

A background image showing a close-up of water ripples on a surface, with a central point where a drop has just fallen, creating concentric circles that spread outwards. The water is clear and the ripples are well-defined.

Towards a Results-Based Management approach in the public sector

The example of Trinidad and Tobago

Knowledge Sharing Series



This publication was promoted by the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago Country Office and the Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean through its Knowledge Management Unit and its Monitoring and Evaluation team. Valuable comments were also received by the Capacity Development and Democratic Governance regional teams.

Towards a Results-Based Management approach in the public sector:

The example of Trinidad and Tobago

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Enough Reinventing the Wheel

Experience can Travel, Cross Borders and Add Value to Projects

UNDP's Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean supports the systematic organization and documentation of knowledge acquired by the countries in the region through their many high-quality and high-impact projects. In addition, the countries are expecting new mechanisms be made available for sharing knowledge, queries and sustainable successes. Therefore, we have undertaken the task of "Knowledge Sharing" guided by a basic principle: many of our experiences can be useful for others in the region. Experience can travel, cross borders, and add value to the work of others.

This series of publications is the conduit chosen to achieve these goals, and, of course, it reflects a joint effort that included the development of a methodology to expedite and facilitate the systematic organization and exchange of knowledge. Colleagues from national and local governments, UNDP Country Offices, experts in various areas, and the thematic teams of UNDP's Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean have all participated in this initiative.

However, the publications are only part of "Knowledge Sharing", only the tip of the iceberg. They are a comprehensive and concise presentation of programming options and relevant aspects of each experience. They essentially tell us "how the programme was created and how it is implemented." Thanks to the participation of various colleagues, all with extensive experience in their respective areas, each programme boasts rich and detailed online documentation (project documents, evaluations, reports, relevant data, etc.) These tools help transfer, replicate, and customize systematized programs – adapting to changing demands in the real world.

Count on us to take the most out of this proposal. Our team is at your service: once specific facts on the ground have been identified, we can deepen and expand multiple facets of knowledge to help achieve your objectives, reduce costs associated with learning and research and development, and help implement key programmes and solutions.

We are grateful for the contributions of those who helped produce this “Knowledge Sharing” series. Your continued remarks and suggestions are key to improve our services.

UNDP’s Regional Centre Team for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Panama

February 2011



Foreword

The content of this knowledge product pertains to the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)'s efforts to implement, with the support of United Nations Development Programme Country Office in Trinidad and Tobago, the Capacity Development in Project Management project, the first step towards the development of a results-oriented approach.

Guided by the concept that experiences must be widely disseminated to be helpful for others and to add maximum value to their work, the knowledge product has been conceived as a concise and clear paper, aimed at transferring lessons learned to a broad audience (including UNDP colleagues, development partners and those who may be interested in this approach to project management).

The document outlines what has been learned from the project from its conception to its (still ongoing) implementation and what can be applied to similar initiatives that are being or will be undertaken. Therefore it allows for constructive comparisons between how work pertaining to the project has been carried out in a particular environment and how it might be repeated in another one.

The product is based on continuous monitoring and evaluation activities, on information provided by some officers from the MoLG and detailed documentation made up of reports, project documents, evaluations, models and graphs.

Its final aim is to provide a template for other similar knowledge products.

3

The reform of the Local Government

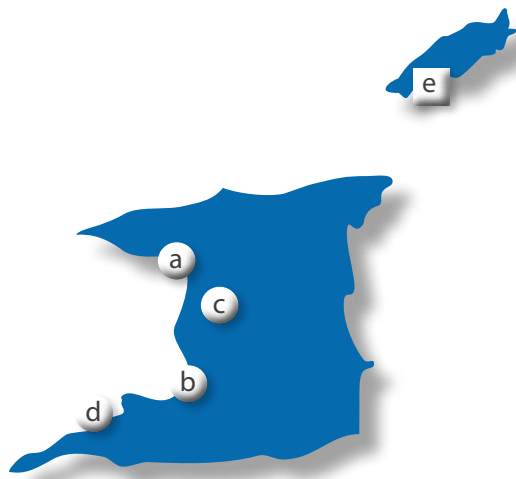


Figure 1.
Map of Trinidad and Tobago

● Trinidad	■ Tobago
a. Port of Spain b. San Fernando c. Chaguanas d. Point Fortin	e. Scarborough

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin-island unitary state situated at the southernmost base of the Caribbean Archipelago. Trinidad covers 4,827 sq km and Tobago 301 sq km. The twin-island state-became independent from Britain in 1962 and attained a republican parliamentary democracy in 1976. Recent population estimates indicate that the population stands at 1.33 million persons.

The country has one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America and the Caribbean and in 2009 its GDP was approximately US\$21.2bn. This wealth stems primarily from its oil and gas reserves. The country has experienced over 15 years consecutive growth up to 2007, and grew faster than most other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the global economic downturn affected growth rate with a recorded rate of -3.5%¹ in 2009, growth is expected to pick up in 2011.

Trinidad and Tobago ranked 59th on the 2010 Human Development Index (HDI) and remains in the High Human Development category. Average life expectancy continues to be nearly 70 years, and in 2008 adult literacy was measured at 98.7%².

Economic growth and both urban and rural development have placed new demands on the local government system of Trinidad and Tobago.

While Tobago's local system is administered through the Tobago House of Assembly Act of 1980, the essential components of the local system in Trinidad are the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and 14 Municipal Corporations. The MoLG is committed to facilitating, coordinating, monitoring and ensuring accountability of Municipal Corporations in the delivery of quality services through meaningful decentralized practices.

The Corporations, established under the Municipal Corporations Act 21 of 1990 and its attendant amendment Act #8 of 1992 are responsible for providing various services: secondary roads, drain and Municipal infrastructure; public health and sanitation services; Municipal building and development control; a Municipal police service and community services and facilities.

The roles of Local Government in Trinidad have been revisited quite often since Independence of 1962 and the current Act was one such outcome. The most recent attempt at reform commenced in 2004 with the aim to implement a new model for the local level, guided by transparency, good governance and accountability to local communities. Its primary objective was to transform local communities, providing them with a strong government system capable of responding to the citizens' needs and expectations and ensuring a better quality of life³. The main points of reference of the reform are represented by the following documents:

- **The Draft Policy paper on Local Government Reform (2004)-A Green Paper.** It takes into account the weaknesses of the Municipal Corporations Act (1990), and recommends a revised process and new perspectives on the Local Government Reform. This should be viewed as an integral part of the Constitutional Reform where Local Government Bodies are partners in the development of the country.
- **The Draft White Paper on Local Government Reform (2006).** It was prepared by the MoLG, in order to set out a strategy for the continued reform and modernization of the Local Government. It outlines the history of the Local Government Reform in Trinidad and Tobago, identifies the features and ambitions of the current Reform initiative and discusses the status of objectives and functions of decentralized governing bodies. In addition, it includes important proposals to make the system more efficient and to promote greater citizen participation, transparency, accountability and responsiveness.
- **The "Green Paper on Local Government Reform: Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government Bodies" (2008).** It represents an important stage of the process towards the implementation of the Local Government Reform. It highlights again

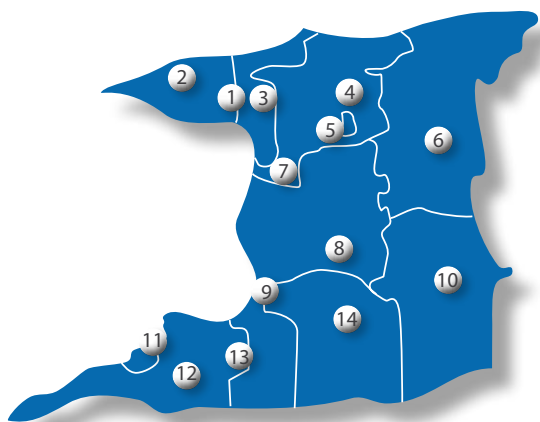


Figure 2.
Municipal Corporations
of Trinidad

1. Port Spain
2. Diego Martín
3. San Juan-Laventille
4. Tunapuna-Piarco
5. Arima
6. Sangre Grande
7. Chaguanas
8. Couva- Tabaquite - Taiparo
9. San Fernando
10. Mayaro-Rio Claro
11. Point Fortin
12. Siparia
13. Penal - Debe
14. Princes Town

the purpose of the Reform that is the decentralization of relevant aspects of the Local Government to improve efficiency and to build sustainable local communities with citizens participating actively in the decision-making process. Furthermore, it describes the major responsibilities of Municipal Corporations in various areas (Municipal management, economic development, social services, and environmental management).

- **The Draft White Paper on Local Government Reform by the MoLG in 2009.** This document sets out a new vision for the Local Government and signaled an important pathway towards its Reform. According to the paper, the Reform was to be achieved 'by promoting meaningful decentralization to improve efficiency, while building sustainable communities within a participative local democratic framework'.

The new Administration has recently accepted in principle a Draft Policy Framework document for Local Government transformation and modernization in the context of its philosophy on Local Government Reform. It is grounded in two of its seven pillars for sustainable development of the country, namely- People -centered Development and Good Governance. Consequently, the approach of the Government in the Local Government Reform is people centred, based on the motto "Serve the people, serve the people and serve the people". This means that the needs of the citizens are of primary importance: people should be engaged in discussions on issues that affect them, have the opportunity to determine their priorities and make sure that Municipalities discharge their responsibilities.

3.1 Developing a project management capacity

Over the period 2007 - 2009 and the ensuing period thereafter under the new administration which assumed office in May 2010 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago devoted special attention to improve the skills of the personnel in both the MoLG and in the Municipal Corporations.

Although some capability already exists in various areas, human resource capacities and project management approach were rather weak⁵.

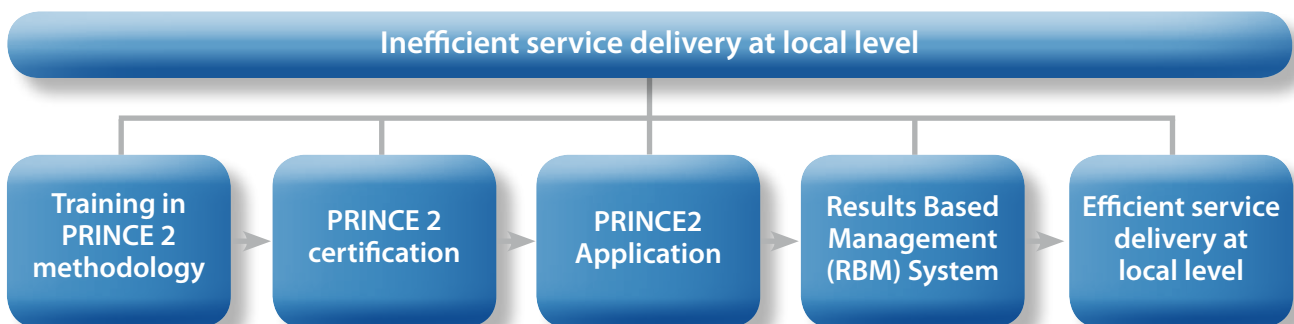
The 2006 Draft White Paper on Local Government Reform mentions a survey conducted in 2003 the *Market and Opinion Research International Opinion survey*, which indicated that citizens were unhappy with key services provided by the Regional Corporations. Also a Management Audit of Systems and Practices of Local Government was conducted and it revealed that there was an absence of modern management systems. The survey and the audit therefore justified the need for improvement in the efficiency within the Ministry and its Municipalities.

The first objective of the strategy chosen by the Ministry was to provide its staff and those from Municipal Corporations with training in project management, enabling them to become more fully involved in management matters.

This would help to improve the HR capacity at local level by having a highly-skilled and productive workforce able to deliver quality services and apply a modern project management approach. Furthermore, this learning process would have resulted in a more supportive environment, with highly motivated personnel willing to disseminate their new skills among their colleagues.

However, training staff in a new project management methodology was only the starting point of a broader approach. In order for the reform to be successful, in terms

Diagram 1. MoLG's strategic framework



of increased efficiency of operations in both the Ministry and the Municipalities, the development of a Results Based Management (RBM) system was set as the ultimate objective.

The reasoning was that a more efficient local system would be made possible by implementing a results-oriented approach, allowing clear assessment of whether the work was proceeding in the right direction, whether progress and success was being achieved, and how future efforts could be improved.

As part of this strategy, in September 2008 the MoLG agreed to partner with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement The Capacity Development in Project Management project, with the objective of training staff members of both the Ministry and the Municipal Corporations in a project management methodology called PRINCE 2 (PROJECT In a Controlled Environment). It was established that the time frame for the project would be three years (2008-2011) and that it would be managed and executed by the MoLG.

According to the UNDP policy of promoting national ownership, leadership and accountability, part of the costs would be borne by the MoLG (as outlined in the Cost-Sharing Agreement between the UNDP and the MoLG), while UNDP would contribute some funds⁶. Furthermore, the UN agency would provide support to facilitate the implementation of the project itself and to guide the Ministry in both monitoring and assessment activities.

3.2 Project management

3.2.1 What does project management mean?

In order to understand what project management means and what this project is about, a detailed analysis of its main elements is necessary.

First of all, what are projects?

Projects are temporary activities, with a clearly defined beginning and end, aimed at providing solutions to identified needs and at bringing about positive changes.

In order to achieve benefits, they must include:

- clearly defined objectives;
- activities required to meet those objectives;
- a defined amount of resources (both financial and human);
- a defined lifecycle;
- an organizational structure.

Projects only provide sustainable value if their processes are structured within:

- a consistent management methodology;
- a broad context of capacity development;
- a results-based management system.

Managing projects in a logical and organized way requires that some questions be asked at the start of any project: What are we trying to do? When will we start? What do we need? Can we do it alone or do we need help? How long will it take? How much will it cost?

The answers to these questions are the building blocks of project management, a process of planning, organizing and managing resources aimed at achieving targeted results, both by optimizing the allocation of inputs and by establishing the roles of all participants.

In brief, project management is about what an organisation wants to do and working out the best way to do it⁷.

3.2.2 PRINCE 2 methodology

PRINCE 2 is the methodology chosen by UNDP for managing projects.

Originally developed as a UK government standard for information systems project management, it now represents a generic project management method, that is becoming increasingly popular worldwide. The standard has more than 200.000 accredited users in some 50 countries, both in private and government organisations; it embodies many years of good practice and provides a common language for project management.

It is an effective project management system because:

- it is widely recognized internationally both in the public and in the private sector;
- it includes a defined organisational structure for the project management team;
- it is focused on business justification;
- it divides the project into manageable and controllable stages;
- it has a flexible structure, which suits every project;
- it allows for greater control of resources;
- it allows effective risk management.

PRINCE 2 provides a complete framework for project management, consisting of processes, roles/responsibilities and techniques.

Table 1. Some PRINCE 2 benefits

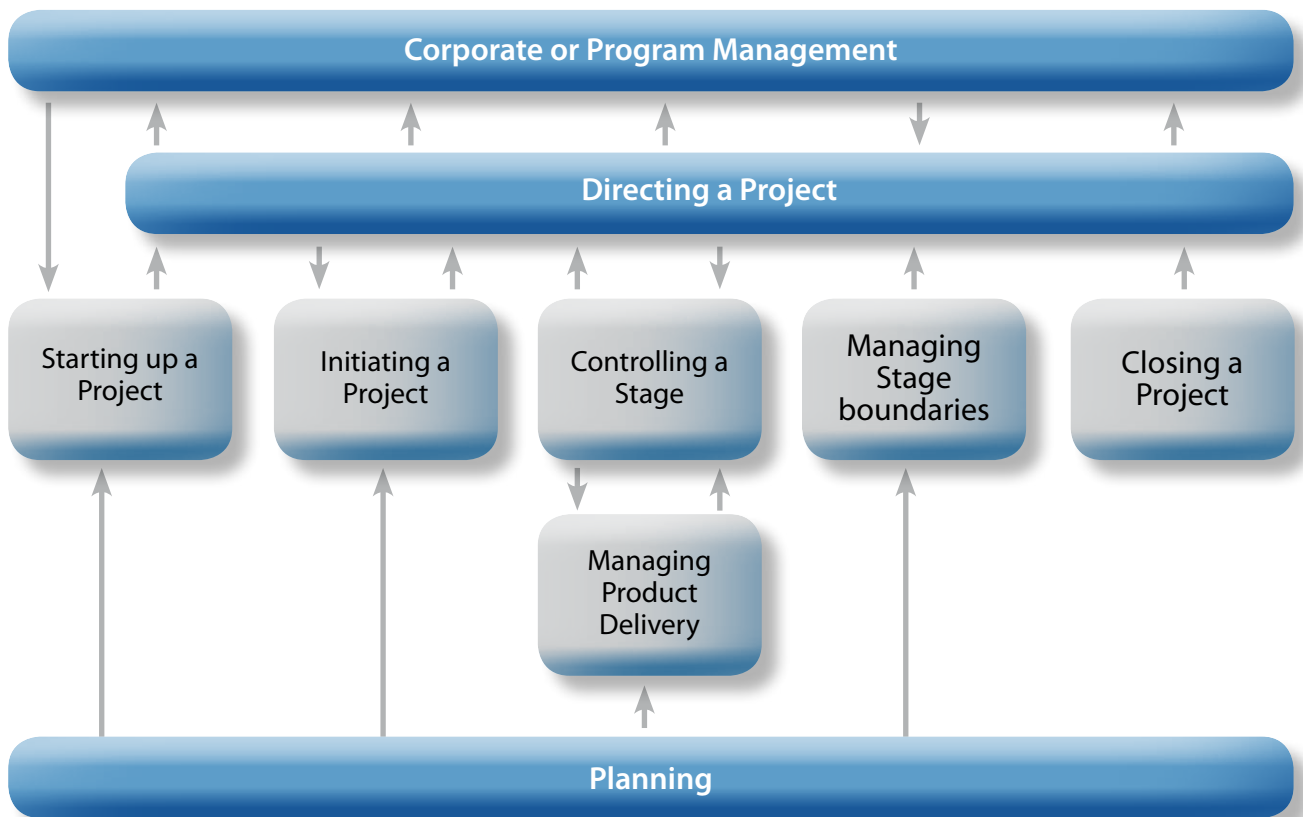
Monitoring	Communication
Regular reviews of project progress	Good communication channels between the project, project management and the rest of the organization
Continuous assurance that the project has a business justification	Capture and sharing of lessons learned
Management control of any deviation of the project from the plan	Increase and sharing of skills and competences among organisation's staff

1. **Processes.** The PRINCE 2 Process Model defines what is required of a project from start-up to completion. According to this model, each of the eight associated processes (Directing a Project, Planning a Project, Starting up a Project, Initiating a Project, Managing Stage Boundaries, Controlling a Stage, Managing Product Delivery and Closing a Project) is defined with specific objectives to be achieved and their related activities.
2. **Roles.** Managing a Project requires the establishment of specific responsibilities for the participants. For this reason, PRINCE 2 identifies an organizational structure, composed of various actors who play different roles in the entire project lifecycle.
3. **Techniques.** PRINCE 2 recommends some techniques, which represent the basic tools to run and manage projects.

More information about all these different aspects (processes, roles, techniques) of PRINCE 2 methodology is available on the website: <http://www.prince2.com/prince2-process-model.asp>

Though the standardized approach of PRINCE2 provides enormous benefits, this methodology does not solve all the problems faced by projects. A clearly defined set of processes, products and structures represents only a framework: projects also require experienced people, committed management and appropriate support. Since projects are different and have to deal with a changing and risky environment, they need flexibility if they are to succeed and, for this reason, PRINCE2 is often considered a useful methodology.

Diagram 2. PRINCE 2 Process Model



3.2.3 Capacity Development

Capacity development is an important dimension of project management. Without a general strategy for creating, committing and adapting capabilities, sustainable results cannot be achieved.

Rather than being based only on technical training, expertise and financial resources coming from foreign countries, as happened in the past, capacity development must be seen as a wider and more complex concept.

UNDP, espousing a comprehensive approach, defines capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organisations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time⁸⁹”.

Within its Capacity Assessment Framework, UNDP has made some key recommendations to improve the impact and coherence of its efforts and to promote a common frame of reference:

- engage stakeholders on capacity development in order to make the process self-sustaining;
- assess capacity assets and needs for defining and designing a capacity development response in each different case, addressing both new and existing capacities;
- formulate a capacity development response, by setting sequenced actions to address three questions: capacity for why? for whom? for what?
- implement a capacity development response, taking into consideration both political dynamics involved in managing change processes and monitoring activities;
- evaluate capacity development, by focusing on the contribution of outputs to the achievement of outcomes⁹.

3.3 Why UNDP as partner in the project management reform?

There are three main reasons why the MoLG chose UNDP for building and strengthening its human resource capacities.

- 1. Past successful cooperation with the Ministry.** From 2006 to 2009 UNDP partnered with the MoLG in the Institutional strengthening and support to the MoLG project. On this occasion, the UN agency provided technical expertise to the Ministry in developing and modernizing its institutional structures with the objective of improving the life of citizens in their communities¹⁰.
- 2. Features and values.** UNDP is well placed to support the Local Government reform, because of:
 - **UN identity.** UNDP is widely trusted by governments, private sector and different types of organizations as both a broker of knowledge and as a facilitator of open and participatory dialogue;
 - **Political impartiality.** UNDP does not put forward ideology-based approaches, but simply facilitates professional networking, in order to exchange experiences and good practices;
 - **Universality.** UNDP, as an agency present in more than 150 countries, is a universal player;
 - **Strong experience.** On many occasions UNDP has supported Local Governments in strengthening their capabilities, particularly by creating the enabling environment for reforms, developing the technical capacities of local institutions and strengthening citizens' participation and empowerment of communities¹¹.
- 3. UNDP has adopted PRINCE2 as its project management methodology.**

3.4 Why PRINCE 2 as project management methodology?

Traditionally implementation of project management techniques in the Ministry has not been systematic. While there is capacity in some areas, for example Logical Framework Methodology, the supporting environment for application and standardization was not present.

In March 2008 UNDP presented the PRINCE2 methodology to the MoLG, the Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Permanent Secretaries and to the Heads of Departments, highlighting PRINCE2 features, benefits and successes.

After having listened carefully to the methodology's elements, the Ministry decided to commence the process for adopting the methodology for managing its own projects, because of:

- its convenient delivery method;
- the ease of transferring lessons learned via the methodology;
- the possibility of online or CD-based training;
- the short time required for the training.



Implementing the Capacity Development Project Management project

Taking into consideration the need to upskill its workforce, training sessions in PRINCE2 for personnel from both MoLG and Municipal Corporations was identified by the Ministry as the first step of its capacity development strategy. This was to be supported by the UNDP through the Capacity Development in Project Management Project.

The PRINCE2 methodology would expose staff members to processes, roles and techniques which, together with an appropriate set of policies and tools, would provide them with the sound project management competencies necessary to communicate effectively with counterparts at a local, regional and international level as well as implement projects in a timely, efficient and effective manner.

The *Capacity Development in Project Management* project represents a good example of a global approach to learning activities and demonstrates that embarking on any training activity, it is necessary to formulate an overall learning strategy, composed of the following elements:

- **The desired objectives.** In any learning strategy the highest priority must be given to establishing clear objectives. As the first step of the project, the PRINCE2 training program was intended to build capabilities among the staff of the Ministry and Municipal Corporations, giving them the required skills to manage projects successfully and to ultimately improve the delivery of service and their responsiveness to the needs of the community¹².
- **The selection of learners.** Before starting any learning activity it is necessary to target the people that will participate according to appropriate criteria. It is also important to convince the learners that the methodology to which they are being exposed will improve their performance.

The Ministry first selected senior staff, identifying these individuals as urgently requiring training in project management, due to their responsibility to implement and supervise projects. Next, supervisors, secretaries, human resource officers, financial officers, accountants, auditors and clerks were targeted. This selection, however, occurred only in the first wave of the training.

In the second wave PRINCE2 was made available to all staff, in order to stimulate a universal understanding of the advantages of this methodology.

- **The coordination of efforts.** A good learning approach, while developing capacities among different actors, should also ensure that training activities are coordinated and do not clash with other plans already in process.

In this case, officers from the MoLG met with representatives of management from the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment and the Ministry of Public Administration to ensure that the project would not duplicate their plans¹³.

4.1 Learning tools

A fundamental part of a learning strategy is the choice of the learning system through which the training will be carried out. An effective learning approach must be user-friendly and professional at the same time. It should:

- be focused not only on the enhancement of individuals' competencies, but also on a set of professional standards;
- ensure that learning is undertaken in a systematic and consistent way;
- pursue accountability, consistency, results-orientation and efficiency.

In the Capacity Development in Project Management project the MoLG agreed with UNDP to use the Learning Management System (LMS), an online platform maintained by the UNDP Headquarters in New York, which provides UNDP staff with training resources. The strength of this system rests in its universal access to learning: in fact it offers a global development network where countries and partners are connected to knowledge resources.

In the case of the MoLG's project, UNDP dealt with all the arrangements required to access the LMS online course, in particular with:

- setting up a database with a list of those who would be using the LMS;
- preparing passwords, usernames and log-ons to access the system;
- providing learners with the necessary information to use the LMS¹⁴.

UNDP also acknowledged that the availability of different tools is important, since a complete source of reference facilitates the learning process. Therefore, some supplementary tools were provided in addition to the online platform, such as the PRINCE2 User Guide (consisting of the main concepts and objectives of the project management methodology) and some past paper exams, which were circulated to candidates.

Table 2. Tools available in the 4 exam sessions

Training Tools	1st session (January 2009)	2nd session (April 2009)	3rd session (June 2009)	4th session (September 2009)
UNDP online platform (LMS)	Yes	No	No	No
PRINCE 2 User Guide	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ILX online platform	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNDP Compact Disks	No	No	Yes	No
Past papers	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PRINCE 2 Workshops	No	Yes	Yes	No

4.2 Facing challenges: contingency plans and keeping ownership

In planning learning activities, contingency strategies must be put in place to cover unforeseen events should they occur.

Before implementing the project, the MoLG took into consideration the risk of limited or unavailable internet connectivity in some regional offices and municipal Corporations that would have prevented some people from accessing the PRINCE2 course via the LMS. Having foreseen this risk at the start of the project, the Ministry designed a back-up plan, based around offline access to the course via CDs¹⁵.

This proved to be useful since the initial plan to complete the training by December 2008 did not materialize. The use of CDs and another platform were therefore essential in continuing the learning since the UNDP LMS was undergoing scheduled transformation and was not available during the first quarter of 2009.

The other platform used was that of the ILX Group¹⁶, with which UNDP had a long term agreement¹⁷ for licenses to access the PRINCE2 training. The ILX Group agreed to provide access to its platform given the unavailability of the UNDP platform.

Furthermore, ILX experts in Project Management who were conducting an assessment of the Ministry for the development of its Results Based Management System including adapting PRINCE2 to the local environment provided some direct training to some of the candidates in preparation for the examinations.

4.3 E-learning and its benefits

E-learning has grown enormously popular in recent years thanks to the development of multimedia technologies. E-learning is a form of distance education aiming to transfer skills and knowledge electronically.

The capacity to work independently or under supervision by an instructor, combined with the wealth of media that can be employed (including text, images, animation, video and audio), makes it a very varied approach.

E-learning offers some advantages over traditional training methods in terms of:

- **Increased access.** Renowned instructors can share their knowledge across borders, allowing students to attend courses regardless of physical, political and economic boundaries;
- **Convenience.** E-learning courses are often self-paced and the sessions are available anywhere and at any time, allowing learners to proceed at their own convenience;
- **User-friendliness.** E-learning courses usually do not require advanced technology beyond basic internet access and audio and video capabilities, which also make it possible to work on a broad range of platforms;
- **Skills development.** E-learning promotes the development of digital literacy;
- **Access to public content.** E-learning provides the opportunity to access webcasts or other course content¹⁸;
- **Time and cost efficiency.** By allowing students to study anywhere, e-learning reduces learning time and also removes costs related to classroom training (e.g. accommodation, travel, meals etc);
- **Increased knowledge retention.** The interactive nature of e-learning provides a strong learning reinforcement that increases content retention;
- **Broad scope.** E-learning can be easily delivered across large audiences;
- **Consistency of message.** E-learning provides a consistent message, without the

effect of differing tutor styles and experiences;

- **Flexible delivery.** E-learning courses are compatible with all existing systems as they can be delivered via CD (without the need for Internet access), on a shared network drive or as a link on an Intranet site.

Because of these benefits, e-learning was utilized throughout all training phases in the Capacity Development in Project Management project.

Although it provides an easy-to-use and stress-free learning environment, online learning is not always received well by learners: in the absence of personal instructions, they are sometimes insufficiently engaged, particularly if the e-learning methodology is limited to text on a computer screen. In order to make the learning enjoyable and to increase its success rate, a simplification is recommended.

The ILX online learning strategy provides a good example of a user-friendly and interactive approach, consisting of a multi-media and rich design interface, voiceover and animation tools and bite-size lessons. Given its simplicity and attractiveness, it was used for the PRINCE2 training.

4.4. The added value of “blended learning”

Before choosing a specific learning strategy an organization should identify and assess the most appropriate tools taking into consideration such things as:

- **Corporate culture**, which determines whether non-traditional training methods have the support of the organization, what attention span employees typically display, and whether employees can be trained at their own desks;
- **Objectives**, necessary to plan any learning activity aimed at developing skills and competencies;
- **Technical constraints** of facilities and infrastructures which might limit the availability of learning tools;
- **Audience analysis** to identify who needs to be trained and what types of courses have worked well in the past;
- **Communication tools**, in order to choose the best way to launch a learning programme and to convey its benefits to the audience.

All these factors should be taken into account when implementing a ‘blended learning’ approach, which consists of various learning methods (e-learning, classroom trainings, workshops, seminars, coaching, mentoring, teleconferences

etc.) properly balanced. In fact good results are often achieved by combining different resources. 'Blended' learning can be tailored to specific needs therefore enabling organizations to achieve their objectives without imposing tools which fit poorly with the corporate culture.

The main success factors of 'blended' learning are:

- an increased effectiveness, thanks to its targeted approach;
- a proper alignment with the working environment;
- the opportunity to use different methodologies according to the requirements of each training level;
- extra value, in terms of motivations for learners who feel more stimulated¹⁹.

In the Capacity Development in Project Management project conventional methods were also utilized including use of paper materials and group study. The latter being encouraged by the Project Management team and the ILX Consultants who invited the learners to come together regularly to discuss what they had learned and arranged some seminars and workshops to assist in exam preparation.

4.5 The roll-out of exams: process and challenges

In the Capacity Development in Project Management project the MoLG had overall responsibility for its management and execution, as well as for handling the logistics of the examinations (locations, invigilation and material).

Relevant support was provided by UNDP, which took the lead role in the invigilation of the exams and in facilitating the certification of those members who successfully completed and passed the exam.

Date and locations. A total of four exam sessions were held over the period January-September 2009 in different locations, in order to accommodate the large number of candidates expected, their geographic spread and the number of invigilators available.

Exam venues. Conference rooms, City Halls and University campuses, were arranged in five main areas: Port of Spain (the capital), Couva (mid west) San Fernando (south-west), Sangre Grande (northeast), Tunapuna (east of Port of Spain).

Exam invigilation. From the initial stage some of the MoLG members were sourced for assisting in the invigilation of the exam sessions, however, according to an agreement between UNDP and the examining body (APMG), UNDP had sole responsibility for overseeing the exams. Ministry staff therefore carried out supportive tasks, such as candidate registration, and the distribution and collection of stationery and exam papers²⁰.

Figure 3. PRINCE 2 examinations



5

Results and lessons learned

5.1 The staff performance

The overall performance in the exams did not meet expectation in terms of both participation and pass rate. The expectations, as set out in the Project Document, were very ambitious: 400 staff members (from both the Ministry and Municipal Corporations) were targeted to participate in the PRINCE 2 training with the expectation that at least 90% would sit the exams and 80% passing and receiving certification.

Participation rate. The average rate achieved during all the examination sessions was about 50%, with the highest rate being 75% instead of the expected 90%. Informal assessment determined that different factors deterred staff from taking the examinations, including:

- insufficient communication with supervisors who had to provide information on the learning and examinations
- workload;
- poor electronic equipment;
- limited or non-existent online access.

Pass rate. The average candidate pass rate was 40%, (60% being the highest), with 80% being the expected rate. The main factor seemed to be inadequate preparation: many staff members underestimated the preparation required to pass the exam and partially utilized the tools provided to them (in some cases only paper-based materials, especially the PRINCE2 User Guide).

5.2 Lessons learned

For the first time, the Ministry has been exposed to a new methodology of training involving a large number of people. Thanks to the PRINCE2 training, conceived as the first output of the Capacity Development in Project Management project trained staff would be able to utilize a new approach in their work, spread it to their colleagues and contribute to the development and implementation of a RBM system.

These lessons centred on the following aspects:

Risk Management. The main risks of the project were:

- inadequate internet connectivity and computer facilities for participants;
- low motivation to take the exams, due to a lack of understanding of PRINCE2 uses and benefits;
- a prolonged gap between phase I and phase II of the project, due to a change in the Senior User.

Project Management. The appointment of a dedicated project manager as required was not achieved due to the heavy workload of the targeted unit, the Human Resources (HR) Division. Project management of the programme was achieved primarily through the Decentralization Unit with assistance from the Change Management Unit. These two units were ill prepared for the role that they had to play since it was not their area of expertise.

This resulted in some implementation challenges in the following areas:

- registration of staff members for training and exams;
- scheduling of PRINCE 2 exams and usage of certified staff to invigilate exams;
- risk management and mitigating measures to address emerging issues, such as connectivity and access to the LMS;
- assessment of staff's readiness and willingness to take exams;
- availability of personnel in charge of organizing meetings and follow-up recommendations;
- availability of regular progress reports, such as: updates on the status of risks, a final project report with lessons learnt and feedback from participants trained and sustained structured statistics on participants and performance.

Project Board oversight. The Project Board is responsible for making management decisions for a project to proceed, including recommendations for approval of project plans and revisions as well as quality project evaluations. In carrying out the project a major shortcoming was a poor commitment and sensitivity to roles, functions, operations and benefits by the Project Board's components.

This resulted in:

- Irregular meetings (not held on a quarterly basis, as expected);
- Poor attendance at meetings by some project board members.

Project design. The weaknesses regarding project planning were due to three main elements:

- the high participation and pass rates expected from learners;
- minimal attention to the time needed by learners to study;
- a tendency to underestimate the interest of junior staff and, conversely, to overestimate the interest of senior staff. Junior staff were very motivated to start training and to pass the PRINCE 2 exam: most of them believed that an internationally recognized certification would help shield them from any job losses caused by the economic crisis. Another motivation was their belief that this methodology would help to solve some problems related to the slow and bureaucratic procedures within the Ministry.

By contrast, senior staff was reluctant to be trained for various reasons: some were apprehensive of additional responsibilities with regard to decision-making, while others were concerned about not performing well in the exam. In addition, according to some verbal reports, PRINCE2 certification would not have improved their performances in a short time and, by the time any change would have happened, they would be retired²¹.

Improvement of work practices. After the training PRINCE2 methodology was applied in two projects of the Ministry, one aimed at establishing a day care facility for the Ministry, and another one aimed at developing a 'business case' for the Waste Management System. The trainees have recognized that PRINCE 2 is helping them to perform their tasks more efficiently; however they have also highlighted the need for more assistance for applying what they have learned.

Capacity assessment. Lack of capacity assessment of the management of the learning process together with challenges experienced by the candidates in utilizing and accessing the online training programme has possibly hindered the achievement of the expected results.

UNDP 'value added'. UNDP has been bringing its comparative knowledge to the project, drawing on its global network of offices and partners and its relevant experience in project management. It has also been ensuring that the implementation of the project includes the development of institutional capacity so that, after the project, it would be possible to carry on the work.

To facilitate the implementation of the project the Country Office provided some services in accordance with the UNDP procedures:

- Preparation of the Learning Platform,
- Participation on the Project Board;
- Guidance to the MoLG in the execution of monitoring and evaluation activities;
- Identificaton and recruitment of experts with the agreement of the Ministry;
- Preparation of financial reports.

Figure 4. Certification ceremony at Hilton Hotel in Trinidad, June 2009





Moving towards a RBM System

A Results-Based Management (RBM) system will add value to the Project Management training of staff and strengthen the delivery mechanisms of the MoLG. The MoLG is therefore currently considering the implementation of such a system as a second phase of the Capacity Development in Project Management initiative.

6.1. What is RBM?

RBM is a strategic management approach aimed at ensuring that all activities are structured around achieving desired results.

It consists of three main processes: planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Planning. It is about the definition and clarification of the objectives and scope of a project. It includes:

- definition of realistic results, either outputs (derived from the completion of activities and emerging from processing inputs) or outcomes (broader changes in development conditions);
- definition of performance indicators (to measure progress), baseline data (to provide starting point from which to measure change and progress over time) and targets (results to be achieved by a specified time).

Monitoring. It is an internal and continuous activity aimed at providing information to help meet targets and determine what actions must be taken to ensure progress.

Evaluation. It is an independent and rigorous assessment, which involves an extensive analysis of either completed or ongoing activities²².

Apart from being a system comprising planning, monitoring and evaluation, RBM is a broader strategy which includes some measures for promoting a “culture of results:”

- Commitment from senior management. This helps to effectively institutionalize the system as a whole;
- Informed demand for results information. A ‘culture of results’ is enhanced if information on results is routinely required in the context of planning, implementation and reviewing and in this way it ultimately becomes a natural part of managing;
- Supportive organizational systems, practices and procedures. Offering the right incentives and rewarding good results management (e.g. undertaking self-evaluation, taking informed risks and sharing information on results) contributes to fostering a culture of results;
- A results-oriented accountability regime. It is about following proper procedures and using approved resources to ensure people are accountable for both the results achieved and their behaviour;
- A capacity to learn and adapt. A culture of results is built on experience in terms of evaluation of past performance, both successes and failures. Providing learning opportunities, treating mistakes as opportunities to learn and focusing on best practices not only helps to achieve better results but also enhances the capacity to make better decisions.

Diagram 3. RBM benefits



- Results measurement and results management capacity. In order to build a culture of results, the capacity to articulate and measure results and to understand how to support and measure results-based management is of paramount importance²³.

6.2 Next steps in the collaboration between UNDP and the MoLG

The UNDP will provide technical support to the MoLG in the implementation of the RBM system by providing practitioners, systems and tools.

UNDP is indeed well placed to give a meaningful contribution thanks to its practical experience in the implementation of a results-based approach: RBM system at UNDP was introduced in 1998 as a tool to improve management effectiveness and today it represents a driving force behind the organisation's culture.

The proposed Results-Based Management project has four main outputs:

1. Implementation of a framework for the RBM system, by executing workshop sessions and developing results chains for projects and programmes as well as a Guidebook for programme and project management;
2. Development of an efficient performance monitoring system, by improving the functioning of the Project Boards, increasing ICT proficiency and identifying a set of monitoring and evaluation indicators;
3. Carrying out of training in Programme and project management, as well as project mentoring and certification activities;
4. Report on monitoring and evaluation, both through Project Board meetings and audit reports.

UNDP and the Ministry are deeply convinced that the features of RBM will help the MoLG to conduct operations in an accountable, transparent and predictable manner and that it can be used as a model for other Ministries and the public sector in general²⁴.

It is however recognized that training in PRINCE2 is not enough for the development of a RBM system. Although PRINCE 2 is a necessary step to enhance the MoLG's human capacity with the requisite skills to operate in a RBM system, a 'culture of results' must be put in place.



Recommendations

7.1 Tips for successful project management

Given the challenges experienced in the implementation of the project, some recommendations are necessary to inform smooth progress towards a results oriented system.

- Motivating people. Firstly this requires encouraging managers and leaders to accept change as progress rather than a threat or insurmountable challenge. Then, motivating the staff with the managers' support;
- Conducting a preliminary study as to what is the capacity on the ground, in order to bring skills up to adequate professional level;
- Having an experienced project manager who is able to coordinate projects in accordance with established guidelines and practices;
- Conducting an assessment of candidates to determine learning challenges and their readiness to sit exams;
- Conducting an assessment of examination conditions: locations, equipment, dates of exams and support personnel;
- Set targets based on assessment of environment
- Establishing a contact with candidates, e.g. through 'point persons';
- Exploring a strategy to encourage a satisfactory turnout and pass rate in the exams;
- Ensuring an adequate amount of invigilators during the exams²⁵.

7.2 The role of Maturity Models for successful project management implementation

In order to achieve effectiveness in delivering results and to produce repeatable successes in managing projects, the adoption of models to certify the maturity of an organisation is highly recommended.

A 'Project Management Maturity Model' provides a framework with which to measure impact on performance and process improvements.

Benefits

Among Maturity Models' benefits there are:

- a clear set of benchmarks;
- ability to make comparison between different organizations and different Units within an organisation;
- visibility and recognition of the organisation's management capacity by project partners;
- improvement in the ability to assess the capacity of implementing partners;
- transparency and accountability.

Maturity's indicators

An organisation can be considered 'mature' if it is able to manage activities based on standard management processes. Some of the indicators of maturity are:

- activities are carried out in accordance with plans and defined processes;
- roles and responsibilities for carrying out programme/project-related activities are clear throughout the office;
- progress is monitored against appropriate plans;
- an objective quantitative basis for judging the quality of deliverables is in place;
- risks, problems and other issues are analyzed and means to take corrective action are available;
- lessons learned from previous programmes/projects are used effectively;
- processes are updated (when necessary) and improvements are implemented.

7.2.1 UNDP Project Management Maturity Models

Since the mid-eighties Maturity Models have become important to measure and improve efficiency. Two Maturity Models have a strong track record of helping

organizations to assess their maturity and are compatible with UNDP's management environment.

1. Portfolio, Programme, Project Management Maturity Model (P3M3)

This is a broad model covering all the three layers of management and consisting of five progressive levels of maturity:

- Awareness of process. During this phase, practice is determined by events or individual preferences, processes are not properly documented and activities are not (or in some case not completely) performed
- Repeatable process. The organization can demonstrate that basic management practices have been established and that processes are developing
- Defined process. The management and technical processes necessary to achieve the organisation's purposes are documented, standardized and integrated with other business processes.
- Managed process. There is evidence of quantitative objectives for quality and process performance which are used as criteria in managing processes.
- Optimised process. The organization focuses on optimisation of its quantitatively managed processes to take into account changing business needs and external factors.

2. PRINCE2 Maturity Model (P2M2)

P2M2 is a specific tool for assessing and certifying maturity exclusively in the use of PRINCE 2. It identifies three levels of maturity. At the first level, processes are still at an initial stage and are mostly underdeveloped; at the second level PRINCE2 is adopted but is applied inconsistently across projects within the organization. At the third one PRINCE2 is the standard for the organization of all projects.

In addition to the assessment and certification of maturity levels, this model can be also used:

- to understand the key practices that are part of effective project processes;
- to identify practices that need to be embedded in order to go on to the next level of maturity;
- to improve the capability to manage projects²⁶.

Whether applied at public or private level, both models need to be tailored to different management levels.



Conclusions

As the Government of Trinidad and Tobago seeks to strengthen its institutions to support accountability, transparency, and good governance, there is need for a more structured and strategic approach to implementation of programmes and projects.

Training and certification in PRINCE2 is but a first step in the process for the MoLG. The next step will be the development and implementation of the Results Based Management System, this will allow the certified staff members to apply their learning and contribute to the effective transformation of their Ministry. It is foreseen that in addition to being change agents within the MoLG, staff members may be called upon to share their experiences in other Ministries as well.

It has been noted that following the Capacity Development in Project Management project, some Ministries (the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Finance) have shown considerable interest in PRINCE2 training for their own project-focused staff.

The work that UNDP has been carrying out, in tandem with the MoLG and Municipal Corporations while only in its initial phase, has demonstrated the steps required for achieving efficient service delivery and a modern results oriented public sector. While it is recognized that challenges are inevitable, continued support in creating an enabling environment with the input of staff, management, UNDP and other stakeholders will ensure eventual success.

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