

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDICATORS IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Trinidad & Tobago is the southernmost island in the Caribbean Archipelago, only 10 km (seven miles) off the Venezuelan coast. It has a population of 1.3 million and 1,980 square miles.

Research into Science and Technology Indicators in the country is fairly new and preliminary work is currently being conducted by the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST). NIHERST has become a member of the Iberoamerican Working Group on Science and Technology Indicators whose goal is the publication of Science and Technology Indicators. In February 1999, NIHERST started collecting data on Science & Technology (S&T) Indicators, the first of its kind to be conducted in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection**

An investigation into the data available on indicators of expenditure and manpower was conducted. This created an understanding of the gaps which existed in the information available and acted as a guide in developing the data request instrument.

Due to the type of data which was being requested, the nature of the subject matter and the various methods of measuring indicators of expenditure and manpower, it was necessary to develop a list of concepts and definitions as an attachment to the questionnaire. The development of this list was guided by information contained in the Fascati Manual and took into account the relative ignorance of the subject matter.

The method of contact employed was one in which the questionnaire and the list of Concepts and Definitions were mailed or hand delivered to organisations and a deadline of 30 May, 1999 given. A period of two weeks was allowed for receipt of questionnaires after which appointments were made to meet with representatives of organisations in order to clarify concepts and definitions and to explain how they should be applied to the various institutions based on their type of activity.

### **Sample Selection**

Organisations in the Manufacturing, Higher Education and Government Sectors identified as being involved in Science and Technology, Research and Development or both were targeted .

## **DISCUSSION**

This research is currently being conducted therefore no results are available at this time. However it is envisaged that upon completion, the data gathered will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) or MS. Excel

The focus of the research lies mainly on the higher education sector which seems to be the leader in the field of innovative science and technology studies. However, it is believed that the manufacturing sector would be a great contributor to the whole research effort when completed.

## **LIMITATIONS**

As this is the first attempt by Trinidad & Tobago at collecting data on S&T Indicators, a situation has developed where much time and energy must be invested in the task of promoting the need for and use of such data and on translating the various concepts used in the study. The Concepts and Definitions, while acting as a guide to completion and providing a basis for uniformity and comparability, has excluded certain aspects of research which is being conducted in Trinidad & Tobago.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That a project be conducted which focuses on developing or adapting current concepts to the Caribbean context.
- Sensitisation of the public to the use of and need for information on S&T Indicators.
- That a workshop be hosted with participants from the sectors being investigated using international experts to introduce and explain the nature of the research its role in policy formulation.

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