

E-SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE

GOVERNMENT E-SERVICES
MORE THAN ICT - **PART 3**

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Part 3: Government e-Services – More than ICTs

Using Data to Continuously Improve the Citizen Experience

ttconnect - the Trinidad and Tobago umbrella Government services initiative - seeks to be the single face of Government for Government services to the citizen.

Noting that all **ttconnect** channels simply represent citizen touchpoints to Government, and that each service request is actually fulfilled through the normal operation of an originating Ministry, some issues arise in the implementation of this initiative. For e.g., for most services there is no quality check or feedback loop after the initial citizen contact on a **ttconnect** channel (Bus, Service Centre, etc.) to ascertain whether the service which was applied for by the citizen was indeed completed by the Ministry.

It should be noted as well that some Ministries and Agencies are not always on-board to facilitate timely turnaround of **ttconnect** applications brought in by **ttconnect** staff on behalf of citizens. This may require training of Ministry staff to receive and treat with service applications from **ttconnect** as importantly and as efficiently as they do walk in customers to their Ministry. There is also the opportunity to take better advantage of the available technology, so as to maximize impact, satisfaction and effectiveness in delivery of services.

Overall, there is also no ability to track the status of a query / request on-line, or measure the timeliness or volume of service completions, per Ministry, or per period. Since this is not measured or monitored, there is no data regarding user experience with the overall citizen-government interaction. This is a lost opportunity to use the technology to augment the service from an overall quality perspective and with a view to giving guidance as to how best to continuously improve over time.

iGovTT Operational Arrangements

As far as citizen satisfaction with **ttconnect** staff goes, feedback suggests that the staff is well trained from a customer service point of view. Additionally, feedback has also been received that staff are able to “cross-sell” and “up-sell” service offerings to citizens based on their assessment of the citizen’s expressed and implied needs as well as their eligibility status for the particular services from the different Ministries / agencies.

However, organisationally within the National ICT Company (iGovTT), **ttconnect** is but a Unit, staffed mainly with Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) who are responsible for the various **ttconnect** channels (i.e. the **ttconnect** Express Bus, Service

Centres and Hotline). The back-end IT systems on which these services rely (in particular the on-line and mobile channels) depend on several other units within iGovTT. These include Units within the Operations and Consulting departments including Internal IT, the Solution Architect’s Office, Business Development, Common Platforms¹. This organizational structure in which multiple Units and Departments are involved in the delivery of a single service, can sometimes result in slow response times to feedback / requests from Ministries and to service innovations proposed by **ttconnect** CSRs.

GoRTT Business Process Re-engineering:

It was originally intended that the communications and other officers within Ministries and Agencies would be trained and responsible for managing their Ministry’s information which resides on **ttconnect** online– thus taking the responsibility to ensure that their information is well presented and up-to-date. In the rollout of the e-Government portal technology solution [**ttconnect** online], this stakeholder training apparently was not emphasized or completed. In the current workflow, the onus is on **ttconnect** / iGovTT to poll Ministries for relevant updates to information, forms, Ministerial mandate and other changes which may occur as a result of the normal operations of those Ministries and of the Government as a whole. This information and other updates are then posted by iGovTT Portal Team [within the Operations Unit], and replicated through the other channels of **ttconnect**.

Based on an understanding of this process it becomes clear that the content on the **ttconnect** on-line site (which was supposed to be the official website of Trinidad and Tobago and used as a basis for the retailing of services on the Buses and service centers, kiosks, etc.) may not always be up-to-date. As such there is an ever-present risk that certain of the information that is retailed to citizens on the basis of this site, may not be valid.

Capacity Limitations

It should also be noted that iGovTT was set up to manage a number of “all-of-government” technology functions, including to oversee the Government Data Centre, the Government Wide Area Network (GovNet) as well as

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¹iGovTT Org Sturcture - <https://www.igovtt.tt/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/iGovTT-FOIA-2015.pdf>

function as the Government's internal consultant on ICT deployments, policy and procurement matters (which are all back-end, enterprise-wide functions). In contrast, **ttconnect** is a front office, customer service oriented non-technical function (w.r.t the **ttconnect** Express, Service Centres and Hotline) – both operating within the same State Company. Thus concerns have been expressed about the capability / capacity of iGovTT to adequately fulfil its **ttconnect** citizen service delivery mandate as well as its core ICT enterprise-wide back-end and GoRTT ICT policy support functions. Such questions centre around whether the company possesses the requisite expertise, competence and capacity, on the scale required to be Government's face on behalf of all Ministries to all citizens; in addition to its other duties.

About this Series

*This is **Part 3** of a five-part series in which we investigate the national e-services infrastructure of Trinidad and Tobago, specifically **ttconnect**, to draw out the pros and cons, successes, and areas for greater attention.*

Future editions in the series will continue dive into this analysis, and draw out conclusions and recommendations relevant for any emerging economy-state seeking to build-out a national /citizen e-services framework.

The Legal Status of iGovTT & Ownership of GoRTT ICT Assets.

From a legal standpoint, iGovTT is a Company, incorporated under the Company's Act and, in that regard is merely a market actor and stakeholder in the Sector. It is not constituted for e.g. as a Commission or Authority. In the instant case, the Company requires authorization in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letter of engagement to act with regard to services delivered on behalf of Ministries and Agencies. In the absence of these legal authorizations, iGovTT (and therefore the **ttconnect** Unit) cannot act on behalf of its client Ministries and has no compelling authority or regulatory power over Ministries regarding design of service workflows or maintenance of service levels.

Further, though the Company has management responsibilities over the technology [e.g. the e-Government Portal infrastructure or **ttconnect** online], it does not have ownership of Government ICT infrastructure on which **ttconnect** service delivery depends. Such ownership control over infrastructure would better enable it to make more responsive decisions regarding the enhancement of the service, technical and business configuration, upgrades and maintenance arrangements. The unification of ownership and management could potentially assist GoRTT in fully realizing the benefits of vesting the execution of its ICT and e-Services agenda with a special purpose State vehicle.

Planning for Digital Government Going Forward

The Government of the day should ponder these realities deeply as Trinidad and Tobago, and many other countries, wrestle with the impact of the global pandemic and seek more efficient and cost-effective ways to deliver critical services to its citizen-base, while delighting the customer with its service quality.