1,492	140	19	30	33	14	-	65

Source: CSO Population and Housing Census, 2011

Examination of the highest qualification attained by Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo's population showed that some 49.4 percent of those 15 years or older had no qualifications. This group would also include some persons who may not have written examinations to receive certification. Table 2.6 shows that 3.3 percent indicated that their highest qualification attained was school leaving certificate, with another 1.6 percent reporting that they attained CSEC Basic as their highest qualification.

Almost one fifth of the population (21.1%) attained General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary ('O') level/CSEC General or Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE)/GCE 'A' Levels as their highest educational qualification, while 7.2 percent were granted Diplomas, Associate Degrees or Equivalent Certification. Another 3.6 percent would have achieved, either a Bachelor's degree, Post Graduate Diploma/ Professional Qualification or a Master's degree. Some 0.1 percent of the population 15 years and older earned doctorate degrees. More women attained Bachelors than their male counterparts. This can be seen in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Non-Institutional Population of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo by Age Group and Highest Qualification

	Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo		Female Population		Male Population	
	No of Persons	Percentage of Population	No of Persons	Percentage of Population	No of Persons	Percentage of Population
Total	178,160	100	87,510	100	90,650	100
None	88,070	49.4%	41,414	47.3%	46,656	51.5%
School Leaving Certification	5,875	3.3%	2,873	3.3%	3,002	3.3%
CXC Basic	2,795	1.6%	1,307	1.5%	1,488	1.6%
GCE 'O'/CXC Gen/SC	34,035	19.1%	18,288	20.9%	15,748	17.4%
GCE "A"/ CAPE/ HSC	3,492	2.0%	2,057	2.4%	1,435	1.6%
Diploma or Equivalent Certificate of Achievement	9,975	5.6%	4,721	5.4%	5,255	5.8%
Associate Degree Higher Diploma	2,846	1.6%	1,560	1.8%	1,286	1.4%
Bachelor Degree	4,557	2.6%	2,527	2.9%	2,030	2.2%
Master Degree	1,158	0.6%	560	0.6%	598	0.7%
Post Graduate Diploma/ Professional Qualification	669	0.4%	331	0.4%	338	0.4%
Doctorate	132	0.1%	58	0.1%	74	0.1%
Other	872	0.5%	395	0.5%	477	0.5%
Not Stated	23,683	13.3%	11,420	13.0%	12,263	13.5%

Source: CSO Population and Housing Census, 2011

About 53 percent of persons in the age groups 20-24 years to 40-44 years had qualifications of CSEC/GCE 'O' levels and above. About 60 percent of the population in the 20-24 age grouping had obtained CSEC/GCE "O" level passes and above, demonstrating higher levels of educational qualification compared to the older age groups. Further, as much as 38 percent of the population within the age group of 15-19 years to the 54-59 years reported that they did not have any certification, thereby placing them in a "low skill trap" where they are not likely to participate in certification programmes on their own unless motivated to do so.

2.5 Living Conditions in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/CSO Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Atlas notes, “Giving people the choice to enjoy a long and healthy life; being educated; having access to resources that enable one to live in dignity; and being able to participate in decisions that affect one’s community are core capacities for human development.” The National Human Development Index (NHDI), developed by CSO is based on Human Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP and measures the level of human development of Trinidad and Tobago and its sub-regions, using three basic dimensions of human development – a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Figure 2.6 shows the NHDI for the various regions within the country. Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was ranked higher than national average with an NHDI at 0.678. Measurement of the Inequality-adjusted NHDI (INHDI)³ ranked Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo relatively high in the country with respect to human development with a value of 0.616 (Figure 2.7). With regard to the dimensions of education and income for the INHDI, Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was ranked highly but with respect to health.

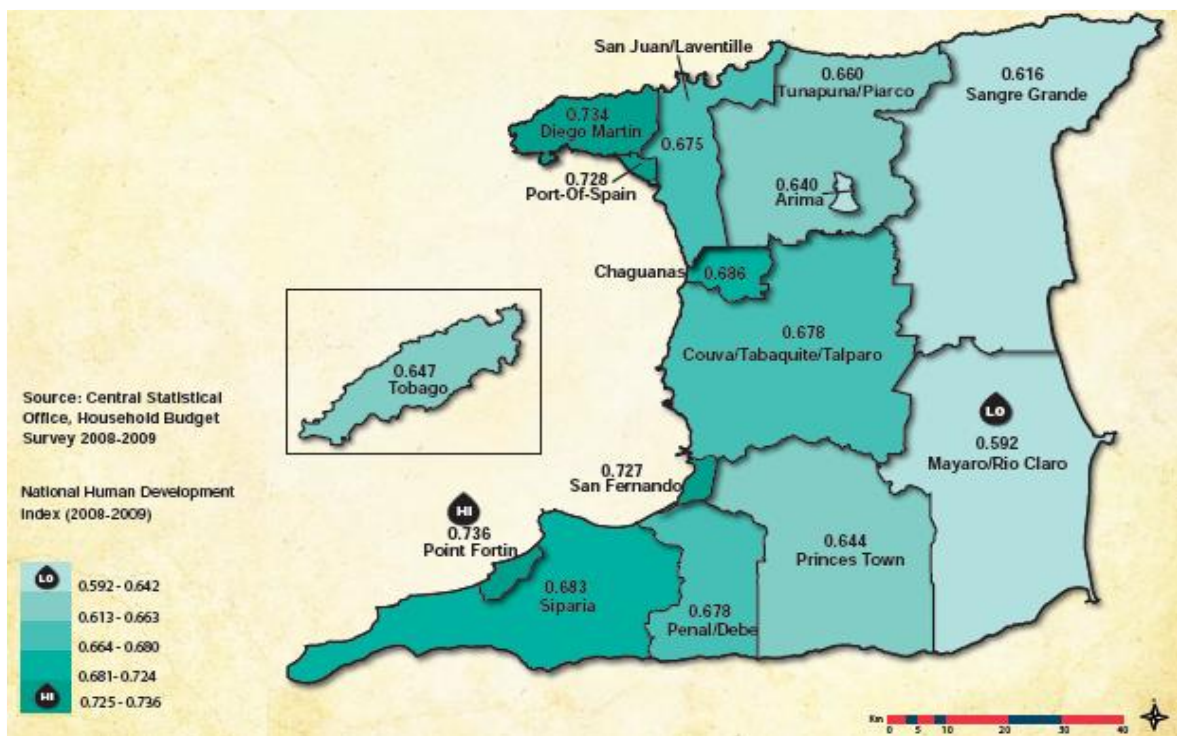


Figure 2.6: National Human development Index 2008/2009 by Administrative Regions

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012

³ Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012. Web site source: http://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/content/mediacentre/documents/Human_Development_Atlas.pdf.

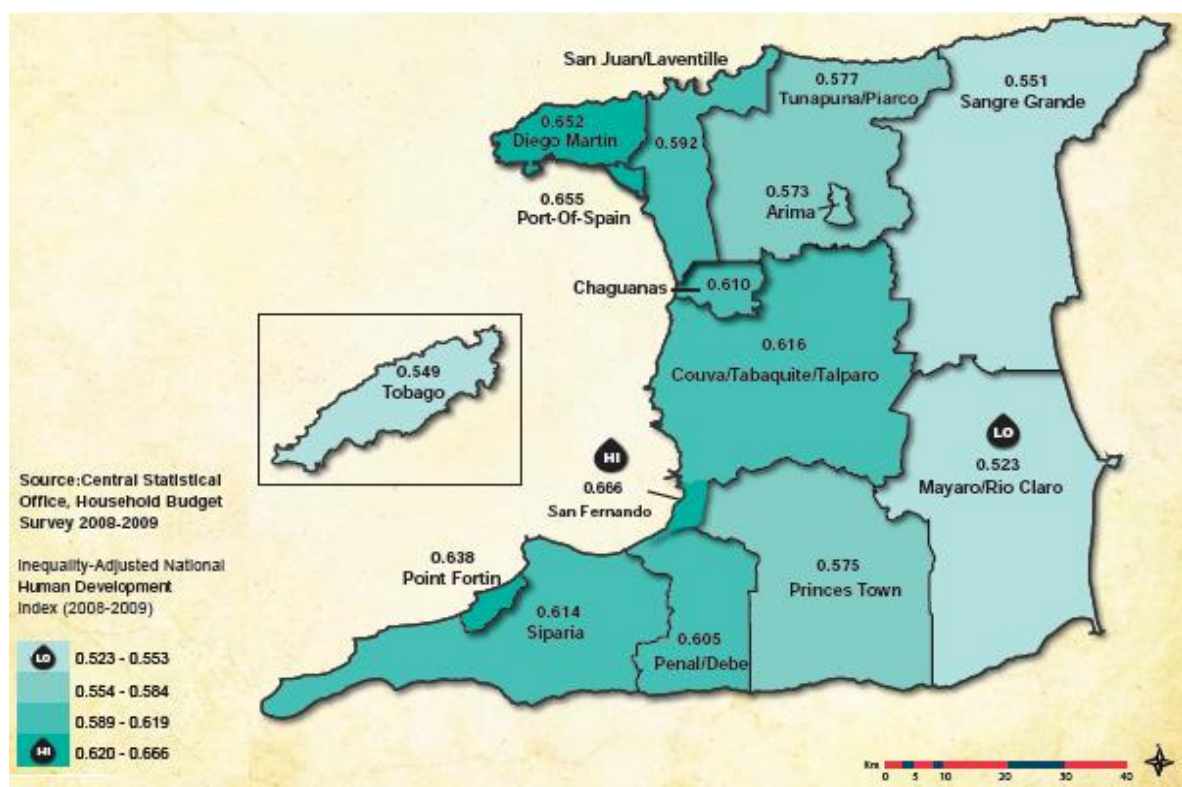


Figure 2.7: Inequality-adjusted National Human development Index 2008/2009 by Administrative Regions

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012

Table 2.7 presents statistics highlighting living conditions in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo taken from the Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Atlas. The Atlas provided information on the NHDI and its dimension indicators which were disaggregated at the sub-regional level to compare levels and disparities among different sub-populations within the country. Data from the Atlas highlight the following:

- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo had a relatively high household income per capita per annum.
- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, with an education attainment rate of 98.3 percent for both females and males between the ages of 6 and 16 years, was among the regions with a high education attainment rate. However the municipality had a relatively low educational attainment rate (62.9%) for persons above 17 years and older who have attained secondary level education and higher.
- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was among the regions that scored relatively high in the gender inequality index indicating that gender inequalities were higher in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo compared to other regions in the country.
- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo had a relatively high Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), indicating a higher incidence and intensity of poverty compared to those areas with lower indices.
- The region was among the regions which had a lower rate of adolescent births.

- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo had a low female labour force participation rate in the country (47.5%).
- Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo recorded a high life expectancy, higher than the national average of 73.2 years for both sexes; 70.2 years for males; and 76.5 years for females. However Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo has a relatively high incidence of chronic diseases of 23.4 percent.
- Consumption of iodised salt was high in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, indicating that children from the island were at low risk of iodine deficiency disorder, which in turn can decrease susceptibility to miscarriages and still births.
- The island recorded the seventh highest population percentage without adequate sanitation facilities,⁴ with 7.3 percent of its households.⁵

Table 2.7: Various Statistics on Living Conditions in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo

Indicators	Value	Rank and Rating out of the Country's 15 Administrative Regions
Total population, 2011	178,410	14 th (high)
National human development index, 2010	0.678	8 th (medium-high)
Population having chronic illnesses ⁶ , 2008/2009 (%)	23.4	12 th (medium-high)
Primary and secondary educational attainment rate ⁷ , 2008/2009 (%)	98.3	6 th (medium-high)
Secondary and higher educational attainment rate ages 17 and above, 2008/2009 (%)	62.9	6 th (low-medium)
Household income per capita (TTD/USD)	30,958/ 6,716	12 th (high)
Inequality-adjusted national human development index, 2010	0.616	11 th (medium-high)
Gender inequality index, 2010	0.34	9 th (medium-high)
Adolescent fertility rate ⁸ , 2010	39.9	6 th (low-medium)
Multidimensional poverty index (MPI), 2006	0.018	9 th (medium-high)
Intensity of multidimensional poverty, 2006 (%)	26.1	6 th (low-medium)
Incidence of multidimensional poverty, 2006 (%)	6.8	10 th (medium-high)
Life expectancy at birth, 2010 (years)	75.4	3 rd (high)
Households in which a child died, 2006 (%)	4.8	13 th (high)
Population without electricity, 2006 (%)	3.3	11 th (medium-high)
Population access to without clean drinking water, 2006 (%)	3.9	10 th (medium-high)
Population access to without improved sanitation ⁹ , 2006 (%)	7.3	7 th (low-medium)

⁴ Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012. Web site source:

http://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/content/mediacentre/documents/Human_Development_Atlas.pdf.

⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests that this situation may have greatly improved over the last eight years.

⁶ The chronic illnesses include Heart Disease, Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Lupus, Kidney Disease, Sickle Cell Anemia, Lung Disease, Epilepsy, Neurological Disorder, and Clinical Mental Disease.

⁷ Primary and secondary educational attainment rate refers to the percentage of children between ages 6-16 who have attained primary or secondary school level of education.

⁸ Number of birth among women 15-19 years per 1,000 women (CSO: Population, Social and Vital Statistics Division 2010)

⁹ Population without Access to improved Sanitation Facilities (2006) Population without access to improved sanitation facilities refers to the proportion of the population with sanitation facilities that are not improved or sanitation facilities which are improved but shared with other house-holds (the toilet is shared) (Ministry of the People and Social Development, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey III, 2006). Improved sanitation facilities for excreta disposal are the

Indicators	Value	Rank and Rating out of the Country's 15 Administrative Regions
Population not consuming iodised salt (%)	58.9	3 rd (low)
Labour force population – male (%)	75	7 th (medium-high)
Labour force population – female (%)	47.5	11 th (medium-low)

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012

2.5.1 Crime

The Human Development Atlas acknowledges that “*Crime and Violence continues to be one of the most critical areas that need to be addressed in the context of national development. Economic growth and meaningful democracy will not be possible unless crime and violence is brought under control and all citizens can feel safe and secure.*” Figure 2.8 illustrates that Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo is policed by the Central Police Division. The 2010 Citizen Security Survey showed that in the Central Police Division, compared to all other areas, had a higher than average percentage of victims of crime (27.1%) within the last 10 years and persons reporting that crime was a problem in their community (56.3%). Twelve percent of the Central Police Division’s respondents indicated that there was a gang in their neighbourhood. Residents in The Central Police Division also did not feel safe and this was reflected in the survey by only one percent stating that they felt very secure. However, more than seventy percent of respondents felt fearful in the last year about the possibility of becoming a victim of crime (70.3%) and did not have much confidence in the police services in effectively controlling the crime problem in the country (42.7%).

followings: flush or pour-flush to a piped sewer system, septic tank, or latrine; ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrine and pit latrine with slab.

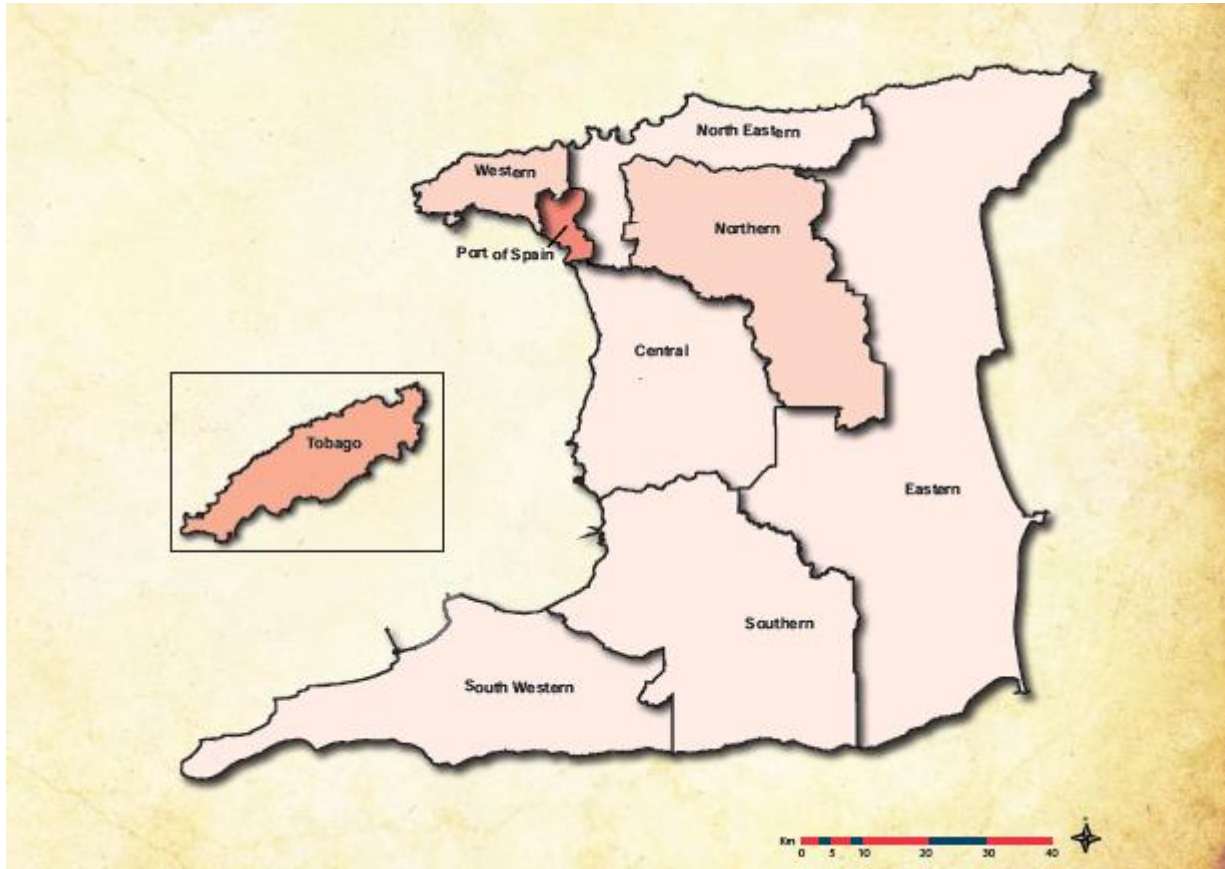


Figure 2.8: Police Divisions of Trinidad and Tobago

According to statistics on crime and violence in the various police divisions compiled by the Crime and Problem Analysis Unit (CAPA) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, The Central Police Division had the fourth lowest level of reported serious crime per 100,000 persons in the country. It was less than half the number reported in Port of Spain Division which had the highest reported level of serious crime (4,800.5 reports).

Figure 2.9 illustrates that serious crimes of major concern in the Central Police Division included burglaries and break-ins, general larceny and robberies, with 368.2, 320.4 and 352.9 reported cases per 100,000 persons, respectively. With one of the highest number of reported cases, it would also be important to pay particular attention to larceny of motor vehicles (118.2 reported cases).

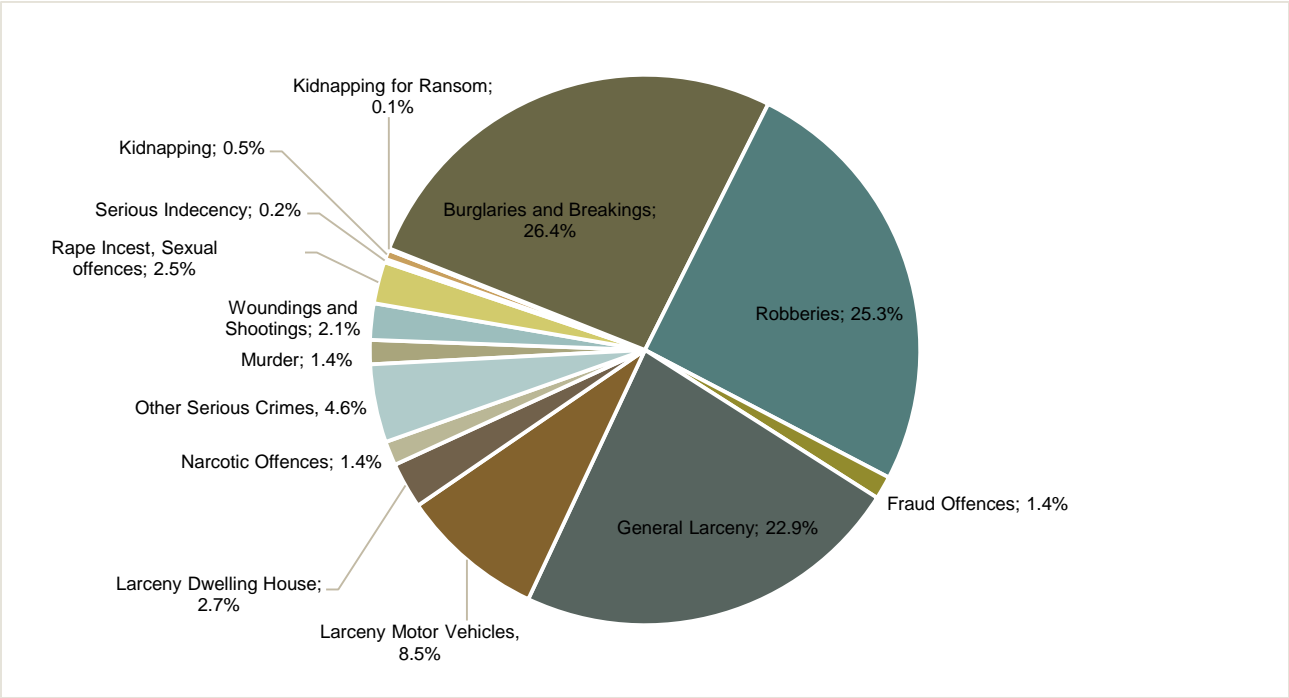


Figure 2.9: Share of Serious Crimes by the Type of Crime in Central Police Division, 2010

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Profile, 2012

3 Land Use and Land Resources

The municipality is one of the most diverse and complex municipalities on the island given a number of its characteristics. Apart from its favourable location with access to major arterial road networks, the municipality also bounds six other municipal corporations. The size and position of the municipal boundaries ensures a wide range of geographic features including river basins, forested areas, the central range, plains and coastline. The unique features and resources within the municipality are explored below.

3.1 Land Use and resources

The municipality does indeed exhibit one of the most diverse land use patterns which comprises tree crop and agricultural areas, old sugarcane lands, large sporting facilities, light and heavy industrial parks, and rural and urban settlements. The town of Couva is the commercial and administrative centre of the municipality and it is proximate to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and Port. The municipality is characterised by considerable industrial and compact urban development in areas west off the Solomon Hochoy Highway and rural development, forest cover and mixed agriculture in areas east of the highway. Major urban development has been concentrated in the Gasparillo-Claxton bay, the California-Couva and in the St. Mary's-Chase Village areas. Settlement patterns in the eastern sections of the municipality can be characterised as rural village development, which is constituted by predominantly by ribbon development along its major roads.

The position of the municipality means that it benefits from direct access to both the north and south of Trinidad via the Solomon Hochoy and the Uriah Butler Highways in addition to the Southern Main Road. The region is also home to three major sporting facilities, the National Cycle Track, the National Cricket Centre and the Ato Boldon Stadium. A range of other community facilities are distributed throughout the municipality. Given its port and coastline, access via the sea is also a possibility, though it used primarily for commercial purposes.

3.2 Freshwater and Forest Resources

Given the proximity of the central range, the municipality is drained by a network of rivers that originate within the Central Range and generally takes a radial course through the municipality. The municipality is home not only to reservoir impoundments but also mangrove swamps and forest reserves.

3.3 Coastal and Marine Resources

Given the position of the municipality, it is home to a 25 kilometre long coastline along its west coast. The western coastline can be considered flat but ascends gradually towards the Solomon Hochoy Highway, which roughly parallels the coastline to the east. Apart from its port facility, the western coastline is also home to six beaches where considerable quantities of fish are landed. These beaches include Waterloo, St. Margaret Bay, Orange Valley, Carli Bay, Claxton Bay and Brickfield.

4 Municipal Physical and Social Assets

4.1 Physical Infrastructure

4.1.1 Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure

The presence of world class industrial complexes creates a demand and a high premium on quality in the telecommunications infrastructure, in which regards, the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) and Columbus Communications Trinidad Limited (CCTL) are the main providers. Other businesses and residents in many areas have access to telephone services – fixed and mobile, cable television and internet access but some rural and remote locations may suffer unreliable access. In the urban centres, however, access is good.

Across the municipality, the majority of residents that can afford it, have access to educational and entertainment services, including broadband. This means that residents can access all free online educational programmes through Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCS) now available from some of the most reputable tertiary institutions like Harvard University and Stanford University.

4.1.2 Storm Water Management and Coastal Protection

There are parts of the municipality that are subject to severe perennial flooding to control which would require major infrastructure works, including construction of levees, expansion of drainage channels and detention ponds. The Municipal Council has a major interest in the capacity of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure in serving the needs of this municipality in which drainage poses a major challenge and in which substantial losses have been incurred by businesses and the farming community in recent years.

Major infrastructure upgrade being undertaken in the municipality would address these problems, but they is not likely to eliminate them entirely from the municipality. Indeed, the rapid conversion of what was open spaces to paved areas and buildings have reduced permeability with consequences for flow of water in rainfall events. The Corporation has invested heavily in drainage and irrigation in the area, and the building of box drains has been a major element in its development budget.

The need to address sea defences is of high importance because of the rise in sea levels caused by global warming. The absence of these defences can result in the damage of existing infrastructure and disruption of economic activity inclusive of those conducted by micro and small businesses.

4.1.3 Transportation

The western half of the municipality is well served by a substantial arterial road infrastructure comprised of the Uriah Butler/Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway, and the Southern Main Road. However, the eastern half is not as well served. Roads in that part of the municipality are of low quality and/or not well-maintained thus rendering transport costs relatively expensive in some communities.

4.1.4 Water Supply and Distribution

Water supply and distribution have been the focus of attention in the more recent past and a number of areas are now better served and with greater regularity. However, there are squatter settlements which may not be well served.

4.1.5 Electricity

Electricity supply is universal in the area, and the few households without access to electricity suffer problems of affordability from extreme poverty.

4.1.6 Wastewater Management

Wastewater management and treatment remain a major problem to be addressed in the municipality. WASA is responsible for the development and implementation of a Waste Water Plan for the municipality.

4.1.7 Solid Waste Management

The municipality is largely underserved in terms of a central sewer system and there is a much higher level of septic tank and latrine use in the area than in the country as a whole. There is uncontrolled dumping of waste in some parts of the municipality. There is need for improvement in solid waste management in this municipality, which has an economic base previously in primary agricultural activities and, since the 1970s, in the large-scale energy-intensive industrial production with world class plants. The Forres Park Landfill is in this municipality.

4.2 Social/Cultural Infrastructure

4.2.1 Dwelling and Building Stock

The Municipality has had an expansion in its housing stock in recent years, with investments made by the state through the Housing Development Corporation and by the private sector. However, the municipality has suffered the challenge of spontaneous settlements.

There is substantial construction being undertaken in parts of the municipality with the Government in the lead with new buildings designed to reduce the concentration of services in Port-of-Spain and in keeping with its commitment to develop the central towns of the island of Trinidad.

4.3 Social Facilities

4.3.1 Education

The municipality is reasonably well supplied with school places at the primary and secondary levels allowing relatively ease of access to the relevant cohorts. However, there may yet be some shortfall in facilities for early childhood care.

There is a University of Trinidad and Tobago Campus at Point Lisas, which focuses on Energy – the Energy Campus – offering programmes in aviation, power and lighting, basic electronics, and welding, While the University offers a number of short courses, it is not apparent that its reach extends to persons engaged in MSMEs.

4.3.2 Health

Primary health care facilities are relatively well distributed through Health Facilities. Secondary care services are available at the Couva District Hospital, with tertiary services at either end of the Highway at the Mount Hope Hospital and at the San Fernando General Hospital. A new hospital is being constructed in the municipality to cater mainly to children and is due to be opened presently. There are also private hospitals in the municipality. The Piparo Empowerment Centre provides rehabilitation services to male substance abusers over a nine to twelve month period: residents come from across the country.

4.3.3 Disaster Management

Within the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Corporation, there exists the Disaster Management Unit which is linked to the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management, the national organisation charged with the responsibility of disaster preparedness for the nation. The Disaster Management Plan for the region recognises the possibilities of natural and manmade disasters.

The Disaster Management Unit of the Corporation has the wide remit of the municipality. However, the major industrial companies at the industrial estates, have their own disaster units. The presence of a number of major industrial plants at Point Lisas and Savonetta, some utilising massive energy, as well as an industrial port managing highly flammable exports like LNG, requires that the Municipality has to be sensitive to the risks of catastrophic failure and industrial accidents in its midst.

4.3.4 Social Services and Community Development

Social services agencies beyond health and educational facilities are available across the various communities. The Ministry of the People and Social Development established a Regional Social & Human Development Council that brings together all the public social service providers of the area as well as Private Sector Organisations and NGOs, to coordinate efforts at poverty reduction and social services delivery. The Council's remit is to:

- Appraise, monitor and evaluate grants to NGO's/CBO's in the region under the Regional Micro Project Funds (RMPF);
- Identify and analyse the needs and responses in the regions; and
- Develop integrated anti-poverty strategies for the regions;

Its work places it in direct contact with the MSMEs of the municipality. There is the Couva Social Services Centre which provides integrated social services to residents of Couva and environs. Residents can secure training in basic and advanced computer literacy, and computer and business services.

4.3.5 Recreation, Sports and Entertainment

There are facilities for the popular sports of cricket and football in most of the major population concentrations, and there are recreation grounds in most communities, under the control of the Municipal Council.

There are also facilities that are available for national/regional sports events – the Ato Boldon Stadium can host major soccer and athletic events. The Municipality is also host to the National Cricket Centre, a Cycling Velodrome and the National Aquatic Centre which is due for completion presently. Altogether, these make the municipality a centre for sports tourism in the country.

In most communities, there are privately owned locations for recreation and entertainment in the form of bars and gaming machines. Recent passage of legislation has legalised the operation of private members clubs that exist in the municipality.

5 The Area Economy

5.1 Gross Domestic Product of Trinidad and Tobago

The economy of Trinidad and Tobago witnessed reduced growth over the period January to September 2014 of 0.7 percent which followed on a period of sustained expansion of 2.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2013, see Table 5.1 below. An unanticipated decline in the performance of the energy sector during the first two quarters of 2014 was the largest factor contributing to the sluggish growth observed. Nevertheless, this was largely offset by continued growth in the non-energy sector for the same period. Increased production in petrochemicals and natural gas in the third quarter resulted in an expansion of the energy sector of 2.8 percent subsequent to the previous two quarters of decline. This third quarter expansion could be attributed to growth of 3.6 percent observed in natural gas production when compared with the same period in 2013 when large-scale maintenance activity occasioned a reduction of 4.6 percent.

The momentum in fourth quarter non-energy sector growth was sustained in 2013 of 1.9 percent was sustained into the first three quarters of 2014 where an average growth rate of 2.2 percent was observed. The continued growth resulted largely due to strong activity in the finance, distribution and construction sectors. Substantial increases in local cement sales precipitated average growth rate of 3.1 percent observed in the construction sector over the first three quarters of 2014. Robust activity in the construction sector was reflective of numerous continuing large scale public sector developments including but not limited to the Port at Point Galeota, the National Aquatic Centre, the Children's Hospital, and the Point Fortin Highway. Greater production of materials required for construction as well as cement caused the growth observed in manufacturing sector growth of 1.2 percent. New car sales drove the growth observed in the distribution sector while resilient activity in commercial banking stimulated financial sector growth of 3.2 percent. At the national level, agriculture grow on average by 3.5 percent for the first 3 quarters of 2014.

The third quarter of also 2014 witnessed increased inflationary pressures following comparative calm over the three preceding quarters. Inflationary pressures were propelled largely by prices of food and greater spending by consumers as demonstrated by precipitous growth in new car sales, robust growth in consumer lending and notable increases in government spending. Headline inflation by the third quarter of 2014 increased from 3.4 percent for the first two quarters to roughly 8 percent by the end of the third quarter of 2014. Food price inflation for the third quarter rose to 18.2 percent up from an average of 4.4 percent over the preceding two quarters of 2014. Increases in the prices of vegetables, fruit and other food products were the primary contributing factors.

Furthermore, the most recent official estimates on the labour force have indicated that unemployment is at a historic low of 3.1 percent for the first quarter of 2014. Robust labour force participation and increasing job creation have resulted in the improvement in the unemployment rate when compared to the rate of 3.7 percent observed in 2013. Increases in employment were most notable among personal services, social services and community services. To a lesser extent, increased labour force participation was observed in the agriculture, water and electricity and manufacturing sectors.

Table 5.1: Trinidad and Tobago Selected Economic Indicators

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Jan-Sep-14
Real GDP Growth (%) (2000 = 100)¹⁰	-3.4	-0.3	-1.2	0.3	2.1	0.7
Energy Sector	1.3	1.8	-3.7	-1.9	0.2	-1.5
Non-Energy Sector	-6.6	-1.8	0.6	1.8	3.5	2.2
Agriculture	-0.7	-15.7	1.2	-2.4	0.3	3.5
Manufacturing	-6.6	0.8	1.7	-1.3	2.6	1.2
Construction	-2.5	-5.8	-2.4	-0.9	3	3.1
Financial Services	-1.8	2.5	0.9	2.5	4.8	3.2
Inflation Rate (%)¹¹						
(period average)	7	10.5	5.1	9.3	5.2	4.6
(end of period)	1.3	13.4	5.3	7.2	5.6	7.8
Unemployment Rate (%)¹²	5.3	5.9	4.9	5	3.7	3.1 ¹³

Sources: Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Central Statistical Office and Ministry of Finance

5.2 Key Economic Drivers (Activities)

Historically, the local economy was driven by the agricultural sector and relied to a substantial degree on the growth and production of sugar cane for local economic growth and development. However, with the shutting down of the Caroni 1975 Limited, activities tied to the sugar industry in the municipality were devastated. Contemporaneously, businesses in the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo operate in a wide range of sectors (

¹⁰ Growth rates are derived from the Central Bank's Quarterly Index of Gross Domestic Product

¹¹ Changes in the Index of Retail Prices (RPI), January 2003 = 100

¹² This represents the average of the four quarters

¹³ For the period January - March

Table 5.2). Consistent with that observed in contiguous municipalities, enterprises in the municipality operate predominantly in the Retail and Distribution (55.66%), Personal Services (15.91%), and Construction (7.77%) sectors. It should be noted, however, that size-based differences in sectoral representation were observed. While Micro and Small Enterprises operated predominantly in the Retail and Distribution Sector, Medium and Large Enterprises operated to a larger extent in the Construction and Energy Sectors. Enterprises were largely concentrated in the communities of Couva Central (8.04%), Cunupia (7.33%), Gasparillo (6.58%), Freeport (5.45%), California (5.32%), Claxton Bay (5.09%), Carapichaima (4.22%), Couva (3.86%), Chase Village (3.76%), and the Point Lisas Industrial Estate (3.73%).

Table 5.2: Enterprises by Sector and Size

Sector	Size of Enterprise					Total
	Micro (1 to 5)	Small (6 to 25)	Medium (26 to 50)	Large (50 and over)	Branch	
Assembly Type And Related Industries	1.13%	1.70%	5.56%	7.69%	2.22%	1.71%
Chemicals And Non-Metallic Minerals	0.19%	1.70%	2.78%	9.62%	0.00%	0.97%
Construction	3.52%	16.76%	34.72%	23.08%	8.89%	7.77%
Distribution	64.82%	42.90%	19.44%	10.58%	42.22%	56.66%
Educational And Cultural Community Services	1.01%	1.70%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%	1.06%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate And Business Services	3.15%	9.09%	11.11%	11.54%	31.11%	5.37%
Food Processors And Drink	0.44%	1.70%	2.78%	3.85%	0.00%	0.88%
Hotels And Guest Houses	0.19%	0.28%	0.00%	0.96%	0.00%	0.23%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	0.25%	2.56%	1.39%	3.85%	0.00%	0.83%
Personal Services	20.20%	3.98%	5.56%	3.85%	2.22%	15.91%
Petroleum And Other Mining Industries	1.01%	7.10%	5.56%	17.31%	4.44%	3.01%
Printing, Publishing And Paper Converters	0.19%	1.42%	1.39%	0.96%	0.00%	0.46%
Textiles, Garments, Footwear, Headwear	0.25%	0.57%	0.00%	1.92%	0.00%	0.37%
Transportation, Communication And Storage	2.83%	5.68%	6.94%	4.81%	8.89%	3.65%
Wood And Related Products	0.82%	2.84%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%	1.11%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Consistent with population growth trends observed within the municipality, MSMEs in operation grew by 13.08 percent from 1,782 in 2001 to 2,015 in 2007. Figure 5.1 illustrates how the mix of Micro, Small and Medium Size enterprises has gradually changed over the period. Of all MSMEs operating in the period, the proportion of Micro Enterprises fell from 92 percent in 2000 to 82.57 percent in 2007. In contrast, small enterprises increased from 6.52 percent in 2000 to 14.66 percent in 2007.

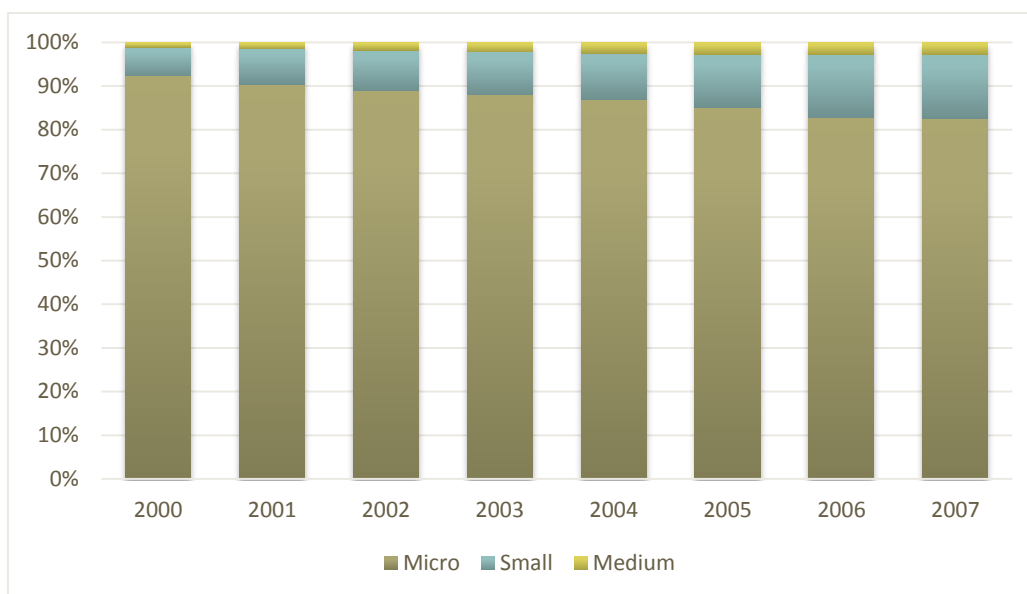


Figure 5.1: Registered MSMEs in Operation 2000 – 2007

Given the rich cultural and natural history of the municipality as represented by its cultural events, cultural and historical sites, scenic and diverse landscape and vast fertile land resources, the municipality exhibits potential for the development of both a cultural tourism cluster as well as an agriculture cluster.

5.3 Employment and Unemployment Trends

There are no readily available data on employment disaggregated by municipality. Employment trends in the municipality have to be contextualised against the backdrop of labour force trends in the economy as a whole. The latest complete data set available relates to the second quarter of 2013. The data showed a decrease in labour force participation, for both males and females, with the overall rate falling from 62.0 percent in the first quarter to 60.7 percent in the second quarter. There was a decline also relative to the corresponding quarter in 2012.

The country has had a declining trend in unemployment which was estimated at 3.7 percent in the first quarter of 2015. Given the structural characteristics of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent represents “full employment unemployment.” This is evident in the ‘hands wanted’ advertisements, and in the presence of non-nationals in a number of low level occupations like Security Guards, gas station attendants and fast food restaurants.

The distribution of employment by sector reveals that community, social and personal services accounted for as much as one-third of employment. It is likely that much of the employment in public services is reflected in this statistic. In other words, given the dominance of oil and gas in the revenues of the Government, there may well be “Dutch Disease” effects at work in the labour market. The ready availability of employment in Government raises the reserve price of labour, and reduces the supply of workers to other sectors. This would impact on MSMEs, and make it difficult

for them to recruit workers, or make labour so costly that MSMEs find it difficult to compete with imports.

5.4 Key Business Activity

Underlying the growth of enterprise witnessed in the area in recent years, is the evolution of a highly segmented economy in the municipality. Firstly, there is the heavy industrial sector at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate that has in its employment workers and personnel from all over the country: the municipality is not deemed to be the source for the work-force at the Estate but the entire country. Some of these might have become resident in the Municipality, but being the better paid workers in the country, they might select for residence areas of the country with elite communities further south just outside San Fernando or in the environs west of Port-of-Spain, or in the centre of north Trinidad like Valsayn, St. Augustine or Maracas Valley. Many of their needs might be catered for in such districts, with the result that the demands that they make with their higher incomes are satisfied outside of the municipality.

There are other large firms not on the industrial estate that draw their employees both from within and outside of the catchment area of the municipality. Two of the largest construction firms in the country - Seereram Brothers Ltd and Junior Sammy Group of Companies - have their headquarters in the Municipality. As national companies engaged mainly in contracts for the Government and state enterprises, these firms operate across the country. Their lower level workers might be drawn from the municipality. However, their professional staff is likely to come from all over the country and display the same residential preferences as those engaged at the higher levels of operation in the enterprises at Point Lisas. It is the work-force employed from within the municipality that is likely to create a demand for goods and services to be satisfied by MSMEs operating in the municipality.

Another group that is growing in importance and earn incomes in employment located in the municipality is the workforce in Government agencies. In more recent times, the Government has sought to decentralise its services and has relocated a number of agencies in central Trinidad, including in the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo. This has created a flow of personnel on a daily basis into the municipality. The policy may eventually lead to some of this work-force seeking residential accommodation in the municipality.

Another segment of the market is the substantial population that is resident in the area and earn their keep in activities outside the municipality and shop for goods and services within or in the immediate vicinity. They have accessible to them higher end shopping complex just outside Chaguanas at a major mall and also in a range of service providers in other buying centres in Chaguanas, Couva and in Marabella. All of the high-level industrial and energy related activities, construction firms, commercial enterprises, banking, financial and credit unions¹⁴ entities create a density of income generation in the municipality and in the immediate environs of its industrial and commercial centre.

¹⁴ One of the largest credit unions in the country, Venture Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited has its main office in this municipality.

There is also the hinterland segment in the east of the municipality. Many of the residents in these communities also earn their incomes outside of the municipality, and journey outward on a daily basis. Those engaged in agriculture and farming and small scale commerce and distribution serving the area remain in the municipality. The farmers depend on their ability to source markets outside of their specific community of residence, may seek outlets in towns within the municipality eg Couva or outside of it in such towns as Chaguanas, San Juan, and Tunapuna or in the capital city, Port-of-Spain.

6 Municipal MSME Profile

It is recognised that MSMEs are a key driver of socio-economic growth in national economies. The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago in 2008/2009 undertook a comprehensive study of the small and medium sized business in the country, the results of which were presented in the report entitled, “Developing Viable Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago: Challenges and Priorities - The Structure, Performance and Networks of SMEs in Trinidad and Tobago.”

There is considerable variation about what constitutes a micro, small or medium-sized (MSME) enterprise. There are various definitions in the literature that tend to be largely dependent on the purpose of the study being undertaken at the time, or the use to which the results are to be put by the particular author(s) or organisations. At the time of the study sponsored by the Central Bank, there was no national definition on MSMEs. The study acknowledges that businesses tend to be lumped either into one grouping called the “SME Sector” or further broken down into the subcategories of “micro, small and medium-sized” enterprises.

The report revealed that the definition then currently in use by the Central Bank, the then BDC and the Ministry of Labour and Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MOL) was based on the Report of the Cabinet-appointed Task Force on Small and Medium Enterprise Development (June 1995). This considered three factors: number of employees, assets and sales (Table 6.1). As a result of the limited information available for SMEs on sales or assets, the Central Bank’s study employed the approach of using “at least” the number of employees as a guide for placing a firm into one category or another.

Table 6.1: Domestic Definition of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Size	No. of Employees	TT\$ Assets (Excluding Land and Buildings)	TT\$ Sales
Micro	1 – 5	< \$250,000	< \$250,000
Small	6 – 25	> \$250,000 - <\$1,500,000	> \$250,000 - <\$5,000,000
Medium	26 – 50	> \$1,500,000 - <\$5,000,000	> \$5,000,000 - <\$10,000,000

Source: The Ministry of Labour and Small and Medium Enterprise Development quoted in the Report of the Cabinet Appointed Task Force on Small and Medium Enterprise Development (June 1995) as quoted in the report: Developing Viable Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago: Challenges and Priorities – The Structure, Performance and Networks of SMEs in Trinidad and Tobago

Currently, Trinidad and Tobago has a draft Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) Policy which provides definitions for micro- mini-micro and small-sized businesses which were equivalent to the categories previously used. During this study on Tobago, it was clear that not many persons were aware of the new definition. The criteria for the new MSE definition are provided in the table below (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Criteria Used to Define Mini-Micro, Micro and Small-sized Businesses

Size of Enterprise	Number of Employees	Asset Value (TT\$)	Turnover (per annum) (TT\$)
Mini-micro	≤1 including owner/manager	Up to \$100,000	Up to \$250,000
Micro	≤5 including owner/manager	\$100,001 - \$500,000	Up to \$2,000,000
Small	≤25 including owner/manager	\$500,001 - \$5,000,000	Up to \$10,000,000

Source: Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Enterprise Development Division, 2013. Draft Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) Policy for Trinidad and Tobago 2013-2016, September 2013.

6.1 Municipal MSME Survey (2015)

The Municipal MSME Survey was conducted over the period April – May 2015 among 120 MSMEs operating within the confines of the municipality. The results of this survey are presented in the following categories:

- General Characteristics;
- Size of Enterprise;
- Legal Status;
- Primary Business Activities;
- Employment;
- Markets and Annual Sales;
- Financing and Investment; and
- Use of Internet

6.1.1 General Characteristics

Of the 120 respondents, the vast majority (76.9%) were over the age of 36 (Table 6.3). Of that group of entrepreneurs, roughly 27.3 percent were over the age of 55. Interestingly, almost a quarter of respondents were under the age of 35, indicating that the municipality was home to a large cohort of young entrepreneurs.

Table 6.3: Category of Business by Age of Respondent

Category of Business	Age Last Birthday				Total
	Less than 35 years	36-55 years	More than 55 years	Age not given	
Micro Mini	30.0	45.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Micro	20.0	62.5	17.5	0.0	100.0
Small	19.5	41.5	39.0	0.0	100.0
Total	23.1	49.6	27.3	0.0	100.0

In conducting the MSME survey, equal numbers of micro-mini, micro and small enterprises were surveyed (Table 6.4). The survey revealed that male entrepreneurs exhibited a greater propensity towards the operation of small enterprises (40.6%) than their female counterparts (25%), while female entrepreneurs demonstrated a great tendency towards the operation of micro-mini enterprises (42.3%) than compared to their male counterparts (26.1%).

Table 6.4: Category of Business by Sex of Respondent

Category of Business	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Micro Mini	26.1	42.3	33.1
Micro	33.3	32.7	33.1
Small	40.6	25.0	33.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, entrepreneurs were predominantly of East Indian descent (71%), followed by persons of African descent (18%), entrepreneurs of Mixed ancestry (8%), and entrepreneurs of Chinese heritage (3%) (Figure 6.1).

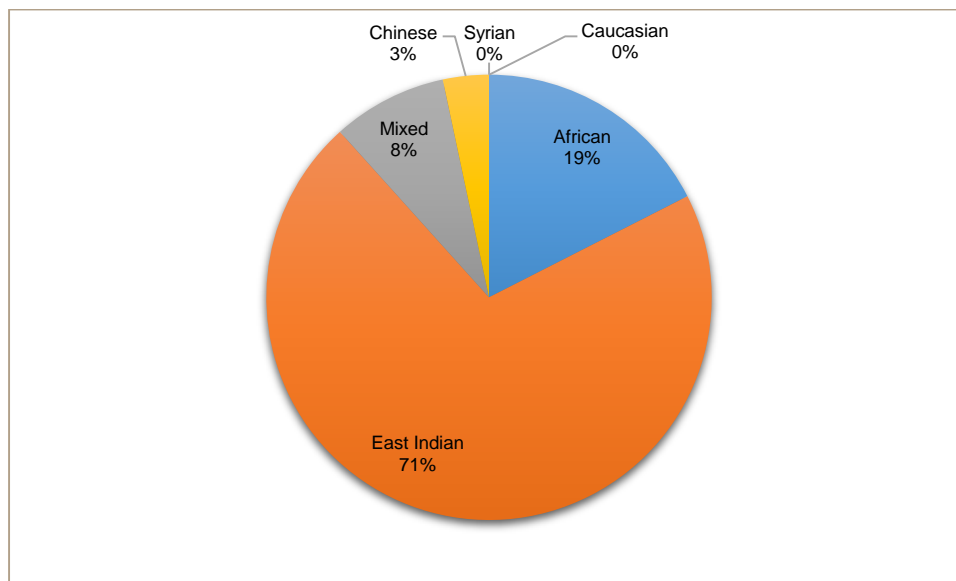


Figure 6.1: Distribution of MSMEs by Ethnicity

6.1.2 Size of Enterprise

The survey revealed notable differences between the proportions of Micro-Mini, Micro and Small enterprises by Gender (Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3). As mentioned previously, female entrepreneurs demonstrated a notable tendency towards the operation of micro-mini enterprises than their male counterparts (42% versus 26%). In contrast, male entrepreneurs tended towards the operation of small enterprises to a substantially larger extent than their female counterparts (41% versus 25%).

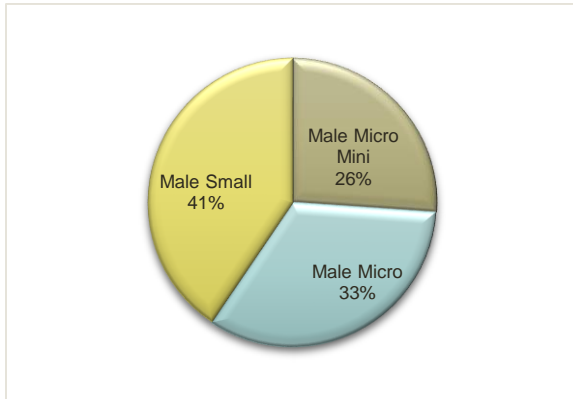


Figure 6.2: Male Ownership of MSMEs

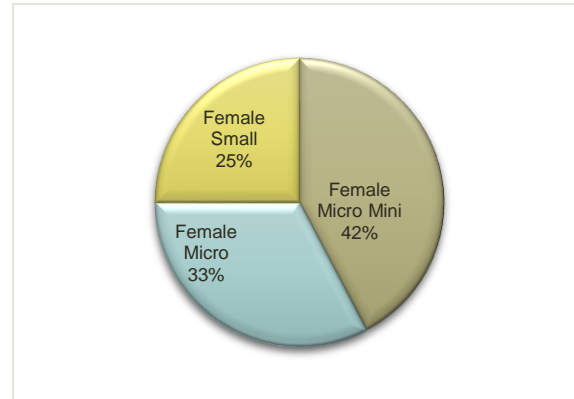


Figure 6.3: Female Ownership of MSMEs

6.1.3 Legal Status

The majority of respondents were in business in excess of 10 years (61%) at the time of the survey (Figure 6.4 and Table 6.5). Just over a quarter of entrepreneurs were in business between 1 and 5 years, while only a minority of entrepreneurs (11%) were in business one year or less. Of the 120 respondents, the vast majority (92%) admitted that their business had been formally registered (Figure 6.5). Only a minority (8%) admitted to being part of the informal sector¹⁵. Registration of businesses is encouraged and affords operators the benefit from programmes geared at promoting and fostering MSME development. Non-registration of unincorporated enterprises refers to absence of registration under commercial, tax or social security laws, professional groups' regulatory acts or similar regulations established by national legislative bodies.

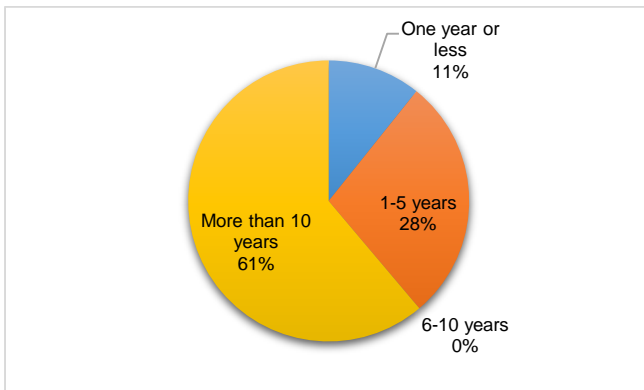


Figure 6.4: Length of Time in Operation

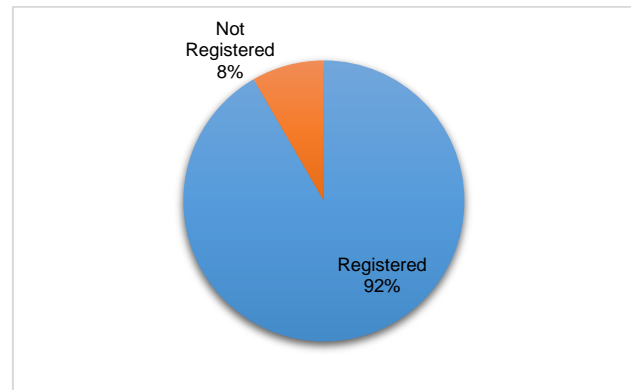


Figure 6.5: Distribution of Registered Versus Unregistered MSMEs

¹⁵ The 1995 National Baseline Survey (Characteristics and Constraints of Small Businesses in Trinidad and Tobago prepared in 1996) defines an informal business as “a small firm with less than 5 workers (no more than 2 of whom are regular employees), which does not have any licence, permit or certification to operate” (p. 89).

Table 6.5: Length of Time in Operation by Size of Business

Category of Business	Length of Time in Business					Total
	One year or less	1-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years	Not stated	
Micro Mini	22.5	35.0	0.0	42.5	0.0	100.0
Micro	7.5	25.0	0.0	67.5	0.0	100.0
Small	2.4	24.4	0.0	73.2	0.0	100.0
Total	10.7	28.1	0.0	61.2	0.0	100.0

Considering the sizes of the businesses surveyed, it is not surprising that most entrepreneurs were registered as sole proprietors (62%) (Table 6.6). Other business types observed included Limited Liability Companies (19.8%), Partnerships (14.9%) and Co-operatives (0.8%). Size appeared to be a factor influencing the legal status of the business with Small enterprises being registered to a much greater extent as limited liability companies (39%) when compared to micro-mini enterprises (5%). While Micro-mini enterprises were registered to a substantially larger degree as Sole proprietors (75%) when compared to small enterprises (39%).

Table 6.6: Legal Status of MSMEs by Size of Enterprise

Category of Business	Legal Status of Business					Total
	Sole Proprietor	Partnership	Limited Liability Company	Cooperative	Not stated	
Micro Mini	75.0	12.5	5.0	0.0	7.5	100.0
Micro	72.5	12.5	15.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Small	39.0	19.5	39.0	2.4	0.0	100.0
Total	62.0	14.9	19.8	.8	2.5	100.0

6.1.4 Primary Business Activities

Of the 120 respondents, almost three-fifths operated in the retail and distribution sector (Figure 6.6). Other major sectors represented include the services sector (16%), the food and beverage sector (14%), the Craft Sector (1%), Tourism Sector (1%), and the Agro processing sector (1%).

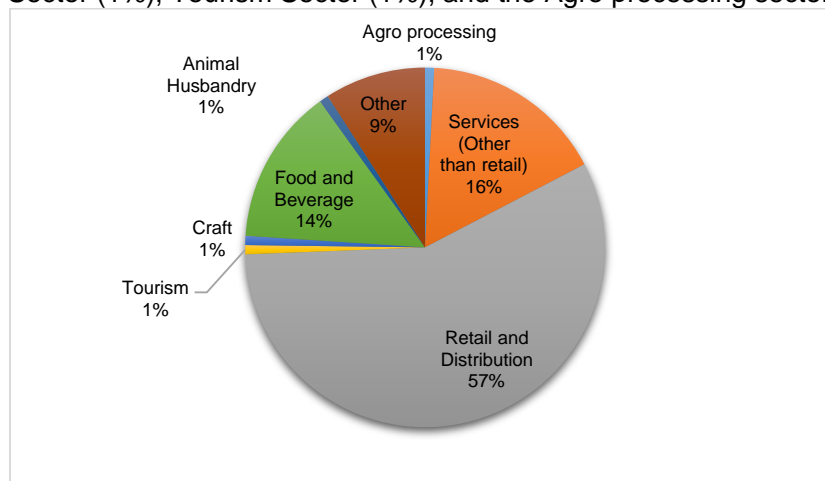


Figure 6.6: Distribution of MSMEs by Primary Business Activities

A relationship between size and key business activity was observed within the sample investigated (Table 6.7). While enterprises in the service sector accounted for 16.5 percent of all enterprises within the sample, only a minority of small businesses (9.8%) operated in this sector when compared to micro mini enterprises (25%).

Table 6.7: Key Business Activities by Size of Enterprise

Primary Business Activity or Sector	Category of Business			
	Micro Mini	Micro	Small	Total
Agro processing	0.0	0.0	2.4	.8
Services (Other than retail)	25.0	15.0	9.8	16.5
Retail and Distribution	55.0	55.0	61.0	57.0
Tourism	2.5	0.0	0.0	.8
Craft	0.0	2.5	0.0	.8
Food and Beverage	12.5	12.5	17.1	14.0
Animal Husbandry	0.0	2.5	0.0	.8
Other	5.0	12.5	9.8	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

No significant gender-based differences were observed within the sample investigated (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Key Business Activities for MSMEs by Sex

Primary Business Activity or Sector	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Agro processing	1.4	0.0	.8
Services (Other than retail)	18.8	13.5	16.5
Retail and Distribution	55.1	59.6	57.0
Tourism	0.0	1.9	.8
Craft	1.4	0.0	.8
Food and Beverage	15.9	11.5	14.0
Animal Husbandry	0.0	1.9	.8
Other	7.2	11.5	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

6.1.5 Markets and Annual Sales

The market for the sales of goods produced and services rendered expanded throughout Trinidad and Tobago (Table 6.9). Of the 120 respondents, almost half indicated that the local community was the primary market for their products and services. While only a minority of respondents (9.1%) identified the nearest town/city as the primary market for their products, almost a quarter saw all of Trinidad as their primary market. Interestingly, as much as 17.4 percent of respondents indicated that their primary market was indeed at the National level and encompassed both Trinidad and Tobago.

Table 6.9: Primary Markets for Goods and Services by Size of Enterprise

Category of Business	Primary Market					Total
	Local community	Nearest town/city	All of Trinidad	Trinidad and Tobago	Not stated	
Micro Mini	67.5	10.0	15.0	7.5	0.0	100.0
Micro	55.0	5.0	25.0	15.0	0.0	100.0
Small	24.4	12.2	31.7	29.3	2.4	100.0
Total	48.8	9.1	24.0	17.4	.8	100.0

The annual sales of entrepreneurs surveyed varied widely from under TT\$ 100,000 to as much as TT\$ 5,000,000 (

Figure 6.7). Almost 65 percent of respondents generated sales under TT\$100,000, while roughly 34 percent made sales in the TT\$ 100,001 to TT\$ 300,000 range. Very few respondents (1.8%) generated sales in the TT\$ 300,001 to TT\$ 5,000,000 range annually at the time of the survey.

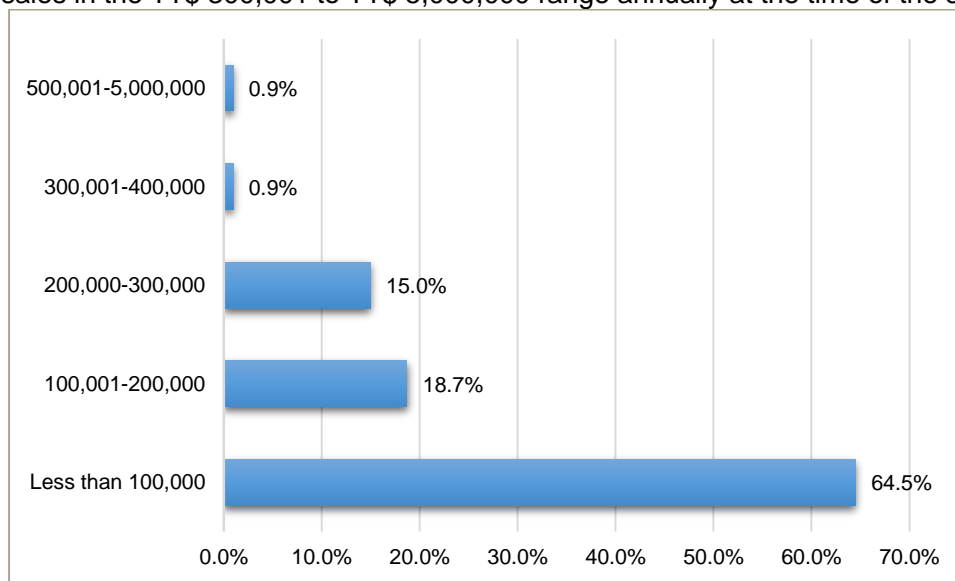


Figure 6.7: Annual Sales for MSMEs

A small minority of respondents (1.7%) indicated that they engaged in some degree of exportation (Table 6.10). Of that group of respondents, products were exported regionally to Grenada (50%) and Guyana (50%) (Table 6.11).

Table 6.10: Business Exporting/Not Exporting Products and Category of Business

Export Products	Category of Business			
	Micro Mini	Micro	Small	Total
Yes	0.0	0.0	4.9	1.7
No	100.0	100.0	95.1	98.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6.11: Country Exporting To and Category of Business

Country Exporting To	Category of Business			
	Micro Mini	Micro	Small	Total
Grenada	0	0	50	50
Guyana	0	0	50	50
Total	0	0	100	100

6.1.6 Financing and Investment

Access to finance is perhaps one of the greatest challenges faced by enterprises of this size. MSMEs require financing not only for “seed” capital but also for working capital and expansion. Of the 120 respondents, almost three-fifths were self-financed or received financial assistance from their families (Table 6.12). Considering the fact that commercial banks are the pivot of the local financial system it is not surprising that as much as 38.5 percent of respondents turned to commercial banks for financing. Other sources of financing included NEDCO (1.5%) as well as Credit Unions (0.7%). Size based differences were observed in respect of the selected source of funds. Micro Mini enterprises relied on self-financing/ family financing to a much larger extent (83.7%) than their small counterparts (41.7%). In contrast, small enterprises exhibited greater success in accessing finance from commercial banks (52.1%) when compared to micro-mini enterprises (16.3%).

Table 6.12: Key Suppliers of Financing for MSMEs by Size of Enterprise

Source of Funds	Category of Business			
	Micro Mini	Micro	Small	Total
Self/Family	83.7%	54.5%	41.7%	59.3%
Credit Union	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.7%
Commercial Bank	16.3%	45.5%	52.1%	38.5%
NEDCO	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	1.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The survey revealed that almost three-quarters of respondents indicated that investments not exceeding TT\$ 250,000 were made in plant equipment and other assets (Figure 6.8). While 17.2 percent of respondents invested between TT\$250,001 in plant equipment and assets, only a small minority invested in excess of TT\$2,000,000 in property plant and equipment.

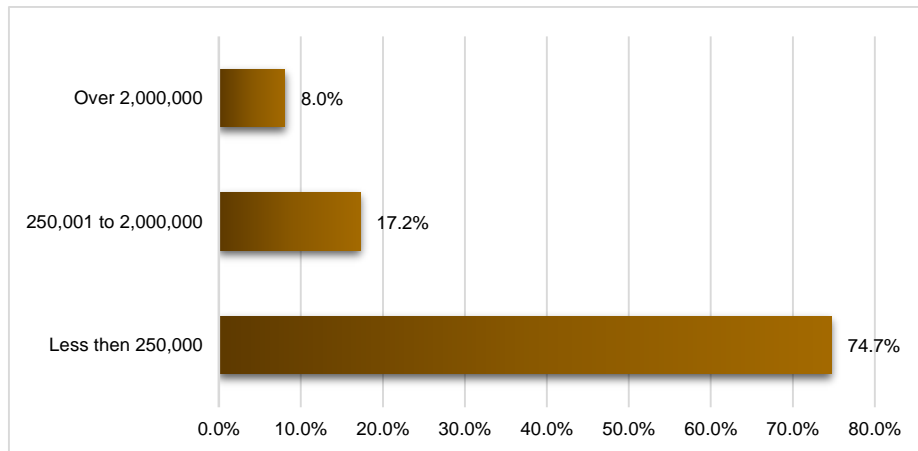


Figure 6.8: Amount Invested in Plant Equipment and Other Assets

6.1.7 Use of Internet

Interestingly, more than half of all respondents indicated no routine use of the internet in business (Table 6.13). While small businesses did routinely use the internet in two-thirds of all cases, just over one third of micro-mini and micro enterprises used the internet routinely in their operations.

Table 6.13: Businesses Reporting Routine Use of Internet and Category of Business

Routinely Use The Internet in Business	Category of Business			
	Micro Mini	Micro	Small	Total
Yes	35.0	37.5	65.9	46.3
No	65.0	62.5	34.1	53.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of those respondents that did routinely use the internet, uses include accessing e-mail services (37.5%), researching product information (33.6%), and identifying critical market information (25.8%). No significant differences were observed among enterprises of different size categories (Figure 6.9).

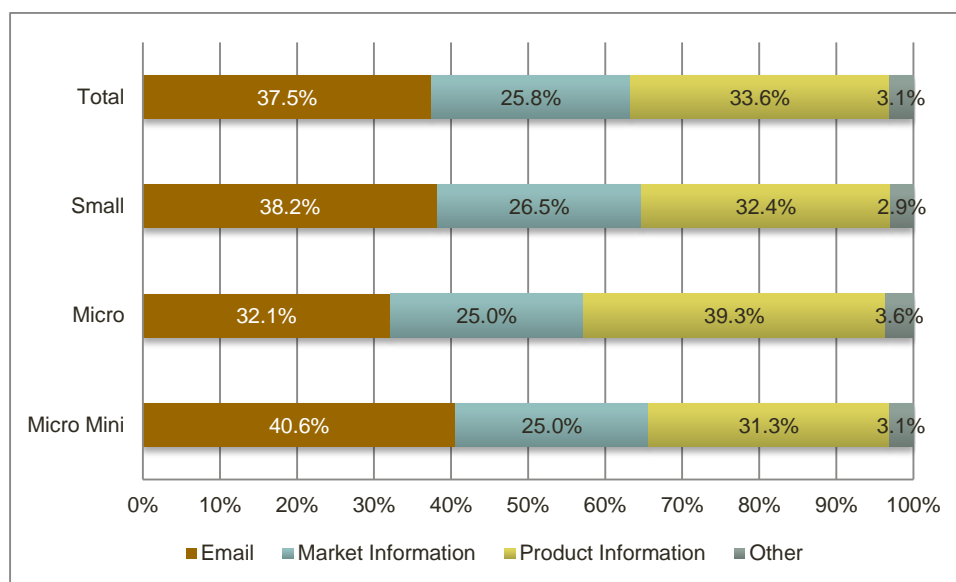


Figure 6.9: Reported Uses of Internet and Category of Business

6.2 Partners in Local Area Economic Development in Trinidad

6.2.1 The Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSED).

The MOLSED is specifically designed by the Government to foster and implement labour strategies on a national level. Whist MOLSED is multidimensional, its major focus is establishing and maintaining a steady industrial relations environment in the work place which promotes productivity and sustainability.

Six Strategic Objectives of MOLSED:

- Facilitation of labour market equilibrium
- Promotion of opportunities for poverty reduction, employment and wealth creation
- Promotion of the application of the principles of decent work in the workplace
- Promotion of industrial relations peace in the economy
- Enhancement of the capacity of the MOLSED to undertake an expanded role in formulating and implementing national development goals and strategies
- Management of Government's regional and international commitments and responsibilities with respect to the Labour Market Agenda, in particular, CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) was established in July 2002 under the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSED) to assist small and micro businesses with regard to the accessing of loans for business start-up and expansion purposes. Skills, training and financial support for entrepreneurs are also offered by NEDCO as they seek to diversify the economic landscape of Trinidad and Tobago.

There is no NEDCO office within the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, however, they work closely with the business sector in the area to promote a positive outcome for the various business ventures. The loan facility does not however, make funds available for primary agriculture, bars, professional services or casinos. NEDCO funding is specifically designed to assist those who face difficulty in accessing fund from commercial banks or other commercial lending agencies, and as such, its loan facility is characterised by simple procedures and minimal collateral requirements.

NEDCO has increased their loan entry ceiling from \$100,000 to \$250,000 for first time borrowers and a maximum of \$500,000 for second time borrowers. NEDCO's office also provides business advisory services and information in areas such as Marketing, Financial Management, Business Planning and Records Management.

The Entrepreneurial Training Institute and Incubation Centre (ETIIC) is an institution under NEDCO, which provides entrepreneurial training, basic support, mentoring, and marketing and distribution support to SMEs. The institute also offers start-up business support, onsite IT, administrative and business services as well as office, computer labs and virtual office services. In addition, users can avail themselves of the reference library services which have publications covering a range of SME development and entrepreneurship topics.

The recently established EIF is a project-based mechanism which aims to provide a strengthened support system for the MSE sector by providing funding to entrepreneurship-support programmes developed by the private sector, academic institutions and other NGOs so that they can utilise their expertise to play a greater role in MSE development.

6.2.3 Micro-Enterprise Loan Facility

The client can also seek the services of the Micro Enterprise Loan (MEL) Facility for accessing business grants and loans for business starts and expansion.

The MEL Facility is a community empowerment and poverty reduction initiative, which equips Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to actively engage in promoting sustainable livelihoods among the poor through the provision of micro loans and support to micro entrepreneurs. A grant is given to a CBO to on-lend to individuals in their communities. The individuals start new or expand existing micro enterprises and repay the loans at a minimal interest rate.

This programme aims to contribute to the reduction of poverty by facilitating the creation of sustainable livelihoods; empower CBOs to discharge micro credit services; and support and promote entrepreneurship at the community level. This programme is aimed at persons in receipt of public assistance; persons earning at subsistence level or at the minimum wage; or unemployed persons who live under impoverished conditions.

MEL provides borrowers with community based business loan services; business training for all interested persons and after-loan services and business support.

6.2.4 The FairShare Programme

The FairShare Programme, launched in January 2011, is a set-aside programme that enables SMEs to access opportunities to do work with the Government for contracts valued up to TTD 1.0M to SMEs. Simultaneously, the FairShare Programme provides some training to MSEs to improve business management, use of technology and understanding of legal obligations. FairShare utilises an online platform where Government Ministries post opportunities and where MSEs search for and bid on those opportunities. However, SMEs can only register with the FairShare programme for to a maximum of six years. The objective of the FairShare Programme is to create independent and strong SMEs by allowing SMEs to participate in Government spending over a fixed period of time during which time they should have increased their capacity, skill, product quality and other capabilities. Additionally, the FairShare programme:

- Is an incentive for formalisation because it is only open to registered MSEs, compliant with state regulations;
- Compiles an online registry of micro and small businesses categorised by economic sector;
- Creates a real-time, online listing of all Ministry contracts worth up to a maximum of \$1M;
- Provides automated notification of opportunities to SMEs for the purpose of bidding
- Provides a space for SMEs to market their products and services through online profiles; and
- Offers training to SMEs in procurement, business management and other important areas of relevance to improve their ability to win contracts.

6.3 Other Stakeholders

6.3.1 Employers' Consultative Association

This agency seeks to quality representation for employers and to ensure the strength and success of the Employer Community, which will auger well for the socio-economic well-being of Trinidad and Tobago. The Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA) was formed with 21 firms in 1960 primarily to assist and support Employers in industrial relations matters and to give them an association that would speak on their behalf on matters of similar interest. Since then, the ECA has built a strong reputation for handling all issues concerning Employers in Trinidad and Tobago. Today, the ECA is still a not-for-profit enterprise whose membership grows yearly and includes companies that belong to a variety of sectors.

6.3.2 Trinidad and Tobago Manufactures Association

The TTMA acts as a representative of the manufacturing sector in dealing with local and foreign governments and in the monitoring of legislation affecting manufacturers. Members are provided with information on all local, regional and international trade related matters of relevance and they act as a liaison between the membership and the Government, specifically the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment. Members are encouraged to maintain and adhere to the required standards and grades of quality in all manufactured goods and services.

6.3.3 Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce

The Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce's goal is to further the interests of businesses within the region by lobbying for favourable policies for their members. Regular dialogues with government to advocate, provide feedback on, and help fine-tune policies and legislations affecting business practices are held. Strategic alliances are forged with local and sometimes foreign organisations to establish and develop mutually beneficial business relationships. The Chamber also provides their members with efforts to trouble-shoot, address, solve common problems and issues affecting business operations. On-going recruitment and sustaining the membership is important to the Chamber's growth and development.

7 Local Government System in Trinidad and Tobago and the CARILED Model

The Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo was established and operates under the Municipal Corporations Act Chapter 25:04. This Act was enacted in 1990 and has been amended over time, the last amendment being in 2013. The Councils are allocated funds by the Ministry of Local Government, and are responsible for House Rates and Local Taxes, Finance, Planning, and allocation of Resources, Public Health and Physical Infrastructure, maintenance of markets, slaughterhouses, pastures, commons, recreation grounds or cemeteries and crematoria, the distribution of truck-borne water subject to the provisions of the Water and Sewerage Act, oversight of Pedlars, Hawkers and Hucksters.

The Tobago House of Assembly (THA) enjoys wider powers than the Municipal Corporations. The THA exercises considerable authority in respect of business development and economic planning. In that regard, the THA has developed a comprehensive economic development plan (CEDP 2.0) in a participatory process, and which provides structure to its initiatives deriving from its annual budgetary exercises.

The Division of Finance and Enterprise of the THA promoted business development through its Business Development Unit, which provides funding to micro businesses and SMEs. It has established an eco-industrial park, on which small and medium sized enterprises can be established. There is also a Venture Capital Company which provides funding for certain types of businesses. There is much in the existing paradigm of the THA that conforms to the CARILED Model.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) has promoted in recent years, the idea of devolution through the development of growth poles and the alignment between national priorities and regional priorities within the 14 local government jurisdictions and the House of Assembly in Tobago, as well as with the 585 communities identified throughout Trinidad and Tobago. In its Medium Term Framework, the Government pledged to transform “Local Government Services through the devolution of authority from Ministries to ensure increased efficiency”.¹⁶

CARILED has been inspired by the experience of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Federation is the “national voice” representing the vast majority of the municipal population of Canada. The membership includes Canada’s largest cities, small urban and rural communities and 19 municipal associations and has been functioning since 1901.¹⁷ The Federation is thus steeped in the philosophy of federalism and in the advocacy of deep involvement of people in the planning and organisation in the place in which they reside. In that regard, local economic development is

¹⁶ *Ministry of Planning and the Economy, 2011, Medium-Term Policy Framework 2011-2014, Government of Trinidad and Tobago, pg. 19.*

¹⁷ <http://www.fcm.ca/home.htm>

premised on a participatory process involving communities, civil society organisations and the private sector in partnership with local governance authorities or local government.

CARILED Initiatives in the Caribbean have involved:

1. Helping communities establish and manage committees of government, private-sector and community representatives to lead local economic development
2. Increasing the capacity of local governments (and decentralised agencies of central governments) to facilitate private-sector growth in a sustainable and equitable manner
3. Strengthening the ability of local government officials to engage civil society in local economic development planning and implementation
4. Collaborating with business support organisations and educational institutions to provide training to micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises
5. Funding pilot LED projects with the potential to show how local governments, the private sector and communities can work together to create jobs, increase micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise revenues, and bring economic and social benefits to communities
6. Working with national governments, local government associations and regional organisations to replicate good practices and successful LED models, and institute policy reforms to support LED

The partnerships provide for the harnessing of local resources, encouragement of investment and the stimulation of local commercial activities including the involvement of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The experience is that local commercial activities contribute to job creation, business development and improved quality of life for citizens.¹⁸

Adoption of CARILED represents signalling of decentralisation and further devolution in economic planning and more particularly in implementation in the Trinidad and Tobago and will require further changes in the existing legislation in the Act establishing the Municipal Council and Regional Authorities.

¹⁸ <http://cariled.org/about-led/definitions/>

8 Promoting Local Economic Development: Issues and Recommendations

8.1 introduction

Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo has been at the centre stage in the economic transformation of Trinidad and Tobago in the last three decades. In that regard, the area reflects the success and the challenges of industrial policy of the country. There are three key features in the economic strategies of the GORTT that create the context in which local economic development has to be undertaken in the short to medium term. The first has been the strategy of economic diversification, which involved the thrust into downstream activity based on the energy resources of the country: diversification within oil and gas. The Point Industrial Estate became the flagship of that strategy with world-scale industrial plants producing output targeted at the international markets, some of which placed the country among the first five of exporters in the world in some products.

The second component of industrial strategy was the country's exit from sugar production based on the plantation agriculture. The municipality is still engaged in managing the after-effects of the transition out of plantation agriculture into other activity. The third component is based on the most recent Medium Term Strategy, in which the Government has sought to create a growth pole in Central Trinidad, comprised of Couva, Chaguanas, Carapichima and Charleville anchored on light industrial development, service industries, software development and creative industries. However, this is complemented by a policy of stimulating development in areas that have been marginalised and/or have been laggard. In other words, the Government is committed to equitable social and economic development in terms of the geographic distribution of the population. This is the context in which local economic development is to be promoted by the Municipal Corporation and aligned with national priorities.

There are possibilities for a vibrant participation of the Municipality in the clusters promoted at the national level, and for substantial local economic development around a number of initiatives on the part of the Municipal Corporation and the National Government. Some of these are addressed in the present concluding section. The Medium Term Framework supports the goal of economic diversification, promotes social equity across the various groups that comprise the society, and seeks to observe participatory modes with devolution and decentralisation of decision-making in the governance structure.

The municipality is plagued with infrastructure problems. The road infrastructure within the municipality is of poor quality: many areas in the eastern hinterland of the municipality are badly served which imposes inordinate costs on businesses located in this part of the municipality and sharpens the divide between the east and the west in terms of the generation of economic output. Agricultural access roads are even more deplorable. Some areas are prone to severe flooding. There is also inadequate public transportation in the eastern region of the municipality. These deficiencies militate against the development of businesses and the promotion of agriculture in some

parts of the municipality. The Municipality will need to have all these major physical infrastructure problems tackled whether by itself, with its being resourced appropriately, or by other state institutions for the National Government in collaboration with it, in creating a facilitating environment propitious to business and entrepreneurship development.

There is also the institutional infrastructure to be addressed. The closing of Caroni 1975 Ltd has not been followed with an orderly programme of land redistribution and the conversion of the sugar lands to other forms of agriculture. Crime including gang violence is a problem in some parts of the municipality. On the other hand, there has been investment by the Ministry of Food Production in Packing Houses in Tabaquite, and in Couva, which improve agricultural marketing.

The municipality is the locus of the largest industrial estate in the country, and comprises a major section of the industrial corridor of Trinidad. The Point Lisas Port Development Company Limited (PLIPDECO) is responsible for the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and thus is one of the most important corporate entities based in the municipality. However, the relationship between the Municipal Corporation and PLIPDECO has not involved a close cooperation. This means that in the promotion by the Council of the Corporation, of industrial and commercial development elsewhere in the municipality which will involve MSMEs is not contextualised within a wider frame which include the existence of PLIPDECO in the municipality.

Another issue is the nature of the social and economic space comprised by the burgesses of the municipality which is relevant to the promotion of MSMEs in the area. The municipality has been one of the municipalities that has enjoyed higher than average growth between the last two censuses. However, much of this has been due to internal migration, with the expansion of housing in certain parts of the municipality. Many of the new residents live in dormitory communities: they work elsewhere in the country, and not necessarily in the municipality. Even their ideas of business development might have little to do with the municipality. It is a moot point whether in the promotion of MSMEs in the municipality the focus should be on communities of long standing residents of the municipality, and more so on the communities that have experienced minimal development in the last two to three decades.

The socio-economic space and demographic issue surfaces in another challenge for the Council. There are areas of the municipality which historically are oriented to other municipal jurisdictions. Communities like Claxton Bay or close to Pointe-a-Pierre feel a closer affinity with San Fernando. Many in these latter communities see themselves as living in a San Fernando space, and are merely a little more distant from the centre than those in San Fernando proper. The core of the MSME thrust of the Council of the Couva-Talparo-Tabaquite Municipality does present some challenge.

The eastern communities share more in common with the adjoining municipalities of Sangre Grande and Mayaro Rio Claro which have historically been the poorest parts of Trinidad. Strategies designed to promote MSMEs in these communities have to take account of this fact, and on the grounds of social equity might involve outlays in social spending and support to compensate for the challenge groups in these communities might experience in joining the mainstream.

If local economic empowerment is to be driven by the Municipal Corporation and the planning and facilitation of business activity become part of its remit, there is need for institutional collaboration in order to ensure that the services of a number of specialised agencies become available to residents of the area who are the immediate clientele and stakeholders of the Municipality in its thrust into business development. One such area is in respect of training and upgrading, especially in the communities that have not been in the mainstream of development. The Ministry of Food Production has been engaged in mounting short-term programmes for training farmers, but this might merely scratch the surface in respect of the requirements for competitive smaller scale agriculture, having regard to the fact that present trade rules place the local farming community in direct competition with farmers in the Dominican Republic and in the United States. With regard to commerce and distribution, new or would-be entrepreneurs need considerable support by way of training in business management and operations.

There is the generalised challenge of the upgrading of the human resources in the municipality and of entrepreneurs and persons involved in MSMEs. The Census data establish that while most of the population is literate. However, there is a deficiency in the educational base in some communities relative to the demands of a competitive economy. The fact that persons may need to engage in MSMEs does not absolve them of the need to have a sound educational base on which training and retraining programmes can be mounted.

The Municipal Corporation has to ensure that there are accessible, across communities, especially the marginalised, programmes which are user friendly and can attract participation and involvement of those who might not have had the opportunity of a good secondary education in their earlier educational career. Internet access in community centres might be part of the infrastructure to be put in place: there is now a wide array of free on-line programmes - massive open online courses (MOOCS).¹⁹

While the GORTT has negotiated a relationship with COURSERA, there does not seem to be a reach of programmes to communities in the municipality, and in particular, the more remote.²⁰ The Couva Multi-Purpose Community Based Telecentre might be used as a focal point for training in business as well as for educational upgrading and technical preparation of would-be entrepreneurs, but there is need for services in the eastern communities. The provision of internet access in these communities by the Corporation may allow for their being linked in distance programmes.

There is also the issue of informal sector operators who, with adequate support, might be able to formalise their operations. The Municipal Corporation has to be provided with the assistance to promote the transition of informal activities into structured businesses. In that regard, there are NGOs and CBOs operating in the Municipality which are familiar with its communities, which might

¹⁹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_open_online_course Through the internet, the information divide can be radically altered, as access is made more democratic.

²⁰ <http://blog.coursera.org/post/87056905797/government-of-trinidad-and-tobago-works-with>

be able to provide services in communities, and which can complement or supplement what is available from agencies like NEDCO and IBIS.

8.2 Strategic Sectors

8.2.1 Energy

The forerunner of what constitutes the municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo has had a long history of involvement in the oil and gas sector. The refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre was in the mid 20th century the largest industrial complex in the country. An industrial estate developed at Savoneta, and then the establishment of the Point Lisas expanded energy related industries over much of the south-western area of the municipality.

While the official policy of the country is the diversification from the reliance on the Energy Sector, Trinidad and Tobago cannot avoid exploiting opportunities that its participation in the sector will provide over the medium term. The underlying strategy for the country is likely to be built around continuing exploitation of the sector, in the traditional mode of extraction and processing, diversification within oil and gas, along with diversification from the sector as a whole. In that regard, energy intensive industries will continue to have a significant place in the economy of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, with the sector providing employment for some of its residents, and with MSMEs engaged in servicing some of the demands created by the sector.

It will continue to be necessary to support the educational and training preparation within the municipality for the technical and professional occupations relevant to the sector. This underlines the importance of the reach of programmes offered through YTEPP, NESC, MIC and OJT to residents across the various communities. It is training and work experience in the related fields that eventually will provide the training for the more entrepreneurial to create new start-ups that will eventually develop into vibrant firms and enterprises, as the nature of the energy intensive industries change. With some skills being fungible across sectors, many of those engaged in servicing the Energy and related Sectors will switch to alternative activities as demand for their skills and expertise declines and increases in other sectors.

8.2.2 Agriculture and Food

The municipality is endowed with the considerable potential for addressing the food sustainability needs of the nation. Historically, a substantial acreage was devoted to plantation agriculture, mainly in sugar cane. There is also a range of tree crop and other agriculture that can be promoted as part of the post-plantation phase: cocoa, coffee and citrus can be revived. Targeted support for farmers by way of technical and extension services, land suitability and capability studies, the selection of planting material, post-harvest technology, and marketing, can contribute to substantial increase in food supplies and to the reduction in imports. Small animal husbandry can be expanded also with appropriate support from the Ministry of Food Production: pigs, goats, rabbits, and poultry including duck are possibilities.

Fishing: The improvement of landing sites through the provision of infrastructure – refrigeration and ice-making facilities etc. – Carli Bay, Claxton Bay and Brickfield. This can contribute to improvement and to viability in operations of fishers in the municipality, Fishers need training to ensure that they can comply with national and possibly international food safety standards.

Aquaculture: There are areas in the municipality that are amenable for fish farming. Swamps and lagoons and riverine areas can be exploited for fish farming e.g. tilapia and cascadox. With appropriate infrastructure and training and extension services from the Ministry of Food Production, residents in some communities might avail themselves of the opportunities for viable businesses e.g. Fullerton and Icacos. Access to state lands and to in-shore waters will require the appropriate management of these special areas as part of the commons and regulation on the part of the state, represented by the Municipal Corporation.

Beekeeping: The substantial forested area and tree crop agriculture lend themselves well to beekeeping and the production of honey. With appropriate infrastructure support, the municipality can promote the expansion of this industry, with a number of MSMEs involved.

Agro-processing: The establishment of small scale and medium scale agro-processing operations in the municipality will be the natural link in the development of a value chain to final consumers in Trinidad and Tobago and in respect of some products, there is possibility of export potential. While domestic markets are likely to be the target with the fisheries, with HACCP, it is possible that the area can become engaged in exports. There are at least two packing plants in the municipality, which provide one stage in the value chain – grading. In respect of both agro-processing and fish processing, the Municipal Corporation will need to enlist the services of CARIRI to ensure that the food processing and fish processing observe the appropriate standards, thereby guaranteeing widening of markets.

8.2.3 Eco and Cultural Tourism and Creative Industries

The Municipality is teeming with historic, cultural and other resources that allow for tour guiding services and adventure experiences as part of the expansion of the tourism industry of Trinidad and which can engage residents of the area interested in the provision of such services as a micro or small business. A tourist in the area has as possibilities:

- Cultural tourism with cultural and religious festivals – Divali, and Phagwa with the large Hindu population,
- Historical and heritage tourism – Temple in the Sea at Waterloo, San Rafael Roman Catholic Church, Our Lady of Montserrat Roman Catholic Church in Tortuga with its Black Madonna and Child, Hanuman Monument, Sugar Museum, Knolly's Tunnel in Tabaquite, the Arena Massacre Site, and the La Vega Estate,
- Nature – Wild Fowl Trust in Pointe-a-Pierre
- Industrial Transformation – the Point Lisas Estate that has placed Trinidad and Tobago as a world class producer of selected industrial products in spite of its being a very small island developing state.

The Municipal Corporation in association with the Tourism Development Company and the Ministry of Tourism can market the uniqueness of the location in Trinidad. There are also restaurant services, catering to visitors to the municipality, which can promote and the speciality food and drinks of residents.

All of this would require some level of enterprise on the part of the Municipal Corporation in recognising that there is a product in the municipality that can be marketed with a number of residents becoming the 'distributors' of the product as they become involved in catering to guests from the rest of the country and from the rest of the world. A number of MSMEs can develop around the cultural tourism and eco-tourism amenity resources of the municipality.

With an increase in visitors to the area, there opens the possibility for the supply of craft goods and artefacts from the area itself. The ingenuity of the people with the resources of the forests and soils, there is the possibility of craft goods that are unique to the area. The area is well known for its ceramics based on the soils of the area, and special expertise of people in the municipality. Craft related items can remain unique and cannot be easily copied and manufactured in China to be sold in Trinidad as craft of the country, and more particularly, as craft and ceramics of this municipality in Trinidad.

There will be need for appropriate training and preparation of the residents in the local population who will become engaged in the various dimensions of the emerging tourism sector. The Municipal Corporation will need to be at the centre of the process of organising most of the elements involved in creating a presence in the tourism sector of the country. However, planning and implementing its initiative in the development of its tourism product will require inputs from the state agencies and consultants specialised in tourism development.

Sports Tourism

The municipality is endowed with a few of the better sporting facilities in the country, including the Ato Boldon Stadium, the National Cricket Centre, and soon the National Aquatic Sports Centre and the National Cycling Centre. It is home of two national Pro-League Football Clubs and cricket teams. Its capacity in events tourism around sports provides possibilities for residents seeking to serve visitors to the area around special events.

8.2.4 Commerce and Distribution

Commerce and distribution will expand with the improvement of economic activity in the municipality and in neighbouring municipalities of San Fernando, Chaguanas, Mayaro Rio Claro, Tunapuna Piarco, and Princes Town. With the possible expansion of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, there will be employment opportunities for residents and workers entering the municipality. Inflows of new residents and expansion of the population will create a widening of the market for commerce and distribution. This is consistent with continued rapid growth in the population in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo.

However, these are sectors which, because of relative ease of entry, attract considerable numbers of micro entrepreneurs. The result is often a particular sequel of excess supply as many seek to

copy the success of first entrants. With oversupply, some find themselves in debt since their businesses which might have appeared attractive at first blush, end up in most of them sharing work or custom from the same level of clients. The Corporation will need to exercise care in the promotion of entry of micro and small businesses. The allocation of licences to operate can be the mechanism to prevent oversupply.

Support for the development and expansion of commercial and distributional activities will require interventions on the part of agencies involved in the provision of credit and training in entrepreneurship, micro and small business development, but will need to be tempered with constant review of levels of involvement to protect the municipality and some of the potential entrepreneurs from losses because of oversupply in sectors that might appear to be easy in terms of market entry.

8.3 Proposed Projects and Implementation Plan

Having greater responsibility for the economic and social outcomes within Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo would require the Local Government to play a more proactive role in LED. Preparation of the Municipal LAEP is a first step in directing investment for business and economic development. However, further work is now needed to build the necessary institutional structures within the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation to lead and coordinate LED. There is also the need to identify business and economic opportunities in the strategic sectors identified in the study. Therefore, the Corporation must also work with local and external partners in developing and implementing sectoral projects that would lead to positive economic growth, provide employment and support the expansion of local MSME sector.

8.3.1 Establishing Institutional Structures within the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation

The following recommendations are provided to create support mechanisms that would the Corporation to play a greater role in economic development of the Municipality:

1. **Establishing a Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Group** – This Group, operating out of the Regional Corporation, would provide a municipal platform to facilitate and support the implementation of targeted local economic activities. The main functions of the Group should be as follows:
 - a. To listen and interact with local and external stakeholders on LED related matters;
 - b. To identify and tackle the challenges to local business and economic development;
 - c. To recommend new initiatives and investments (to be implemented by the Municipal Corporation, Central Government Agencies and others) that would improve the local business environment, foster innovation and strengthen the municipal economy;
 - d. To monitor, advise on and support the implementation of LED activities undertaken by the Corporation; and

- e. To provide guidance on the use of Corporation's resources to achieve the objectives of Municipal LED.

The Group should meet regularly (monthly or at least quarterly) and comprise:

- Councillors/Aldermen;
- Representatives of the private sector and the NGO and community sector (inclusive of the Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce and a MSME representative);
- Local knowledge and research institutions; and
- Public sector business support agencies (such as NEDCO and the Cooperative Division), and Point Lisas Industrial Development Company Ltd (PLIPDECO).

2. **Strengthening the capacity of the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation to facilitate local business and economic development** - The goal here is to build technical capacity within the Corporation that would allow the Corporation to effectively lead and participate in sustainable LED of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo.

This calls for the establishment of the LEDU which would be lead by a LEDO and assisted by two Assistant LEDOs. These officers should be seen as the nucleus of industrial, commercial and business development within the municipality. The LEDO should be charged with the following responsibilities:

- To facilitate LED planning in order to identify and establish business and development economic opportunities;
- To collaborate with stakeholders inside and outside of the Municipality in engaging in scenario planning and identifying possibilities for local resource use and mobilisation that might otherwise remain untapped. The LEDO should be instrumental in organising and recording discussions between the Municipal Council and the MSME and institutional stakeholders within their jurisdiction.
- Work with local businesses, organisations, schools, and communities in supporting and promoting LED and individual, school and community-led entrepreneurship;
- Identify opportunities that will allow the Corporation and its stakeholders to develop the local MSME sector, programmes and projects;
- Identify and secure funding for MSME and LED initiatives;
- Assist local organisations, communities, businesses and individuals to develop project proposals and business plans for financing; and
- Assist with communities and businesses to establish business groups and other support networks, including working closely with stakeholders in the informal economy in and around main commercial districts.

3. **Preparing a comprehensive LED strategy and action plan** – One of the efforts in supporting municipal LED, is the formulation of an LED strategy and action plan for the municipality. The preparation of this strategy should be the responsibility of the LEDO. This strategy and action plan should be tailored to the needs of the Municipality and provide a comprehensive agenda for LED including the identification of potential areas where the Corporation and its partners can focus investment, additional actions to create enabling

mechanisms to support the work of local organisations, businesses, communities and individuals within the Municipality. The strategy should also identify and contain concrete proposals for creating and expanding economic and business opportunity in the strategic sectors identified earlier in this chapter.

The strategy should also provide the necessary baseline information to be used for monitoring and evaluation and strategic LED decision-making.

4. **Developing a database of municipal entrepreneurs (of all sizes)** – This should be developed based on the sector within which these business establishments operate. This will serve well not only in terms of the conduct of research activities but will also be required for collaborative and promotional partnership activities. The Corporation should actively encourage informal MSME business owners to register with the Corporation to ensure that all can access benefits from future business programming. The LEDO should be charged with the responsibility for developing and regularly updating of the databases, and maintaining contact with the local MSM businesses.
5. **Establishing Strategic Partnerships with Neighbouring Municipal Corporations** – The Corporation should seek strategic partnerships and collaborate with neighbouring Local Governments to explore joint economic opportunities, for example in the areas of industrial development, tourism development and agricultural production.
6. **Establishing a Municipal Business Support Programme for Local MSMEs** – The success of this programme depends heavily on the commitment and cooperation between the Corporation and the national business support service providers. The approach here is not to duplicate the work of the MSME support agencies, but rather to bridge the current gap in services identified during the study. The goal is to provide a one-stop-shop platform within the Corporation.

The model for service provisioning should allow clients to have easy access to the various services provided by agencies.²¹ The Corporation should work closely with providers to create a system where clients can access information on the full range of business support services available and to connect them to the services they need. Moreover, the Programme should facilitate the implementation of the sectoral projects implemented by the Corporation.

Therefore, the Corporation should approach and work with service providers to seek their assistance in establishing this one-stop-shop mechanism. For example, the platform can be:

- The main source for accessing information on business support services offered by the various providers. In addition, several Municipal Corporations should collaborate in developing an app that would provide information and facilitate clients' more ready access to services.

²¹ Finance and markets, entrepreneurial skill development, training (soft and technical skills), and mentoring and coaching, etc.

- Locate suitable space for the conduct of specific business training programmes as identified in the LAEP study that would facilitate the increase use of ICT and the Internet in business and to foster personal development of entrepreneurs. The objective here should be to address the entrepreneurial characteristics and functional competencies of participants through effective training programmes.
- Provide access to business advisory and mentoring services through the establishment of municipal business support networks, business associations and business support cooperatives. A lack of business mentorship and business advisory programmes was highlighted by MSMEs as a major barrier to the survival of businesses.
- Facilitate business cluster development and establishment industry and marketing cooperatives as vehicles for achieving critical mass in specific sectors.
- Offer business Incubator support services - the MOLSED and NEDCO should use the Municipal Programme to expand the reach of the IBIS, ETIIC and Women in Business programmes.

Special attention must be paid to the findings of the study with regards to the challenges faced by women and youth in setting up and operating their own business. The object would be to put mechanisms in place that would eliminate any barriers to women's and youth's entrepreneurship.

The programme should be audited and its impact monitored regularly to ensure it remains attractive, relevant and accessible to its target clients.

8.3.2 Recommended Sectoral Initiatives

There was insufficient data collected to clearly identify the sectoral business projects at this stage. The recommendation here is to identify the local sectoral initiatives in Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo during the LED strategic planning phase and should be based on the strategic sectors identified. All the projects developed should be based on an inclusive model which ensures the participation of residents of the Municipality, including the poor, women and youths.

8.3.3 Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Implementation Plan

Project	Activities	Implementing Agencies	Collaborating agencies	Time Frame	Resources Requirement	Priority Rating (1-2)
Establishment of a Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Local Economic Development Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop scope, responsibility, function and reporting procedures of the Group. • Identify the prospective agencies/individuals to comprise the Group. • Prepare and issue invitations to prospective Group members/agencies. • Hold inaugural meeting and orientation session. • Hold regular/monthly meetings. • Monitor and provide advice on on-going LED programmes and projects 	<p>Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation (CTTRC) (through its Municipal Council)</p> <p>Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries ○ Ministry of Tourism ○ NEDCO ○ TTIInvest, ○ ExportTT Cooperative Division ○ Ministry of Local Government ○ National Council of Village and Community Councils ○ Local MSME owners representative ○ CARILED Project ○ UTT ○ PLIPDECO 	4 months to establishment and ongoing	Representatives who are decision makers in their organisations	1
Strengthening the capacity of the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation to facilitate local business and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit the LEDO • Establish a Chairman's Advisory Subcommittee to oversee the establishment of the LEDU, comprised of two other Councillors, and the CEO with the LEDO as Secretary. • Prepare requisite documentation for establishing the LEDU - rationale for its establishment, resources requirement (staffing, furniture, equipment, software, training, etc.); and estimated cost. • Obtain the necessary approvals for establishment of the Unit. • Recruit additional staff and procure the necessary resources • Officially establish the LEDU. 	CTTRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government ○ Ministry of Public Administration ○ CARILED Project 	12 Months	<p>Ministry of Public Administration and Consulting Services to assist the Council in developing a business oriented focus to support the emergence of businesses in the area.</p> <p>Provision for appointment of a LEDO, two Assistant LEDOs and supporting staff – Statistical Assistant and Clerk/Typist</p>	1

8.3.3 Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Implementation Plan

Project	Activities	Implementing Agencies	Collaborating agencies	Time Frame	Resources Requirement	Priority Rating (1-2)
Preparing a comprehensive strategy and action plan for the Municipality of Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED workshop on way forward and the LED and MSME creation. • Hold consultations with specific industry stakeholders to elaborate strategies and actions agreed on at the workshop • Prepare a local economic development strategy and action plan in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. This plan should include cost estimates, funding sources and mechanism for continuous monitoring and evaluation. 	<p>Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Local Economic Development Group</p> <p>CTTRC-LEDU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce ○ Local business owners ○ MOLSED ○ NEDCO ○ TTInvest, ○ ExporTT Cooperative Division ○ Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government ○ MCD ○ National Council of Village and Community Councils ○ MSME owners representatives ○ CARILED Project ○ UTT ○ PLIPDECO 	6 months	Consultancy – Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Strategy and Action Plan	
Establishing a Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Business Establishments Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold discussion with the CSO, NEDCO and other relevant agencies on the establishment of the database. • Identify resource requirement for database. • Acquire software and other support tools. • Determine the type of information to be recorded in the database - business owner name and contact details for communications, gender of owner; type of business; years in operation; size of business/number 	CTTRC LEDU/LEDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CSO ○ Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce ○ NEDCO ○ MOLSED 	3 months to establish database and ongoing	Computer Spreadsheet or database software Clerk Campaign to encourage business registration	1

8.3.3 Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Implementation Plan

Project	Activities	Implementing Agencies	Collaborating agencies	Time Frame	Resources Requirement	Priority Rating (1-2)
	<p>of employees, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise and encourage business owners to register with the Corporation. • Undertake initiatives to actively register businesses. • Develop a profile of local businesses by sector which can help understand local business owners' needs. • Update profiles regularly based on additional information received. 					
Establishing Strategic partnerships with neighbouring municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold discussions with Chairmen and CEO of neighbouring municipalities, and the Mayor and CEO of Point Fortin. • Identify and reach agreement on areas for collaboration and support and resource requirements • Undertake agreed joint activities • Monitor and evaluate partnerships biyearly 	CTTRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neighbouring Corporations 	6 months and ongoing	Chairmen and CEOs of the Corporations Meeting place	1
Establishing a Municipal Business Support Programme for MSMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold meetings with key business support service providers to discuss service provisioning and areas of collaboration between CTTRC and service providers. • Reach agreement on the CTTRC one-stop service model for MSMEs to be used (e.g. CTTRC as a business information and advisory hub, provide space where service providers offer selected services, etc.). • Develop MSME services app to provide information on service 	CTTRC-LEDU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce ○ Established local businesses ○ NEDCO ○ MOLSED including the Cooperative Division ○ Ministry with responsibility for development of medium-sized enterprises 	9 months to establish and on-going	<p>Cooperation of central government, NGO and private sector service providers</p> <p>For development of the app - Graphic designer Copy writer Software developer</p> <p>Service provision – brochures, factsheet</p>	1

8.3.3 Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo LED Implementation Plan

Project	Activities	Implementing Agencies	Collaborating agencies	Time Frame	Resources Requirement	Priority Rating (1-2)
	provisioning and places to existing and potential MSME clients (in collaboration with other Local Governments). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo MSME Support Programme.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Local Banks○ ADB○ Authur Lok Jack GSB		and information on product and services for small businesses	

8.4 Conclusion

Decentralised Governance: The adoption of the CARILED Model involves a widening and deepening of decentralisation and devolution in the governance structure of the country. The Municipal Corporations are at the epicentre of this process. The authorities and the elected representatives of residents in municipalities have to embrace responsibilities that will extend to the economic development within the municipalities.

Business Facilitation: There is evidence that the country does not lack agencies that are formally entrusted with the responsibility for the facilitation of business and enterprise and for the provision of such supports as credit supply and training. However, their reach into communities is limited and constrained. In the context of the CARILED Model, the authorities in Municipal Corporations will have the responsibility for coordinating and enlisting the services of these agencies, and parlaying their support for residents in municipalities as they seek to create productive activity within the economic space of the municipality.

In this regard, CARIRI has to be available to collaborate with the Municipality of Siparia in the promotion of fish processing for external markets. The Ministry of Food Production has to contribute in the focused attempt of the Municipal Corporation of Siparia to develop aquaculture operations in the lagoons in Fullerton and Icacos. The technical personnel of the Corporation have to enlist the support of Tourism Business Development Company in planning and implementation of the initiatives to realise the tourism potential of the Municipality that is well endowed with the amenities for eco-tourism and cultural tourism.

Competitiveness: Residents in the municipality of Siparia are no strangers to international competition. Historically, residents have been involved with the firms engaged in the heavy industries with production geared to the international market. The small firms engaged in work-overs are sensitive to international energy prices. As the Energy Sector adapts to the changing international market for fossil fuels, domestic firms servicing the sector will need to adjust. As the Corporation mounts its own strategy in support of the diversification and resuscitation of the non-oil sector with the area, there will be need to be sensitive to the requirements imposed on large and small firms including micro-enterprises.

Expansion and revival of agriculture has to be seen in the context of a huge bill and foreign exchange usage on imported food. Domestic agriculture based on production in Las Lomas, Talparo or Brickfield, and has to withstand and/or push back on imports from Florida. The producers, large and small have to be fully seized of the nature of the competition in organising production from farm to market. Dressed or processed fruit and vegetables from geographically remote locations in the municipality, on entering the market place in an upscale supermarket in Port-of-Spain are in competition for shelf space with cabbage from Florida, and cassava from the Dominican Republic. In other words, entrepreneurs even in micro-enterprises in Tabaquite or Couva are players on the world stage.

Structuring Economic Equity: The survey data show that there is differential participation among groups in the area of business and enterprise: these relate to access to initial capital and social capital that may be founded on cultural factors, gender and geographical differences. On the grounds of social equity, there will be need to ensure that state involvement in the provision of support for business and enterprise does not contribute to the creation of structural barriers and further marginalisation of non-traditional participants in business and enterprise.

Information, Training and Educational Upgrading: The Census Data and the survey data collected in the course of this exercise establish that there does exist a human capital challenge in the municipality. This imposes a constraint on the capacity of residents in the establishment of viable business and productive enterprises. There is need to institutionalise a support system that would allow large numbers of the residents although located in relatively remote communities to embrace technology and access information, and, most importantly, initiate themselves on the path of lifelong education and upgrading such that they can correct for previous marginalisation in the education system.

The task is to ensure that the avocado farmer in Tabaquite is no less knowledgeable and no less technically competent than his counterpart in Costa Rica. While this may not be currently the case, the measures and initiatives undertaken by the Municipality in association with the Ministry of Food Production and with the cooperation of UTT or the Distance Education Programme, would allow such transformation to take place in less than a decade.

Moreover, those interested in undertaking the provision of high level information services from a base in Couva or Charlieville, must be readily equipped to develop the start-up based on the infrastructure provided by the Municipal Corporation or with the assistance that it can mobilise from agencies at the national level to support local economic empowerment. There are persons engaged in on-line marketing and other services demonstrating that residents can be and are involved in the international market place from the various locations in the municipality.

Paradigm Shift: The CARILED Model involves a major paradigm shift in thinking in local governance. The responsibilities of Municipal Councils require perspectives that extend beyond what seems to be incorporated in the current legislation. At the level of the Ministry, there is need to win the resources including the fiscal space for Municipalities to become entrepreneurial in implementing national policy relating to the economy.

There is need to recognise the enormity of the task of investing people in their communities with the capacity to transform their economic reality with the resources that reside in their community such that they can create a high quality of life from their respective spaces. The municipality of Couva/Talparo/Tabaquite can engage the international market place from many more areas than the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

