

THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (ACTT)

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2025 (Abridged Version)



ACTT'S PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

We Support People Development

We Engage Our Regional Partners in Education and Training

We Influence Global Recognition of Our National Qualifications



July 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We are pleased to present the ACTT's Strategic Plan, 2020-2025, to all stakeholders and well-wishers. The Plan was produced after months of focused work by ACTT's Management and Staff and was favourably reviewed by the Board of Directors. On behalf of the Board, I wish to commend Management and Staff for their diligence and the quality of the product.

There was wide consultation with key stakeholders in the construction of the Plan. This highlights the ACTT's commitment to collaboration as we engage in the work of quality assurance and facilitating continuous improvement in the post-secondary and tertiary education sector.



The Plan is built on four pillars, viz, organisational transformation, financial stability, post-secondary, and tertiary education (PSTE) sector quality, and PSTE qualifications recognition. There is thus a focus on both the internal and external operations. The intention is to use the experiences of the past to continue to build the organisation to enhance its efficiency and stability while pursuing its core work nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The Board of Directors is committed to supporting Management and Staff in the implementation of this Plan. We thank all stakeholders in advance for their continuing cooperation in this venture.

June George, PhD
ACTT Chairperson

FOREWORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fifteen years ago, the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) was established by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years, ACTT has developed a quality assurance infrastructure and culture for the improvement of the post-secondary and tertiary education institutions which have advanced the nation's human resource development. Now, ACTT has reached a critical path in its history. Strategic Plan (2020-2025) promises to be a vehicle for post-secondary and tertiary education sector transformation and organisational change within the ACTT. While the planning process, which lasted over a year, has engaged all levels of stakeholders, it has also been a stimulus for re-positioning ACTT for greater influence, reach and impact.



As a recently appointed Executive Director, I have had the privileged and exciting opportunity to lead the processes for formulation of this Strategic Plan during this important period in ACTT's history. While this has been a rewarding project, it has also been a huge challenge. The project still progressed within a changing environment, one with a lack of people resources, declining finances, infrastructure problems and above all the national shutdown due to the pandemic of COVID-19. These experiences have brought out the creativity and resilient capacity of ACTT and contributed in no small measure to transformational changes, both in terms of current actions taken and identified priorities and prospects within the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan (2020-2025) promises to be a vehicle for post-secondary and tertiary education sector transformation and organisational change within the ACTT

While at ACTT we anticipate working within a setting of constant change and limited resources, I believe that through this Strategic Plan, we will expect major gains to be achieved that will contribute to ACTT's advancement within the national, regional and global spaces.

Eduardo Ali, EdD (Sheffield)
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) (also referred to as the Council), has a critical role to play in developing, maintaining, and advancing the quality of the post-secondary and tertiary education (PSTE) system in Trinidad and Tobago. The Strategic Plan for the five-year period (2020 - 2025) aims to improve systems for development of human resources in Trinidad and Tobago through working with ACTT's regional partners in the Caribbean and enabling better global recognition of qualifications awarded by local institutions.



As ACTT embarked on its planning process, it examined its past performance over a five-year period and considered ways to re-model its organisational structure, improve its business operations and provide efficient services. This activity led to the generation of new vision and mission statements, revised core values and new prioritised goals. While, for the last decade, ACTT has made significant strides in Trinidad and Tobago's PSTE landscape, it is envisaged that even greater changes will occur with the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. ACTT has embraced a transformational change model which keeps it at the forefront of global best practices in PSTE, while remaining flexible and responsive to changes in the external context.

This Strategic Plan is aligned to regional and national education policies. Benchmarking of strategies from similar external quality assurance bodies and systems, has resulted in the adoption of suitable approaches. A detailed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was also conducted. The SWOT analysis resulted in the identification of various strategic opportunities, which are articulated in the Strategic Plan. During this exercise, the Council engaged in an extensive research-based consultative approach by obtaining feedback from key stakeholders such as the Parliament; Government; registered and accredited PSTE institutions; international and

regional agencies; external evaluators; existing and former staff and management of ACTT; and from members of former ACTT boards.

The Strategic Plan (2020 - 2025) will be used to guide the work of the ACTT over the next five years focusing on four priority areas; namely: i) organisational transformation ii) financial sustainability iii) PSTE sector quality and performance and iv) PSTE qualifications recognition. ACTT's Strategic Plan identifies

mission and vision statements, core values, goals, objectives, key performance indicators and actions. The Balanced Score Card (BSC) model and methodology were chosen to enable ACTT to cascade and implement four critical priority areas to ensure that the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives are managed and achieved within a dynamic environment of political, social, economic and educational change.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan (2020-2025) is a formal document which articulates five years of focused capacity building actions. It is characterised by several components which include the vision statement, mission statement, core values, priorities, goals, key performance indicators, objectives and enabling and core actions that were developed during the organisation's strategic planning exercise.



ACTT's Strategic Plan, Direction and Actions consist of the following key components: goals, objectives, key performance indicators and strategic actions. These are defined in the table below:

Table 1: List of Definitions

Component	Definition
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A general, long term statement detailing a desired outcome or that which is to be achieved or accomplished by ACTT within the five-year period.¹
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specific, measurable step or broader action taken to meet each ACTT goal (usually within a timeframe such as 3-5 years and with available resources). It is a performance measure that would lead to achieving the goal.
Key Performance Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of the organisation, its employees, etc. in meeting objectives for performance.

¹ Adapted from the Ministry of Education Draft Education Policy Paper 2017 - 2022

Strategic Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are planned action which should be executed within specific planning cycles.
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THE VISION

- *ACTT is to be the vanguard¹ and catalyst² of a quality post-secondary and tertiary education sector which is globally relevant³, responsive⁴ and supportive of the development⁵ of a qualified workforce and society in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean*

THE MISSION

- *ACTT assures and enhances⁶ the quality of post-secondary and tertiary education nationally and abroad⁷ through innovative business⁸, globally-benchmarked standards⁹ and service excellence¹⁰*

The Vision and Mission Key words

1. Vanguard - *ACTT is leading and paving the pathway for a quality PSTE sector*
2. Catalyst - *ACTT stimulates and challenges PSTE institutions to meet its standards*
3. Globally relevant - *ACTT embraces and adapts international models, best practices and standards in the design of its systems and services*
4. Responsive- *ACTT understands that it operates in an environment of constant change, is nimble and responds to needs*
5. Supports the Development – *ACTT ensures that PSTE institutions contribute to the development of a knowledgeable and skilled workforce and society*
6. Assures and enhances - *ACTT applies its policies, standards and processes for external quality assurance of PSTE institutions and, qualifications*
7. Nationally and abroad - *ACTT engages and supports PSTE institutions and awarding bodies located in Trinidad and Tobago and to overseas institutions and awarding bodies offering in-country or education abroad programmes via distance and online learning*
8. Innovative business - *ACTT establishes new business models and approaches that have adopted or modelling its own best practices*
9. Globally benchmarked standards- *ACTT contextualizes and adapts global external quality standards to design its own*

10. Service excellence - ACTT establishes standards for providing efficient and effective service to stakeholders

These values form the foundation that guides the behaviours necessary to achieve ACTT's goals and strategic objectives and will, therefore, be consistently communicated to all staff to build a strong and positive execution culture.

ACTT has developed a Competency Framework which will ensure that staff has a common understanding of the organisation's core values and expected behaviours.

Accountability - we answer to our governing authorities and ensure that our stakeholders do the same

Commitment to Career and Professional Development - we support the career and professional development of our employees

Customer Focus - we listen to and consider our customers' needs when making decisions and taking action

Integrity - we embrace, comply with and administer national laws, government policy, organisational policies and best-in-class post-secondary and tertiary education quality practices. We are above reproach in our actions

Teamwork - we perform better together while seeking our stakeholders' interests instead of attempting to work individually

Trust - we speak the truth and support and respect each other. We guarantee honest business when we engage our stakeholders

Excellence - we model innovations and best practices, going beyond what our customers expect of us



ACTT STRATEGY MAP (2020-25)



VISION 2025:

ACTT is to be the vanguard and catalyst of a quality post-secondary and tertiary education sector which is globally relevant, responsive and supportive of the development of a qualified workforce and society in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean.

MISSION:

ACTT assures and enhances the quality of post-secondary and tertiary education nationally and abroad through innovative business, globally benchmarked standards and service excellence.

ACTT VALUES

- Accountability
- Commitment to Career & Professional Dev.
- Customer Focus
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Trust
- Excellence

ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Goal 1- Enhance organisational capability, operational efficiency & sustainability

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Goal 2- Create and cultivate revenue & cost containment measures

PSTE SECTOR QUALITY & PERFORMANCE

Goal 3- Improve external quality assurance & performance monitoring systems in the PSTE sector Systems

PSTE QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNITION

Goal 4- Develop systems that enhance global recognition of local PSTE qualifications

2020-2025 ACTT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.1 Improve public profile and marketability within country and external jurisdictions

1.2 Enhance stakeholder relations and partnerships

1.3 Revise & remodel organisational structure & processes

1.4 Develop, establish & evaluate an organisational excellence system

1.5 Enable an operationally efficient enterprise

2.1 Develop new products & services to increase revenue

2.2 Enhance fee structures and models to increase revenue

2.3 Manage cost containment activities to reduce recurrent expenses

3.1. Research & establish a globally aligned PSTE EQA Ecosystem

3.2. Survey & establish data- & risk-sensitive EQA & perf. monitoring criteria & standards & related guidelines

3.3. Develop and introduce highly rigorous PSTE sector regulatory processes

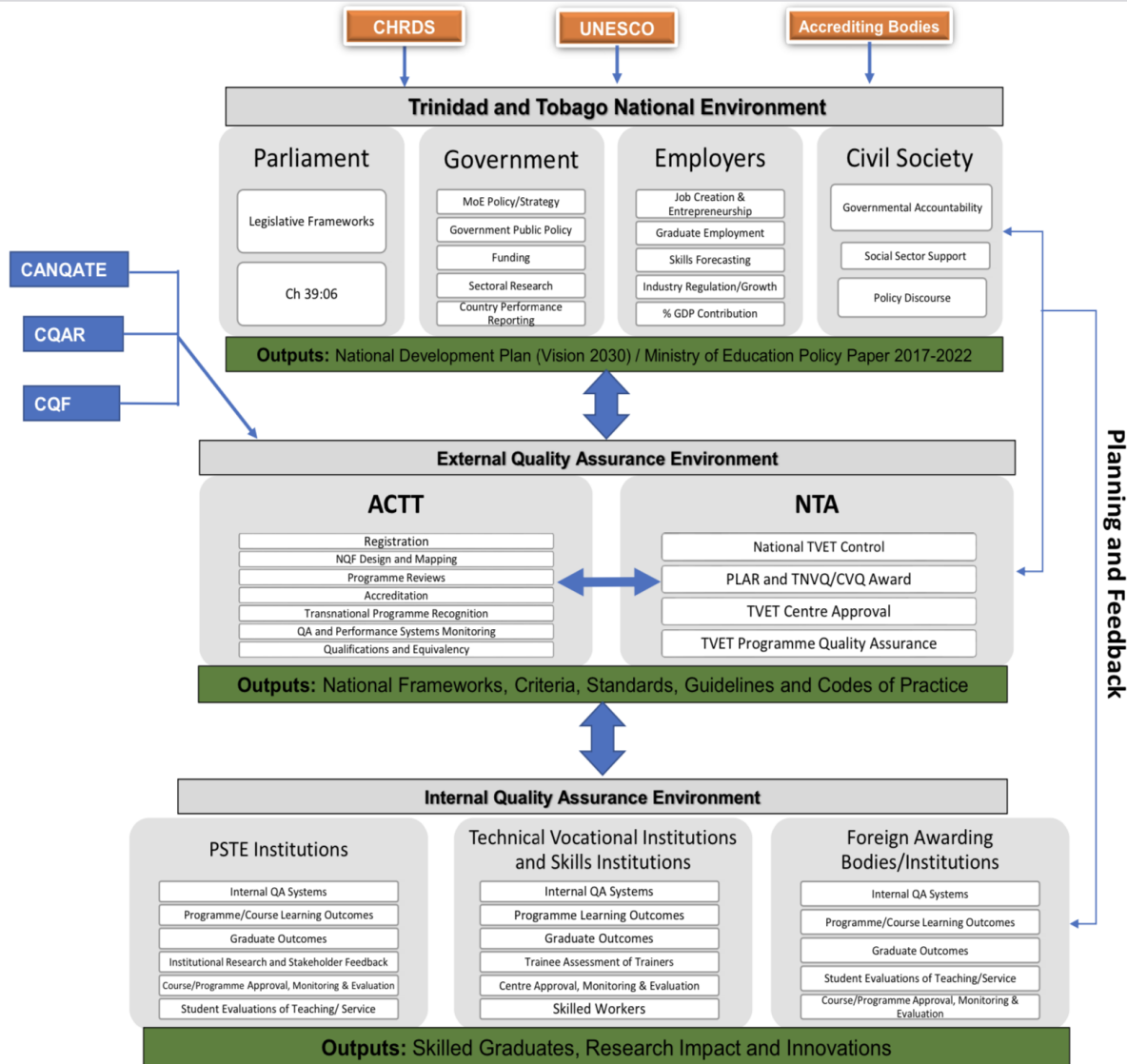
3.4. Streamline and digitise EQA and performance monitoring systems

4.1. Implement the National Qualifications Framework

4.2. Facilitate PSTE qualifications development and management

4.3. Establish global partnerships to enhance recognition of local PSTE qualifications

The Post-Secondary and Tertiary Education (PSTE) External Quality Assurance Ecosystem



The concept of an Ecosystem for PSTE Quality Assurance is one which clearly identifies and determines a core set of principles, best practices, models and synergistic relationships which positions ACTT as a premier EQAA nationally and regionally. It facilitates ACTT working collaboratively and efficiently with the internal quality assurance systems of PSTE institutions, as well as other partners such as the National Training Agency, CARICOM EQAAs, the Ministry of Education, the Tobago House of Assembly and other agencies involved in employment, labour outputs and societal advancement. Figure 1 shows the PSTE EQA Ecosystem for Trinidad and Tobago which becomes a priority for ACTT as it develops and oversees registration, accreditation and qualifications recognition in the country. Accordingly, the ecosystem has to be prioritised in the strategic planning process and requirements.

ACTT's Quality Management/Organisational Excellence

ACTT has adopted the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Organisational Excellence (OE) model, which takes a systems approach to building a culture of change within ACTT. The OE model delineates three (3) core components for ensuring excellence, with the organisation at the pivot for effecting change as follows:

1-Direction

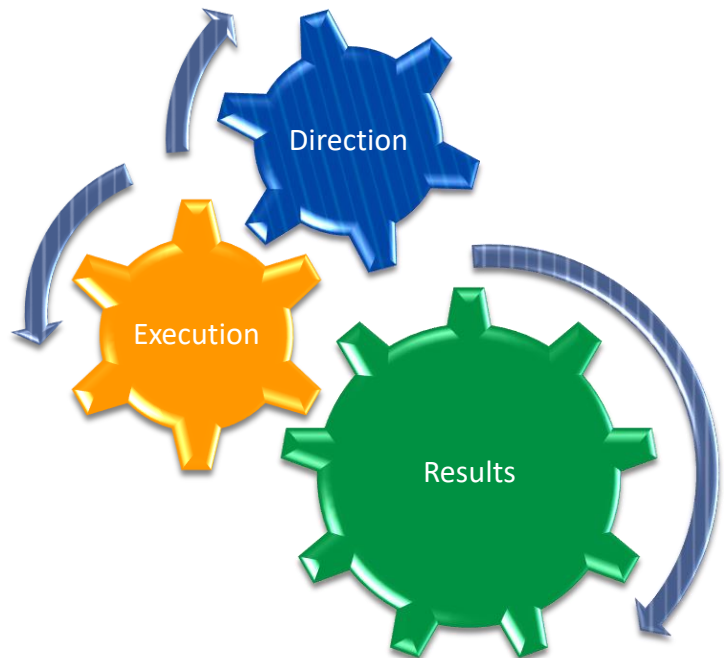
ACTT takes its cues from external drivers of change such as its own legislation, the Ministry of Education, wider government policies and statutory systems, strategic human resource systems, regional and international stakeholders, and global best practices and models such as INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP).

2-Execution

ACTT adopts the Balanced Score Card (BSC) framework to manage implementation of the Strategic Plan on an annual basis by engaging its stakeholders, leading its employees to attain performance, managing its resources and cultivating an environment that engenders sustainable value.

3-Results

ACTT adopts a Results Based Management (RBM) model and uses its feedback processes to collect stakeholder information annually. This data is then used for unit-level improvement and corrective actions, thus encouraging high performance in its employees, teams, taskforces and committees as they deliver service excellence to stakeholders.



THE CONTEXT

cont'd

ACTT's Adaptation of the EFQM Excellence Model
Systems Change – Organisational Excellence

