

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE)

Trinidad and Tobago 2017–21



Office of
Independent Evaluation

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Acronyms

BMC	Borrowing Member Country	MoF	Ministry of Finance (GORTT)
BOD	Board of Directors (CDB)	MPD	Ministry of Planning and Development (GORTT)
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank	NTU	National Transformation Unit (GORTT)
CES	Country Engagement Strategy	OCR	Ordinary Capital Resources
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease	OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
CSO	Central Statistical Office, (GORTT)	OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	OIE	Office of Independent Evaluation (CDB)
CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation	PBL	Policy-Based Loan / Lending
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development, Canada	PCR	Project Completion Report
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	PSR	Project Supervision Report
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group	RCI	Regional Cooperation and Integration
EU	European Union	RMF	Results Management Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SDF	Special Development Fund
GORTT	Government of Trinidad and Tobago	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ICT	Information, Communication Technologies	SEPPD	Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division (GORTT)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank	SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
IFI	International Financial Institution	TA	Technical Assistance
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews	THA	Trinidad House of Assembly (GORTT)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	ToC	Theory of Change
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank	UN	United Nations
MDT	Ministry of Digital Transformation (GORTT)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	WB	World Bank

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Executive Summary

This Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) examines the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) Country Strategy and Programme (CSP) for Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2017–21; and activities implemented and designed by the Bank until 2024. The evaluation, drawing on international evaluation standards for CSPEs¹, uses a mixed-methods approach, combining document reviews, portfolio analysis, and stakeholder interviews, to inform the next Country Engagement Strategy (CES).

The evaluation process itself was structured to ensure **participation, reflection, and co-creation**. During the inception phase, feedback was collected from CDB staff and national counterparts to refine the focus and ensure that the evaluation questions and methodology would generate insights aligned with both CDB's strategic needs and country priorities.

A Theory of Change workshop was then conducted with CDB and government stakeholders to reconstruct

the underlying logic of the CSP and identify key assumptions, change pathways, and areas of inquiry. This collaboration provided a shared foundation for assessing progress and strategic alignment. Validation of emerging findings was carried out through bilateral exchanges and internal learning sessions.

A co-creation workshop was held toward the end of the evaluation process to collaboratively develop the recommendations and ensure that the proposed actions are useful, specific, and actionable—with the aim of increasing the likelihood of uptake and influence on the next CES.

The evaluation concludes that **the CSP was highly relevant at the time of design**. It reflected a strong alignment with Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030, responded to the country's development context, and showed coherence with CDB's evolving corporate priorities. The strategy sought to support structural transformation, institutional strengthening, and climate resilience—drawing attention to

1 Evaluation Cooperation Group, Big Book on Good Practice Standards [Country Strategy](#) | [ECG](#)

important cross-cutting issues including digitalisation, inclusive growth, and environmental sustainability.

However, **the translation of strategic intent into meaningful development outcomes was uneven.** Projects in Tobago, for instance, faced no uptake due to local capacity constraints and institutional complexities such as the two-party dynamic and project approval protocols which remain centralised in Port-of-Spain. A portfolio-wide analysis reveals **underperformance in fund disbursement.** As of the end of 2024, only 2.46% (USD10.75 mn) of the indicative CSP envelope had been disbursed—well below the 7.7% achieved under the previous strategy (2011–14).

While individual interventions demonstrated value—such as support to the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Development Finance Limited line of credit—**implementation faced challenges.** Projects were often delayed and institutional uptake remained limited. These issues were often due to insufficient understanding of the internal dynamics and/or processes of key decision-making institutions, particularly the Ministry of Finance, the Cabinet, and the Tobago House of Assembly. The impact of COVID 19 also affected part of the strategy period. As a result, **several initiatives struggled to gain national traction or move beyond approval stages.**

Internal CDB processes also posed challenges. Rigid appraisal procedures, and limited flexibility during implementation, undermined the ability to respond to contextual

changes or course-correct when needed. Although **the Bank was responsive during the COVID-19 pandemic, these adaptive practices were not mainstreamed across the portfolio and were not always effective.**

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks were in place but were not used as tools for learning or adaptation. The Results Monitoring Framework (RMF) lacked real-time data, alignment with national systems, and flexibility to reflect emerging changes. This hindered the Bank's capacity to manage for results or support country-led evaluation efforts. A more integrated approach—linking flexible M&E tools with adaptive procedural mechanisms—could improve performance management and learning across the strategy cycle.

Despite these constraints, **CDB added value in the areas of its comparative advantages. Regional technical expertise, staff with in-depth country knowledge, and continuity of engagement were key success factors.** Yet these expertise were applied inconsistently. Likewise, while the CSP was broadly complementary to other development partners' work, the lack of/limited formal coordination meant **opportunities for joint programming, peer learning, or joint advocacy were often missed.**

Looking ahead, the evaluation points to the need for **a more focused, adaptive, and institutionally embedded approach.** Future engagement should prioritise a smaller number of catalytic themes where CDB can lead or **add distinctive value—**

such as digital transformation, regional integration, and support to institutional resilience. Strengthening engagement with the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), and the Cabinet through structured advocacy efforts will help enhance buy-in and increase uptake. At the same time, **a more flexible approach to results frameworks with the support of relevant national units,** introducing operational flexibility, and scaling regional peer learning (e.g. through regional projects and peer learning platforms) **will enable a more responsive and sustainable delivery model.**

Five recommendations were prioritised and developed with CDB and government stakeholders:

1. **Develop a Focused and Differentiated CSP with Strong Thematic Anchoring**
 - Focus next CES on 1–3 catalytic themes (e.g., digital transformation, regional integration, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development) where CDB’s value proposition is strongest and national implementation capacity is available.
2. **Design and Implement a Strategic and Comprehensive Communications and Advocacy Plan**
 - Create a deliberate communication and engagement strategy to position the CES as a

nationally relevant tool, not just a technical document.

3. **Leverage Regional Knowledge and Expertise as a Country Strategy Delivery Modality**

- Systematically integrate CDB’s regional knowledge assets and platforms into the design and delivery of Trinidad and Tobago’s CES.

4. **Institutionalise the Use of Staff with Country Knowledge**

- Prioritise staffing Trinidad and Tobago engagements with personnel familiar with the national system, including the nuances of dual governance and approval structures.

5. **Enhance Procedural Flexibility and Institutionalise Adaptive Management**

- Transform M&E and project appraisal procedures into dynamic, flexible tools aligned with Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) systems and capable of supporting real-time decision-making.

Introduction

Background

This Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) for Trinidad and Tobago is primarily intended to support learning and decision-making within the Caribbean Development Bank. It provides a structured assessment of the **relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and sustainability** of CDB's programming under the 2017–21 Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and through to end 2024. The evaluation examines progress against outcome targets and identifies factors that influenced implementation, effectiveness, and the sustainability of results.

The evaluation is **learning- and utility-focused**. It aims to deliver useful, **specific and actionable recommendations** that can inform the design of the next **Country Engagement Strategy (CES)** for Trinidad and Tobago. The evaluation also offers transferable lessons that may be of value to broader CDB programming and operations.

The **primary users** of this evaluation are:

- **CDB's Senior Management and CDB Staff** directly engaged in the development and implementation of the upcoming CES
- **CDB's Board of Directors** providing oversight and strategic guidance for country programming;
- **Project teams across sectors**, who can draw on evaluation insights to improve delivery, alignment, and performance in future interventions.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation is utilisation-focused, based on a streamlined version of [Evaluation Cooperation Group \(ECG\) Good Practice Standards for Country Evaluations](#). The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis from document review and key informant interviews (KII) and quantitative analysis of administrative/financial data. Findings are based on triangulated data (using multiple sources) and based on thematic analysis against the following Evaluation Questions (EQs).

1. To what extent was the CSP for Trinidad and Tobago aligned with national development priorities and CDB's corporate strategies?
2. How effectively was the CSP designed and implemented to deliver intended results?
3. To what extent were CDB's interventions coordinated with and complementary to other development partners, including IFIs?
4. How efficiently were CDB's interventions managed, implemented, and disbursed under the CSP?

5. To what extent did the CSP's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework facilitate results measurement and adaptive management?
6. What is the likelihood that the development results achieved under the CSP will be sustained?

The evaluation matrix (see Annex C) was structured around the key EQs and developed during the inception phase, a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex E), and five OECD DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The evaluation used the ToC approach as a core analytical tool to guide the formulation of the EQs and help assess how well the strategic logic held in practice. The ToC also informed evidence needs during portfolio analysis and interviews. By explicitly referencing the assumptions underpinning each causal link—such as institutional readiness, policy coherence, and stakeholder engagement—the evaluation was able to examine “what happened” and “why or why not.”

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation was designed to serve both accountability and learning purposes in determining how well Bank interventions performed and the lessons that can be drawn to inform Bank operations in the future.

This independent evaluation covers the Trinidad and Tobago country strategy 2017–21, as set out in the CSP

approved by the Board of Directors (BOD) at their Two Hundred and Seventy-Fourth Meeting in December 2016 (BD 74/16). The scope of the CSPE also encompasses the timeframe post 2021 during which the CSP had elapsed, but TA project disbursements continued, and development outcomes were still being achieved. Therefore, it includes projects ongoing or completed at December 2024.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation was initiated in February 2025 with a four-week inception phase to finalise the design, gather data sources, identify main areas of focus and create the data collection mission plan. A one-week mission to Port of Spain, Trinidad was conducted from March 17–21, 2025. A workshop was held on March 26, to discuss

and validate the reconstructed CSP theory of change with CBD and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) staff, and a second workshop was held with key CDB and MPD staff on April 10, to discuss the findings and co-develop useful, specific and actionable recommendations.

Data Collection

The evidence for the evaluation consists of a range of qualitative and quantitative sources, specifically:

- 22 CDB project documents
- 5 policy or project-specific documents sourced from MPD, GORTT;
- 19 documents sourced independently by the evaluation team; and
- 80 key informants were interviewed in a group format, guided by the evaluation questions and using semi-structured interviews, including
 - 11 scoping interviews during inception phase, 10 of which with CDB staff, one with MPD
 - 47 public officers from various ministries within GORTT
 - 21 with other development partners and international financial institutions

KIs were adapted in line with the specific interviewees, the relevant project(s) and evidence already available from document review.

Data Analysis

The basis for planning data collection and analysis was the evaluation matrix (see Annex C). The analysis began with a review of project documentation and financial data on disbursements. Following this, a ToC of the CSP was reconstructed to serve as a data collection and analysis tool. It enabled the evaluation team to visualise the causal links from output to outcome, build a picture of the project portfolio,

and validate with CDB colleagues the evaluation team's interpretation of the CSP through a validation workshop of the reconstructed ToC. Following the field mission, the evaluation team undertook a qualitative analysis of meeting notes and transcripts, referred to recordings as needed, and reviewed additional documents or reports that the MPD had shared with the OIE evaluation team.

Stakeholder Engagement

To improve the utility of the evaluation, various efforts were made to interact with key stakeholders at various stages of the evaluation process, as follows:

- Early and ongoing engagement with the focal points from the Economics Department to ensure that the approach and planned outputs of the evaluation met intended objectives. This engagement included meetings, review and feedback on the approach paper, consultation on the project sample, ad-hoc conversations for clarifications, and participation in all workshops.
- Engagement of the former and current country economists and others that had been involved in the CSP, through early scoping interviews, data collection, participation in workshops, and reviewing the draft and final reports.
- A workshop to validate and discuss the reconstructed theory of change for the CSP 2017–21, March 26, 2025, with key CDB staff and representatives from the MPD. This workshop used a Miro online, interactive whiteboard, and included a group discussion on the project portfolio and alignment with CSP pillars, and the links between outputs to outcomes, achievement of outcomes, and the identification of risks and assumptions. Participation was good and the information supported the data analysis process.
- A Co-Creation of Recommendations Workshop held on April 10, 2025, with key CDB staff and members from the GORTT Ministry of Planning and Development to improve buy-in for and utility of evaluation recommendations. The workshop served to present the findings and to pose strategic questions to help identify evidence-based recommendations that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound (SMART), as well as coherent and user-owned. (See Annex F)

- The draft of the Evaluation Report was shared initially with the main stakeholders for the evaluation team to elicit and address feedback, consider possible omissions, different interpretations and political and other sensitivities, before submission of the final report.

Limitations

While this evaluation aimed to provide a rigorous, evidence-based assessment of the CSP for Trinidad and Tobago (2017–21), some factors limited the definition of the findings and recommendations:

1. Limited Volume and Maturity of the Portfolio

There were relatively few approved interventions (one loan and several technical assistance grants) during the CSP period, which limited the opportunity to assess systemic or sector-wide results. Many interventions were either modest in scale, approved late in the CSP period, or still in their early implementation stages, making it difficult to evaluate outcome-level change.

2. Incomplete Monitoring and Financial Data

There were significant gaps in results and financial reporting. Supervision reports, project completion reports, and disaggregated disbursement data were either unavailable or inconsistently documented. This limited the ability to systematically assess performance against targets, financial efficiency, and delivery bottlenecks. Weak integration between CDB and national monitoring systems further constrained performance analysis.

3. Constraints in Real-Time Monitoring and Evaluation

CDB's Results Monitoring Framework (RMF) was not consistently used as a live management tool, and several

indicators lacked baselines, targets, or alignment with national data systems. As a result, real-time adaptation and performance tracking were limited, reducing learning opportunities during the CSP.

4. Evolving Country Context and Delayed Strategy Extension

The CSP was not formally restructured beyond 2021. While engagement between CDB and Trinidad and Tobago continued through technical assistance and portfolio activity, this introduced a level of ambiguity regarding strategic intent—particularly during the COVID-19 recovery period. The evaluation covered both formal CSP and post-CSP interventions as part of a continuous engagement recognising that later initiatives may have been shaped more by operational responsiveness than explicit strategic direction.

5. Loss of Institutional Memory

There was high turnover of staff both within CDB and among key national partners. Many individuals involved in the design or early implementation of the CSP (2017–21) were no longer available to provide context or validation of key decisions. This weakened institutional memory was partially mitigated through document review and stakeholder triangulation, but it nonetheless impacted the depth of historical memory insights—particularly regarding early design assumptions and project sequencing.

Country Context

Trinidad and Tobago is a high-income, twin-island Caribbean country with a stable democracy, strong institutions and a natural resource–driven economy. Although its human development indicators and income are among the highest in the region, underlying structural vulnerabilities—economic dependence on hydrocarbons, institutional fragmentation, geographic disparities—remain development challenges.

The country's dual economy is led by the energy sector, which has historically driven growth and government revenue. However, this dependence has resulted in a

persistent imbalance: energy exports account for a large share of GDP and foreign exchange, while non-energy sectors such as tourism and agriculture remain underdeveloped. Manufacturing is still dependent on the oil and gas sector and there is a lack of high technology exports, based on the Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030. This structural dualism constrains employment, diversification, and long-term fiscal sustainability. The volatility of energy prices and production is closely mirrored in GDP growth patterns over the last five decades (Figure 1), underlining the need for economic transformation.

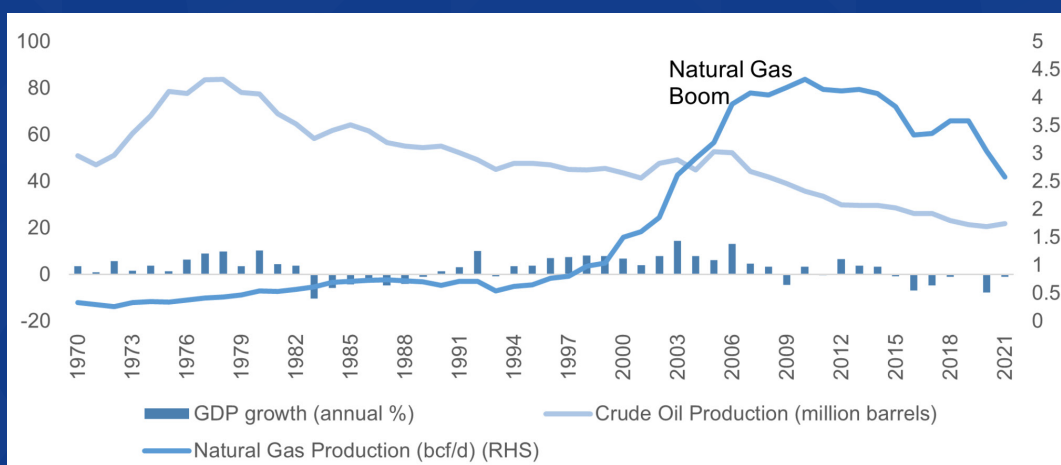


Figure 1 Oil and natural gas production and GDP growth over the last 50 years (1970–2021)

Source: Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago 2023²

² Accessed via [Riding the economic waves: Trinidad and Tobago's navigation through the headwinds - Caribbean Development Trends](#)

In recent years, growth has resumed following the COVID-19 pandemic, with GDP growth averaging around 2% since 2022.³ Yet, the country continues to face external shocks, such as natural disasters and energy market disruptions, which undermine stability and public investment. Tobago has faced greater challenges in accessing financing, diversifying its economy, and implementing projects, due to institutional and resource constraints.

Social inequalities persist across the two islands and demographic groups. While access to education and health services is strong, mismatches between education and labour market needs contribute to youth unemployment and skills gaps—particularly in high-value sectors like Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and engineering. Gender disparities, citizen security concerns, and urban-rural divides further affect the inclusiveness of growth.

Governance remains a priority reform area. Despite a strong public administration and a mature democratic system, implementation bottlenecks—particularly in procurement, inter-agency coordination, and the effectiveness of state-owned enterprises—continue to constrain policy execution. Recent

government efforts have aimed to strengthen transparency, digitise public services, and improve development planning capacity.

Trinidad and Tobago has also been affected by repeated flooding, tropical storms, and climate-related shocks. These have exposed gaps in infrastructure resilience and environmental risk management. While the Government has signalled its commitment to environmental sustainability and the energy transition, fossil fuels continue to dominate the energy mix, and the pace of renewables expansion remains limited.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a deep multidimensional impact. Real GDP contracted by 8.9% in 2020⁴, exposing the fragility of revenue streams and service delivery systems. Small businesses and vulnerable groups, including women and youth, were disproportionately affected. The government recovery agenda comprised a substantial relief package and later prioritised digital transformation, social protection, and public health investment. Although the economy is recovering gradually, real GDP remains sensitive to external shocks and the performance of the energy sector (Figure 2).

CDB Engagement and CSP Overview

Trinidad and Tobago has been a member of CDB since 1970 and is one of its largest shareholders. The 2017–21 CSP, extended to 2024, sought to align with Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030 and address structural bottlenecks

through targeted investments in infrastructure, institutional strengthening, and environmental sustainability. The strategy also aimed to support public sector modernisation and resilience-building across both islands, with a

3 [Trinidad and Tobago GDP Growth Rate 1961–2025 | MacroTrends](#)

4 [Selected Economic Indicators Annual | Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago](#)

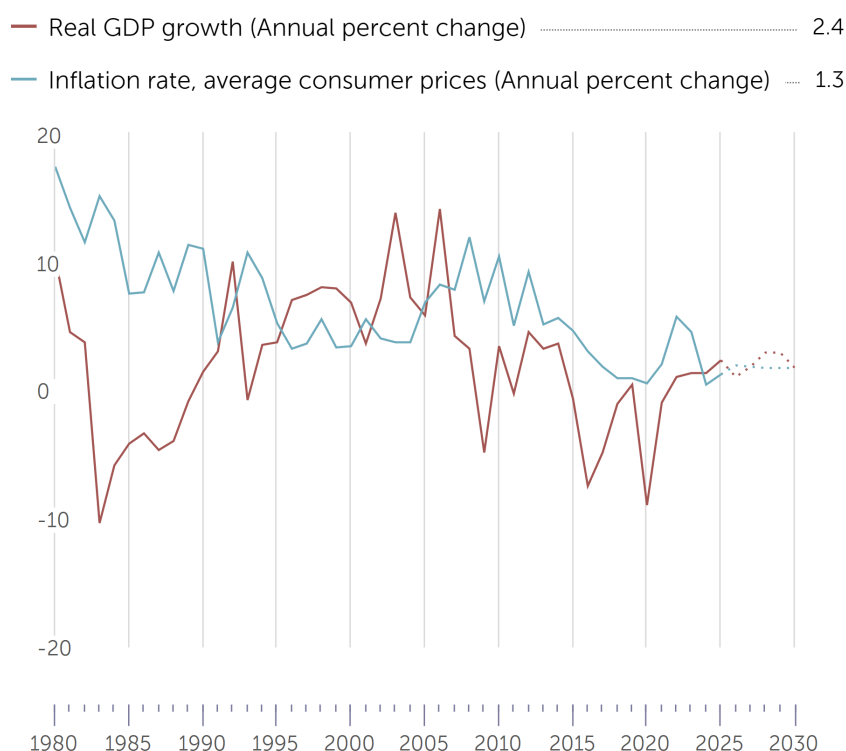


Figure 2 GDP trends in relation to inflation rate from 1980–2025

Source: IMF DataMapper⁵

focus on quality infrastructure, private sector development, and capacity support to government entities.

During the CSP period, the government of Trinidad and Tobago faced mounting pressure to diversify the economy, modernise the state, and address institutional inefficiencies. The CSP reflected these priorities, though its implementation was influenced by several contextual constraints—including the aftermath of the commodities downturn, governance complexity, and the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its core, the CSP was built on the recognition that while Trinidad and Tobago is a high-income country with robust institutional foundations, it faces persistent structural constraints that hinder long-term growth and equity.

These include a heavy reliance on the hydrocarbon sector, institutional delivery gaps, geographic disparities between Trinidad and Tobago, and mounting environmental vulnerabilities. In response, the CSP articulated a development model that combined financing with knowledge, policy dialogue, and capacity support—targeting areas where CDB could add value as a regional institution.

The strategic framework was structured around three thematic pillars:

- 1. Inclusive Social and Economic Development** – aimed at improving social protection systems, expanding access to education and training, and promoting economic diversification, particularly through support to MSMEs and job creation initiatives.

5 IMF DataMapper, April 2025 [Trinidad and Tobago and the IMF](#)

2. Governance and Institutional Development – focused on enhancing the effectiveness of public sector institutions, strengthening evidence-based policymaking, and supporting reforms in areas such as procurement, data systems, and planning.

3. Environmental Sustainability – aimed at improving climate resilience and environmental management, particularly through investment in resilient infrastructure, urban planning, and water resource management.

While not formally defined as a cross-cutting theme, **digital transformation** was increasingly integrated across these pillars, reflecting a growing national priority triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CSP also recognised the distinct development context of Tobago and earmarked a specific allocation to address gaps in infrastructure and service delivery on the island.

The strategy was underpinned by an indicative financing envelope of approximately USD436.7 million (mn), including a USD67 mn allocation specifically for Tobago. In addition to investment lending, the CSP envisaged

the use of technical assistance, lines of credit, and policy dialogue as complementary instruments to achieve its goals.

A Theory of Change (ToC) (Annex E) was reconstructed in collaboration with CDB and national counterparts to clarify the strategic assumptions behind the original CSP. The ToC highlighted several enabling assumptions: that national institutions would be ready and willing to implement reforms; that CDB procedures would align with local systems; and that coordinated engagement across stakeholders—including the Ministry of Finance, the Tobago House of Assembly, and line ministries—would support delivery. These assumptions were tested throughout the evaluation to understand where strategic intentions held and where causal linkages broke down.

Overall, the CSP represented a comprehensive but ambitious approach to development partnership. It sought not only to mobilise resources but also to accompany Trinidad and Tobago in addressing its most pressing development challenges through a mix of financial and non-financial interventions.

During the inception phase, a ToC for the CSP was retrospectively constructed based on the strategy and project documentation. This was revisited with CBD staff involved in the CSP design and implementation, through interviews, and a subsequent ToC validation workshop, which also included representatives of the MPD. The workshop provided an opportunity to:

- Discuss the causal links between outputs and outcomes

- Map the key risks and assumptions made during implementation, and
- Highlight any changes to the strategy that took place during the implementation period.

The diagram below is the outcome of the ToC reconstruction exercise and illustrates the CSP as it was implemented.

Legend: Outcome Partially Achieved

Outcome Not Achieved

Risks
Some identified during CSP design 2016, some noted during ToC workshop 2025

Assumptions
Noted during ToC workshop 2025

CDB Projects

Project approved during CSP period 2017-21

Project approved after CSP end date 2021

Project selected for evaluation sample

Outcomes

Pillar I Inclusive Social and Economic Development

Outcome 1
Improved Quality of and Access to Education and Training

Outcome 2
Strengthened Social Protection

Outcome 3
Increased Productivity, Competitiveness and Economic Diversification

Regional Education Initiative (TA)⁷

Assessment of Disability in CDB Borrowing Member Countries (Trinidad and Tobago) (Mar 2018 - 2024)

Third Agricultural and Industrial Credit (May 2019 - completed)⁶

Establishment of a Trade Facilitation Enquiry Point For Trinidad And Tobago (Dec 2020 - completed)

Developing The Export Readiness of Trinidad and Tobago Companies For The European Union Market (Fit 4 Europe II) (Jun 2021-)

Building a Quality Culture In Trinidad and Tobago- Implementation of the National Quality Policy (Dec 2020 - completed)

Development of a National Quality Policy For Trinidad and Tobago

Implementation capacity constraints

Macroeconomic challenges may reset GOTT'S priorities

Implementation capacity constraints

Education USD146.2 mn [of which: Tobago USD27.7 mn]/ **Disbursed 0**

1. Significant teacher shortages in key curriculum areas, particularly TVET.
2. Limited second-chance opportunities for skills development.
3. Aging and inadequate infrastructure unable to support population growth and curriculum expansion, and provide a safe environment for students and teachers.
4. Inadequate support structures for learners with special educational needs.
5. Inadequate school and system leadership capacity.
6. Inequity and inequality in educational opportunities, particularly at the tertiary level.

Institutional strengthening, capacity building, and training USD1 mn/ **Disbursed 76,856.62** [of which: Tobago USD0.2 mn]/**Disbursed 0**

1. Ineffectiveness of National Employment Service to train and retool retrenched workers.
2. Inability of LMIS to provide real time information and data on the needs of the labour force.
3. Limited capacity of the Ministry of Youth and Sports to research and disseminate information on major issues affecting youth.
4. Inadequate coordination of social programmes.

Productive Sector/Private Sector Development USD20.4 mn [of which loan: 10 mn]/**Disbursed 417,902.01 grants; 8.2 m loan**; [of which: Tobago USD0.2 mn]/**Disbursed 0**

1. Limited institutional capacity of development agencies to support entrepreneurs.
2. Insufficient resources to finance MSME activities.
3. Insufficient technical capacity of MSMEs.
4. The absence of a robust policy framework to guide agriculture sector interventions.
5. Inadequate production-support infrastructure and systems.
6. High exposure to natural hazards, in particular floods and droughts.
7. Underdeveloped tourism sector, especially in Tobago.

Pillar II Governance & Institutional Development

Outcome 4
Improved Evidence-based Development Planning and Institutional Development

Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment for Trinidad and Tobago

Establishment of an Interoperability Ecosystem (Jul 2022 -)

Training Programme on Public Policy Analysis and Management/ Project Cycle Management (PAM/PCM) (Feb - Apr 2018)

Development Evaluation Conference - 2024

Infrastructure Mapping Workshop (Mar 2020)

There is/was an appetite for PPPs

Support for National Statistical Institute

Improved administrative data systems, including Ministry of Social Development

Implementation capacity constraints

Governance and Institutional Strengthening USD6.1 mn/ **Disbursed 79,400** (financial data for DEC & Interoperability Ecosystem only) [of which: Tobago USD0.9 mn]/ **Disbursed 0**

1. Acute capacity gaps in the areas of development planning and coordination, project management and the use of MfDR frameworks in sector programmes.
2. Gaps in statistical capacity ranging from national accounts and external sector statistics to demographic analysis, vital statistics and overall data processing, management and dissemination.
3. Lack of modernised, ICT-based central administration system affects effective implementation (Tobago).

Pillar III Environmental Sustainability

Outcome 5
Strengthened Environmental Management Supported by Safe and Resilient Infrastructure

Training: Measuring and Verifying Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Apr - Dec 2017)

Disaster Management Emergency Relief Grant: Adverse Weather Related Flooding October 19-21, 2018 (Oct 2018 - completed)⁸

Wind Assessment, Feasibility Assessment & Environmental, Social and Gender Assessment and Training (Apr 2024 - Dec 2027)⁹

Development of a Climate Risk-Informed Water Resources Master Plan (Sep 2024 - pending GOTT to sign GA)

Building National and Community Capacity for Climate and Disaster Risk-Informed Decision-Making (May 2024 - pending GOTT to sign GA)

Lack of enforcement of legislation and policies

Sustained weakness with respect to inter-sector coordination

Delays or discontinuation in project implementation due to administrative and/or policy changes

CC Adaptation and Mitigation USD25 mn [of which: Tobago USD13 mn] Environmental Management USD58 mn [of which: Tobago USD5 mn] Physical Infrastructure Upgrade USD180 mn [of which: Tobago USD20 mn] Distributed 75,622.50 [Tobago 0]

1. Limited mainstreaming of environment, CC, EE and disaster risk reduction in sector policies, strategies and plans.
2. Weak institutional and technical capacity for effective environmental management and physical development planning.
3. Limitation of the current energy policy.
4. Inadequate sanitation, water and transport infrastructure.

RoTT of aware of eligible items/ expenditures for this funding source

Government Procedure; change in government April 2025; timing with regards to signing of the GA

CDB is the preferred and most competitive lending/ development partner in these targeted sectors

These stay relevant areas if operational context remains the same

Gender Equality (GE) and security and citizen security considerations, will be mainstreamed in CDB's interventions

Digitalisation & Evidence for Decision Making became important areas since CSP was designed

CDB-funded Projects

Indicative Total USD436.7 mn [Tobago USD67 mn]
Dispersed (as of Dec 2024)
10 mn USD loan & 752,924.51 USD grants. Total disbursement USD 10,752,924.51 (2.46% of the total anticipated envelope). [+10m Energy Sector PBL approved under previous CSP].

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED DURING DEVELOPMENT OF CSP IN 2016 (Specific sector constraints being addressed by CDB)

TVET expansion is RoTT's policy

⁶ MSME eligibility criteria does not fit the market demand.

⁷ Aided in the development of a curriculum for students, from which ROTT benefited. The TA also aided governments in dealing with students with special needs. This initiative partially contributed to achieving one indicative area of support, thus reflects minimal progress on the CSP objectives.

⁸ Due to lack of awareness of grant conditions GORTT purchased invalid items not covered by the agreement. Funds from this grant (\$180k) will be reimbursed to CDB...modality TBD.

⁹ GOTT pending the signing of the Agreement.

Portfolio Overview and Analysis

Portfolio Element	Status (2017–2024)
Total Approved	USD 10.46 m
Investment Lending	USD10 mn
Technical Assistance Grants	USD0.46 mn
TA/Investment Ratio	4.6%
Largest Sector	Energy, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Disaster Risk Reduction
Top Fund Source	SDF Unified
Tobago Allocation	USD67 mn (earmarked), Zero uptake

An indicative resource envelope of USD436.7 mn, inclusive of \$67 mn for Tobago-specific interventions, was estimated to support GORTT's development priorities over the 2017–21 strategy period. The use of funds was predicated on the evolution of the government's public finances, as well as the extent to which technical capacities in key line ministries could support project preparation and execution.

During the five-year CES period (2017–21), seven interventions - comprising one USD10 mn loan and \$0.65 mn in technical assistance (TA) grants were approved, representing 2.4% of the total indicative envelope. The initial TA-to-investment ratio was 4.6%, suggesting limited use of TA as a strategic tool to de-risk investments or enhance institutional readiness.

In the absence of a renewed CES, the period 2022–24 saw the continued use of technical assistance. The Board approved a total of five TA grants totalling USD1.8 mn, bringing the overall TA-to-investment ratio for the CSP period (2017–24) to approximately 22.6%. This shift suggests a growing recognition of the role that TA can play in maintaining strategic engagement, supporting institutional development, and preparing the ground for future investment operations.

Despite early ambitions for a diversified program, the small number of approved operations limited the strategic depth of the CSP.

Portfolio approvals were uneven across the CSP period, with low activity in the early years and a peak in 2020 (see Figure 3). A period of limited approvals

followed, but a revitalisation of activity occurred in 2024, marked by renewed technical assistance operations and re-engagement with national institutions. This suggests potential to rebuild traction as the Bank and country counterparts re-align around strategic priorities, facilitated by the initiation of work on a new country strategy. The approvals pattern reflects a common trend seen across other Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations (CSPEs), where initial years are typically marked by slower approvals and disbursements, followed by a surge in the latter stages of the strategy cycle. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the 2020 peak coincided with the COVID-19 crisis, prompting a rapid increase in approvals to support the country's emergency response and recovery efforts.

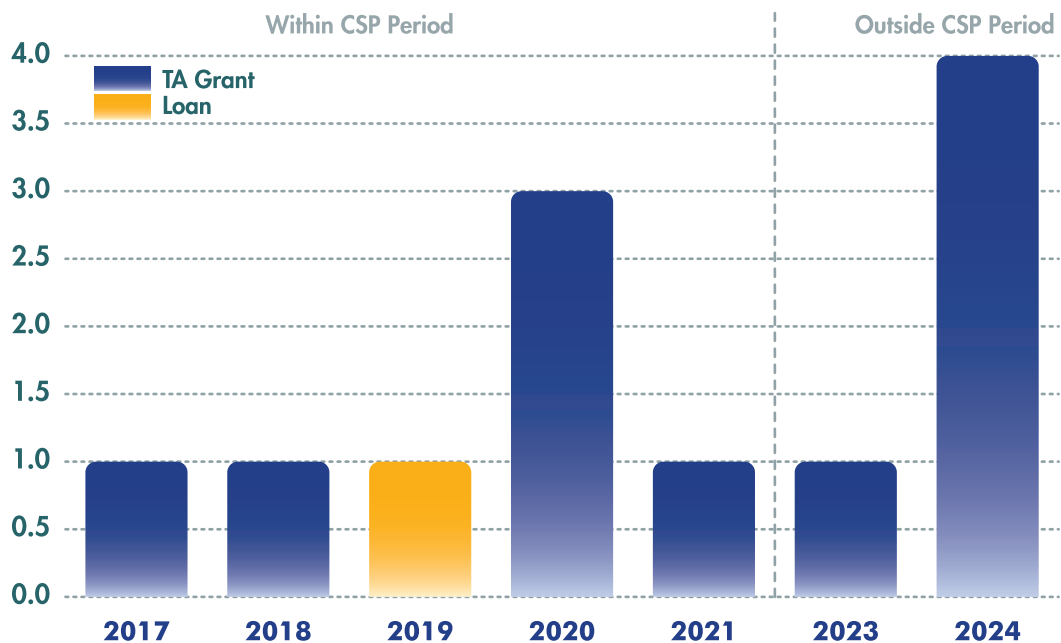


Figure 3 Number of Approved Interventions by Year and Type

Source: CDB project portfolio data for Trinidad and Tobago

The disbursement rate for projects approved over the strategy period averaged 80%. However, considering the entire portfolio of projects over the period 2017–24, the average disbursements fell to 63% on account of three TA interventions which were approved in 2024 but not yet started.

The approved portfolio reflected the CSP’s thematic pillars, with a concentration in areas such as energy (17%), disaster risk reduction (DRR) (17%), and regional integration (RCI) (25%). A total of 12 initiatives were mapped to the strategy’s thematic areas. While the sole loan (*Third Agricultural Line of Credit*) was targeted toward accelerating economic diversification (*Pillar 1: Inclusive Social and Economic Development*), most of the TA interventions addressed the cross-cutting themes.

Figure 4 shows the range of sectors/themes in Trinidad and Tobago’s project portfolio. Regional cooperation and integration (RCI) and energy were among the most represented sectors, indicating an intention to leverage regional expertise and climate-related support. However, the small number of projects in each category limited the potential for systemic impact.

The CDB’s Trinidad and Tobago portfolio was delivered through a combination of ordinary capital resources (OCR), special development funds (SDF), and co-financing from development partners such as the EU and Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). As seen in Figure 5, the SDF was the dominant funding source, supporting five of the twelve initiatives.

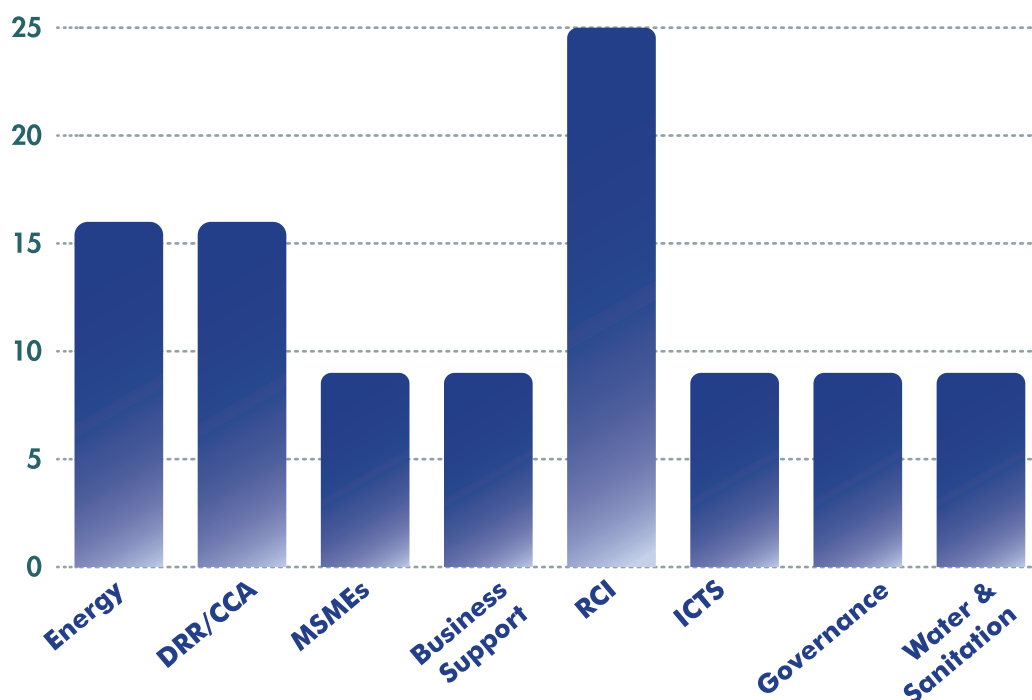


Figure 4 Projects by Thematic Area (%)

Source: CDB project portfolio data for Trinidad and Tobago

While diversity of funding channels enabled some flexibility, it may have introduced procedural complexity. Each funding source—OCR, SDF, or co-financing from partners e.g. the EU or DFATD—carries distinct operational guidelines, approval procedures, and reporting requirements. This can result in differentiated timelines, coordination challenges, and administrative burdens for the Bank and for the national implementing partners.

While the portfolio was broadly aligned with the CSP pillars, the implementation varied. The projects in Tobago, for instance, faced no uptake due to capacity constraints and institutional complexities. A detailed list of interventions and disbursements under the CSP 2017–21 and until 2024 is in Annex D.

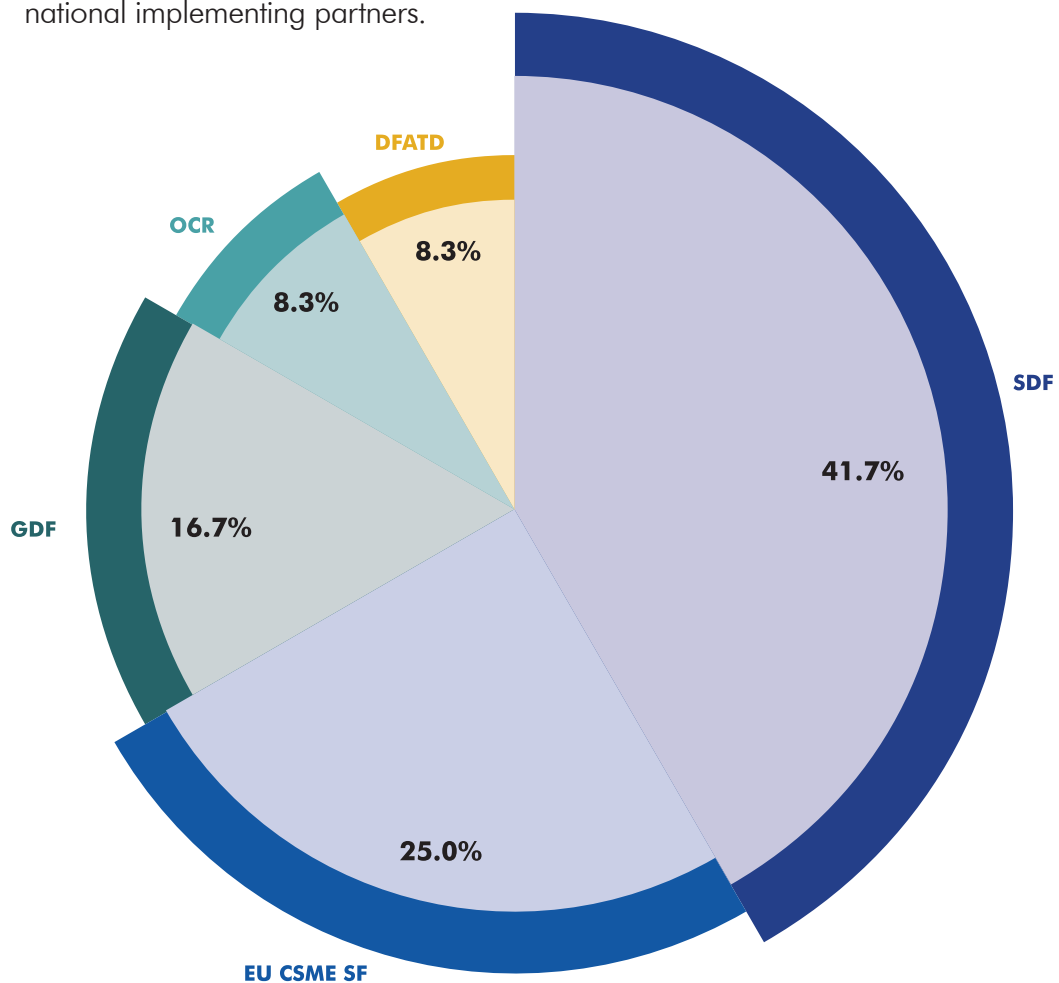


Figure 5 Portfolio by Fund Source
Source: CDB project portfolio data for Trinidad and Tobago

SDF
EU CSME SF

GDF
OCR
DFATD

Special Development Fund
European Union CARICOM
Single Market and Economy
Standby Facility
General Development Fund
Ordinary Capital Resources
Department of Foreign
Affairs, Trade and
Development, Canada

Findings

This section examines the performance of CDB's activities in Trinidad and Tobago since 2017, by answering six high-level evaluation questions and against the following evaluation criteria:

High-Level Evaluation Question	OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria
1. To what extent was the CSP for Trinidad and Tobago aligned with national development priorities and CDB's corporate strategies?	Relevance
2. How effectively was the CSP designed and implemented to deliver intended results?	Effectiveness
3. To what extent were CDB's interventions coordinated with and complementary to other development partners, including IFIs?	Coherence
4. How efficiently were CDB's interventions managed, implemented, and disbursed under the CSP?	Efficiency
5. To what extent did the CSP's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework facilitate results measurement and adaptive management?	Effectiveness
6. What is the likelihood that the development results achieved under the CSP will be sustained?	Sustainability

Alignment of CSP with national development priorities and CDB's corporate strategies

The Country Strategy Paper for Trinidad and Tobago 2017–21, which remained in effect through 2024, was highly relevant to both the national development priorities of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the corporate strategic direction of the CDB. It reflected a sound understanding of the country's development aspirations, responded to contextual shifts during a period of economic volatility and global uncertainty, and aligned well with CDB's evolving strategic objectives. However, while the strategy's intent and thematic focus were clearly relevant, **its operationalisation was constrained by institutional, procedural, and coordination challenges** that affected the ability to fully translate strategic alignment into effective implementation.

The CSP's three strategic pillars— inclusive social and economic development, governance and institutional development, and environmental sustainability—closely mirrored the five core themes of Vision 2030, the country's National Development Strategy. **The strategy was well-tailored to support key national priorities**, including human capital development, public sector modernisation, competitiveness, and climate resilience. It also incorporated

cross-cutting themes such as gender, environmental sustainability, and results-based management, consistent with Vision 2030's guiding principles. While there was CSP's alignment with gender equality goals, gender mainstreaming was only marginally achieved, indicating a gap between stated intent and actual integration.

The CSP was designed and implemented during a period marked by declining energy revenues, growing fiscal pressures, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, **the CSP's focus on institutional strengthening, disaster risk management, and evidence-informed policymaking proved timely and responsive.** The strategy adapted to emerging needs through technical assistance, supported the design of national planning and resilience frameworks, and maintained policy coherence with global agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In terms of CDB's corporate alignment, **the CSP was fully consistent with the Bank's 2015–19 Strategic Plan and remained relevant under the 2022–24 Strategic Plan Update**, which introduced a resilience-focused framework.¹⁰ The CSP's emphasis on national systems, data reform, and inclusive growth positioned it within

¹⁰ Although not officially renewed, the CSP remained the guiding document for the Trinidad and Tobago portfolio and high-level objectives through to 2024/25 and will be surpassed by the launch of the new CES which is anticipated by second half of 2025.

CDB's broader vision of sustainable and resilient development. Its sectoral emphasis—on education, public sector performance, and private sector competitiveness—also corresponded to CDB's evolving investment and operational priorities.

The **choice of partners and executing agencies was appropriate** in terms of formal institutional mandates, with lead roles assigned to central agencies such as the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of Finance, and sector-specific ministries. However, **execution capacity varied significantly**. Successful collaboration with agencies such as the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT) demonstrated the value of tailored support and technical continuity. In contrast, other initiatives were hindered by institutional fragmentation, limited procurement readiness¹¹, and unknown inter-ministerial roles for CDB staff—particularly in projects involving decentralised authorities such as the Tobago House of Assembly or those which required approval processes from more than one ministry (e.g.

Building National and Community Capacity for Climate and Disaster Risk-Informed Decision-Making, led by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management). These operational mismatches revealed that **strategic alignment alone was insufficient without complementary attention to institutional capacities and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms**.

In conclusion, **the CSP was well designed in terms of its relevance to national priorities and CDB's strategic vision**. It addressed pressing development needs, anticipated policy shifts, and supported reform-minded institutions. However, the experience of its implementation **highlighted the importance of going beyond strategic fit to ensure that institutional partners are not only appropriate in principle but are also equipped and supported to deliver**. Future strategies would benefit from structured engagement with all key stakeholders, robust institutional diagnostics, and adaptive delivery models that can translate relevance into sustainable impact.

11 This was mentioned particularly in the context of ministries engaging with CDB for the first time e.g. the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management and therefore less familiar with the process, in addition to the fact that on occasion CDB agreements had to be reviewed and signed off by key people in more than one ministry. The standard CDB agreement validity period of 90 days was insufficient for GORTT to complete these internal approval processes.

Effectiveness of CSP design and implementation to deliver results

The CSP design was **moderately effective, though partially effective in its implementation**. It delivered select technical outputs and contributed to institutional capacity strengthening in targeted areas, but the overall progress toward strategic outcomes was constrained by systemic implementation barriers, slow disbursement, and insufficient institutional readiness. The CSP's relevance and alignment with national priorities were clear, yet its operational effectiveness was hampered by

persistent bottlenecks in coordination, procurement, and partner engagement. As a result, the CSP was rated "Marginally Unsatisfactory" in the Country Strategy Completion Report.

Across its three strategic pillars, **the CSP made partial progress toward two of the five planned outcomes**, as illustrated in table 1 below. For a financial breakdown of disbursements per pillar / outcome area see table 2 in the findings section of this report.

Table 1 Achievement of outcomes as per the CSP 2017–21 design, as of 2024

Outcomes in the CSP 2017–2021	Result ¹²
Pillar 1	
Outcome 1: Improved Quality of and Access to Education and Training	Not achieved
Outcome 2: Strengthened Social Protection	Not achieved
Outcome 3: Increased Productivity, Competitiveness and Economic Diversification	Partially Achieved
Pillar 2	
Outcome 4: Improved Evidence-based Development Planning and Institutional Development	Partially Achieved
Pillar 3	
Outcome 5: Strengthened Environmental Management Supported by Safe and Resilient Infrastructure	Not achieved

¹² Rating based on RMF in the Strategy Completion Report (draft was shared with OIE for this evaluation)

The **most tangible achievements were recorded under the productivity and private sector development agenda**, notably through the USD10 mn Line of Credit to Development Finance Limited (DFL), which disbursed 82% by 2024¹³ and supported MSMEs alongside the adoption of environmental and social safeguards. Technical assistance further contributed to a national quality policy and modest capacity improvements in development finance.

Results in social protection and institutional reform were more mixed. CDB supported a poverty analysis and a review of social programmes, which informed policy dialogue but stopped short of creating systemic transformation, while a national disability assessment was also supported, but the implementation was ineffective for the circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, training for over 100 public officers led by the National Transformation Unit (NTU) and assistance to the Central Statistical Office (CSO) helped advance results-based planning and results-based M&E, but these efforts have not yet been institutionalised at scale. **Environmental outcomes were the least successful**, with no loan-financed infrastructure implemented despite preparatory work on solid waste management and climate-related technical assistance.

Several factors helped facilitate implementation, including the **strong strategic alignment with**

Vision 2030, flexibility in project timelines (especially during the COVID-19 pandemic), and **targeted use of grants**—particularly for smaller or emerging institutions. Agencies like the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management and the MDT highlighted the value of CDB’s technical guidance, especially when delivered by staff with regional or national experience. **Continuity of CDB focal points also proved essential in maintaining momentum and trust.**

However, **a range of persistent challenges limited the CSP’s overall effectiveness.** These included protracted delays in legal and administrative approvals which affected project startup and disbursement. Fragmentation across ministries, frequent turnover of project coordinators, and a lack of systematic learning mechanisms further reduced implementation coherence. CDB’s procurement processes were often misaligned with national practices, leading to at least one project (a road safety initiative) being abandoned.¹⁴ Several agencies noted that, while timelines were adjusted, project objectives and indicators could not be easily revised, limiting responsiveness to evolving realities.

Despite these constraints, **the CSP contributed meaningfully to institutional capacity development.** It strengthened the policy coordination and disaster planning capacity of the Office

13 According to CDB financial disbursement data

14 In addition, disagreement during the negotiations on the Termination Clause in the Loan Contract was a major reason for withdrawing from the Road Sector project.

of Disaster Preparedness and Management; helped MDT establish itself as a credible digital governance institution; helped build momentum for the NTU to strengthen national capacities on M&E and improved analytical capacity within CSO and the Ministry of Planning and Development. These gains, while not system-wide, were meaningful and showed how CDB support catalyses progress when paired with responsive design, localised knowledge, and sustained engagement. Nevertheless, the absence of a comprehensive capacity-building strategy, combined with limited follow-up on technical outputs (e.g., sustainability plans, guidance papers), weakened the continuity and scaling of interventions.

The CSP also led to unintended results. On the positive side, it enhanced the institutional legitimacy of emerging ministries like MDT and fostered trust between CDB and national agencies. It also triggered regional dialogue on digital interoperability, including an MoU between 11 Caribbean countries—an outcome not foreseen at design but consistent with CDB’s long-term

integration goals. However, the CSP also unintentionally reinforced perceptions of procedural inflexibility, deepened tensions between central and local institutions (particularly with the Tobago House of Assembly), and produced knowledge products that were underutilised due to a lack of sustained institutional follow-up. Gender and inclusion were treated as cross-cutting themes but were inconsistently integrated, with digital exclusion by age emerging as a more locally salient issue for MDT than gender.

In conclusion, the CSP for Trinidad and Tobago **demonstrated effectiveness in selectively delivering outputs and enabling reforms in key institutions.**

It showed that **CDB can play a catalytic role in early-stage capacity building and policy innovation.** However, its **effectiveness in achieving broader outcomes and strategic objectives was limited by systemic constraints in implementation readiness, coordination, and follow-through.**

Coordination and complementarity with other development partners

The CSP demonstrated **strong thematic alignment with national priorities and the strategic areas pursued by international financial institutions (IFIs) and development partners** such as the UN system, IDB, and the World Bank. CDB's emphasis on inclusive social and economic development, institutional strengthening, and environmental sustainability echoed the broader development landscape. Document review and interviews confirm that CDB's portfolio did not overlap or conflict with other donor-funded interventions, but also lacked active coordination or joint delivery mechanisms, resulting in parallel rather than integrated implementation.

In several sectors, **CDB's niche was recognised as providing regional knowledge, hands-on, technically grounded interventions.** However, the **absence of structured collaboration at the design or implementation stage meant that potential synergies remained untapped.** For example, the Disability Assessment Project was well-aligned with UN and government strategies on inclusion, yet did not coordinate with UN initiatives in disability mainstreaming. Interviews with implementing partners indicated that coordination, if it occurred, was informal and often reliant on personal networks rather than institutional mechanisms.

Similarly, the Third Agricultural and Industrial Line of Credit, designed to support productive sector financing through local institutions, aligned with broader donor interest in economic diversification and resilience. However, there was no evidence of coordination with the IDB's programs or FAO's value chain support activities in the same period. This reflected a pattern across the CSP portfolio, where alignment was evident in principle but not operationalised through joint programming or harmonised delivery.

Evidence from project documentation, progress reports, and stakeholder interviews indicates that **formal coordination mechanisms were absent.** There were no coordination platforms, sector working groups, or joint review forums with other development partners. Interviews with both internal and external stakeholders confirmed that while, in some cases, **some bilateral communication occurred,** particularly at the project preparation stage, this was **often ad hoc and undocumented.**

This **lack of structured coordination was a constraint,** particularly in sectors with high donor activity. Stakeholders observed that **opportunities for co-financing, technical harmonisation, or mutual capacity building were missed,** often because coordination depended on individual project officers

rather than an institutional process. The Trade Facilitation Enquiry Point (TFEP) project, for example, supported by CDB as a standalone TA intervention, could have benefited from closer alignment with parallel customs reform and trade facilitation support from the IDB and World Bank, but no such collaboration was recorded.

The CSP articulated clear cross-cutting priorities, including gender equality, environmental sustainability, and institutional capacity building. However, analysis of project documentation and interviews indicate that **these objectives were not consistently integrated across the portfolio**. Implementation tended to occur in siloed structures, with minimal interaction between sectors, and limited cross-project coordination. Although cross-cutting priorities may have been stated, the extent to which stakeholder collaboration was required or expected was not clearly articulated in the CSP.

The Disability Project again illustrates this challenge: while it contributed to the CSP's inclusive development goals, there was no evidence of linkages with other social development projects. Likewise, while the Third Agricultural

and Industrial Line of Credit addressed economic inclusion, its design did not include any gender-disaggregated targets or indicators. Overall, **gender reporting was inconsistent across interventions**.

KIs highlighted **several constraints to strategic coherence**, including:

- Absence of a harmonised M&E system to track outcomes across sectors,
- Weak feedback loops between project design, supervision, and learning functions, and
- Limited institutional mechanisms for knowledge sharing across sectors or between lending and TA instruments.

As a result, while individual projects were generally aligned with CSP objectives, the **lack of internal integration diluted the potential for synergistic impact**. **Cross-cutting outcomes were not systematically tracked, and opportunities to build cumulative, programme-level results across projects were underutilised.**

Efficiency of CDB's interventions management, implementation, and disbursement

The CSP employed a combination of loans, technical assistance, and limited grant funding, which were broadly suited to the intervention types. However, the use of instruments lacked a programmatic rationale—that is, a strategic framework guiding the coordinated use of these financing modalities to achieve broader development objectives—thus limiting opportunities to increase efficiency through complementarity or sequencing between project types.

- **Loans were deployed for capital-intensive initiatives** aligning well with national investment needs. However, **some operations failed to progress beyond the appraisal stage, either due to a lack of government buy-in or inadequate early engagement** with key actors like the MoF. One loan was approved by the Cabinet for a Road Safety Assessment after much scoping and appraisal work, yet upon seeing the loan agreement terms and conditions the Ministry of Works and Transport decided it was not convenient nor suitable for the relatively small loan amount.
- **TA resources were used for institution-building** (e.g. TFEP, TTBS quality infrastructure) but were generally implemented as standalone interventions, with **limited integration into larger sector reforms or follow-up investment**

operations. Stakeholders noted **missed opportunities to use TA to inform or prepare lending pipelines.**

- Five TA grants totalling USD1.8 mn were approved between 2022 and 2024. While these fell outside the original CSP timeframe (2017–21), the evaluation analyses the full period of implementation. While Trinidad and Tobago's high-income status limits eligibility for concessional financing, stakeholders expressed that grants—particularly for technical assistance and capacity building—remain highly valued. These **grants are seen as crucial for unlocking implementation, supporting institutional reform, and maintaining engagement during periods when investment lending may be constrained.**

A portfolio-wide analysis reveals **underperformance in fund disbursement** (table 2 for a breakdown of anticipated versus disbursed funds). As of the end of 2024, only 2.46% (USD10.75 mn) of the indicative CSP envelope had been disbursed—well below the 7.7% achieved under the previous strategy (2011–14).

Several factors contributed to this:

- **Delays between project appraisal and loan signing,** often due to lengthy internal reviews;

- **Weak execution capacity in implementing agencies**, particularly for complex procurement or cross-sector initiatives;
- **A lack of readiness at project approval**, with delays in mobilisation due to absence of staffing, planning permissions, or procurement documentation.

For instance, the Disability Project implementation was delayed due to COVID-19 disruptions and administrative hurdles. While adaptive strategies (e.g., an online survey of persons with disabilities) were introduced, these were only partially successful due to digital access limitations and gaps in outreach mechanisms.

CDB demonstrated flexibility during the pandemic, allowing for extended timelines and revised implementation modalities. However, **the success of the adaptive responses varied**:

- The Disability Project adapted by digitising stakeholder consultations and introducing remote data collection, but project documentation and interviews reveal that **the complexity of reaching marginalised groups hindered full implementation**.
- Progress on other projects, such as those in education and institutional capacity, was **slow or halted**, with **no formal documentation of adaptation plans or monitoring of mitigation efforts**.

CDB's internal systems did not consistently support efficient implementation as expected:

- While the RMF did include outcome-level indicators with defined targets, **the framework was underutilised as a performance management tool**. Output-level indicators were missing (not phrased as indicators), and there was little evidence of regular progress tracking or course correction based on RMF data. **This limited the strategic use of results for adaptive management and weakened institutional learning across the CSP cycle.**
- **Decision-making and procurement processes were described in interviews as centralised and slow**, especially in the early implementation phases. Delays of 6–12 months between project approval and disbursement were common across the portfolio.
- **Internal coordination remained weak**. Projects were largely managed in sectoral silos, and no unified country team structure was in place to ensure strategic coherence or facilitate portfolio reviews. **This fragmented approach undermined efficiency**, especially for cross-cutting goals like institutional capacity building and gender inclusion.

A number of projects failed to progress beyond the appraisal phase, revealing a lack of strategic alignment with Trinidad and Tobago's governance architecture.¹⁵ For

example, a coastal erosion protection project in Tobago was unable to move into implementation due to limited buy-in of national authorities. Interviewees noted that **CDB did not secure high-level buy-in early enough, nor did it tailor its approach to navigate the dual-island governance system.** This contributed to strategic and operational inefficiencies and stalling of otherwise well-conceived projects.

Also, **CDB’s internal timelines did not always align with national readiness to prepare or submit documentation.**

Projects involving inter-ministerial coordination often faced delays that national focal points could not

resolve within CDB’s deadlines. **This mismatch suggests a need for more adaptive appraisal and engagement models, tailored to high-income, complex administrative environments like Trinidad and Tobago.**

To conclude, the level of disbursement was very low during the CSP period due to challenges and inefficiencies internal and external to CDB. Although TA and grant projects were welcomed by the GORTT, it was much more difficult to reach agreement on loans. Despite having a clear focus in the CSP Tobago was not represented in the project portfolio—a new strategic approach to the CES is needed to address this moving forward.

Table 2 Planned and disbursed 2017–21 CSP funds by CSP pillars and outcomes

CSP Pillar and Outcomes	Indicative Allocation (USD million)	Disbursed (USD million)	
1. Inclusive Social & Economic Development	167.4m	9.48m	5.6%
Improved Quality of and Access to Education and Training	146.2 m	0.77m	
Strengthened Social Protection	1m	0.0m	
Increased Productivity, Competitiveness and Economic Diversification	10.4m grants /10m loan	0.41m grants/ 8.2 loan	
2. Improved Governance and Institutional Development	6.1m	0.79m	13%
Improved Evidence-based Development Planning and Institutional Development	6.1m	0.79	
3. Environmental Sustainability	263m	0.76m	0.29%
Strengthened Environmental Management Supported by Safe and Resilient Infrastructure	263m	0.76m	
Total	436.7	10.8	

15 While the CSP targeted Tobago, a relatively underserved region, there was a critical design flaw. The CSP did not acknowledge that THA must seek national-level approval from the GORTT—especially the Ministry of Finance—for Tobago-based investments due to legislation as outlined by the Ministry of Finance under the THA Act, which clarifies borrowing parameters for Tobago. On several occasions CDB invested time and human resources in scoping missions and preparation of project appraisal documents only to fall short when it came to THA obtaining sign off from MoF.

CSP's Monitoring & Evaluation framework, facilitation of results measurement, and adaptive management

The CSP design includes a RMF to monitor and assess the achievement of results. **The RMF, as designed, was aligned with GORTT Vision 2030 goals and CSP outcomes,** however the RMF and results measurement more broadly were not well considered during implementation of the CSP, either in terms of documenting interim progress or in being used for course correction and adaptation to contextual and implementation challenges.

The structure and layout of the RMF is adequate, as it sets out the country priorities, the sector-specific problems, and the sector outcomes being addressed by each of the three pillars of the CSP. Against these, outcome indicators are generally specific, measurable and timebound, with baselines and clear targets. High level risks and mitigations are noted for all but one outcome. Yet **the RMF's utility as a performance management and monitoring tool was limited** for several reasons.

Firstly, **the output level states 'areas of intervention' instead of using SMART output indicators with baselines and targets.**

Three of the areas of intervention have defined baselines and targets. The use of 'intervention areas' instead of outputs led to confusion in reporting at this level, with performance ratings being allocated

against intervention areas based on whether an intervention took place, although there were no indicator, target or measurement criteria.

Secondly, **the RMF was designed in 2016 and not revised during the official country strategy period nor after the CSP elapsed during 2021 to 2024.** Updates could have taken place for instance following a mid-term review if there had been one, or in response to emerging challenges such as COVID-19, new priorities (e.g., rising concerns about the cross-cutting topics of gender/GBV and citizen security), or the low implementation levels during the strategy period and lack of activity under outcomes 1, 2 and 4. **Projects that were designed and initiated after 2021 were aligned with the overall objectives of the CSP and the three pillars, however they were not incorporated into the RMF** since they were not designed to contribute to the specific indicator targets. It may be that additional results could have been captured if the RMF was updated accordingly, although several of the newer projects are still in the early stages of implementation. As a result, **the RMF could not effectively support ongoing monitoring or adaptive management** (including identification of and response to new/emerging risks or incorporating changes to the project portfolio).

Finally, in terms of data and results reporting, **none of the five outcome indicators have been fully achieved**, with only two partially achieved. This is mostly due to the limited implementation during the CSP period. Data was not available for five of the twelve outcome indicators, revealing that **some outcome indicators were not aligned with available and accessible data**. A review of the RMF indicators also shows that **by the end of the strategy period many of them were not fully SMART**. In particular, the relevance of many indicators for capturing the CDB's contribution

towards the overall outcome became limited due to many of the interventions outlined in the CSP not converting into project agreements or moving forward into implementation. For example, one outcome indicator relates to tourism's contribution to GDP in Tobago, but ultimately, the CDB did not support any interventions related to tourism, nor was any project implemented in Tobago despite it being a focus of the CSP. On the other hand, the interventions that were implemented post 2021 were not captured by the existing indicators and therefore do not contribute to RMF results.

Gender as a cross-cutting theme for the CSP

None of the indicator targets in the RMF were designed to capture data disaggregated by gender (or any other disaggregation), so this was not incorporated in the results. Notably, while in-country stakeholders such as Development Finance Limited reported that gender disaggregated data is available it was not requested for monitoring or reporting purposes.

The Ministry of Digital Transformation highlighted the importance of tailoring data disaggregation needs. Gender was included in the CSP as a cross-cutting theme, however for MDT,

gender considerations are not a priority because issues of gender are not deemed as prevalent in the Caribbean as compared to age in relation to ICT and digital skills:

"If you look at our digital skills platform, for example, the data shows that it's men and women access the opportunities in equal proportion.[...] We need to look at age and the aging population; in terms of upskilling and reskilling, those are the nuances of the data that could be perhaps more relevant to what we do, not just gender."

- Ministry of Digital Transformation

Sustainability of CSP development results

Evidence of sustainability from the 2017–21 CSP period is limited due to low activity levels and project delays.

The environmental sustainability pillar showed minimal signs of sustainable results; three of five projects were launched in 2024, too recent for outcome assessment. One earlier project was removed from the portfolio due to funding eligibility issues, and the overall environmental management outcome was not achieved.

Some projects under other pillars show potential for long-term impact.

The Development of a National Quality Policy for Trinidad and Tobago successfully produced a policy with enduring relevance, but its follow-up initiative, Building a Quality Culture, faced delays. While a baseline and implementation plan were completed, a gap in funding has stalled further progress, posing risks to sustainability.

Capacity-building initiatives revealed promise of lasting impact.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index work with the Central Statistical Office incorporated training, and the 2018 Public Policy Analysis and Management/Project Cycle Management (PAM/PCM) Programme aimed to improve public sector skills. The 2024 Development Evaluation Conference, partly funded by CDB, saw high-level government attendance and increased interest in M&E,

potentially fostering a more receptive environment for future reforms.

The Interoperability Ecosystem project supports Trinidad and Tobago's digital transformation. In 2023, a regional digital leadership conference convened by MDT led to commitments from 11 CARICOM nations, illustrating potential for broader impact.

However, **long-term sustainability requires regional collaboration, investment in digital skills, addressing connectivity gaps, and integrating ICT into economic diversification strategies.**

The Third Agricultural and Industrial Line of Credit, the CSP's sole loan, faced delays and missed several outcome targets. Though only one target was achieved, Development Finance Limited (DFL) has integrated environmental policies, developed compliance plans with clients, and shifted toward business model assessments, indicating **a progressive approach to sustainability, though long-term impact monitoring remains a gap.**

Overall, while some initiatives have laid important groundwork, **sustained outcomes remain uncertain, and many depend on future funding, regional partnerships, and institutional capacity-building.**

For more project specific details on evidence of sustainability see annex H.

Conclusions

This Evaluation for Trinidad and Tobago CSP 2017–21, (and the time elapsed to 2024) offers the opportunity for reflection and forward planning as the CDB prepares its next CES. The findings highlight strong strategic intent and alignment with national priorities, but reveal operational, institutional, and strategic barriers that limited the CSP's ability to deliver transformative development results. These conclusions form the basis for the recommendations.

The evaluation demonstrated that CDB was able to add significant value in areas where interventions were well-targeted and tailored to local realities, such as digital transformation and development finance. These successes reaffirmed the importance of sustained regional expertise, contextual familiarity (e.g., country context, institutions and government processes), and adaptive delivery models in achieving relevant and effective results. However, implementation efficiency was hampered by procedural bottlenecks and coordination gaps, both internal to CDB and with other development partners. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks, though present, were not

fully leveraged to support adaptive management or real-time learning.

The sustainability of outcomes was mixed, largely dependent on the degree to which initiatives were anchored within national systems and institutions and supported by long-term investment and capacity development strategies. Moreover, projects that benefitted from continuity in CDB staffing and local knowledge were more successful in achieving operational relevance and positive stakeholder engagement.

Overall, the CSPE highlights the importance of a more focused and distinctive strategic approach in future. Concentrating on areas where CDB holds a comparative advantage would increase the relevance, visibility, and developmental impact of its support. This evaluation serves as a foundation for institutional learning and informed decision-making as CDB shapes its next Country Engagement Strategy and continues to refine its broader operational modalities within the Caribbean region.

Recommendations



Five priority recommendations are derived from the analysis of the evidence, findings and conclusions of the evaluation. The recommendations have been co-developed with the CDB staff responsible for implementing the CSP—and for designing the next CES—with participation and inputs from the MPD. Given the timely opportunity to provide evidence to inform the CES, these recommendations were identified as the priority areas that would help to overcome the challenges experienced under the CSP 2017–21, and designed to be useful, specific and actionable to support with that process.

Recommendation 1

Develop a focused and tailored CES with strong thematic anchoring

Focus next CES on 1–3 catalytic themes (e.g., digital transformation, regional integration, MSME development) where CDB’s value proposition is strongest and national implementation capacity exists.

Action

Support MPD to develop an updated donor matrix and funding gap analysis, leading to a jointly developed roadmap identifying areas where CDB will lead complement or partner on initiatives—based on value-added, gaps, and thematic priorities across development partners.

Responsible Unit

Economics Department, led by the CES Focal Point/s

Timeline

within second quarter 2025

Background and Evidence

Linked Evaluation Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency; **EQ(s):** 1, 2, 4;

Linked Conclusions: Conclusion 3, 8, 4, 7: Strengthening operational readiness and embedding flexibility into procedures and results frameworks will increase both the relevance and effectiveness of future strategies, especially in a high-capacity, dual-governance context like Trinidad and Tobago.

Findings / Context: The CSP 2017–21 was overly broad, with multiple sector-specific outcome objectives. This diluted its strategic clarity, led to fragmented implementation, and increased risk of missed outcomes if key projects were not approved or launched.

Recommendation 2

Design and implement comprehensive strategic communications and advocacy

Create a deliberate communication and engagement strategy to position the CES as a nationally relevant tool, not just a technical document.

Action

Develop a strategic communications and advocacy plan including tools like CES Briefing Notes for Cabinet, MoF, THA, strategic dialogues such as 'CDB Days', co-advocacy platforms with development partners to engage in national policy spaces and remove common implementation barriers. Where feasible, engage sector ministers in the Cabinet to 'champion' areas of focus of the CES.

Responsible Unit

Economics Department, led by CES Focal Point/s, with support and inputs from the Department of Communications & Corporate Affairs and SAO.

Timeline

by end 2025

Background and Evidence

Linked Evaluation Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Coherence, Efficiency, Sustainability; **EQ(s):** 1, 2, 3, 4, 6;

Linked Conclusions: Conclusion 1, 4, 6; Strategic visibility and consistent engagement with key national decision-makers is essential to improve project uptake, secure approvals, and align implementation priorities.

Findings / Context: The CSP lacked visibility and engagement at the highest decision-making levels, particularly MoF, Cabinet, and THA. Limited strategic advocacy reduced approval speed, project prioritisation, and uptake. Peer partners noted similar challenges, suggesting joint engagement could amplify voice.

Recommendation 3

Leverage regional knowledge and expertise as a country strategy delivery modality

Systematically integrate CDB's regional knowledge assets and platforms into the design and delivery of Trinidad and Tobago's CES.

Action

Incorporate regional knowledge and expertise into CES design and project documents, consider resources and functions available through CDB's regional initiatives that may facilitate implementation (e.g. SDF funding, procurement), create platform to showcase Trinidad and Tobago's innovations (e.g., digital tools) across the region. Establish a medium-term knowledge sharing strategy and community of practice to share lessons and support peer learning—capitalising on CDB's regional presence and network.

Responsible Unit

Economics Department, led by CES Focal Point/s

Timeline

within timeline for developing the new CES

Background and Evidence

Linked Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness, Coherence, Sustainability; **EQ(s):** 2, 3, 6;

Linked Conclusions: Conclusion 2, 4, 7, 6; Leveraging regional expertise and positioning can enhance delivery effectiveness, innovation diffusion, and institutional learning.

Findings / Context: CDB's strongest results were observed when leveraging regional experience and in-country knowledge. However, this was inconsistently applied. Opportunities for peer exchange and regional knowledge mobilisation were missed.

Recommendation 4

Institutionalise the use of staff with country knowledge

Prioritise staffing Trinidad and Tobago engagements with personnel familiar with the national system, including the nuances of dual governance and approval structures.

Action

Incorporate in the CES clear guidelines and responsibilities for addressing staff turnover, including improved onboarding processes and materials to ensure continuity of CDB personnel capabilities for implementing the CES. Consistent and uniform use of OP365 will support developing institutional knowledge, as well as formal handover documents and an established handover process including a country mission to introduce new staff. Assign “country champions” within CDB who have deep experience in Trinidad and Tobago to provide technical continuity across CES cycles. Institutionalise a mentorship model pairing experienced country staff with project teams to retain institutional memory and increase responsiveness.

Responsible Unit

Economics Department, led by CES Focal Point/s.

Timeline

ongoing

Background and Evidence

Linked Evaluation Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability; **EQ(s):** 1, 2, 3, 4, 6;

Linked Conclusions: Conclusion 7, 6; CDB’s value is enhanced when country knowledge is retained and embedded in operations.

Findings / Context: Contextual familiarity with Trinidad and Tobago’s institutions, political economy, and processes significantly improved project design and delivery. Where this was lacking, projects struggled with traction and responsiveness.

Recommendation 5

Enhance procedural flexibility and institutionalise adaptive management

Transform M&E and project appraisal procedures into dynamic, flexible tools aligned with GORTT systems and capable of supporting real-time decision-making.

Action

Co-develop the CES RMF with MPD (NTU, SEPPD), embed “adaptive windows” into appraisal processes to allow mid-course revisions, and pilot adaptive management features in select projects—including pause-and-reflect reviews and real-time progress tracking. Programme a mid-term review into the CES workplan/timeline.

Responsible Unit

Economics Department, led by CES Focal Points

Timeline

within timeline for developing the new CES

Background and Evidence

Linked Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Learning, Sustainability; **EQ(s):** 2, 5, 6;

Linked Conclusions: Conclusion 5, 6; M&E and procedural flexibility must work together to enable adaptive management and responsive implementation.

Findings / Context: M&E frameworks were poorly integrated with GORTT systems and not designed for real-time learning. Indicators were rigid, often mismatched with national data, and rarely used for adaptation. There was no mechanism for procedural adjustments during delivery, particularly in absence of a mid-term review.

Management Response



Implementation of the Evaluation Recommendations

Title	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation -Trinidad and Tobago 2017-2021
Due date of Management Response	By or before June 11, 2025
Coordinator of Management Response	Ronald James, Economics Department
Submission for management Response	May 2, 2025
General comments on the evaluation (if any)	<p>Management welcomes the Office of Independent Evaluation's evaluation of the Country Strategy (CS) for Trinidad and Tobago 2017-2021, and the operationalisation of the country pipeline/programme through to 2024. The Bank welcomes the collaborative process adopted with the participation of Bank staff and members of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT). Management appreciates the extension to the due date of the Management Response from May 19, 2025, considering competing demands including the timely finalisation of Board papers for the Bank's Annual Meeting preparations.</p> <p>The evaluation presents a fair overall assessment that concludes that, while the strategy's intent and thematic focus was highly relevant reflecting strong strategic alignment and coherence with country and Bank priorities and responsiveness to contextual shifts during the pandemic, "institutional, procedural, and coordination challenges" limited the effective implementation of the strategy's project pipeline and, hence, the CS's contribution to meaningful development outcomes in Trinidad and Tobago. With a highly relevant strategy, underperformance of the country programme, with few approved and/or significantly delayed interventions backloaded during the cycle, pointed to challenges in the effective management of the country pipeline and portfolio, exacerbated by pandemic disruptions in the latter years. This is pointed to in the evaluation's findings: "CDB's internal systems did not consistently support efficient implementation", "impeded project approval processes and reduced the pace of uptake", "weak execution capacity in implementing agencies", "a lack of readiness at project approval" and "operational inefficiencies stalling of otherwise well-conceived projects". CS implementation could have benefited from enhanced portfolio management, but also efforts to "lock-in" political buy-in and momentum waned over time.</p> <p>Management broadly accepts the findings, insights and recommendations, having identified what can change and needs to be worked on to improve CS performance, noting the limitations of the evaluation spelt out in the report. This evaluation, like several recent CS evaluations that have spanned this period, has offered similar findings and recommendations. The evaluation perspectives, therefore, broadly align and are complimentary to initiatives already being pursued by the Bank and in-train to strengthen internal processes and procedures for greater development impact.</p> <p>Against a backdrop of persistent project implementation challenges and recognising the imperative for reform, management is actively implementing strategic, focused and adaptive approaches to enhance engagement with country and address operational bottlenecks. For Trinidad and Tobago specifically, to adopt approaches that will enhance political ownership and relevance and strengthen adaptive implementation, the Bank has committed to having an in-country presence during CS appraisal to allow for deeper and more continuous interaction with the new administration during the design phase. This, along with stepped-up efforts at pipeline management, programme/portfolio monitoring and evaluation through, <i>inter alia</i>, required mid-term country strategy reviews and the resumption of country portfolio reviews, coupled with ongoing efforts to strengthen evaluation and results orientation (of staff/ and in-country), aim to improve implementation performance through enhanced responsiveness and coordination on the ground.</p>

Evaluation recommendation #1 (*'the what'*)

Develop a focused and tailored Country Engagement Strategy (CES) with strong thematic anchoring: Focus next CES on 1-3 catalytic themes (for example: digital transformation, regional integration, Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise development) where the Bank's value proposition is strongest and national implementation capacity exists.

Lead entity (*'who' is responsible*)

Country team, led by the Economist (Economics Department), CS Coordinator

Participating partners (*'who else is responsible'*)

Projects Department, Country officials – Permanent Secretaries/Ministers, GOTT

Overall management response

or (*'if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected*)

- ☐ Accepted
☒ Partially Accepted
☐ Rejected

(*'how' – in 250 words or less to explain the management response*)

The Bank has adopted a country-centred approach to developing CSs with a strong thematic anchoring to country (and corporate) priorities, underpinned by analytical country work (through own-work and knowledge sharing), in-country dialogue and consultations, and a focus on outcomes-orientation and strengthened partnerships. This approach aligns the country's highest priorities with the Bank's comparative advantage (where its value proposition is strong), goals and mission focus which reinforce country ownership. This anchoring helps the Bank better prioritise its programme of assistance and reflects in the high relevance finding of most CS evaluations.

Borrowing member countries (BMCs) have large development needs. The Bank values flexibility in design where the identified themes (and number of themes) emerge from country consultation/ agreement, and not predetermined. A new CS for Trinidad is under design. The Bank has initiated country engagement, having recently concluded high-level discussions with the new administration with agreement to an adaptive approach that should bring focus and relevance.

The Bank accepts that a focused and tailored CS can serve to deliver more impactful results but not in the absence of parallel efforts by the Bank and BMCs to address the continued difficulties in approving and advancing the implementation of project pipelines.

Evaluation recommendation #1

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Support MPEAD ¹⁶ to develop an updated donor matrix and funding gap analysis, leading to a jointly developed roadmap identifying areas where the Bank will lead, complement or partner on initiatives—based on value-added, gaps, and thematic priorities across development partners.	<p>The CS framework and process employed by the Bank (Operational Policy and Procedures Manual [OPPM]), adopts a systematic approach for articulating a jointly developed roadmap that identifies where the Bank will lead, complement or partner based on country diagnostic work, the identification of development gaps, comparative advantage, and priorities, and gaps based on other development partner assistance. This suggested “line of action” is embedded as part of preparatory work required during the development of the</p> <p>CS Framework Paper—a technical diagnostic and analytical inception report that underpins and guides CS formulation—and the CS.</p> <p>The Bank’s country team will work closely with MPEAD in determining the priority themes and areas of focus for the next CS cycle. The Bank will also advocate active participation in Trinidad and Tobago’s Annual Development Partners’ Forum as a useful platform to help align CS with national planning efforts, while exploring other opportunities for joint programming and coordinated implementation, where feasible.</p>	Ongoing	Mid-2026

16 Formerly Ministry of Planning and Development, now Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (MPEAD).

Evaluation recommendation #2 *(‘the what’)*

Design and implement comprehensive strategic communications and advocacy: Create a deliberate communication and engagement strategy to position the CES as a nationally relevant tool, not just a technical document.

Lead entity *(‘who’ is responsible)*

Participating partners *(‘who else is responsible’)*

Department of Communication and Corporate Affairs/
Operations units

Line and executing Ministries, MPEAD

Overall management response

or *(‘if’ – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)*

(‘how’ - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

- ☐ Accepted
- ☒ Partially Accepted
- ☐ Rejected

Strategic country engagement is a key requirement for maintaining relevance, visibility, and uptake throughout the CS cycle, and for positioning the Bank’s work to be relevant and accepted as nationally and politically resonant tools that supports national development agendas. A CS on its own, however, will not necessarily deliver greatest visibility and development impact without effective means to advance pipeline implementation through robust, structured and timely pipeline engagement, management and project implementation.

Evaluation recommendation #2

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Develop strategic communications and advocacy plan (including tools like CES Briefing Notes for Cabinet, Ministry of Finance, Tobago House of Assembly, strategic dialogues such as ‘CDB Days’, co-advocacy platforms with development partners) to engage in national policy spaces and remove common implementation barriers.	<p>While the suggested tools have potential value, Management underscores the importance of a tailored, context-specific approach to communication. Engagement around the CS must be pragmatic and aligned with the CS’s purpose, role, and primary audience. As a strategic and operational framework, the CS is intended to guide the Bank’s collaboration with the Government and key implementation partners. Accordingly, the Bank should prioritise keeping these stakeholders, particularly line ministries and implementing agencies, well informed and engaged throughout the strategy cycle. In keeping with this, we note that in-country stakeholder engagement and consultation was actively pursued during the preparation of the past CS and included a presentation to the Cabinet in Tobago.</p> <p>A targeted stakeholder communications approach, incorporating direct and fit-for-purpose engagements such as quarterly and annual virtual briefings or updates. Combined with timely press releases and social media promotion, this approach will be more effective than broad-scale public campaigns. This should be embedded in the CS’s implementation schedule to provide continuous communication while supporting alignment and mutual accountability for results.</p> <p>For broader national visibility, the Bank currently publicises CSs across traditional and social media upon Board approval. In some instances, where appropriate and feasible, the Bank has undertaken structured in-country launches to which local media partitioners are invited. More importantly, however, the Bank sees significant opportunity for strategic communication centred on the tangible results of its investments in Trinidad and Tobago. Highlighting how these initiatives are grounded in the CS will reinforce the strategy’s relevance and demonstrate the Bank’s</p>		
Engage—as feasible—sector ministers in the Cabinet to ‘champion’ areas of focus of the CES.	The Bank engages closely with government stakeholders during project appraisal and design, project launch and implementation to secure visible support, and ensure project integration within annual budget cycles and sector policy agendas		Ongoing

Evaluation recommendation #3 ('the what')

Leverage regional knowledge and expertise as a country strategy delivery modality: Systematically integrate the Bank's regional knowledge assets and platforms into the design and delivery of Trinidad and Tobago's CES.

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)

Country team

Participating partners ('who else is responsible')

Operational departments and research unit

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)

- ☐ Accepted
- ☒ Partially Accepted
- ☐ Rejected

('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

The Bank currently leverages regional knowledge assets as a CS delivery modality. This practice is embedded through leveraging lessons learnt from strategy/project implementation across the Region and through knowledge sharing and development with expertise from several regional entities and other development partners involved in the regional space (the Inter-American Development Bank, for instance). The Bank's established research unit works collaboratively with regional research and non-research entities (University of the West Indies, Caribbean Community Secretariat, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, the Caribbean Economic Research Team) to produce knowledge products that aim to inform CS development and the Bank's overall development work. The staffing of this unit is ongoing, and the expected development of a country and regional policy-oriented research agenda will, over time, further strengthen this delivery modality..

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Incorporate regional knowledge and expertise into CES design and project documents, consider resources and functions available through the Bank's regional initiatives that may facilitate implementation (for example: Special Development Fund funding, procurement), create platform to showcase Trinidad and Tobago's innovations (for example: digital tools) across the region.	Regional knowledge, where appropriate, will be incorporated in CS design. The CS team will research/source relevant knowledge products to inform design.		Ongoing
Establish a medium-term knowledge sharing strategy and community of practice to share lessons and support peer learning – capitalising on the Bank's regional presence and network.	Relevant lessons learnt will inform CS design. The Bank's project supervision and completion reports document lessons learnt. These will be shared with relevant and appropriate country offices to support peer learning and with key stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago.		Ongoing

Evaluation recommendation #4 ('the what')

Institutionalise the use of staff with country knowledge: Prioritise staffing Trinidad and Tobago engagements with personnel familiar with the national system, including the nuances of dual governance and approval structures.

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)

Operations units, management

Participating partners ('who else is responsible')

Human Resources and Administration Department

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)

- ☐ Accepted
☒ Partially Accepted
☐ Rejected

('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

The Bank's country-centred approach in the delivery of its technical work across its 19 BMCs institutionalises the use of staff with country knowledge. Technical specialists are assigned specific country responsibility and will build country knowledge and capacity on their assigned countries over their tenure. In-country handovers, country surveillance missions, and project appraisal missions are some of the ways in which country knowledge and capacity is built. However, accumulating country knowledge will take time. Staff turnover and the inability to undertake country missions during the pandemic years created hurdles to effective onboarding, learning, and work continuity.

There are efforts ongoing to strengthen the institutionalisation of country knowledge/accelerate learning and flatten the learning curve of new staff to ensure smoother transfer of country and programme knowledge. To help institutionalise country knowledge, the structured use of OP365 to capture and store project information/issues should promote sustained institutional learning and responsiveness. Mentorship models (pairing new staff with more experienced staff) and plans to improve or introduce work guidelines are being introduced and strengthened as part of the onboarding process. The use of country team channels to centralise country sharing, learning, awareness, and discussion is helping to break down silos.

Evaluation recommendation #4

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Incorporate in the CES, guidelines and responsibilities for addressing staff turnover, including improved onboarding processes and materials to ensure continuity of the Bank's personnel capabilities for implementing the CES.	Continuity in country work, in the context of staff turnovers, is managed at the Department and Divisional levels, in conjunction with the Human Resources and Administration Department to source short-term specialist consultancy resources, as needed, and through staff replacements. Management does not agree, therefore, that guidelines and responsibilities for addressing staff turnover should be a permanent feature of a CS.		
Consistent and uniform use of OP365 to support developing institutional knowledge.	This is the Bank's objective. To that end, the Bank continues to provide OP365 Comprehensive Training in the use of OP365 for capital and technical assistance projects to all staff to deepen their understanding of OP365 and continues to streamline operations to foster greater process efficiency.		Ongoing
Establish a formal handover process including handover document and a country mission to introduce new Country Economist or other key staff.	This process is already in place within the Economics Department. In addition, detailed country folders and files with country documents serve as key knowledge stores for new members of staff. Introduction and courtesy call missions are standard features in the Department although these were disrupted by COVID. There is an opportunity, however, given the proposed update of the OPPM (hopefully to start in 2025) to formally document and reinforce this process in the updated OPPM.		
Assign "country champions" within the Bank who have deep experience in Trinidad and Tobago to provide technical continuity across CES cycles.	There are efforts ongoing, that are noted above, that are expected to help better institutionalise country knowledge and help sustain technical continuity, although given the often highly specialist functional areas in the Bank this knowledge may not easily be transferable to a single country champion and may not guarantee technical continuity with staff attrition.		
Institutionalise a mentorship model pairing experienced country staff with project teams to retain institutional memory and increase responsiveness.	This approach is practised across the Bank; there is opportunity to embed this practice within the Bank's operational procedures during the planned update of the OPPM. However, there are limits with this approach when the Bank experiences a high rate of staff turnover.		

Evaluation recommendation #5 ('the what')

Enhance procedural flexibility and institutionalise adaptive management: Transform monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and project appraisal procedures into dynamic, flexible tools aligned with GOTT systems and capable of supporting real-time decision making.

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)

Country Team Members, Operations Managers

Participating partners ('who else is responsible')

Strategy and Accountability Office

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)

- ☒ Accepted
☐ Partially Accepted
☐ Rejected

('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

CDB supports the adaptive strategy and delivery frameworks. The CS/Project Results Monitoring Frameworks (RMFs) will be developed jointly with MPEAD and other executing Ministries, incorporating flexible design features that allow course correction and real-time learning. Pilots of adaptive M&E practices will be pursued, and a mid-term review (MTR) is required as part of the Bank's operational procedures.

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action

Co-develop the CES RMF with MPEAD (National Transformation Unit, and Socio-Economic and Policy Planning Division), embed "adaptive windows" into appraisal processes to allow mid-course revisions, and pilot adaptive management features in select projects—including pause-and-reflect reviews and real-time progress tracking.

Suggested Actions to be Implemented

(to articulate how to implement the recommendations)

The Bank has clear M&E systems and understands that standard good practice requires the RMF be co-developed with country/executing agencies. Guidance to staff on good practices and procedures to follow, is continually being provided and reinforced through ongoing training facilitated by the Office of Strategy and Accountability, to ensure quality and accuracy.

The CS RMF will be kept under constant review and tracking by the CS Coordinator. A formal review is programmed for mid-cycle, with additional reviews coupled with country portfolio reviews conducted to facilitate and embed adaptive management and ensure the Bank remains responsive to shifts in country context, changing priorities and needs, operational challenges, and external shocks, while continuing to align with national development priorities and institutional objectives.

Timeline

Start Date End Date

Ongoing

Suggested lines of action			
Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
	<p>At the project and programme level, OP365 will be leveraged to enable real-time tracking of the CS programme that is under implementation by the CS Coordinator, with regular inputs from project coordinators. This will support timely performance monitoring, facilitate adaptive decision-making, and enhance overall implementation oversight. Discussions to further develop OP365 to incorporate CS workflow and strengthen the monitoring of links between project and strategy-level RMF data for monitoring progress to outcomes, have commenced.</p> <p>Embedding “adaptive windows” into appraisal processes to allow mid-course revisions is done in various ways. The appraisal process involves frequent country interactions that are typically documented and shared via aide-memoire or memoranda. In addition, an early draft of the appraisal report is usually shared with country, however, the timeframe for response is usually limited (two weeks or less) and fulsome responses are rarely received. Annual project supervision reports can facilitate reflection and progress tracking.</p>		Ongoing
Programme a MTR into the CES workplan/timeline.	The Bank values the relevance and importance of MTRs and is committed to their preparation to ensure the utility of the RMF amidst contextual changes. The Bank’s operational procedures require the preparation of a MTR for active CS. This will, therefore, be programmed into the workplan for Trinidad’s CS. Four such reviews were prepared in 2024 for CS under implementation in 2024.		Ongoing

Overall management response	
or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)	('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	<p>The Bank's country-centred approach in the delivery of its technical work across its 19 BMCs institutionalises the use of staff with country knowledge. Technical specialists are assigned specific country responsibility and will build country knowledge and capacity on their assigned countries over their tenure. In-country handovers, country surveillance missions, and project appraisal missions are some of the ways in which country knowledge and capacity is built. However, accumulating country knowledge will take time. Staff turnover and the inability to undertake country missions during the pandemic years created hurdles to effective onboarding, learning, and work continuity.</p> <p>There are efforts ongoing to strengthen the institutionalisation of country knowledge/accelerate learning and flatten the learning curve of new staff to ensure smoother transfer of country and programme knowledge. To help institutionalise country knowledge, the structured use of OP365 to capture and store project information/issues should promote sustained institutional learning and responsiveness. Mentorship models (pairing new staff with more experienced staff) and plans to improve or introduce work guidelines are being introduced and strengthened as part of the onboarding process. The use of country team channels to centralise country sharing, learning, awareness, and discussion is helping to break down silos.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially Accepted	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	

References

ECG Good Practice Standards (2012), ECG Book on Good Practice Standards, [Country Strategy | ECG](#)

Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE)
Trinidad and Tobago 2017–21



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