

**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and
Tobago**
Public Statement of the
Land Settlement Agency
In Compliance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of
The Freedom of Information Act 1999 (FOIA)

The Act gives members of the public:

- 1) A legal right for each person to access information held by the Public Authority;
- 2) A legal right for each person to have official information relating to himself/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading;
- 3) A legal right to obtain reasons for adverse decisions made regarding an applicant's request for information under the FOIA;
- 4) A legal right to complain to the Ombudsman and to apply to the High Court for Judicial Review to challenge adverse decisions made under the FOIA.

In accordance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act, 1999 (FOIA) the Public Authority is required by law to publish the following statements, which list the documents and information generally available to the public.

Section 7 Statements

Section 7 (1) (a) (i): Function and Structure of the Public Authority

Mission Statement: The Public Authority's mission is to empower the landless by the integration of established informal settlements on State lands and new planned settlements with the rest of the national community through investments in property rights, infrastructure, human development, sustainable land-use planning and shelter technology.

The Public Authority is a Body Corporate. The Public Authority commenced operations on June 1st 1999 in accordance with an Act of Parliament – The State Land (Regularisation of Tenure) Act 25 of 1998. It comprises a staff of **192** and is headed by a Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. The Public Authority is divided into seven responsibility centers as depicted in the following Organizational Chart.

Effect of Functions on Members of the Public

The Land Settlement Agency's (LSA) work directly impacts the Settlements Sector and indirectly impacts various other sectors including health and safety. Agency led land development and household investments in dwelling improvements also stimulate the construction industry thereby bolstering the economy and labour market. The quality of life in the country is impacted through greater equity in land ownership, better public health, stimulation of micro-enterprises, reduced crime and skills training among other things. The public has the opportunity to shape the Agency's policy and programmes through Settlement Councils, public exhibitions and ceremonies, as well as through ongoing community consultations.

Section 7 (1) (a) (ii): Categories of Documents in the Possession of the Public Authority

1. Files dealing with administrative support and general administrative documents for the operations of the Public Authority
2. Personnel files, which detail all staff appointments, job applications, job specifications, promotions, transfers, resignations, deaths, retirements, leave, vacation etc.
3. Files dealing with the accounting and financial management function of the Public Authority
4. Financial Records (cheques, vouchers, receipts, journals, etc)
5. Files dealing with matters relating to the procurement of supplies, services and equipment
6. Cabinet Documents
7. Maps / Charts / Photographs / Compact Discs / Diskettes / Abstracts / Tapes / Catalogues
8. News Releases, speeches originating in the Public Authority
9. Policy and Procedure Documents
10. Internal and external correspondence files
11. Customer files
12. Documents relating to strategic review of the Public Authority, Information Technology Strategy and Training Plans
13. Legislation and Legal Instruments
14. Legal Opinions and related matters
15. Files dealing with training – local and foreign and technical co-operations
16. Minutes / Agenda of Meetings
17. Files dealing with Circulars, memoranda, notices, bulletins etc.
18. Reports: Statistical, Annual / monthly / quarterly, Audit, Consultants' / Technical Corporate, Valuation, Accident etc.
19. Briefing Papers
20. Books, booklets, leaflets, pamphlets, brochures, posters, newspaper clippings
21. Files dealing with official functions, conferences and events hosted and attended by the Public Authority
22. Inventories
23. Periodicals and publications
24. Complaint / suggestion files

25. Registers / Certificates / Permits / Licenses etc.
26. Land-Use and Structure Plans
27. Planning Permissions to carry-out Development

Section 7 (1) (a) (iii): Material prepared for Publication or Inspection

The public may inspect and/or obtain copies of the following material between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on normal working days at:

Land Settlement Agency

44-46 South Quay

Port of Spain

Tel/Fax No. 627-8420

Email: lsa@tstt.net.tt

- ◆ Act No. 25 of 1998 - September 1998
- ◆ A Preliminary Proposal for Inclusion of the Land Settlement Agency of The Ministry of Housing in the European Community-Funded Poverty Alleviation Programme - July 1999
- ◆ Land Settlement Agency - Report on Achievements June - September 1999 - October 1999
- ◆ Land Settlement Agency - An Information Package - March 2000
- ◆ Assessment of State Agencies with Responsibilities for Lands and Other Real Properties: The Land Settlement Agency - April 2000
- ◆ La Savanne Structure Plan - April 2000
- ◆ Carlsen Field Structure Plan - April 2000
- ◆ River Estate / Bagatelle Diego Martin Structure Plan - May 2000
- ◆ Demerara Road Community – Site Development Review and Proposed Land-Use Plan - June 2000
- ◆ La Phillipine Structure Plan - June 2000
- ◆ Report of the Trinidad & Tobago Delegation on its Participation at the Ninth Meeting of Ministers and Higher Authorities of Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI) Conference - January 2001
- ◆ Report of the Trinidad & Tobago Delegation on its Participation in the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN/ECLAC) and HABITAT - January 2001
- ◆ Executive Brief on the LSA - January 2001
- ◆ A Statement On The Ability Of The Land Settlement Agency (LSA) To Deliver Public Goods In A Timely Fashion - February 2001
- ◆ A Statement of the Objective of the LSA for the Fiscal Year 2000-2001 - February 2001
- ◆ Proposals for Minimizing Residential Breaches on State Lands – A Statement for the Honourable Minister of Housing and Settlements - February 2001.

Videos:

- a) Land Settlement Agency Strategic Planning Workshop - September 1999
- b) Reaching New Horizons
- c) Discovering the Future
- d) The Ministry of Housing - Business Feature 2
- e) Certificate of Comfort:
 - Information Division Promotion
 - Community Dateline Promotion
 - T&T This Morning Promotion
- f) Shelter for All – The Indian Experience
- g) T&T This Morning (Squatter Regularisation Promotion) - July 19, 2000

Section 7 (1) (a) (iv): Literature Available by Subscription

This Section is not applicable at this time.

Section 7 (1) (a) (v): Procedure to be followed when accessing a document from the Public Authority

How to Request Information:

➤ *General Procedure*

Our policy is to answer all requests, both oral and written, for information. However, in order to have the rights given to you by the FOIA (for example the right to challenge a decision if your request for information is refused), you must make your request in writing. The applicant must, therefore, complete the appropriate form (Request for Access to Official Documents) available in any Public Authority in order to access information that is not readily available in the public domain.

➤ *Addressing Requests*

To expedite the processing of your request, please address it to the Designated Officer of the Public Authority (see Section 7 (1) (a) (vi)).

➤ *Details in the Request*

Applicants should provide details that will allow for ready identification and location of the records that are being requested. If insufficient information is provided clarification will be sought from the applicant. If you are not sure how to write your request or what details to include, communicate with our Designated Officer.

Requests not handled under the FOIA

- A request under the FOIA will not be processed to the extent that it asks for information, which is currently available in the public domain, either from this public authority or from another public authority, for example brochures and pamphlets etc.

Responding to your Request

➤ Retrieving Documents

The Public Authority is required to furnish copies of documents only when they are in our possession or we can retrieve them from storage. Information stored in the

National Archives or another storage center, will be retrieved in order to process your request.

➤ Furnishing Documents

Subject to some exception, as indicated in the FOIA, an applicant is entitled to copies of information we have in our possession, custody or power. We are required to furnish only one copy of a document. If we cannot make a legible copy of a document to be released, we may not attempt to reconstruct it. Instead, we will furnish the best copy possible and note its quality in our reply.

Please note we are not compelled to do the following:

- (a) Create new documents. For example, we are not required to write a new program so that a computer will print information in the format you prefer.
- (b) Perform research for you.

Time Limits

➤ *General*

The FOIA sets certain time limits for us to decide whether to disclose the documents you have requested. If we fail to meet the deadlines, the FOIA gives you the right to proceed as if your request has been denied. We will try diligently to comply with the time limits, but if it appears that processing your request may take longer than the statutory limit, we will acknowledge your request and advise you of its status. Since there is a possibility that requests may be misaddressed or misrouted, you may wish to call or write to confirm that we have received the request and to ascertain its status.

➤ *Time Allowed*

We will determine whether to grant your request for access to information as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days as required by Section 15 of the FOIA. If a decision is taken to grant access to the information requested, you will be permitted to inspect the documents or be provided with copies, if you so request.

➤ *Fees and Refunds*

The Freedom of Information Fees and Charges Regulations prescribe the fees incurred in making documents available. You are entitled to receive the document/s within seven days of payment of the relevant fee. If we fail to provide the information within the seven days period you are entitled to a refund of the fees paid in addition to access to the document/s requested.

Section 7 (1) (a) (vi): Officers in the Public Authority responsible for:

- 1) The initial receipt of an action upon notices under section 10,**
- 2) Requests for access to documents under section 13 and**
- 3) Applications for corrections of Personal Documents under section 36 of the FOIA**

The Designated Officer is:

Job Title Corporate Secretary
Name Neil Bhagan
Address (work) Land Settlement Agency
44-46 South Quay
Port of Spain
Tel/Fax Nos. 627-8420 / 627-4489
E-mail address lsa@tstt.net.tt

The Alternate Officer is:

Job Title Senior Operations Analyst
Name Muriel Lezama
Address (work) Land Settlement Agency
44-46 South Quay
Port of Spain
Tel/Fax Nos. 627-8420 / 627-4489
E-mail address lsa@tstt.net.tt

**Section 7 (1) (a) (vii): Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees and other bodies
(Where Meetings / Minutes are open to the public):**

- Tenders Committee Meetings
- LSA's Staff Meetings

Section 7 (1) (a) (viii): Library Reading Room Facilities

Information in the public domain can be accessed in our Research, Development and Communication Unit.

You may make general enquiries to the Unit's Executive Secretary at telephone number 627-8420.

The Reading Room in the Public Authority is located on the 1st Floor.

The Reading Room is open to the public from Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Policy of the Public Authority for provision of copies of documents held in the public domain.

- Charge for Photocopies is twenty-five cents per page, however, if you provide suitable paper, fifteen cents per page will be charged. Other charges for maps etc depend on the cost of reproduction.
- Certain provision of documents may be subject to a small charge to cover administrative costs.

- No smoking, eating or drinking is allowed in the Reading Room.

Section 8 Statements

Section 8 (1) (a) (1): Documents containing interpretations or particulars of written laws or schemes administered by the Public Authority, not being particulars contained in another written law.

The following Legal Notices can be purchased at the Government Printery.

1. Legal Notice No. 151 – Application for a Certificate of Comfort (Form A) and Declaration to Support Application for a Certificate of Comfort (Form B) – 5th August 1999
2. Legal Notice No. 198 – The State Land (Regularization of Tenure Act), 1998 – 14th October 1999 – (Delegation of Power) Order 1999
3. Legal Notice No. 36 – The State Land (Regularization of Tenure) (Certificate of Comfort) Regulations, 2000 – 14th February 2000
4. Legal Notice No. 134 – Application for a Certificate of Comfort (Form A1) – 20th June 2000
5. Legal Notice No.135 – Declaration to Support Application for a Certificate of Comfort (Form B1) – 20th June 2000.

Section 9 Statements

Section 9 (1) (a)

The following reports / statements contain the advice and/or recommendations established within the Public Authority:

Title	Author	Year
Squatting and Public Policy in Trinidad	Research, Development and Communication Unit	March 2001
Policy for sourcing Caroni (1975) Limited and Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited Lands by the Ministry of Housing in its Squatter Upgrade and Greenfield Sites (Land Settlement Area) Programmes	Chairman - Land Settlement Agency	April 2001
The Conceptual Framework of the LSA	Research, Development and	July 2001

	Communication Unit	
A Plan to Process 23,000 Certificate of Comfort Applications by December 2004	Research, Development and Communication Unit	September 2001
Harmony Hall Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
La Paille Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
La Platta (KP Lands) Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Malick Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Rice Mill Road Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Southern Gardens Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Wallerfield Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Sea Trace (South) East Structure Plan	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Policy Statement on Land-Use Planning for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements: The Local-Centric Mode	Settlements Planning and Land Surveying Unit	December 2001
Profiles of Applicants for Vacant Lots in North-East, South-East & South-West Trinidad	Research, Development and Communication Unit	January 2002
Allocations Policy for Vacant Residential Lots	Research, Development and Communication Unit	February 2002

Section 9 (1) (b)

At this time, we have no report or statements containing advice or recommendations * (1) of a body or entity established outside the public authority by or under a written law, * (2) or by a Minister of Government or other public authority for the purpose of submitting a report or reports, providing advice or making recommendations to the public authority or to the responsible Minister of that public authority.

Section 9 (1) (c)

The following report contains the advice/recommendations of an inter-departmental Committee whose membership includes an officer of the public authority.

Title	Author	Year
Report of the Committee established to make proposals to contain Squatting on State Lands after January 1 st 1998	Committee headed by Ms. Shireen Ali - Manager Legal Services Unit, Land Settlement Agency	June 2001

Section 9 (1) (d)

At this time we have no report or statement containing the advice or recommendations, of a committee established within the public authority to submit a report, provide advice or make recommendations to the responsible Minister of that public authority or to another officer of the public authority who is not a member of the committee.

Section 9 (1) (e)

At this time we have no report prepared for the public authority by a scientific or technical expert employed within the public authority.

Section 9 (1) (f)

At this time we have no report prepared for the public authority by a consultant.

Section 9 (1) (g)

At this time we have no report prepared within the public authority containing the results of studies, surveys or tests carried out for the purpose of assessing, or making recommendations on, the feasibility of establishing a new or proposed Government policy, programme or project.

Section 9 (1) (h)

The following reports relate to the performance and efficiency of the public authority:

Title	Author	Year
Squatter Regularization and the Environment	Research, Development and Communication Unit	April 2001
Monitoring the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda in Caricom – Trinidad & Tobago’s Progress	Research, Development and Communication Unit	May 2001
Trinidad & Tobago Country Report for the United Nations Habitat Conference	Research, Development and Communication Unit and Others	May 2001
Institutional Reform in Facilitating Shelter for the Landless - The Ongoing Experience of Trinidad	Research, Development and Communication Unit	June 2001
Report to Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State	Corporate Secretary and Research, Development and	July 2001

Enterprises	Communication Unit	
Input / Output Analysis of Developmental Activity of the Land Settlement Agency	Research, Development and Communication Unit	September 2001

Section 9 (1) (i)

At this time we have no report containing *(1) final plans or proposals for the re-organization of the functions of the public authority, *(2) the establishment of a new policy, programme or project to be administered by the public authority, or * (3) the alteration of an existing policy programme or project administered by the public authority, whether or not the plans or proposals are subject to approval by an officer of the public authority, another public authority, the responsible Minister of the public authority or Cabinet.

Section 9 (1) (j)

At this time we have no statement prepared within the public authority and containing policy directions for the drafting of legislation.

Section 9 (1) (k)

At this time we have no report of a test carried out within the public authority on a product for the purpose of purchasing equipment.

Section 9 (1) (l)

At this time we have no environmental impact statement prepared within the public authority.

Section 9 (1) (m)

At this time we have no valuation report prepared for the public authority by a valuator.

LAND SETTLEMENT AGENCY

**HONOURABLE
MINISTER OF HOUSING**

**LAND SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE /
BOARD**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

*Support staff 7
Positions filled 4
Vacant positions 3*

Positions filled	147
Month to Month employees	31
Vacant positions	47
Managers	7
Total	232

