



Government of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

# NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY



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**Mindful** of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with special emphasis on the fundamental human rights and freedoms enshrined therein;

**And** the Policy Framework for Multiculturalism which sets standards for equitable distribution of resources in the Cultural Sector;

**Recalling** the National Plan for Development with particular reference to its pillars related to the Embracing of the Arts;

**Cognisant that we are parties to the:**

- Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy
- Charter of the United Nations
- Constitution of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- Universal Copyright Convention
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion and Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Declaration of Commonwealth Principles
- Harare Commonwealth Declaration
- Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme
- Charter of the Organization of American States
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Copyright Treaty
- WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty

**And consequently must endeavour to recognise the principles and ideals that comprise these regional and international agreements and standard setting documents;**

## DECLARATIONS

**The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago declares that:**

1. **The Creative Arts** are a vital expression of the thoughts and ideas of the people of Trinidad and Tobago
2. **Heritage** is an important wellspring for the ingenuity and identity for our people and serves to unite individuals, families, communities and the society
3. **Cultural Industries** represent a viable option for enhancement of quality of life via economic diversification, contribution to full employment, wealth creation and the boosting of cultural confidence

## PILLARS

4. **Consequently, the following be our pillars for all developmental activity by Government in the Cultural Sector**
  1. **Promotion of the Creative Arts** and respect for the work of our creative people.
  2. **Preservation of Heritage** both tangible and intangible.
  3. **Sustainable Cultural Industries Development** and an awareness of the nexus between sustainable livelihood for persons directly involved in the arts and the sharing of our creative products and talents with the rest of the world.
  4. **Social Cohesion** with an emphasis on the role of culture in family life and community development and the use of the arts strengthen our national identity and to foster the spirit of unity in diversity.

## ENTITLEMENTS

5. **All citizens in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago are entitled:**
  1. To express and participate in the cultural life of their choice in a manner consistent with the rights enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.
  2. To free expression of thoughts and ideas using creative arts in a manner consistent with the rights enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.
  3. To use the nucleus of the family to pass on the cultural traits of their choosing.
  4. To have the opportunity to learn about the Trinidadian and Tobagonian cultural form of their choice.
  5. To have the opportunity to develop the artistic skill of their choice to the extent of their ability so long as they are willing to work towards it.
  6. To have the opportunity to earn a living from the artform of their choice once they are appropriately skilled to do so.

## AREAS OF FOCUS

6. **In an effort to ensure the development of its pillars for Cultural Development and to facilitate the entitlements, the Government will focus on the following:**
  1. The development of an enabling environment that will result in a citizenry grounded in its nation's culture to the extent that regardless of their gender, ethnicity or religious beliefs, they will possess the qualities to enable them to be empowered and live dignified lives in a democratic society;
  2. The development and promotion of the country's diverse cultural expressions;
  3. The development and promotion of high standards in myriad artistic skills;
  4. The sustainable development, facilitation and stimulation of the growth of the cultural industries;
  5. The preservation and dissemination of national heritage, legacy and memory.

## METHODS

7. **The government shall work to achieve its areas of focus via the following means:**
  1. **Effective Administration** inclusive of
    - a. **Strategic Planning:** via the declaration of objectives, programmes, projects, targets, deliverables and subsidiary policies that match government action to policy objectives and priorities
    - b. **Institutional Strengthening:** to so organise and restructure where necessary its relevant agencies to optimise implementation of its objectives
    - c. **Resource Acquisition:** to ensure completion of stated targets and deliverables
    - d. **Rationalisation:** so as to ensure cohesiveness and complementarity of its many initiatives in the Cultural Sector
  2. **The Articulation of a Policy Agenda** inclusive of
    - a. **A system of Policy Analysis** that facilitates issue search, filtration, forecasting, prioritisation, options analysis, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and closure or succession for creation of effective measures for sector development
    - b. **General Research** to develop that complement of baselines, databases and inventories that can adequately inform decision-making in the sector
    - c. **A Legislative Agenda** to facilitate progressive legal measures to confront change in this dynamic sector
    - d. **Regulatory Measures** that facilitate quality operation of the sector
  3. **Developmental Work** inclusive of
    - a. **Funding** to facilitate strategic development of the sector
    - b. **Training** to adequately develop human resource necessary to optimise quality growth in the sector
    - c. **Infrastructure Development** to ensure the provision of facilities required to support the sector's developmental needs
  4. **Collaboration** with
    - a. **Civil Society** in recognition of their role in preserving, promoting and developing culture via any means of Partnership, Alliances or other methodology for stakeholder involvement

- b. **Private Sector** in recognition of the expertise that they may contain via cooperation and outsourcing of any relevant activities in keeping with best practices in the procurement of goods and services
- c. **International Agencies and Institutions** that can provide technical and financial support for the development of the Cultural Sector.

## STANDARDS

8. **The Government, in the pursuit of these means, will adhere to the following Standards:**
  1. **Transparency:** In keeping with best practice for a progressive, modern democratic state
  2. **Consultation:** in keeping the principles of democratic, participatory government
  3. **Efficiency:** via the optimum use of resources to ensure that matters are dealt with in the shortest time possible
  4. **Fairness:** sharing our finite resources in accordance with stakeholder needs as determined by a measure for equity that will facilitate equitable resource distribution. In order to ensure its achievement, equity must be pursued through the conduct of a means test to determine the stakeholder needs. Variables including the following will be used to determine this:
    1. Physical Capital
    2. Capacity
    3. Human Resource
    4. Financial Resources
    5. Geographical factors
    6. Relevant cultural activities
    7. Keeping the following issues in mind when dealing with individual stakeholders:
      - a. developmental needs of the subsector they represent,
      - b. number of beneficiaries they can influence
      - c. record of disbursements and assistance they have received
      - d. potential for and record of excellence

NB: Government support can take the form technical and financial support, collaborative arrangements, representation in cultural activities and participation in developmental programmes and projects of the Ministry.

## POLICY ARTICULATION

9. **The Policy Process is guided by the Methodology for their elaboration as follows:**
  1. Disparate stages of articulation:
    - a. **NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:** which is elaborated as part of the Medium Term Policy Framework and provides details on the following:
      - i. Policy Agenda
      - ii. Legislative Agenda
      - iii. Developmental Agenda
      - iv. Research Agenda
      - v. Regulatory Measures

These Agendas will be finalised after conduct of the National Cultural Mapping Exercise and consultation with relevant stakeholders.
    - b. **NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY:** A document that facilitates long term planning for the sector and that references core legislation and international agreements to which the Government must subscribe. It will be subject to periodic review to ensure in consistency with dynamic sector needs.
    - c. **WORK PROGRAMME, MINISTRY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CULTURE AND OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES:**
      - i. Annual business plan and estimates of expenditure for necessary submission to Ministries of Finance and Planning as part of the annual budgeting procedure
    - d. **DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES** that ensure that all activity is guided by best practices in finance, procurement, human resource management etc.



## APPENDIX

### The Cultural Sector

#### ➤ HERITAGE: Legacy and Tradition

- **Built Heritage:** Architecture, buildings, monuments, archaeological sites.
- **Cuisine:** Foods & food preparation methods and styles.
- **Festivals:** Large communal activities and public events.
- **Forms of Culture:**
  - **Artefacts:** Physical objects produced by a people including clothes, furniture, toys, tools, instruments etc.
  - **Mentifacts:** Fundamental, enduring beliefs and ideas of a culture inclusive of ideology, religion, folklore, legends and superstitions.
  - **Sociofacts:** The main links between the individual and the communal that comprise societal organisation inclusive of family structure, religion etc.
- **History:** Research that accurately captures past events, individuals and achievements.
- **Languages:** The study of languages, dialects, slang etc.
- **Leisure:** Pastimes, games, storytelling etc.
- **Rituals:** Feasts, rites of passage and public observances.

#### ➤ ARTS (Inclusive of Fine Arts, Folk Arts and Popular Culture):

- **Literary:**
  - Writing: Fiction (Prose, Poetry), criticism etc.
  - Publishing industry.
- **Media:**
  - Digital: Computer Imaging, Gaming etc.
  - Audiovisual: Film, Video, Television, Radio etc.
- **Performing:**
  - Music
  - Dance
  - Drama
- **Visual:**
  - Drawing
  - Painting
  - Sculpture
  - Mixed Media
  - Photography
  - Graphic Arts
  - Design: Fashion, Costume, Architecture, Furniture, Handicraft.