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**Exante Assessment of the Policy
Analysis and Planning Process in
the Ministry of Agriculture, Land
and Marine Resources**

Output of National Project for "Improving the Agricultural Policy Analysis
and Planning Infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago"

IICA OFFICE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



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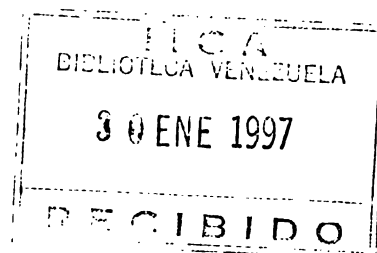
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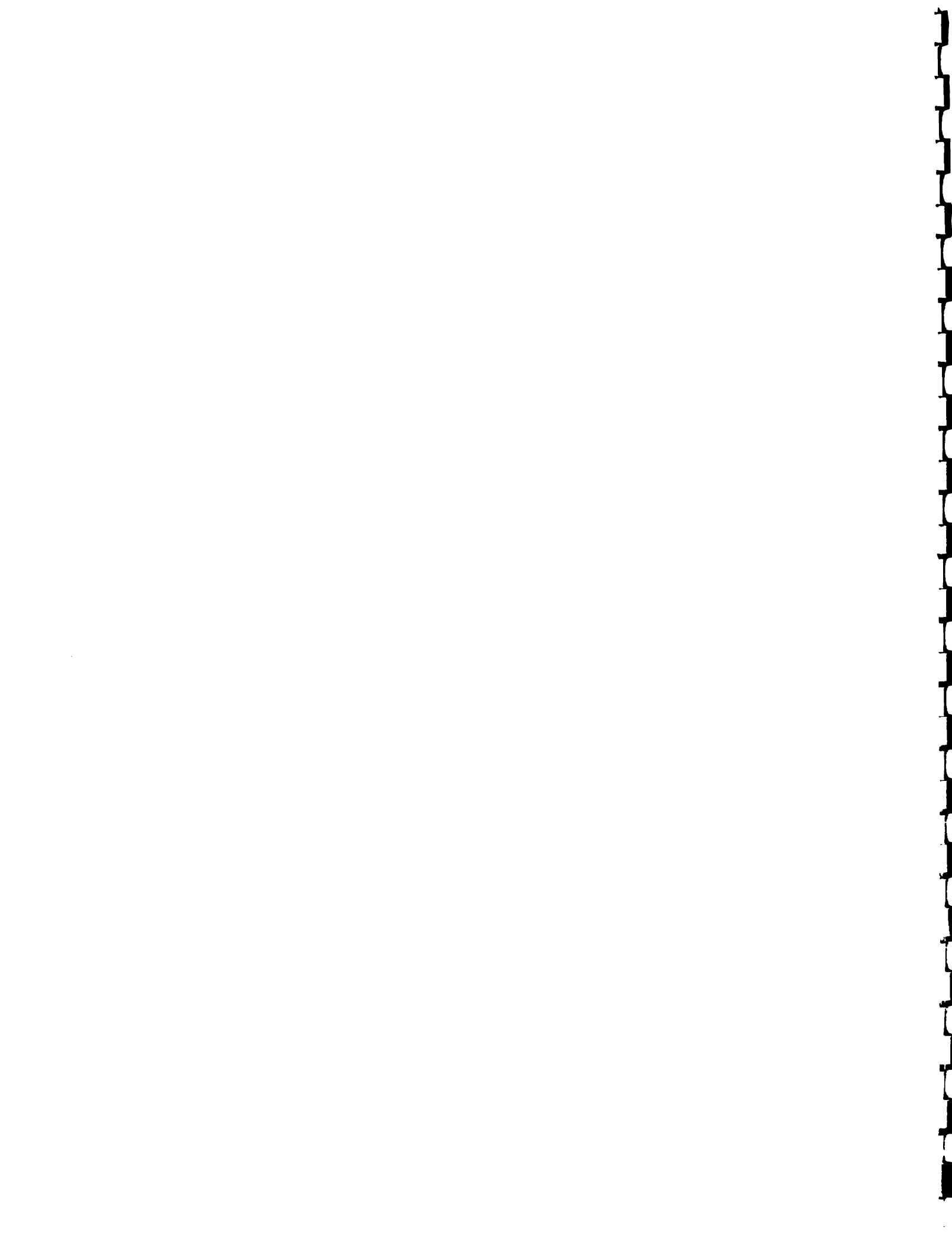
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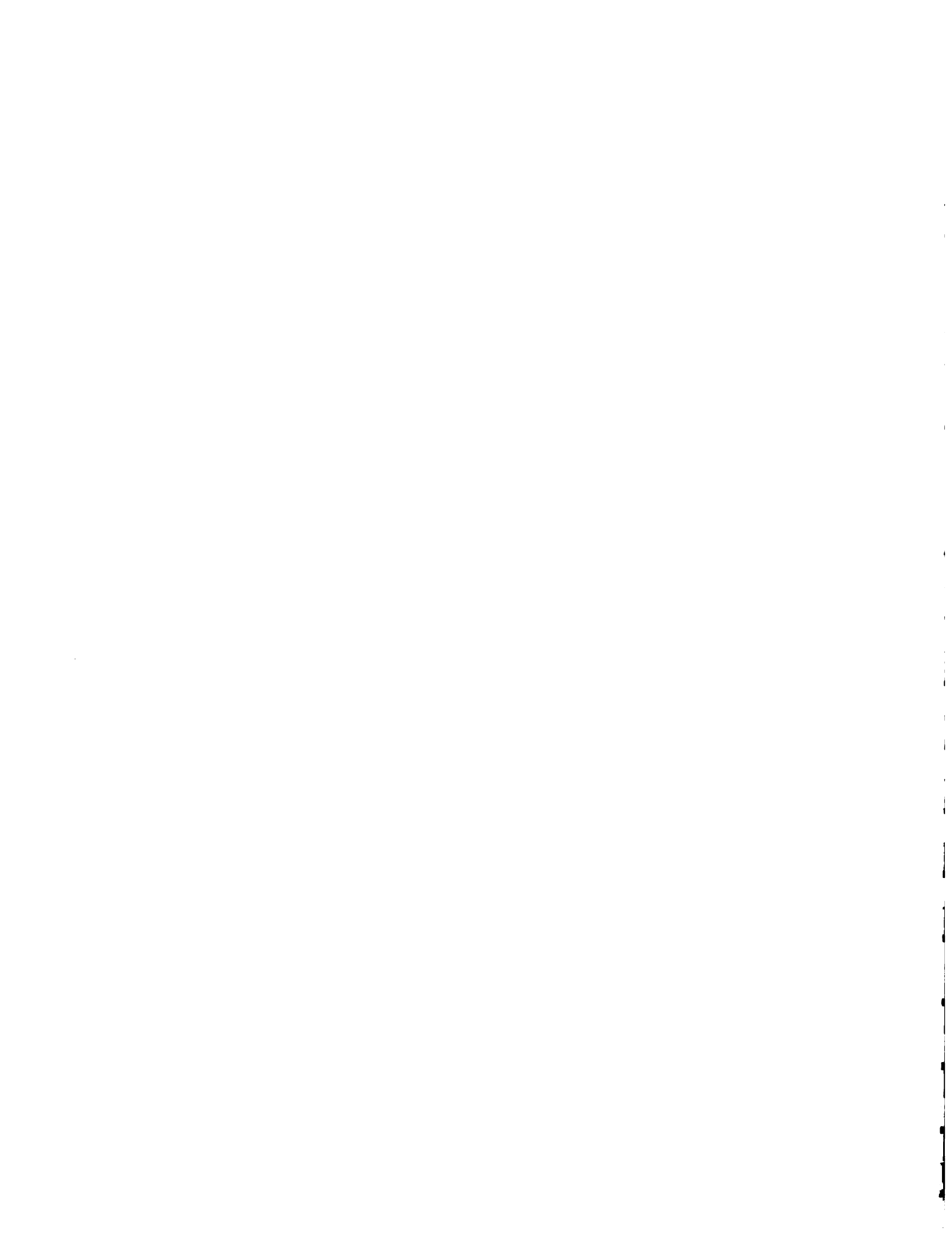
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
ADIU	Agriculture Data and Information Unit
APD	Agricultural Planning Division
BASS	Basic Agriculture Sector Studies
CARICOM	Caribbean Common Market
CABI	CAB International
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
DAFMA	Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Marine Affairs
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
MALMR	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources
NAMDEVCO	National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporation
PPAB	Policy and Programmes Advisory Board



INTRODUCTION

The function of agricultural policy analysis and planning in Trinidad and Tobago is vested with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR). Specifically, the Agricultural Planning Division (APD) of this Ministry is the unit charged with this responsibility. There are, nevertheless, a number of other agencies and units which influence and contribute to policy decision-making both at the sector and national levels. Many assessments have been made of this function within the MALMR and a number of proposals have been made for addressing the weaknesses and constraints identified.

In one such study, the IDB's Basic Agricultural Sector Studies (BASS), indepth assessments have been made of the process and the institutional framework in which planning and policy analysis are conducted. It was this study among others which prompted a request for support to streamlining the policy analysis and planning process in the APD. The subsequent evolution of the project titled "Improving the Infrastructure for Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning in Trinidad and Tobago" represents IICA's response to such a request.

This project will render support towards planning process improvement in two areas, being:

1. the enhancement of the policy analysis process itself; and
2. the introduction of more appropriate tools for supporting the process.

In this regard, it is considered that the ultimate determination of institutional improvement, requires that *a priori*, the current status of policy analysis and planning in the MALMR be established.

This is the aim of this document, and the assessment is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 appraises the current organization of the agricultural policy analysis and planning infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago, while Chapter 2 examines the mechanics of the current process at the APD. Chapter 3 evaluates the current status of information management within the APD and Chapter 4 summarizes identified strengths and weaknesses of the current planning architecture. The annual planning process is introduced as an approach towards streamlining the function in Chapter 5.

It must be emphasized that the findings presented here are not new, but are really a synopsis of a number of previous studies. This notwithstanding, the establishment of this baseline position is important in order to identify areas for attention and to rationalize the approach to resolving the constraints identified. Moreover, this assessment provides the means for adjudging that actual institutional improvement has taken place as a result of the project.



Chapter I

Organization of Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning Infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago

Agricultural policy analysis and planning is organized at two levels in Trinidad and Tobago. The first is the national level, where a number of national planning agencies impact on policy analysis and planning through their influence on national macro-economic policies. The second level is of the agricultural sector, where the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources has primary responsibility.

1.1 Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning at the National Level:

The national policy analysis and planning agencies include the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of Trade, and the Ministry of Finance.

There are also a number of para-statal organizations which have an important bearing on the agricultural policy formulation and planning process. Among the most important of these agents are the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) which has the mandate for coordinating and developing the agricultural marketing process in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as, the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) which functions to provide a line of development credit to the farming community. Both of these organizations are directly influenced by the MALMR since their boards of directors are answerable to the Minister of Agriculture.

The Ministry of Planning and Development directs overall economic policy through its medium to long range policies and plans. In its Medium Term Macro-planning Framework, this ministry sets out the national policies and plans for all sectors and influences the direction of resource allocation, incentives and promotional mechanisms for various areas of national economic activity.

This Ministry also liaises with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism in the establishment of

national trade and investment policy, the determination of trading quotas and the areas which will be emphasized or de-emphasized by such policies. Finally, the Ministry of Finance exercises direct influence through its control of budgetary allocations to various ministries, the establishment of fiscal and monetary policy, establishment of levels of import duties, taxes and surcharges, and the management of the exchange rate regime.¹

1.2 Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning at the Sector Level:

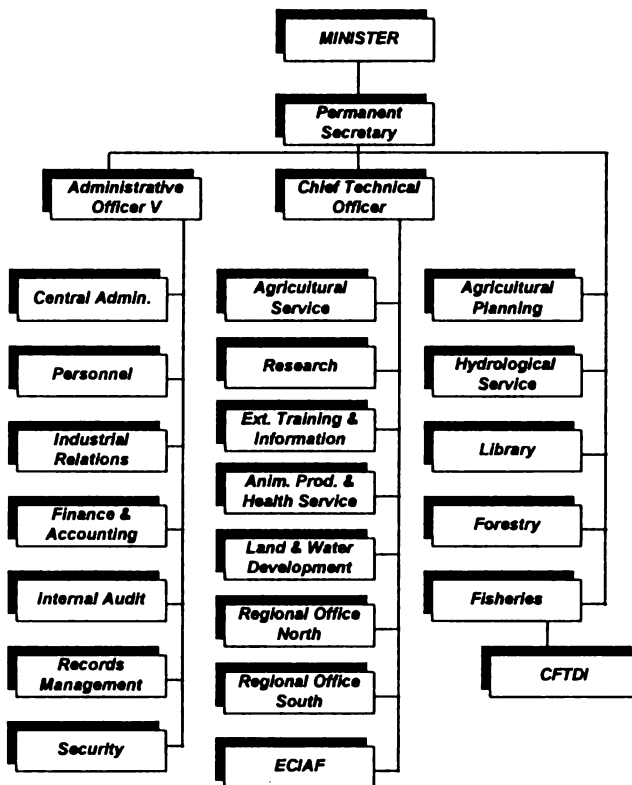
The MALMR directly influences sector policy formulation and planning through its Agricultural Planning Division (APD). The mission of the APD is "to develop and maintain an effective planning process in the Ministry of Agriculture..."² Among its strategic objectives are:

- (a) the formulation of a consistent set of plans, policies and programmes which are supportive of, and consistent with, the development objectives of the sector; and
- (b) the monitoring and control of these plans and policies, in order to continuously assess their impact upon the sector.

The APD was constituted so as to play an overall coordinating role in the management of planning and policy activities within the agricultural sector. As such, within the MALMR, it is regarded as having a super-ordinate rather than sub-ordinate function with responsibilities for monitoring and coordinating the activities of all other divisions of the Ministry.

In order to appreciate this role, the current organizational structure of the Ministry is presented in figure 1. This figure points to the central functional role which the APD must undertake in order to achieve these ends.

FIGURE 1:
Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources



farming public. All of these divisions, with the exception of the APD, Forestry, Fisheries and Hydrological Service are headed by the Chief Technical Officer who is directly responsible for the management of all the MALMR's technical functions. The APD, Forestry, Fisheries and Hydrological Service Divisions report directly to the Permanent Secretary, an arrangement which reflects the special functions of these units in directing wider functions of the MALMR.

The administrative function is managed by an Administrative Officer who oversees sub-functions such as central administration, personnel, industrial relations, finance and accounting internal audit, records management and security. The head of the administration function also reports directly to the Permanent Secretary of the MALMR.

Tobago's public agricultural infrastructure is serviced through the Tobago House of Assembly's Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Marine Affairs (DAFMA) which maintains a very close operational relationship with the other MALMR divisions in Trinidad. The technical functions of the DAFMA are managed by a Technical Officer.

1.3 Current Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Agriculture:

The MALMR is headed by the Minister of Agriculture, under whom is a Permanent Secretary followed by the Chief Technical Officer. Overall, the MALMR consists of eleven technical divisions which are supported by a centralized administrative function. These divisions include Agricultural Services, Research, Extension Training and Information, Animal Production and Health Services, Land and Water Development, Forestry, the Regional Office North, the Regional Office South, Fisheries Division, Hydrological Services and the Agricultural Planning Division. By a process of ministry decentralization, the Regional Offices were established in 1988 in an effort to more easily deliver the broadest possible range of services to the

1.4 Organizational Structure of the Agricultural Planning Division:

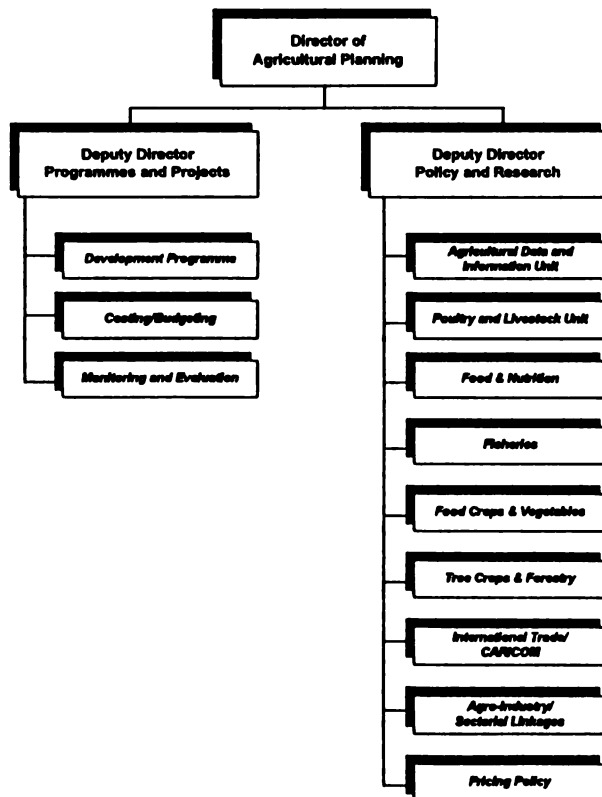
Within the APD, a clear organizational structure is evident with the division being headed by a Director of Agricultural Planning. The Division is organized around two broad functional areas being **Policy, Research and Planning** and **Programmes and Projects**. Each of these sub-areas is headed by a Deputy Director of Planning, both of whom report to the Director of Agricultural Planning.

The Policy, Research and Planning section deals with all commodity aspects in crops and livestock, agroindustry, forestry, fisheries and farm

management. The Programmes and Projects section is subdivided into two sub-units, namely Project Formulation and Evaluation, and Programmes and Projects Coordination and Control.

There are also ancillary units in the APD's structure comprising the Agricultural Data and Information Unit (ADIU), and the Administrative Services Unit. The ADIU services the data and statistical needs of the Division and reports directly to the Director of Agricultural Planning. The Administrative Section comprises six persons providing clerical, stenography and library management support services, as well as in other general administrative services. The internal organization of the Division is diagramized in figure 2.

**FIGURE 2:
Organization of the Planning Function
of the ADP**



1.5 Key Resources and Strengths of the Planning Division:

1.5.1 Human Resources:

At the moment, the APD consists of 20 professional staff members in addition to administrative support staff, some of whom are distributed between the Ministry's headquarters, the Regional Office North, and the Regional Office South. Based on the proposals of the Tahal Consultants under the BAS Studies, this division is currently under-staffed when consideration is given to the broad role which the division must play.

Generally, the APD's staff are well-trained, most of them having obtained higher degrees in the area of agricultural economics, with specializations in economic development, trade, agribusiness, marketing, farm management, and production economics. Additionally, there are a number of first degree graduates with qualifications in general agriculture, statistics and mathematics, economics and management studies.

Further to these qualifications, almost all staff have received additional specialized training in project identification and design, macro-economic modelling, international marketing, trade negotiations, and agricultural policy analysis and planning. Table 1 shows a distribution of the current staff portfolio of the division, by the various units and functions. All of the division's staff are also computer-literate and are comfortable users of standard micro-computer software.

In terms of working experience, most of the professional officers have been within the employ of the division for at least three years. There is, however, a limitation with respect to relevant experience in policy analysis and planning, since most of the daily tasks undertaken by the division's staff do not involve the application of their training to the resolution of

policy and planning problems. This suggests that engendering new planning and policy analysis approaches and methods in the APD would require some degree of training in order to improve the application of new analytical tools.

1.5.2 Physical Resources:

The APD also possesses substantial physical resources for the conduct of the policy analysis and planning function. In terms of computer resources, the division has six micro-computers each of which is an up-to-date facility. There is a limitation in terms of storage capacity with five of the machines having no more than 40mb of hard disk space. However one machine possesses more than 100mb of operating space. There is also a laser printer, a color printer, as well as three dot-matrix printers. Details of current computer hardware in the APD are shown in Table 2.

For administration, the division is also well-served with a number of electronic typewriters, duplicating facilities and filing systems. However, a high degree of rationalization is required to optimally utilize these facilities. Moreover, there is a critical need for streamlining the internal information management regime as well as telecommunications of the division in order to enhance these functions more efficiently.

**TABLE 1:
Current Staff Distribution by
Functional Units of the APD**

Poultry Sector	-	1 Planning Officer III
Milk/Dairy/Pigs	-	2 Planning Officers II
International Trade/ CARICOM	-	2 Planning Officers I
Livestock/Others	-	1 Planning Officer III
Fisheries	-	1 Planning Officer III
Food and Nutrition	-	1 Planning Officer
Agro-industry/Sectorial Linkages	-	1 Planning Officer
Development Programme	-	1 Senior Project Analyst
Budgeting	-	1 Project Analyst II
Monitoring & Evaluation	-	1 Project Officer III
Statistics	-	1 Statistician I

**TABLE 2:
Micro-computer Facilities Currently Available at the APD**

Hardware Device	RAM	Hard Disk Capacity	Disk-drives	Clock Speed	Processor
1	640 K	30 MB	5.25" HD/3.5" HD	12 MHz.	80286
2	640 K	40 MB	5.25" HD/3.5" HD	12 MHz.	80286
3	4 MB	104 MB	5.25" HD/3.25 HD	20 MHz.	80386
4	2 MB	40 MB	3.25" HD	16 MHz.	80286
5	2 MB	40 MB	3.25" HD	16 MHz.	80286

The Division also possesses five printers with specifications as follows:

- 1 Hewlett Packard Laser Printer, 1 Inkjet Color Printer and 3 Wide Carriage Dot Matrix Printers.

Additional peripherals include data switch boxes and cabling.

Additionally, the division lacks specialized software systems for supporting policy analysis, database management, project management and policy analysis. There is also no widely utilized statistical analytical system. Finally, there is need to urgently improve the physical state of accommodation for some sections of this unit. There is evidence that this process has begun in some sections.

1.5.3 Other Resources:

Linkages to other Key National, Regional and International Agricultural Agencies:

Another important resource of the APD is its linkages with key agencies and institutions involved in agriculture nationally, regionally and internationally. Through these agencies, the APD has access to important information and intellectual resources which, if it is committed to draw on these resources, can serve as an invaluable source of technical assistance. At the national level, such agents

include those described above. However, regionally and internationally, support for policy analysis and planning may be derived from UWI, IICA, CDB, CABI, FAO and CARICOM. Moreover, networks with other planning agents in neighbouring countries can be useful as a means of sharing experiences in policy analysis and planning in the region.

Consultants Reports from Specialized Studies:

The APD has also benefitted from a number of specialized studies which have evaluated both the internal environment in which this division functions, as well as the external agricultural development environment. These initiatives have generated comprehensive and timely diagnoses of the institution as well as the agricultural sector, and these analyses can now serve as an invaluable baseline for the enhancement of both the division's operations and the achievement of its mandate to serve national agricultural development objectives.

Chapter II

The Policy Analysis and Planning Process of the Agricultural Planning Division

2.1 Policy Formulation:

According to the Draft Strategic Plan of the APD, the Division aims to support and influence the process whereby the Ministry's policies and plans are determined. Among the strategic objectives cited are the formulation of a consistent set of plans, policies, programmes and projects.

At the moment, the Division services these aims with varying degrees of success. To do this, the APD employs a number of avenues which constitute an informal process of issue identification, presentation, evaluation and approval. Typically, policy issues are crystallized and gain ascendancy via three main routes:

1. Issue identification by the APD, and policy presentation in the form of a position paper; this is a pro-active approach to policy formulation which arises out of the need to resolve developmental issues evidenced in the day to day work of the Division.
2. Reactions on the part of the Ministry to developments on the national, regional or international economic landscape. Such developments often arise from proposals by other ministries and/or agencies, and are calculated to have national or multi-sectoral impact. The annual national budget is one such development which readily comes to mind.
3. Requests by the MALMR's Policy and Programmes Advisory Board (PPAB), for special investigations into policy areas being contemplated.

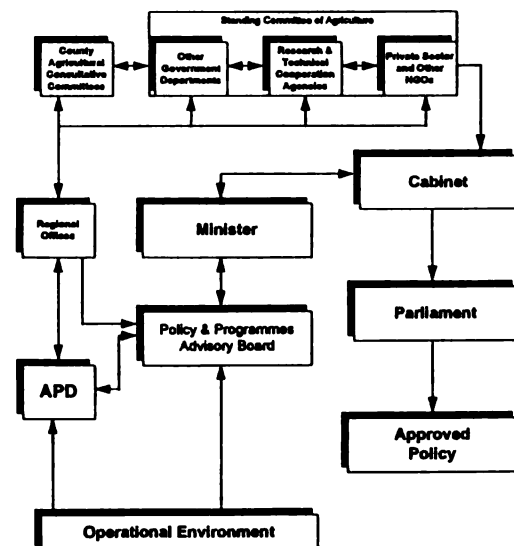
For any of these routes, however, the process of policy formulation involves the direct participation of the MALMR's Policy and Programmes Advisory Board, which functions as an evaluator of MALMR policy, and determines *a priori* the acceptability of the policy proposal. The PPAB also serves in promoting accepted policy positions

to higher levels of the decision-making framework, so that ultimately a government decision can be taken to bring a particular policy position into effect. In this regard, upon acceptance by the Board, the policy is presented to the Minister, who then takes it to the government's Cabinet. Cabinet seeks inputs from other ministries or agencies considered to have a stake in the policy issue presented, after which the policy is subjected to debate in the national parliament before it becomes an established position of the state. Figure 3 presents a conceptual framework of the current policy formulation process.

2.2 Formulation of Plans:

The process of plan formulation contingent upon the evolution of policy is much less obvious at the APD. It would appear that the major planning activity of the division is the preparation of the annual draft estimates of expenditure for the Ministry's recurrent budget and development programme. Prepared plans are usually very general documentation of anticipated activities for the fiscal period.

FIGURE 3:
Schematic of Current Policy-making Process at the APD



Chapter III

Key Constraints and Weaknesses in the Operations of the APD

Notwithstanding the obvious strengths of the APD as reflected in its structural organization and human and physical resources, the policy analysis and planning process has not been dynamized within this Division.

Policy-making and planning, as described above, are somewhat amorphous. The process emphasizes more administrative rather than technical elements which would engender issue identification, analysis and presentation of viable sector-development alternatives. Additionally, it does not afford the extrapolation of a set of activities related to the main elements of derived policy prescriptions. In this regard, there are clear weaknesses in the system for policy evaluation and the establishment of linkages between such policies and a programme of work. Indeed the Division's efforts are mainly in an *ex post* context, where it reacts to proposals and developments with policy implications for the sector. There appear to be less initiatives by way of on-going policy analysis and the generation of policy alternatives and subsequent workplans to sustain such policies.

Although there is ample evidence of strategic assessments and review through the preparation of a number of medium to long range plans, the actualization of these strategic analyses is limited to the coordination of budget proposals for the Ministry's divisions and related agencies. Planning therefore is primarily a budgeting exercise which often does not clearly establish any well-defined short term objectives, targets outputs and dates and achievement indicators. There is need for a process which establishes a more obvious linkage between policy positions and the implemented work programmes.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, this function amounts to the financial management of MALMR programmes and projects; the function does not find expression in the monitoring of non-project activity such as the Ministry's other support programmes and services. There also appears to be much overlapping and duplication of efforts in

carrying out these functions. In this regard, current informal linkages between key agencies important to national and sector policy formulation and planning must be considered to be inadequate. There is therefore the need for more formalized linkages between the APD and other para-statal, ministries and local and international agencies which influence the pattern and direction of agricultural development locally. The BASS proposal for the formulation of a policy planning network should be given serious consideration.

Poor coordination is also occasioned within the Ministry itself where the APD plays only a cursory role in coordinating the work programmes of wider Ministry's divisions and in influencing the activities of other key sector agencies.

Arising out of the above, the following specific weaknesses and constraints affecting the delivery of the APD can be identified:³

- No clear strategic direction, objectives and expected results. While it is certain that there are many expressions of a *raison d'être* for the MALMR, such purpose has not been dis-aggregated into relevant and specific goals, and objects around which the expenditure of the institutions resources are to be centered.
- Missing some key skills/competencies
- Shortage of professional staff
- Poor track record in coordinating the work programmes of the Ministry's Divisions, and coordinating the activities of key institutions in the sector
- Poor information management
- Inadequate/inappropriate accommodation
- Lack of appropriate systems for allocating responsibilities
- Inadequate management of staff at all levels
- Low staff morale
- Inadequate internal communication system
- Inadequate induction training at all levels.

Chapter IV The Status of Information Management within the APD

It is widely recognized that policy analysis, formulation and planning is heavily dependent on the availability of data and information which are accurate, timely and sufficiently detailed to sustain the process. Indeed, it can be argued that the status of information management within an organization is a good measure of the efficiency of the planning process. Within the Agricultural Planning Division, the Agricultural Data and Information Unit (ADIU) is the section which is charged with the responsibility for managing data and information.

This unit is staffed with one professional, two para-professionals and two clerks. The unit serves as a repository for all agricultural data and statistics received by the Division and has established linkages with the national Central Statistical Office, through the Agricultural Statistics Section. It also maintains linkages with other national agents such as the Agricultural Development Bank and the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO).

Apart from the ADIU, other information services are provided to the Ministry of Agriculture through the MALMR's Library, a branch of which is located at the Ministry's headquarters. This library provides documentation services to all of the MALMR's Divisions, as well as to the wider public.

Although the ADIU has been mandated to perform the data management function within the APD, it is severely constrained in its ability to achieve these functions. Among the most apparent reasons for this limitation are:

- the organizational positioning of the unit as a sub-unit of the policy and research section biases its focus to this unit and does not allow it to embrace the wider division in its efforts to provide information services.
- limited human resource: the current staff does not possess the range of skills required to support a comprehensive information management process. The ADIU should be

recognized as a foundation unit to the total policy analysis and planning process and should accordingly be staffed by more highly trained and experienced planning or information specialists. The current profile of staff is quite inadequate to support the total planning function.

4.1 Information Gathering and Distribution:

The ADIU does not perform an active information gathering function. On the contrary, the unit collects and collates data supplied from national agencies such as the Central Statistical Office, the Agricultural Development Bank, NAMDEVCO, and relevant divisions of the Ministry. It serves mainly the other professional staff of the APD by responding to requests when these are made. The ADIU also prepares an annual statistical publication which presents data in a standardized format. Among the main areas of data collated are:

- National Food Import Bill
- Changes in the Retail Price Index
- Agricultural Gross Domestic Product
- Agricultural Labor Force and Non-institutional Population
- Payments of Food Subsidies
- Agricultural Subsidy Payments
- Domestic Agricultural Production
- Quantity of Food Crops Harvested
- Wholesale and Retail Food Crop Prices
- Cocoa & Coffee: output and gross earnings
- Citrus: output and gross earnings
- Sugar Cane Production: estate farmers production - gross earnings
- Fish landed at main beaches and number of boats registered
- Livestock Feed: output, average prices and gross earnings
- CARICOM Trade

The ADIU has also begun the process of computerizing some of its records using spreadsheets and other database software.

Chapter V

Streamlining the Policy Analysis and Planning Process: An Annual Planning Process

The assessment of the APD thus far highlights some of the current strengths and weaknesses of the Division. The APD possesses an ideal structure by which, with some adjustments, a dynamic planning and policy function can be realized. Although a number of assessments relating to the structure and function of this agency have been completed, and many recommendations made, the APD continues to be constrained in its ability to manage the planning process because of the absence of clear goals which are linked to specific objectives, target dates and outputs. The annual planning process is the essence of an approach which could orient the APD in this direction. The annual planning process brings the planning function to life, by imposing a structured framework for goal setting and subsequently directing the preparation of plans so that they are consistent with these goals.

Based on the recommendations of the BASS consultants in their institutional analysis of the MALMR, the introduction of an annual planning process is identified as one of the key requirements for enhancing policy analysis and planning. In this section, a brief introduction to the annual planning process is made and important pre-requisites for implementing is identified.

5.1 Overview of the Annual Planning Cycle:

The annual planning process can be conceived as an annual cycle of planning events which are undertaken in order to rationally direct the allocation of institutional resources to work programmes and plans, in a manner that such allocation is consistent with the long term, medium term and short term goals of the organization. Planning in this context is perceived as a continuous policy producing process, so that the establishment of goals and the determination of strategic objectives are intimately linked to the identification of activities to be under-taken in the annual work programme. By extension, the annual planning

process draws on the activities, goals and outputs of a previous cycle, and uses the performance indicators of this cycle to validate the continuation or termination of any aspect of the work programme. Monitoring and evaluation, as well as annual review, are therefore fundamental to the annual planning process.

The annual process of planning is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted and draws on the total participation of the institution in the development of workplans, the review of institutional performance, as well as, in the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of prepared plans. In an annual planning regime, all participants should be familiar with the objectives of the organization, and each individual should be aware of the role he must play in the achievement of these objectives. Everyone should be able to identify the contribution he is required to make in order to achieve the institute's outputs.

Finally, annual planning requires the support of a broad sector-network which incorporates the inputs of farmers, input suppliers, researchers, technical support agents, specialized national agencies and other government departments in the formulation and evaluation of sector goals and performance.

5.2 Key Elements of the Cycle:

5.2.1 Sector Review and Annual Report:

The notion of a cycle implies the incorporation of some previous initiative or activity. Hence, it may be convenient to identify the beginning of the Annual Planning Cycle at the Sector Review stage.

The Sector Review, which should be prepared by the Planning Unit, is a technical review and economic analysis of the performance of the agricultural sector over the past fiscal year. This review should identify important policy instruments

and evaluate the most recent performance of the sector against these instruments.

Moreover, the Sector Review should assess the current state of the sector's economy, its resources, and its growth potential over time. Ultimately, this review is a technical audit in which new developments and their potential benefits and constraints to sector development are highlighted. These constraints should subsequently form the basis for timely policy or technical intervention in order to obviate future negative impacts on the sector. It should also identify positive achievements and note its potential benefits and need for further research.

The Sector Review should be one of the Planning Unit's major annual reports and should be prepared sufficiently early so that all members of the wider planning network can have the opportunity to be appraised of the latest developments in the sector and can therefore be prepared to make contributions to the current planning process based on the most recent developments in the sector.

The Annual Report represents the institution's main communication instrument with its stakeholders. Unlike the Sector Review, this report is an administrative document in which the total performance of the institution over the past fiscal year is chronicled, and a comparison is made between planned targets and actual achievements. The Annual Report should also comment on internal developments which can affect the institutional environment in which policies and plans are to be implemented during the next planning cycle, noting adjustments to the institutional resource base and citing implications for activity analysis during the new fiscal year.

Both the Sector Review and the Annual Report are prepared as performance appraisals of the previous planning cycle preparatory to the initiation of a new planning process. These activities establish the basis for future policies and

activities during the new planning cycle. These documents should enjoy wide circulation among the key interest groups and agencies within the agricultural sector, and opportunities should be afforded these bodies to advance their comments and concerns which may be incorporated into the new policy analysis and planning process of the next planning cycle.

5.2.2 *Review of Short Term Goals/Objectives:*

Arising out of the overall performance review as discussed above should be the reassessment of short term goals and objectives. It may be necessary, for instance, to adjust policies by making changes to achievement targets and policy parameters, or to eliminate altogether a particular objective if its prospects for feasibility as determined in the annual review appear to be minimal.

It is at this stage that a new round of policy analysis for the next cycle takes place, and this process should draw very heavily on the data and information set generated from continuous monitoring and evaluation activities during the past annual cycle of planning.

The monitoring and evaluation information will indicate how well actual outputs have matched expected outputs and indicate the need for correction, removal of constraints to achievement, the re-orientation of activity objectives or the elimination of the goal/objective altogether. The review of goals/objectives can also be linked directly to the annual review process, where a revised policy matrix is derived as a major output. The output of this exercise should be the list of objectives for the new planning cycle, as well as, in addition to planning instructions for budgets and workplans.

5.2.3 *Preparation of Annual Workplans/Budgets:*

The preparation of annual workplans and budgets represents the heartland of the planning function. It must be pointed out that this stage of the

cycle should involve the institution in its totality, since this is the stage at which the strategic objectives of the institution are disaggregated into a set of key activities and tasks which will be undertaken to achieve the specified goals. Work-planning involves the specification of the basic methodology for achieving goals, the key tasks to be undertaken, the resource budgets (both human and financial) necessary to carry out the activities, the output indicators, the target outputs and dates, contingency conditions which may affect goal attainment, and the persons responsible for the activities.

This detailed level of planning must, of necessity, involve all technicians at all levels of the institution, since it calls for a thorough understanding of the mechanics of the activity in order to determine details such as resource requirements and target dates. Such information is best provided by the technicians themselves. This exercise is therefore simply not an administrative task. It, however, requires a high degree of management so as to ensure that prepared workplans are consistent with the short, medium and long term objectives of the institution.

Ideally, the institution should identify a specific period on its annual calendar when all its technicians are required to prepare and submit draft workplans for approval, with such preparation receiving the guidance of the directorate of the institution. Additionally, there should also be established a work planning and budgeting unit within the Agricultural Planning Division which will have responsibility for coordinating all submitted activities, verifying the proposed cost estimates, and generating the overall work plan for the various divisions and ultimately the total annual programme of work for the institution.

5.2.4 Implementation/Monitoring/Evaluation:

Because planning is a continuous process, monitoring and evaluation are integral elements of this process. As the implementation of annual

activities progresses monitoring and evaluation takes place through regular assessment of resource use versus output indicators, and limitations likely to affect goal attainment are identified and corrective action taken.

The monitoring and evaluation process is best undertaken by the *a priori* determination of an appropriate reporting schedule and by objective selection of measurable target indicators which can be used to establish that goals are being achieved. The monitoring/evaluation function is continuous throughout the annual planning process.

5.2.5 Periodic Reporting:

The annual planning process should also define a schedule of reporting as well as the types of reports to be generated during the year. Out of the monitoring and evaluation function, a series of monitoring reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.) is produced. These are used at the end of the year to produce the institute's annual report.

5.3 Outputs from the Annual Planning Process:

An effective annual planning process should generate the following key products for each cycle:

- Annual Report
- Annual Technical Review
- Revised Policy Matrix
(subject to findings from annual technical review and policy review)
- Series of Monitoring/Evaluation Reports
- Reporting Schedule
- Annual Work-plans
(including objective set, activities and expected outputs)

CONCLUSION

- Annual Budget

The agricultural policy analysis and planning process in Trinidad and Tobago at the moment can be considered to be weak. This reality, notwithstanding the institutional infrastructure for supporting the process, possesses much potential for improvement through its favourable organizational structure, and human and physical resources. This infrastructure has also benefitted from many indepth studies, the synopsis of which suggests the adoption of an annual planning process for the national agricultural sector. This process can serve to address the major weasknesses such as poorly conceived objectives, absence of detailed work-planning, weak inter-institutional linkages, and limited internal coordination. The introduction of this process is the main thrust for enhancing the policy analysis and planning process in the target institution.

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Since the recent floatation of the Trinidad and Tobago Dollar against the US\$, the Ministry of Finance exercises less management control over the exchange rate, this rate being now determined by market forces as manifested in the commercial financial institutions. The new exchange rate management regime has been described as a managed float.
- ² Draft Strategic Plan of the Agricultural Planning Division - May 1993.
- ³ These weaknesses were identified in the MALMR's strategic analysis of the APD and presented in its recent publication: "**Draft Strategic Plan of the Agricultural Planning Division**" in May 1993. The author considers this assessment to be instructive and current. The constraints identified are therefore repeated here.

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