

# National Trust of Trinidad & Tobago Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030



Joanna Woodroffe-King

June 2024

## Foreword/Message from Chairperson

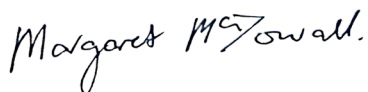
*The strategic plan that was approved by the Council and Members for the 2019-2023 period, was prepared by the end of 2018. What a different world we are living in in 2024! The preparation for the new strategic plan began in 2023 with three retreats involving both Council Members and staff.*

*The discussions that we had at that time concluded that firstly we were going to try for a longer window of implementation that would seek to align the National Trust with the National Planning cycle as outlined in the 2030 Vision. Secondly, we would review the former plan and determine what strategies were still relevant for this time especially as the worldwide pandemic prevented many of our Goals from being achieved. Thirdly, we wanted to separate the strategic from the operational and get a general agreement on the goals, strategies and outcomes that we envisaged before moving on to the operational plan, which, with the Organisational chart, would be presented again to the members, and then be presented to the Ministry and Minister to lay before Cabinet. This step is important if the National Trust is to expect any financial support from the Ministry in the future.*

*In Fiscal 2024, the NTTT was provided with some funding to engage a consultant to assist us in preparing the Strategic Plan. The person that was hired is Mrs. Joanna Woodroffe-King. A small group comprising the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and the Business Development Coordinator/Acting CEO met with Mrs. King and went through the results of those retreats as a way of introduction. After a review of the former Strategic Plan and a look at our Act and our website, Mrs. King conducted a series of interviews with a selected number of Council and staff members and contacted persons from other National Trust organisations. A small committee of Council members was formed to work with Mrs. King to begin to respond to her observations, comments and recommendations.*

*The result is this draft of the planned strategic direction for 2025- 2030. There are some strategies, goals and objectives that were in the previous plan, but we have identified Five Strategic Outcomes that we want to bring to the full membership for consideration. We trust that you will go through this document and make your comments by the **13<sup>th</sup> December 2024**, or before so that we can commence working on amendments and complete the operational part to submit before the next regular General Meeting or a special General Meeting.*

*Thank you, Members for your interest and feedback*



Margaret McDowall

Chairman

26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

# National Trust Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030

## Message from the Chairperson

Introduction.....	4
The National Trust of Trinidad & Tobago .....	5
<b>Vision, Mission, Core Values</b> .....	5
Legislative, Regulatory & Policy Environment .....	6
United Nations Conventions and SDGs .....	6
National Trust Act: Fulfilling the Mandate.....	7
<b>Vision 2030 National Development Strategy</b> .....	8
Heritage Environment.....	10
Stakeholder Perspectives.....	10
Regional Trusts’ Perspective.....	10
Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030 .....	11
Strategic Plan at a Glance .....	11
Strategic Priority #1 Viability & Self-Sustainability .....	11
Strategic Priority #2 Visibility, Impact & Credibility .....	11
Strategic Priority #3 Enabling Environment.....	12
Strategic Priority #4 Supportive Regulatory Framework.....	12
Strategic Priority #5 Awareness, Knowledge & Capacity Building.....	13
Implementation .....	14
Outcomes .....	14
Counting The Cost .....	20
Impact & Performance Metrics .....	20
Conclusion .....	21
Appendices .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

## **Introduction**

The National Trust of Trinidad & Tobago (NTTT) is the organisation with the primary responsibility for safeguarding the natural and built heritage of Trinidad & Tobago. Achieving this mandate is no simple task, and the Trust's effectiveness and viability into the future requires a focused strategic direction supported by a well-articulated Strategic Plan, which is consistent with its Vision and Mission.

# **The National Trust of Trinidad & Tobago**

## **Vision, Mission, Core Values**

### **We are Committed to Heritage Preservation**

Our Heritage is worth safeguarding and protecting for generations to come!

### **We are Inclusive**

Heritage is for Everyone, and needs Everyone! We welcome everyone to access the benefits Heritage has to offer.

### **We are Advocates**

We are Heritage's Voice and Defender! We speak for Heritage, who cannot speak for itself, and tirelessly seek its interest. Always.

### **We develop strong Partnerships**

We all have a role to play, and so are committed to understanding what everyone brings to form effective and strategic relationships around our common mission: Heritage preservation.

## Legislative, Regulatory & Policy Environment

In developing our Strategic Plan, we are guided by Heritage's legislative, regulatory and policy environment.

### United Nations Conventions and SDGs

Our role in effectively managing and preserving our Heritage helps support the GoRTT in fulfilling Trinidad & Tobago's obligations as a member state of the United Nations. Trinidad & Tobago has adopted a stance of strong support of UN Conventions and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as demonstrated by its ratification of UN Conventions and the Nation's engagement with the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF).

Our strategy for managing and preserving our Heritage is directly in alignment with the global framework for heritage preservation. In developing our Strategic Plan and its supporting activities, we have considered several United Nations Conventions and Sustainable Development Goals that have a strong connection to Heritage:

- 1 The World Heritage Convention (1972)**, which focuses on ensuring the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites of outstanding universal value.
- 2 The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)**, which looks at preserving living cultural practices like oral traditions, the performing arts and traditional craft.
- 3 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)**, that protects against the unlawful removal and exportation of cultural property.
- 4 Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention (2001)**, which seeks to safeguard underwater heritage assets like submarine archaeological sites or shipwrecks.

Further, relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals and heritage preservation and management shows the important role our work plays in aiding sustainable development. Some of the SDGs that our initiatives can impact are listed below:

- 1 SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – incorporating heritage preservation into urban planning and communities**
- 2 SDG 1: No Poverty** – helping to eradicate poverty through job creation and business development in the heritage sector
- 3 SDG 4: Quality Education** – through sensitisation, school curriculum development and promoting awareness

- 4 **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** – heritage can stimulate economic growth through tourism
- 5 **SDG 13: Climate Action** – developing or preserving heritage sites using sustainable practices
- 6 **SDG 15: Life on Land** – protecting heritage landscapes and ecosystems
- 7 **SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** – promoting unity and diversity in communities through the promotion of cultural practices
- 8 **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals** – collaborating with government, communities and national and international organisations to pursue heritage initiatives

### National Trust Act: Fulfilling the Mandate

The National Trust Act is the basis for our existence and outlines our mandate.

The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago Act Chap. 40:53 described the Trust as a ‘charitable institution of a public character’ with specific duties and responsibilities. The Act is both a blessing and curse for the Trust, as while the Act legitimises its existence and provides a guide for what activities the Trust should be engaged in, it also provides restrictions on how the Trust can operate and does not provide sufficient enforcement powers or accountability structures to support its duties.

Our main responsibilities as outlined by the Act are as follows:

- *Listing and acquiring such property of interest as the Trust considers appropriate.*
- *Permanently preserving lands that are property of interest and as far as practicable, retaining their natural features and conserving the animal and plant life.*
- *Preserving, maintaining, repairing and servicing or, arranging for the preservation of property of interest other than land and where such property of interest comprises buildings, augmenting the amenities of such buildings and their surroundings.*
- *Making provision for the access to and enjoyment of property of interest by the public.*
- *Encouraging research into properties of interest including, where applicable, animal, plant or marine life.*
- *Compiling photographic or architectural records of property of interest.*
- *Making the public aware of the value and beauty of the heritage of Trinidad and Tobago.*
- *Advising the Government on the conservation and preservation of properties of interest and related matters.*



## Vision 2030 National Development Strategy

Our Strategic Priorities are geared to support the GoRTT's strategic agenda, as expressed in its Vision 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS). The Vision 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016 to 2030 seeks to address several challenges facing Trinidad & Tobago.

We have a role to play in contributing to addressing some of challenges<sup>1</sup> to national development that were highlighted, namely:

- Expanding Exports and Increasing Foreign Exchange Earnings and Employment;
- Transforming the existing economic growth model into one that is environmentally friendly while addressing climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience to its adverse impacts.
- Protecting and sustainably using our environmental resources.

The National Development Strategy provides five Thematic Areas<sup>2</sup> for national development. We are poised to contribute to Themes I and V:

- **THEME I:** Putting People First: Nurturing Our Greatest Asset
- **THEME V:** Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development

Trinidad & Tobago is underperforming in the achievement of its National Development Strategy and one of the causes identified in the NDS lies with the Values, Attitudes and Behaviours (VABs) of our people. Further, the NDS identifies *Nurture citizens who are more creative, innovative and entrepreneurial, beginning with investment in education; and Engender greater care for the environment* as one of five key transformations required to address this. This strongly resonates with our Vision and Mission. Further, our goals, objectives and strategies outlined in our Strategic Plan directly respond to the GoRTT's call for transformation:

*“An urgent call is made to all relevant implementing agencies to commence activities to effect the transformations direly needed....the NDS calls on all segments of society to play its role in our country's development. Key stakeholders include the Private and Public Sectors and Civil Society, including labour, citizens, our international development partners and the diaspora”.*<sup>3</sup>

In developing our strategies, we will also consider whether, as is likely, the challenges identified by the NDS also impact or inform their execution. For example, do the Nation's

<sup>1</sup> Vision 2030 National Development Strategy 2016 - 2030, Introduction 05-06

<sup>2</sup> Vision 2030 National Development Strategy 2016 to 2030, Envisioning the Future 43-44

<sup>3</sup> Vision 2030 National Development Strategy 2016 - 2030, Executive Summary 03-04



VABs present any challenges for implementation? How can we contribute to reversing non-progressive cultural attitudes and behaviours?

Managing a diverse society is another challenge put forward by the NDS that must be addressed. A diverse society is a double-edged sword, as while it provides a rich heritage, it may also mean divergent views on what aspects of national heritage are worth preserving, where more attention may be paid to heritage associated with the history of one ethnic group at the expense of the other. As the National Trust, we will ensure there is no bias in that regard or be taken off course by any group's agenda.

The strategic plan is being formulated in a national context of increased interest in diversifying our economy due to the decline of the Energy Sector. Surely there is no better time to pay greater attention to the gold mine of other resources that can be leveraged for economic development.

## **Heritage Environment**

### **Stakeholder Perspectives**

### **Regional Trusts' Perspective**

## Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030

Our Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030 charts a course that ensures our sustainability and success. While the Plan covers a six-year period, this Plan contains the building blocks to take us into the distant future. The Plan builds strongly on momentum we have gained and brings us closer to achieving our long-term Strategic Objectives. Our Plan is bold and ambitious, but realistic and achievable, by carefully considering and balancing our sometimes-competing priorities.

The work we do is critical to our development as a Nation and as a people. Our five Strategic Priorities speak directly to our intent to continue to fulfil our mandate and ensure our Viability, Visibility, Effectiveness and Credibility for many years to come.

### Strategic Plan at a Glance

#### Strategic Priority #1 Viability & Self-Sustainability

**We will leverage income-generating opportunities for heritage in the different coloured economies, and ensure the more effective harnessing of economic activities and benefits that can be derived from the preservation, management, and promotion of TT'S heritage assets.**

Our Nation's Heritage has vast, and largely untapped potential to boost our economy through the creation of employment opportunities, developing new skills in our workforce, and contributing to the influx of foreign exchange by attracting visitors to our twin island. The development of a wider range of income-generating opportunities from the work we conduct, and assets we manage will also provide additional income streams, that will provide the financial means to look after our heritage, and reduce the financial burden shouldered by the government mainly through subventions.

#### Strategic Priority #2 Visibility, Impact & Credibility

**We are, and must be seen as, heritage's strongest defender.**

By raising awareness and giving voice and greater sensitisation to heritage issues we ensure that all heritage-related actions or decisions are in its best interests.

While we have made many strides, we know that we still have far to go in the spread and extent of our impact. Our membership base is still smaller, narrower and less active than we would like it to be. Further, low levels of national and international awareness of the work and services we offer still hamper our ability to ensure widespread awareness, safeguarding, treasuring and ownership of TT heritage at home and abroad.

**We intend to place ourselves at the forefront of this movement and become synonymous with heritage in the hearts and minds of all.**

Managing and safeguarding our heritage is a collaborative effort, involving an extensive network of individuals, communities and agencies. It is important that we all work together, pooling our resources to have maximised and coordinated impact. The national heritage space is currently under-regulated with poor communication, accountability and cooperation amongst related organisations. This lack of coordination means redundancies, a lack of recognition of our role as a supervisory and regulatory body and ultimately leaves the Nation's heritage vulnerable to mishandling and destruction.

**We will proactively seek out and strengthen relationships with similar and complementary agencies or groups, and facilitate communication, accountability and cooperation.**

Acquiring our headquarters at Mille Fleurs, while a significant milestone, was only the first step towards establishing a strong presence for the heritage of Trinidad & Tobago.

**We will create virtual and physical spaces that people of all ages and locations can access to view, explore, handle or learn about our heritage through virtual or physical museums, sites or online resources.**

### **Strategic Priority #3 Enabling Environment**

We are growing as a Trust and expanding the scale of our work and responsibilities. As we expand the scale of our operations, we will ensure we have the internal capacity to provide a solid base for all our activities.

**As a well-managed, well-equipped organisation with all the policies, procedures and systems to ensure our operational efficiency, we continue to make our mark in the heritage sector.**

At the Trust, we are committed to being an employer of choice. Our staff are engaged, motivated and completely committed to our vision, mission and mandate.

**Our organisational culture is one that promotes teamwork and mutual support, where staff rally around each other to accomplish the team's goals.**

We empower our staff by ensuring they are provided the resources, equipping and enabling environment they need to do their best. The Trust still has a small staff, and gaps in some required areas of expertise.

**We will place a high priority on attracting and retaining the talent that we need to take us to the next level as an organisation, and to effectively accomplish all of our strategic priorities.**

### **Strategic Priority #4 Supportive Regulatory Framework**

Public Service law guides on the relationships and co-dependencies of the Trust and provides both opportunities and limitations on our span of operations. We have already begun the process of critically examining our legislative environment to put forward pieces of legislation that need to be developed or strengthened to allow us as a Trust to fulfil our mandate more effectively. While the National Trust Act is the legislation that has the most obvious connection to the Trust, there are several other pieces of legislation that impact and guide our operations.

**We will lobby for the development of a legislative framework that is fully supportive of our mandate.**

### **Strategic Priority #5 Awareness, Knowledge & Capacity Building**

We recognise that expert advice, monitoring and regulating TT's national heritage is critical. Often, the mismanagement of our heritage is due to ignorance and lack of technical 'know-how' in the field. Therefore, we are focusing on more strongly positioning ourselves as the champion and watchdog of heritage matters in the country.

**We must be clearly recognised by all as the teacher, driver and setter of policy and standards where heritage preservation and management are concerned.**

The heritage sector calls for a wide range of knowledge and skills, across many professions and disciplines from architects, to masons, historians to project managers, tour guides to museum curators.

**We will meaningfully contribute to the boosting of the skills capacity in the heritage sector by developing meaningful partnerships with local and international experts including universities.**

## Implementation

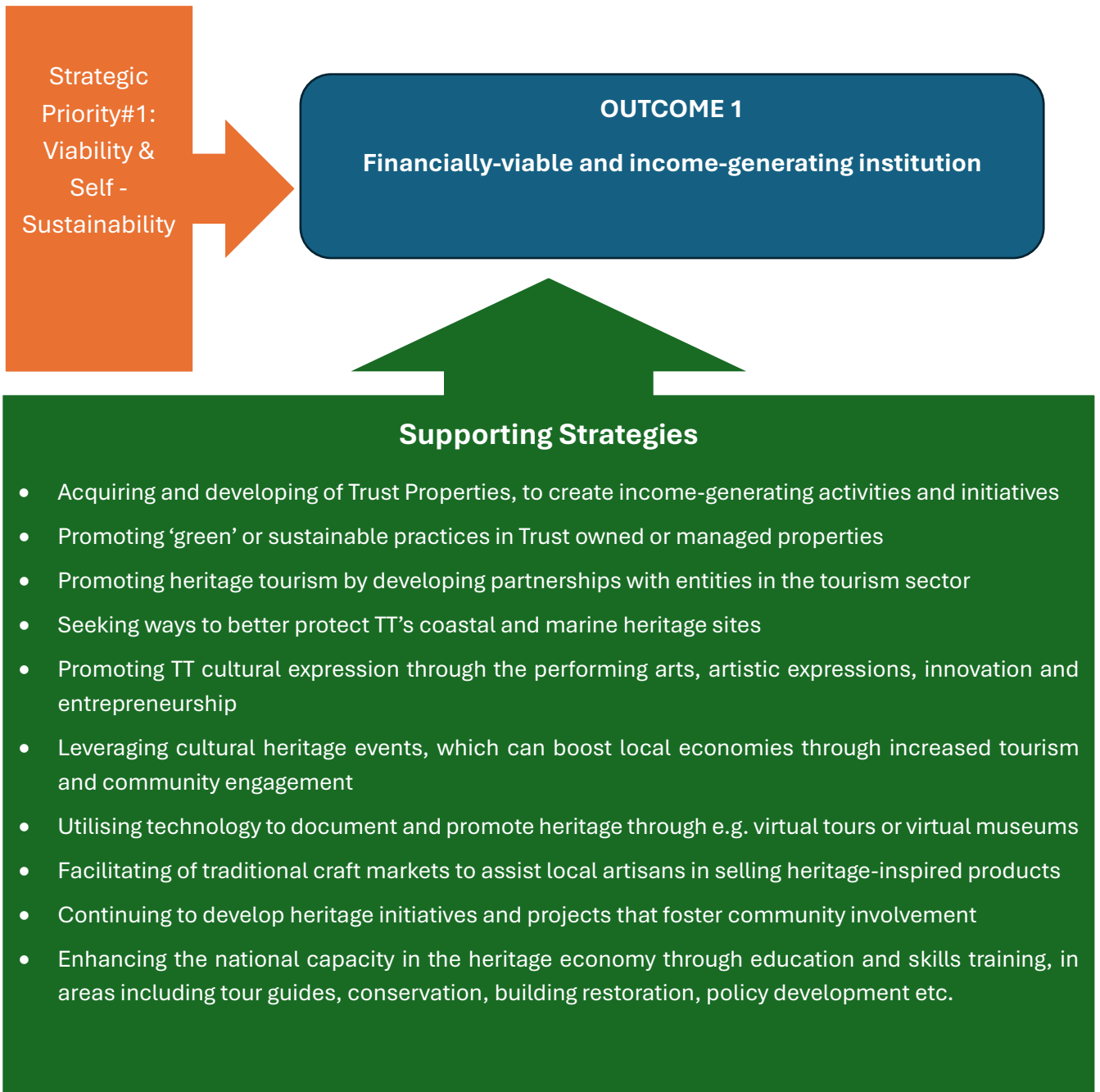
Our five Strategic Priorities are expressed through ten outcomes, which are supported by several strategies and initiatives. We will carefully track the success of our Strategic Priorities through the realisation of these ten outcomes by developing targets, key performance indicators and timeframes for each of the supporting activities.

### Outcomes

Our ten Outcomes are listed below:

- 1 A Financially viable and income generating institution to support the heritage economy**
- 2 NTTT Recognised nationally and internationally as the authority and primary agency for consultation, advice and advocate for T&T heritage**
- 3 Household name, recognised internationally and known by all demographics in T&T and its diaspora**
- 4 Effective national, regional and international sectoral networks, partnerships, synergies and collaborations**
- 5 A 'tangible' virtual and physical presence for heritage in TT**
- 6 Have robust internal systems, structures and procedures**
- 7 Supportive legislative environment that enables and empowers the Trust to fulfil its goals and objectives**
- 8 Organisation where people are excited to come to work and are present and engaged**
- 9 Full staff complement with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to achieve the Trust's goals and objectives**
- 10 Effective Training, Education and Development Initiatives to build knowledge and capacity in heritage sector**

Our ten outcomes are grouped under our five Strategic Priorities as follows. Supporting strategies that may be employed to achieve outcomes are also shown below:





Strategic  
Priority#2:  
Visibility,  
Impact &  
Credibility

### OUTCOME 3

Household name, recognised internationally and known by all demographics in T&T and its diaspora

### OUTCOME 4

Effective national, regional and international sectoral networks, partnerships, synergies and collaborations

### OUTCOME 5

Have a 'tangible' virtual and physical presence for heritage in TT

## Supporting Strategies

- Actively wooing the diaspora by developing targeted marketing and outreach initiatives abroad
- Enhancing existing membership services and communication systems
- Conducting an analysis of our existing membership base and actively and strategically targeting underrepresented demographical groups
- Establishing a stronger presence in the regional and international heritage sector including seeking full membership in INTO
- Putting T&T on the global heritage map by pursuing world heritage recognition for selected T&T heritage sites
- Driving heritage tourism by promoting heritage attractions, activities and events that attract visitors
- Boosting the visibility of listed heritage sites to promote awareness and encourage visitor traffic to sites
- Working with relevant agencies to develop, collect and track heritage metrics that will enhance the ability to monitor the management and development of TT's heritage sector
- Formalising relationships or partnerships with relevant individuals or entities by pursuing official agreements in the form of MOUs or TOEs to drive our heritage priorities
- Spearheading the reactivation of a Caribbean National Trust by establishing contact and building relationships with, other regional Trusts
- Constructing or acquiring physical premises to act as museums, resource centres or storage facilities for heritage artefacts
- Developing and expanding websites, online resources and social media platforms to create an extensive virtual world for heritage

Strategic  
Priority#3:  
Enabling  
Environment

#### OUTCOME 6

Have robust internal systems, structures and procedures

#### OUTCOME 8

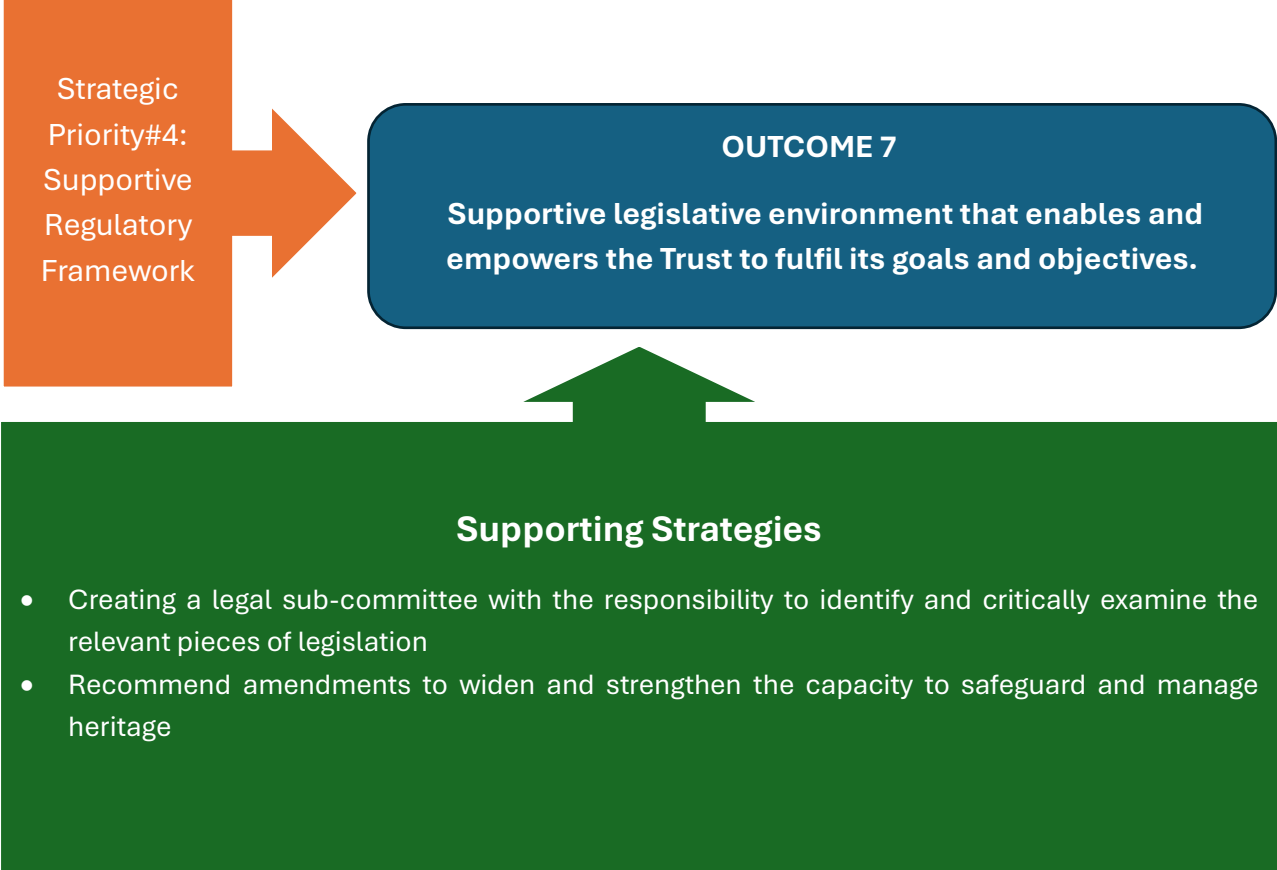
Organisation where people are excited to come to work  
and are present and engaged

#### OUTCOME 9

Full staff complement with the requisite knowledge,  
skills, attitudes and behaviours required to achieve the  
Trust's goals and objectives

### Supporting Strategies

- Implementing systems that allow for the monitoring of individual and organisational performance
- Creating programmes to ensure induction, training and development of our staff
- Developing or enhancing our internal organisational policies and procedures to manage and clearly define our staff, operations and activities and to ensure alignment with industry and legal requirements
- Strengthening our IT infrastructure and capacity, including implementing the Digital Transformation PSIP
- Build strong teams through effective recruitment, selection, training, development and acculturation
- Developing effective induction and training programmes
- Designing programmes and initiatives that instil desired organisational culture
- Providing an enabling environment including comfortable work premises, tools and equipment to enable and motivate high performance
- Devising communication, accountability and recognition systems that ensure staff are heard and acknowledged for the contributions they make
- Building strong teams through effective recruitment, selection, training and development initiatives
- Creating attractive and competitive employment opportunities, remuneration and benefit packages
- Developing & Implementing a strategic human resources plan to ensure HR systems, structures and capacity can support our goals and objectives





### Supporting Strategies

- Ensuring heritage issues are publicised and defended in the public domain
- Building partnerships and establishing MOUs with stakeholders and related agencies to encourage them to consult with the Trust in any activities that impact heritage
- Building heritage capacity by mobilising experts and volunteers to actively contribute to heritage development in the country
- Spearheading education and sensitisation campaigns to build knowledge and awareness not only of heritage but the role played by the Trust in its preservation
- Encouraging communication from, and cooperation with, the public to report any areas of heritage concern to the Trust for immediate action
- Developing a stronger and more articulated stance on climate change and the environment, as it impacts T&T's heritage
- Promoting heritage education in our schools by developing learning material and educational opportunities for youth
- Creating manuals and publications to provide 'how to' guidance and information on relevant topics
- Offering training programmes to professionals in the heritage sector to enhance their skills
- Attending international conferences and training programmes to network with sector leaders and share knowledge and best practice
- Conducting or facilitating research into heritage matters and concerns to build the body of knowledge

## Counting The Cost

As we implement our Strategic Plan, we will be constantly considering the required human, financial and other resources. By developing a tally of the human and financial resources required to support the Plan, areas of resource deficit, overuse or duplication can be easily identified, and activities that support the most important outcomes can be given priority. This will avoid a scattershot approach, where many activities are embarked on, but are only achieved to a limited extent or scale.

Resourcing the strategic objectives will be an iterative process that will take place throughout the lifespan of the planning period, as we take steps to ensure that we have sufficient human and other resources to execute each successive phase of the Plan.

## Impact & Performance Metrics

### Assessing the Impact, Measuring Performance

Developing measurable standards against which the success of strategies can be measured and monitored is necessary for assessing and tracking the true impact, and degree of completion of the Plan. As far as is practicable, KPIs and targets will be set to facilitate the effective monitoring and measuring of its achievements of the goals and objectives. This is in alignment with the requirements outlined in the NDS: *“Programmes, projects and activities must be based on sound, robust criteria and data, and must be aligned to the national goals.”*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Vision 2030 National Development Strategy 2016 to 2030, Introduction 09-10

## **Conclusion**

The strategic planning period 2025 to 2030 comes at an exciting and critical time not only in our Nation's history, but that of the entire planet. Never has world heritage been in greater peril, and therefore never has it been so important to do all that is necessary to preserve it. The GoRTT's Vision 2030 shows that it recognises the many challenges facing Trinidad & Tobago and the need to rally all individuals, groups and organisations to contribute to Nation development. We intend to take our place alongside many others and make a sustainable impact on our Nation's future.