



# Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean Trinidad and Tobago Case Study

Rodolfo Beazley and Francesca Ciardi  
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## Preface

This report is part of a series of case studies on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean commissioned by the World Food Programme ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)) and conducted by Oxford Policy Management ([www.opml.co.uk](http://www.opml.co.uk)). The OPM Project Manager is Rodolfo Beazley [rodolfo.Beazley@opml.co.uk](mailto:rodolfo.Beazley@opml.co.uk) and WFP Project Managers are Regis Chapman [regis.chapman@wfp.org](mailto:regis.chapman@wfp.org) and Francesca Ciardi [francesca.ciardi@wfp.org](mailto:francesca.ciardi@wfp.org) (Office for Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Caribbean).

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### **Oxford Policy Management Limited**

Registered in England: 3122495

Level 3, Clarendon House  
52 Cornmarket Street  
Oxford, OX1 3HJ  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 207 300  
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 207 301  
Email: [admin@opml.co.uk](mailto:admin@opml.co.uk)  
Website: [www.opml.co.uk](http://www.opml.co.uk)  
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LinkedIn: [@OPMglobal](https://www.linkedin.com/company/OPMglobal)

### **World Food Programme**

Barbados Office for Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Caribbean

UN House  
Marine Gardens  
Christ Church  
Barbados

Tel: +1 246 467 6085  
Email: [wfp.barbados@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.barbados@wfp.org)  
Website: [www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean)  
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# Executive summary

## Introduction

There is global recognition of the promising linkages between social protection and disaster risk management (DRM) in responding to and mitigating shocks, and in contributing to strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus. It is in this context that the World Food Programme (WFP) and Oxford Policy Management (OPM) began a research project in 2016 on shock-responsive social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). In 2019 and 2020, the study focuses on the Caribbean where several governments have used social protection programmes and systems to reach people impacted by disasters.<sup>2</sup>

This report studies the case of Trinidad and Tobago and identifies the factors that would allow its social protection system to be more responsive to shocks. Trinidad and Tobago is a high-income country and is among the countries with highest percapita income in the LAC region. This small twin-island state has become one of the most developed nations in the Caribbean region, based on the successful development of the energy sector. At the same time, Trinidad and Tobago is highly exposed to different types of covariate shocks (shocks that affect entire communities, or large parts of the population simultaneously). The most frequent and severe are hydrological and seismic events, such as floods, landslides and earthquakes, economic shocks, and more recently a high influx of migration. To reduce the impact of disasters on affected populations, the government provides a number of temporary food, relief and assistance grants and has developed the 2017-2022 National Social Mitigation Plan, which aims to improve access to social protection programmes in order to enhance people’s capacities to better manage risks and shocks. At the time of publishing this research, Trinidad and Tobago was one of several countries in the Caribbean that introduced, expanded or adapted social protection programmes and systems to support individuals and households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These dynamics make it highly relevant to assess the actual and potential role of social protection in preparedness and response to shocks in Trinidad and Tobago. This report examines disaster risk management and social protection institutions and systems, as well as their linkages. It is based on interviews with government officials and other key stakeholders and a review of policies, strategies, evaluations and reports on social protection and DRM. The box below briefly summarises the theoretical framework for this case study.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean>

## Shock-Responsive Social Protection: theoretical framework

**This research explores two dimensions to analyse how social protection systems relate to DRM and could be used in emergency response. The first is the extent to which social protection systems in place are prepared to respond to major shocks. This concerns:**

1. Institutional arrangements and capacity: legislation, policies and mandates of key DRM and social protection institutions.
2. Targeting system: protocols, processes and criteria for identifying people and families that should receive social protection or DRM support.
3. Information systems: socioeconomic, disaster risk and vulnerability information to enable decision-making before and after a shock, such as social registries and beneficiary registries, DRM information systems and issues related to the collection, sharing and accessing of data.
4. Delivery mechanisms: mechanisms in place for delivering cash or in-kind assistance to social protection beneficiaries and/or people affected by shocks.
5. Coordination mechanisms: mechanisms and protocols for coordinating DRM activities before and after a shock, including the role of social protection.
6. Financing mechanisms: strategies and mechanisms for funding DRM such as budgetary instruments, contingency financing and insurance, including any financing of social protection responses.

**The second dimension is the ways that social protection programmes systems can directly provide assistance or play a supportive role in an emergency response, which can be used in any combination:**

1. Vertical expansion: increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing social protection programme or system.
2. Horizontal expansion: temporarily extending social protection support to new households.
3. Piggybacking: utilising elements of an existing social protection programme or system for delivering a separate emergency response.
4. Alignment: aligning some aspects of an emergency response with current or possible future national social protection programmes.
5. Design tweaks: making small adjustments to the design of a core social protection programme.

Sources: OPM (2015) and Beazley et al. (2016)

## Disaster risk management in Trinidad and Tobago

This section describes the disaster risk management (DRM) system in Trinidad and Tobago, focusing on the institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, and the financing mechanisms.

### Institutional arrangements

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), established in 2005, is the national coordinating agency that manages all phases of the disaster management cycle – prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery – as well as climate change adaptation programmes (ODPM, 2011). Its main responsibilities include formulating policies, drafting legislation, coordinating and overseeing relevant actions in the DRM sector, and assuming required roles in times of emergency. ODPM is part of the Ministry of National Security and, in contrast to its predecessor, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), has a more comprehensive and proactive approach to disaster management rather than a reactive one, in line with regional strategies and global trends.

The primary piece of legislation governing disaster management in Trinidad and Tobago is the Disasters Measures Act Chapter 16:50 (Act 47 of 1978). This act is outdated and does not reflect the shift from a DRM-as-response vision to the current approach in which DRM involves all the phases of the disaster management cycle. Moreover, the act is not aligned with the current institutional arrangements (i.e. ODPM's coordinating role).

### Coordination mechanisms

ODPM is responsible for coordinating actions throughout the phases of the disaster management cycle. However, the lack of an adequate regulatory framework undermines its capacity to coordinate and to enforce DRM principles and actions. There are currently no sectoral committees that meet regularly for prevention, mitigation, and preparedness actions. Interactions between ODPM and line ministries and regional corporations are limited to ad hoc trainings and consultations. There is also a disconnect between the work of ODPM, which operates within the Ministry of National Security, and the Disaster Management Units, which are part of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government.

### Financing mechanisms

The Contingency Fund is the main source of funding for responses to shocks. The Exchequer and Audit Act authorises the Minister of Finance to establish a Contingency Fund to defray unforeseen expenditures. The value of the Contingency Fund in 2019 was US\$14.8 million (Trinidad and Tobago dollars (TTD) 100 million). The Fund is not specific to disasters, but generally for unforeseen expenditures.

In 2007, Trinidad and Tobago joined the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) Segregated Portfolio Company (SPC), a regional catastrophe insurance facility that uses

parametric insurance to provide quick-disbursing and short-term liquidity for financing responses and recovery. Trinidad and Tobago has insurance policies for tropical cyclones, excess rainfall (two separate policies, one for Trinidad and one for Tobago), and earthquakes. Since 2017, the Government has received two pay-outs for excess rainfall, totalling approximately US\$9.5 million (TTD64 million). The first payment was received in October 2017 and the second one in October 2018.

## Social protection in Trinidad and Tobago

The social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago includes both contributory and non-contributory schemes. Since Trinidad and Tobago is largely an industrialised country, with a strong formal economy, contributory social protection – which is linked to current or past formal employment – has substantial coverage: approximately 67% of the labour force contributes to social security.

Most of the main non-contributory social protection programmes are implemented by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS). Other ministries, like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, and the Ministry of Works and Transport, implement social assistance programmes too. This report focuses on the following non-contributory social protection programmes implemented by the MSDFS: i) the **Food Support Programme** and ii) the **Public Assistance Grant**, which are the main cash transfer programmes for the poor; iii) the **Senior Citizens' Pension**, which is a social pension for the elderly; iv) the **Temporary Food Support Programme**, which is a one-off support to people in need, including victims of disasters; v) the **General Assistance Grant**, established to support persons affected by disaster or other shocks, which also provides assistance to individuals and households living in poverty and other social welfare beneficiaries; and the vi) the **Disaster Relief Grant**, which is provided to victims of disasters whose items are damaged or destroyed. The report also covers the **old-age pension** administered by the National Insurance Board and the **School Nutrition Programme** operated by the Ministry of Education.

While the MSDFS continues to make improvements in the administration and delivery of grants and services, there is currently no national social protection sector strategy guiding the implementation of these different programmes and schemes towards common objectives. The absence of such a strategy, and of adequate coordination mechanisms, makes the social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago very fragmented.

## Targeting mechanisms

All the non-contributory social protection programmes covered in this case study are means-targeted in some way. The Public Assistance Grant and the Food Support Programme use the

Standard Means Test (SMT)<sup>3</sup> for assessing poverty, while the people are eligible for the Senior Citizen's Pension if they are more than 65 years of age and have a monthly income level below US\$ 814 (TTD 5,500). In the case of the School Nutrition Programme, the poverty level is assessed subjectively by schools. Finally, both the Disaster Relief and the General Assistance Grant are paid against actual losses and damage to assets and property.

Applications for the Disaster Relief are made via the Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA) form. The DANA captures generic and sectoral information on damage and needs of affected households in the aftermath of a disaster. Collected information is then utilised to onboard eligible recipients into the grant programmes. Most of the DANA information consists of a written description of the damages and the needs. DANA forms were traditionally filled out by social workers at the MSDFS but more recently this has become a responsibility of the Disaster Management Units (DMUs) under the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, although MSDFS staff still provides support to the assessment and information collection process.

## Information systems

MSDFS has initiated a procurement process for the development of an Integrated Social Enterprise Management System (ISEMS) to store and share data within the ministry and with other ministries and entities. The lack of such a system is widely seen as an obstacle to the effective delivery of social protection in the country (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT), 2019).

The National Insurance Board has its own management information system (MIS). In 2019, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between MSDFS and the National Insurance Board for data sharing. The MSDFS also has a data sharing MoU with The Registrar General's Department of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

## Delivery mechanisms

MSDFS' Direct Deposit Initiative (piloted in 2013 and re-introduced in 2017) allows recipients of the Senior Citizen's Grant, the Public Assistance Grant, and the Disability Assistance Grant to receive payments in their own bank accounts. Approximately 55% of persons accessing these grants receive their benefits via this initiative. The rest are still paid by cheques. Payments made under MSDFS programmes, either by cheque or bank transfers, are usually made on time.

Under the National Insurance Board, virtually all the pensioners receiving old-age pensions are paid monthly with direct deposits.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The SMT was launched in 2018 by the MSDFS with the objective of improving and streamlining the targeting of its programmes. The SMT consists of a simple two-page paper form that collects data about the applicant's household income. The eligibility of the applicant is determined by comparing the net household income with the poverty line: if the income is equal to or lower than the line, the household is considered eligible.

<sup>4</sup> NIBTT, 2020



## Towards a more shock-responsive social protection system

Social protection already plays an important role in the provision of support to people affected by shocks in Trinidad and Tobago. However, this support would have to be adapted and improved in order to be adequate and holistic, and to respond to the various types of shocks and stressors affecting the country.

The main recommendation is to **develop an adequate regulatory framework for DRM, which can also enable shock-responsive social protection**. The status of the current regulatory framework, and of recent strategies and plans, has been one of the main constraints affecting the DRM sector. Following the development of an adequate regulatory framework, it is recommended to develop a DRM national strategy, which should include the role of social protection as well as other actors.

Another key recommendation is to **develop a national social protection strategy, including the role of the sector in emergency preparedness and response**. This strategy should promote the strategic collaboration of different actors and programmes in the sector and aim at exploiting synergies and reducing fragmentation of programme and service delivery including for emergency response.




It is also recommended to consider **merging or streamlining programmes with similar objectives, target populations and operational processes, to avoid fragmentation and promote efficiencies**. This could be done for example with the Disaster Relief, the General Assistance Grant and the Temporary Food Card, where possible and appropriate, as well as with the Public Assistance Grant and the Food Support Programme.



The ongoing influx of Venezuelan migrants calls for swift action in Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of **how migrants and refugees may be able to benefit from and contribute to the social protection system in a sustainable way**. This is a difficult and urgent challenge affecting various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Trinidad and Tobago is among the most affected.

Below we divide the recommendations into preparedness and response actions.

### Preparedness

#### **Table 1: Recommendations to enable Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Trinidad and Tobago**

Preparedness category	Short/medium-term recommendations	Long-term recommendations
<p><b>Information management</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue investing in the development and implementation of the Integrated Social Enterprise Management System (ISEMS) for the MSDFS and share data with other relevant entities</li> <li>• Establish data-sharing agreements with other ministries and agencies (e.g. NIBTT, Immigration, TTConnect/iGOVTT, social sector partners and others)</li> <li>• Revise and improve the DANA's data collection process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developing a social registry and, if one is implemented, collect information that allows for assessing vulnerability and exposure to shocks and operational data that are useful for rapid responses</li> <li>• Consider geo-referencing the location of people registered in the MIS / social registry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Targeting</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise and improve the DANA's form</li> <li>• Revise the SMT to minimise inclusion and exclusion errors and ensure it captures vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Develop protocols for the provision of grants to affected populations</li> <li>• Consider revising the eligibility criteria of programmes to ensure that migrants and refugees – if eligible – are also included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider making the targeting criteria and methodologies more risk-informed (i.e. SMT capturing not only the chronic poor but also the vulnerable)</li> <li>• Use the information from the DRM sector to improve the understanding of hazards and risks, and their effects in social protection design and delivery</li> <li>• Align the targeting criteria of different relief programmes and consider merging some of them</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivery mechanisms</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue transitioning towards electronic payments across MSDFS</li> <li>• Establish a continuity plan that allows for the transfer of regular benefits during crises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess, learn from, and improve the delivery mechanism</li> <li>• Develop business continuity protocols for the School Nutrition Programme and assess whether it can play roles in future responses</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish protocols and build capacity for the delivery system to scale up in times of crisis</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Coordination</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create or re-establish sectoral committees with clear objectives and roles in terms of preparedness and response</li> <li>Strengthen coordination mechanisms for central and local actors</li> <li>Develop protocols to strengthen the linkages, roles and responsibilities between social protection and disaster risk management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish MoUs and protocols with different actors (including non-government) for joint preparedness and response work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financing</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a disaster risk financing assessment to evaluate the extent to which the existing financing mechanisms are adequate given the risk profile of the country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider creating a protocol for the use of the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund to finance disaster response including through the social protection system</li> <li>Identify alternative financing mechanisms to fund emergency preparedness and response actions through the national social protection system</li> </ul>

In addition to the points above, it is important to assess the benefit adequacy of the various grants delivered by MSDFS. Some indications suggest that the values of some grants may be too low to achieve the effects desired. Further evidence in this area is required.

Finally, most of the stakeholders interviewed for this case study stressed the importance of strengthening preparedness to face more extreme shocks, such those that have affected other Caribbean countries in recent years (e.g. Hurricane Maria in Dominica in 2018, Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas in 2019). It is recommended further to learn from the preparedness actions from other countries that have faced large-scale events and to develop capacity and protocols to respond to different scenarios.

## Response

It is recommended to explore the possibility of increasing the value of the Food Support Programme (i.e. vertical expansion) in response to large-scale shocks. Such events may challenge the capacity to

conduct DANA assessments and therefore may delay the social protection responses. In those cases, a quick top-up to Food Support Programme's beneficiaries living in affected areas could provide timely support to the poorest, until the DANA information is available. This type of response assumes that the poor are worse affected and, although it may lead to errors of inclusion and exclusion, it may be the easiest and fastest way of providing support. Complementary actions would be required to support those who are not in the Food Support Programme.

In the same vein, it is recommended that a strategy involving the vertical expansion of National Insurance Board transfers is considered. Given the coverage of the National Insurance Board system, the provision of top-ups to people living in areas affected by a large-scale shock may be a timely way of responding to immediate needs, until DANA data is available.

In relation to small- and medium-sized events, the existing programmes are suitable for providing support to affected populations, although they would have to be improved. In addition to the preparedness actions mentioned above, and to the recommendation about merging or streamlining similar programmes, **it is recommended to consider creating a grant (or adapting an existing one) that provides support that is not just linked to the actual loss of, or damage to household items and property.** There are three reasons for this: 1) people are affected in other ways beyond the loss of, or damage to assets and other items – for example, their income or livelihoods may also be negatively affected; 2) assessing the level of damage or loss can be cumbersome and costly; and 3) the Disaster Relief and the General Assistance Grant are capped and are not meant to compensate for all the losses, but to provide support to people who have experienced some losses. Consequently, it is advisable to introduce grants, or adjust the design of existing ones, to address the different needs that may arise following a shock more comprehensively.

Keep **piggybacking** on the capacity of MSDFS to collect data after a shock (DANA). The capacities of DMUs for data collection during emergencies are limited. Depending on the scale of the shocks, MSDFS support may allow conducting more rapid and accurate assessments. It is recommended, however, to define clearly the roles of MSDFS and DMU staff, and to provide them with adequate training.

The National Social Mitigation Plan recommends conducting a **feasibility assessment in respect of introducing an unemployment insurance scheme.** Given the size of the formal sector in Trinidad and Tobago, unemployment insurance could provide protection to many workers in the country against different types of shocks.

**Finally, it is recommended to revise the entitlements that the work permits given to Venezuelans in 2019 provide.** Venezuelan migrants and refugees are currently excluded from social protection. Moreover, those Venezuelans who have formal employment under the work permit given in the registration process are exempt from contributing to social security. This creates two main problems: i) Venezuelan workers do not contribute but also do not benefit from social security, so they are unprotected; ii) firms are incentivised to hire Venezuelans, and this may create tensions with nationals and migrants from other countries. It is also recommended to consider designing a social protection programme that gives temporary assistance to migrants and refugees

during the transition period until they have access to the social protection system. This temporary support could include the provision of cash transfers or employment in public works, for example, be linked to responses from other sectors and promote access to key services such as health, education, and housing.

# Table of Content

Preface.....	i
Executive summary.....	ii
Table of Content.....	xii
List of tables, figures and boxes .....	xiv
List of acronyms .....	xv
1 Introduction .....	1
2 Research methodology.....	3
2.1 Theoretical framework	3
2.1.1 System preparedness	3
2.1.2 System response	4
2.2 Research tools and fieldwork	5
3 Risk, vulnerability and poverty in Trinidad and Tobago.....	7
3.1 Economic shocks	7
3.2 Natural hazards	8
3.3 Migration	9
4 DRM in Trinidad and Tobago.....	13
4.1 Institutional arrangements	13
4.2 Coordination mechanisms	14
4.3 Financing	15
5 Social Protection in Trinidad and Tobago .....	17
5.1 Main programmes	18
5.2 Targeting	22
5.3 Information systems	23
5.4 Delivery	23
6 Shock-responsive social protection in Trinidad and Tobago .....	24
7 Towards a more shock-responsive social protection system .....	26



7.1	Preparedness	26
7.2	Response	28
8	Conclusions .....	31
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>Annex A List of interviewees .....</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>Annex B Research questions.....</b>	<b>37</b>

## List of tables, figures and boxes

<b>Table 1:</b>	Recommendations to enable Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Trinidad and Tobago .....	vii
<b>Table2:</b>	Venezuelan migrants – with regular status – per country .....	10
<b>Table3:</b>	Main social protection programmes.....	18
<b>Table4:</b>	How to prepare the social protection system: Recommendations .....	27
<b>Figure1:</b>	Typology of system preparedness for shock-responsive social protection .....	4
<b>Figure2:</b>	Typology of shock-responsive social protection .....	5
<b>Figure3:</b>	GDP: 2000-2018 .....	7
<b>Figure4:</b>	Venezuelan migrants – with regular status – per capita .....	10
<b>Figure5:</b>	Advertisement of the registration in a local newspaper .....	12



## List of acronyms

CCRIF SPC	Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
DANA	Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis
DMUs	Disaster Management Units
DRM	Disaster risk management
FSP	Food Support Programme
GAG	General Assistance Grant
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MIS	Management information system
MSDFS	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NEMA	National Emergency Management
NIB	National Insurance Board
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSMP	National Social Mitigation Plan
ODPM	Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PAG	Public Assistance Grant



PMT	Proxy means test
SCP	Senior Citizens' Pension
SMT	Standard Means Test
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
TEMA	Tobago Emergency Management Agency
TTD	Trinidad and Tobago dollars
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

# 1 Introduction

There is global recognition of the promising linkages between social protection and disaster risk management in responding to and mitigating shocks, and in contributing to strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus. This recognition has, for example, been expressed in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit by the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B)<sup>5</sup> and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, approved by the United Nations in September 2015.

It is in this context that WFP has joined forces with OPM to implement a research project *on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)*, which aims to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in the region. Between 2016 and early 2019, the project included a literature review of experiences in LAC (Beazley *et al.*, 2016); seven country case studies (Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Dominica); a synthesis report illustrating main findings from the studies and policy recommendations for capacity and system’s strengthening (Beazley *et al.*, 2019); and a series of conferences and webinars.<sup>6</sup>

In 2019 and 2020 the study focuses on the Caribbean region, with a literature review, five country case studies (Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago), and a synthesis report. The characteristics of Caribbean countries, their disaster and risk profiles and the disaster risk management and social protection systems and linkages, call for a focus on this region. The emphasis on the Caribbean region will provide the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and its Participating States with evidence and best practices to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacities.

This report studies the case of **Trinidad and Tobago** and identifies the factors that would allow the country’s social protection system to be more responsive to shocks. Trinidad and Tobago is a very interesting case because it is a country affected by different types of events: disasters, economic crisis and an unprecedented influx of migrants. At time of publishing this research, Trinidad and Tobago was also one of the many Caribbean countries providing support to individuals and households affected by the adverse socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, by introducing, adapting and expanding social protection programmes.

<sup>5</sup> SPIAC-B is an inter-agency coordination mechanism that is intended to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues and to coordinate international cooperation in country demand-driven actions. SPIAC’s board is chaired by the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and includes representatives from development partners, UN agencies and others. SPIAC-B has committed to ‘support the further expansion and strengthening of social protection systems to continue to address chronic vulnerabilities and to scale up the utilisation of social protection as a means of responding to shocks and protracted crises.’

<sup>6</sup> The reports and other relevant material are available at [www1.wfp.org/publications/shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean](http://www1.wfp.org/publications/shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean) and [www.opml.co.uk/projects/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean](http://www.opml.co.uk/projects/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean).

The next section presents the research methodology. [Section 3](#) describe the risks, vulnerability, and poverty profile of the country. [Section 4](#) describes the DRM system, and [Section 5](#) describes the social protection system. [Sections 6](#) discusses Trinidad and Tobago's experiences in using social protection in response to shocks, and [Section 7](#) provides recommendations for ensuring more responsive and flexible systems. Finally, [Section 8](#) provides a brief conclusion.

## 2 Research methodology

This section presents a framework that helps understand the two key dimensions of shock-responsive social protection: system preparedness and system response. We also present the overarching research questions for the case study and briefly describe the tools and fieldwork.

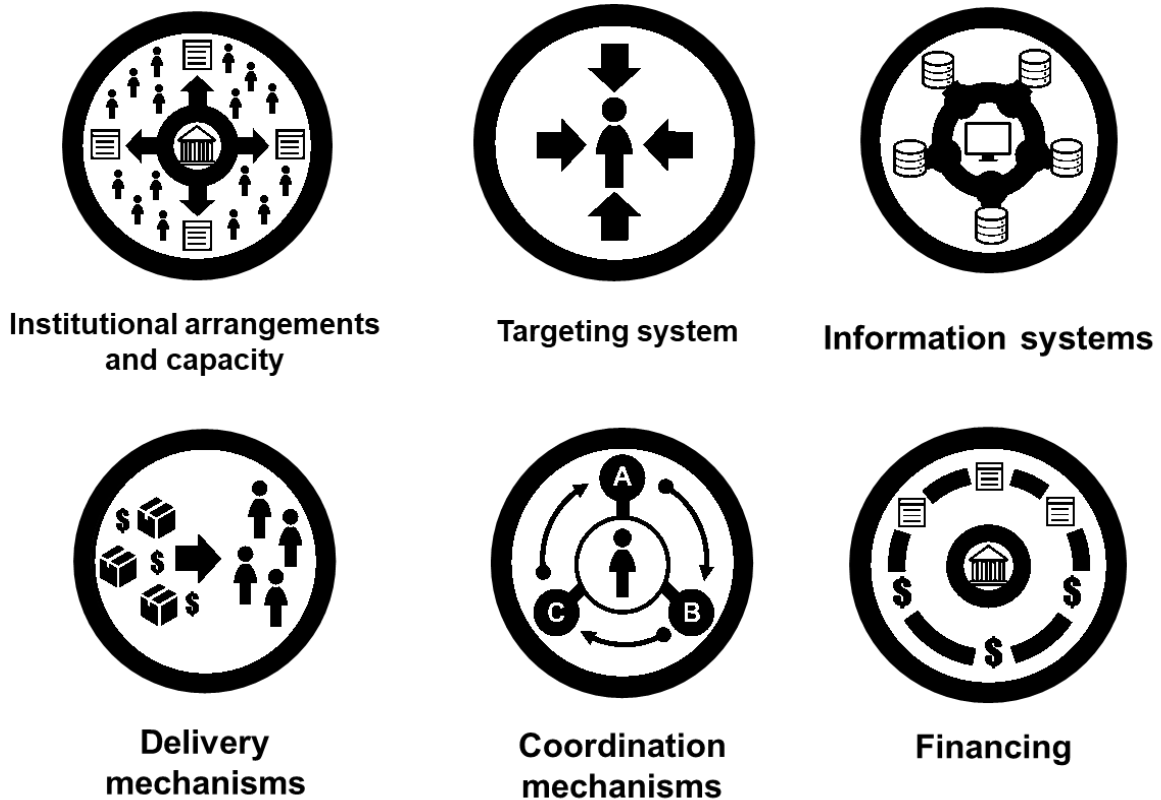
### 2.1 Theoretical framework

#### 2.1.1 System preparedness

In this study, we analyse the level of preparedness of the social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago based on six aspects that are essential for a prompt and effective response to shocks (Beazley *et al.*, 2016):

1. **institutional arrangements and capacity:** the legislation, policies, and mandates of key DRM and social protection institutions, as well as the organisational structure that affects services delivery in these areas;
2. **targeting system:** the protocols, processes, and criteria for identifying people and families that should receive social protection or DRM support;
3. **information systems:** socioeconomic, disaster risk, and vulnerability information to enable decision-making before and after a shock—including social registries and beneficiary registries, DRM information systems, and issues related to accessibility, sharing protocols, data collection mechanisms, data relevance and accuracy, and security and privacy protocols;
4. **delivery mechanisms:** the mechanisms in place for delivering cash or in-kind assistance to social protection beneficiaries and/or people affected by shocks;
5. **coordination mechanisms:** mechanisms and protocols for coordinating the DRM activities before and after a shock—including the coordination of different government agencies, of activities at different government levels, and of humanitarian agencies (the role of the social protection sector is of particular interest); and
6. **financing mechanisms:** strategies and mechanisms for financing DRM activities before and after a shock—including budgetary instruments, contingent credits, and market-based instruments like parametric insurance (protocols and commitments for financing responses through social protection are of particular interest).

**Figure 1: Typology of system preparedness for shock-responsive social protection**



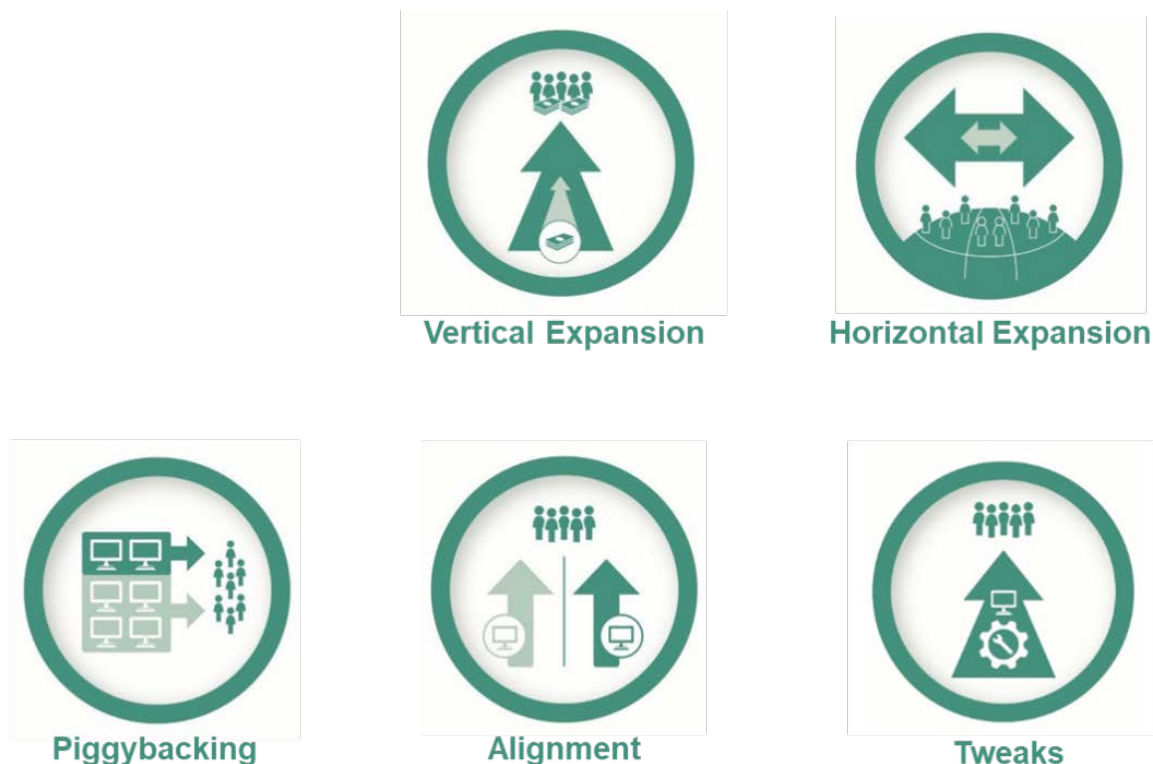
Source: adapted from Beazley et al. (2016)

### 2.1.2 System response

When policymakers consider the use of a social protection system to address emergency needs there are a number of strategies that they may employ to scale up the overall level of support that the system provides to vulnerable people. Based on OPM (2015), we tentatively consider five main types of scale-up (which can be used in a combination):

1. **vertical expansion:** Increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing social protection programme or system;
2. **horizontal expansion:** Temporarily extending social protection support to new households;
3. **piggybacking:** Utilising elements of an existing social protection programme or system for delivering a separate emergency response;
4. **alignment:** Aligning some aspects of an emergency response with the current or possible future national social protection programmes; and
5. **design tweaks:** Making small adjustments to the design of a core social protection programme.

**Figure 2: Typology of shock-responsive social protection**



Source: OPM (2015)

## 2.2 Research tools and fieldwork

The research consisted of three phases: a literature review, fieldwork and analysis. In relation to the first phase, a thorough review of legislation, policy plans, and strategies was conducted, as well as of programme reviews, assessments and evaluations available. The theoretical framework presented above and the research questions set out in Annex B guided the review. The main research question for the case study is: **‘What factors enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks?’**

Fieldwork was conducted from 20 November to 28 November 2019. The research was conducted by Rodolfo Beazley (OPM), research lead, and Francesca Ciardi (WFP). The research was conducted in Port of Spain, Tunapuna, and Diego Martin. The research tools used were as follows:

**Key informant interviews:** Key informants interviewed were from MSDFS, the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Insurance Board, the School Nutrition Programme, ODPM, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Tobago House of Assembly, the Red Cross, UNDP, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF. These interviews served to triangulate the findings from other data sources. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, supplemented by selected tools.

**Key informant interviews in Port of Spain and Tunapuna:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the MSDFS's Social Welfare Division of Port of Spain Local Board and the DMU of Tunapuna Regional Corporation.

The list of key informants who were interviewed can be found in Annex A.

The third phase of the research consisted of analysing the information collected and the findings of the literature review and answering the research questions. Preliminary results were shared with WFP. This report, which has been peer reviewed, is the output of this research.



## 3 Risk, vulnerability and poverty in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is a high-income country and is among the countries with the highest per capita income in LAC.<sup>7</sup> This small twin-island state has become the most developed nation in the Caribbean region, based on the successful development of the energy sector (Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), 2016). It has a population of approximately 1.2 million, of which the vast majority (95%) are concentrated in Trinidad, which relies largely on oil and natural gas production. The small economy of Tobago,<sup>8</sup> where approximately 5% of the population resides, is based on tourism (IADB, 2016).

Trinidad and Tobago has achieved a relatively high human development status, ranking 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 189 countries in the 2019 Human Development Index—among the highest in LAC.<sup>9</sup> The 2005 Survey of Living Conditions provides the latest data on the incidence of poverty. It indicates that the poor and the extremely poor accounted for 15.5% and 1.2% of the population respectively in that year (IADB, 2016).

The country is highly exposed to different types of covariate shocks that affect the population. The most frequent and severe are hydrological and seismic events such as floods, landslides and earthquakes, economic shocks, and more recently a high influx of migration.

### 3.1 Economic shocks

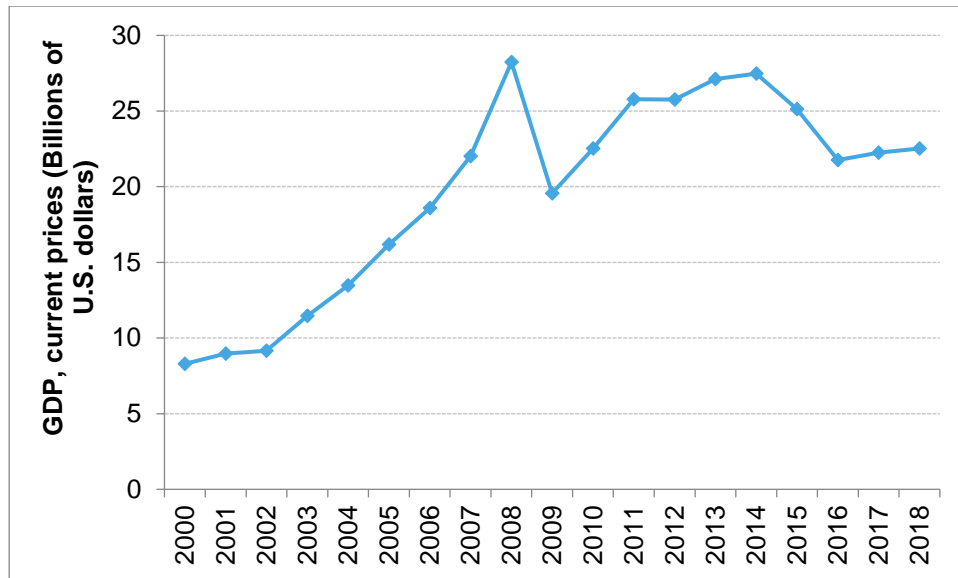
Due to its economic profile, Trinidad and Tobago is particularly vulnerable to external economic shocks – most notably to the market volatility of the international energy sector (i.e. sudden falls in international prices). In recent years, changing international market conditions have led to a strong economic downturn. Since 2012, years with gross domestic product (GDP) growth have been exceptional, and the economy experienced a strong contraction between 2016 and 2017. Projections anticipate a slow and mild recovery in the coming years (IMF, 2018).

#### Figure 3: GDP: 2000-2018

<sup>7</sup> <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

<sup>8</sup> Tobago has semi-autonomous status and is administered by the Tobago House of Assembly.

<sup>9</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/2019-human-development-index-ranking>



Source: IMF – [www.imf.org/external/datamapper/datasets/WEO/1](http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/datasets/WEO/1)

Unemployment has risen as a consequence of the economic downturn. The unemployment rate increased from 3.3 to 4.9% from 2014 to 2017 (IMF, 2018). The last official estimates of poverty are from the year 2015 and do not capture the effects of the economic crisis, which are likely to be substantial.

The economic shock of recent years is not an isolated event. For example, the global economic crisis of 2008–09 hit the country strongly: the economy shrank by 4.8% in 2009, recovered in 2010 and then contracted further in 2010 and 2011.

### 3.2 Natural hazards

The natural and anthropogenic characteristics of Trinidad and Tobago make it prone to many high-impact hazards. However, compared to other Caribbean countries, in recent years Trinidad and Tobago has been affected mostly by moderate localised hazards. For example, since the country is located just outside the Atlantic Hurricane Belt, it has escaped the major impacts of tropical cyclones. Although such a risk still exists, it is less than that of its Caribbean neighbours (ODPM, 2014).

The country is at high risk of seismic hazards (ODPM, 2014). In August 2018 a 6.9 earthquake affected Trinidad and Tobago. This was the biggest earthquake in decades. According to ODPM, approximately 300 houses experienced substantial infrastructure damage and required government support. There were no casualties.

The nation’s most prevalent hazards are hydro-meteorological events, such as flooding, landslides and high wind events (ODPM, 2014). The most significant weather-related event in recent years were the widespread flash-floods in October 2018. According to ODPM, more than 3,000 households were severely affected and required support.

### 3.3 Migration

More than four million Venezuelans have left their country as a result of the political turmoil, socioeconomic instability, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis there. This is the largest displacement in LAC's recent history.<sup>10</sup> The pace of the outflow from Venezuela has skyrocketed in the last years, from around 695,000 refugees and migrants at the end of 2015 to over 4 million by mid-2019.

LAC countries are hosting the vast majority of Venezuelans, with Colombia accounting for some 1.3 million, followed by Peru with 768,000, Chile with 288,000, Ecuador with 263,000, Brazil with 168,000, and Argentina with 130,000, according to UNHCR (UNHCR, 2019).<sup>11</sup>

The geographical proximity between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela has fostered a tight historical relationship between the two nations, leading to strong economic, social, and cultural linkages. This is why many Venezuelans have migrated to Trinidad and Tobago as a result of the ongoing crisis.

There has been much debate in Trinidad and Tobago about the number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. The most reliable figure results from a two-week registration process conducted by the government in June 2019. Approximately 16,500 Venezuelans were registered and given one-year work permits (Box 1).

Trinidad and Tobago is among the top host countries for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as a proportion of the national population. In addition, it is the only Caribbean nation among the top five countries with regards to the number of Venezuelan migrants with regular status per capita. The table and figure below show the number of Venezuelans with regular status, including resident permits, in the main host countries compared with the national population. The figures of Venezuelans with regular status underestimate the amount of migrants and refugees, but make it possible to compare different countries and are the most reliable data sources available. Because the absolute number of migrants is substantially lower than in other countries, Trinidad and Tobago is not usually referred to as one of the countries most affected by the Venezuelan migration flow; however, when the country size is considered, it is in fact one of the most affected countries.

<sup>10</sup> [www.iom.int/venezuela-refugee-and-migrant-crisis](http://www.iom.int/venezuela-refugee-and-migrant-crisis)

**Table 2: Venezuelan migrants – with regular status – per country**

Country	People with regular status, including resident permits <sup>12</sup>	Projected overall country's population in 2018 <sup>13</sup>	Ratio
<b>Colombia</b>	677,313	49,648,685	1.36
<b>Peru</b>	549,606	31,989,256	1.72
<b>Chile</b>	325,025	18,729,160	1.74
<b>Argentina</b>	175,950	44,494,502	0.4
<b>Ecuador</b>	107,052	17,084,357	0.63
<b>Brazil</b>	104,858	209,469,333	0.05
<b>Panama</b>	71,053	4,176,873	1.7
<b>Mexico</b>	46,072	126,190,788	0.04
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	16,500	1,389,858	1.19
<b>Uruguay</b>	13,225	3,449,299	0.38
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	7,946	10,627,165	0.07
<b>Canada</b>	5,705	37,058,856	0.02
<b>Costa Rica</b>	5,692	4,999,441	0.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,105,997	559,307,573	0.38

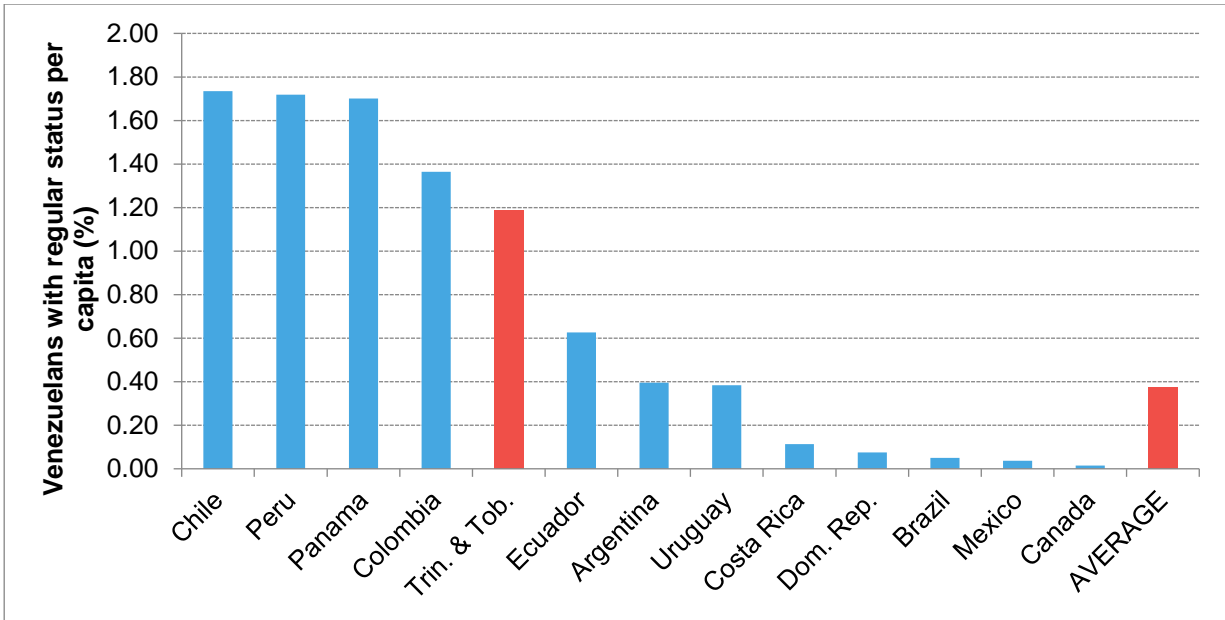
Source: UNHCR and World Bank data portals.

Note: The ratio is calculated as the number of people with regular status divided by the total population in the country – times 100.

**Figure 4: Venezuelan migrants – with regular status – per capita**

<sup>12</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/vensit#category-4> – Accessed on 4 December 2019.

<sup>13</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>



Source: UNHCR and World Bank data portals

**Box 1: Registration of Venezuelan migrants**

On 31 May 2019, the government commenced a two-week exercise to register all Venezuelans present in the country, including those who had entered irregularly or overstayed. Those registered were granted permission to work for up to one year. Approximately 16,500 individuals were registered by the end of the exercise on 14 June.

The permit given to those who registered allows access to primary health services but not to secondary health services, education or social protection. Those who have formal employment under this permit are exempt from contributing to social security.

Following the completion of the registration, the government announced the introduction of a visa scheme for Venezuelans. Previously, Venezuelans were free to travel to Trinidad and Tobago on holiday and business for up to 90 days without the requirement of obtaining a visa.

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

**TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

### VENEZUELAN MIGRANT REGISTRATION PROCESS

#### VENEZUELAN IMMIGRANT REGISTRATION FACTS

1. Venezuelans who are in Trinidad and Tobago, either legally or illegally, MUST register in a two week period (May 31st to June 14th 2019).
2. Time: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.
3. Registration Centres will be closed for Eid-ul Fitr (Public Holiday) on June 5th 2019.
4. Venezuelans who are registered will receive a Registration Card which will authorize the holder to work legally in Trinidad and Tobago for one (1) year. The holder of the permit will be assessed every six months.
5. Employers must comply with the country's Labour Laws, including payment of no less than the minimum wage.
6. Holders of work permit exemptions will be required to pay PAYE if they cross the income threshold but not NIS.
7. Applicants will be required to submit completed Registration Forms (giving their local address and contact information), have their photographs taken, provide biometrics including fingerprints.
8. Applicants are required to swear to a statutory declaration that the information given is true and correct.
9. Registered Venezuelans will benefit from free emergency medical services at public health institutions.
10. There is no guarantee to education or social services.
11. After this period of amnesty expires for Venezuelans to register, the law will revert and illegal persons may be subject to deportation.
12. The initiative will be led by the Ministry of National Security in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Children's Authority.
13. Registration does not mean automatic issuance of Registration Cards.

### PROCESO DE REGISTRO DE MIGRANTES VENEZOLANOS

#### DATOS SOBRE EL REGISTRO DE INMIGRANTES VENEZOLANOS

1. Los venezolanos que se encuentran en Trinidad y Tobago, con o sin estatus legal, DEBEN registrarse en un período de dos semanas (del 31 de mayo al 14 de junio de 2019)
2. Hora: 7 a.m. a 5 p.m. todos los días
3. Los centros de registro estarán cerrados el 5 de junio de 2019 por Eid-ul Fitr (Feriado).
4. Los venezolanos que estén registrados recibirán una Tarjeta de registro que autorizará al titular a trabajar legalmente en Trinidad y Tobago por un (1) año. El titular del permiso será evaluado cada seis meses.
5. Los empleadores deben cumplir con las leyes laborales del país, esto incluye el pago de no menos del salario mínimo.
6. Los titulares de exenciones de permisos de trabajo deberán pagar a PAYE si superan el umbral de ingresos pero no NIS.
7. Se requerirá que los solicitantes envíen los Formularios de registro completos (con su dirección local e información de contacto), permitan que se tomen sus fotografías y proporcionen datos biométricos, incluidas las huellas dactilares.
8. Los solicitantes deben hacer una declaración jurada de que la información proporcionada es verdadera y correcta.
9. Los venezolanos registrados se beneficiarán de servicios médicos de emergencia gratuitos en las instituciones de salud pública.
10. No existe garantía de acceso a la educación o a los servicios sociales.
11. Después de que termine este período de dos semanas para que los venezolanos se registren, se aplicará la Ley y las personas en condición irregular podrán estar sujetas a deportación.
12. La iniciativa estará dirigida por el Ministerio de Seguridad Nacional en colaboración con el Ministerio de Salud y la Autoridad de la Infancia.
13. Registrarse no significa la emisión automática de su Tarjeta de registro

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/Venezuelanregistration/>

Photo: Advertisement of the registration in a local newspaper

## 4 DRM in Trinidad and Tobago

This section describes the DRM system in the country, focusing on the institutional arrangements, the coordination mechanisms, and the financing mechanisms. Where relevant, we highlight the role of social protection actors in the DRM system.

### 4.1 Institutional arrangements



Established in 2005, ODPM is the national coordinating agency that manages all phases of the disaster management cycle: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery; as well as climate change adaptation programmes (ODPM, 2011). Its main responsibilities include formulating policies, drafting legislation, coordinating and overseeing relevant actions in the DRM sector, and assuming required roles in times of emergency (see below). ODPM is part of the Ministry of National Security and, unlike its predecessor NEMA, has a more comprehensive and proactive approach to disaster management rather than a reactive one, in line with regional resilience strategies and global trends. This approach is referred to in the country as a ‘comprehensive DRM approach’. ODPM is also responsible for supporting DRM actions in neighbouring countries – Grenada, Guyana and Suriname – under the CDEMA’s regional response mechanism.<sup>14</sup>

Currently, the primary piece of legislation governing disaster management in Trinidad and Tobago is the Disasters Measures Act Chapter 16:50 (Act 47 of 1978). This act is outdated and does not reflect the shift from a DRM-as-response vision to the current approach, in which DRM involves all the phases of the disaster management cycle. Moreover, the act is not aligned with the current institutional arrangements (i.e. ODPM’s coordinating role).

In 1998 NEMA made an attempt to develop a bill that, if passed and enacted, would have become the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act 1998. This act would have addressed gaps and the incorporation of a more holistic approach to the management of emergencies, hazards, and disasters. Additionally, it would have cemented the transition from a response-centric approach to dealing with the impacts of hazards to a paradigm that is more all-encompassing. Although the act was never passed, it has served as the foundation for the development of new legislation.

Other efforts have been made over the years to update the legislation, without success. When interviewed for this research, ODPM reported that draft legislation is awaiting corresponding approvals and enactments.

The actions of ODPM and other actors in the DRM sector are guided by frameworks and plans, but these are outdated and often in draft form. The 2010 National Response Framework, which adopts

<sup>14</sup> Under the CDEMA’s regional response mechanisms, Trinidad and Tobago is one of the Sub-Regional Focal Point (SRFP) countries which provide support actions to Participating States within the sub-regions. The four SRFPs of the CDEMA regional response mechanisms are Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

a comprehensive DRM approach and establishes the institutional arrangements and foundations, is still in its draft version. ODPM's strategic plan 2010–2015 was also a draft and is the last strategic plan to have been developed. The National Flood Contingency Plan was developed in 2003 and the Emergency Standard Operating Procedures in 2000.

The institutional roles for emergency response depend on the severity of the emergency. An emergency is categorised as Level 1 if the response can be managed by the corresponding regional corporation. In this case, the affected corporation is responsible for coordinating emergency operations. Each of Trinidad's 14 regional corporations, which are part of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, has a DMU, which comprises four staff members on average. Emergency response in Tobago is managed by the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), within Tobago House of Assembly. In the case of Level 2 or Level 3 emergencies, the capacity of the corporation is exceeded, and the coordination and leadership of the central government is required. The National Emergency Operations Centre, managed by ODPM, is responsible for the coordination, and management of emergency response and relief operations.

## 4.2 Coordination mechanisms



ODPM is responsible for coordinating actions throughout the phases of the disaster management cycle. However, the lack of an adequate regulatory framework undermines its capacity to coordinate and to enforce DRM principles and actions.

There are currently no sectoral committees that meet regularly for prevention, mitigation, and preparedness actions. Interactions between ODPM and line ministries and regional corporations are limited to ad hoc trainings and consultations. The relationship between ODPM and MSDFS is no exception; despite the important role that the ministry plays in conducting post-disaster needs assessments and providing relief support (Section0), there are no regular channels established for the joint work prior to a crisis.

The joint work between ODPM and the Disaster Management Units is key for the DRM sector. However, the Disaster Management Units are within the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and ODPM is part of the Ministry of National Security, and there are no strong coordination mechanisms to promote such collaboration.

The National Emergency Operations Centre is in charge of coordinating the response efforts during Level 2 and 3 emergencies. In the case of Level 1 emergencies, the local DMU is responsible for coordination; however, less clear is the planned and actual role of ODPM in monitoring, oversight or support, if any at all, and the interaction with the DMU. The same applies to the coordination between ODPM and TEMA.



### 4.3 Financing



The Contingency Fund, established in accordance with the provisions of the Exchequer and Audit Act of Chap. 69:01 (Ministry of Attorney General and Legal Affairs 2016),<sup>15</sup> is the main source of funding for responses to shocks. The act authorises the Minister of Finance to establish a Contingency Fund to defray unforeseen expenditures. The value of the Contingency Fund in 2019 was US\$14.8 million (TTD100 million). The Fund is not specific to disasters, but generally for unforeseen expenditures. Upon approval by the Cabinet, the Ministry of Finance facilitates the advance of funds from the Contingency Fund to the relevant ministries, via a warrant from the Budgets Division to the Treasury Division. This process takes one working day and funds are made available immediately thereafter. However, delays may occur if the Cabinet Note does not clearly outline how the funds are to be allocated by the Treasury Division to the various ministries and their agencies.

Trinidad and Tobago is a member of CCRIF SPC, which is a regional catastrophe insurance facility that uses parametric insurance to provide quick-disbursing and short-term liquidity for financing responses and recovery (Box 2). Trinidad and Tobago has insurance policies for tropical cyclones, excess rainfall (two separate policies, one for Trinidad and one for Tobago), and earthquakes. Since 2017, the government has received two pay-outs for excess rainfall, totalling approximately US\$9.5 million (TTD64 million). The first payment was received in October 2017 and the second one in October 2018 (CCRIF 2018).<sup>16</sup>

The Heritage and Stabilisation Fund was established in 2007 with the purpose of: i) cushioning the impact on, or sustaining, public expenditure capacity during periods of revenue downturn, whether caused by a fall in prices of crude oil or natural gas; ii) generating an alternative stream of income so as to support public expenditure capacity as a result of revenue downturn caused by the depletion of non-renewable petroleum resources; and iii) safeguarding Trinidad and Tobago's heritage for future generations, from savings and investment income derived from excess revenues. According to ODPM, descriptions of the purpose of the fund do not speak directly about the use of funds in the aftermath of a disaster. However, it may be a source of relief assistance after a national disaster.

**Box 2: The CCRIF SPC**

In 2007, the CCRIF was formed as the first multi-country risk pool in the world and was the first insurance instrument to successfully develop parametric policies backed by both traditional and capital markets. It was designed as a regional catastrophe fund for Caribbean governments to limit the financial impact of devastating hurricanes and earthquakes by quickly providing financial liquidity when a policy is triggered.

It works by combining the benefits of pooled reserves from participating countries with the financial capacity of the international financial markets. It retains some of the risks transferred by the participating countries through its own reserves and transfers some of the risks to reinsurance markets where this is cost-effective. This structure results in a particularly efficient risk financing instrument that provides participating countries with insurance policies at approximately half the price they would obtain if they approached the reinsurance industry on their own.

The facility was restructured into a segregated portfolio company to facilitate expansion into new products and geographic areas and is now named CCRIF SPC. The new structure, in which products are offered through different portfolios, allows for total segregation of risk.

CCRIF SPC offers earthquake, hurricane, and excess rainfall policies to Caribbean and Central American governments. Its parametric insurance mechanism allows it to provide rapid pay-outs to help members finance their initial disaster response and maintain basic government functions after a catastrophic event. In 2017, the Aggregated Deductible Cover, a new policy feature for tropical cyclone and earthquake policies, was introduced. The Aggregated Deductible Cover was designed to be akin to a dedicated reserve fund, providing a minimum payment for events that are objectively not sufficient to trigger a CCRIF policy because the modelled loss is below the attachment point.

Since it began in 2007, CCRIF SPC has made pay-outs of over US\$152 million to 13 member countries, with all payments occurring within 14 days of the shock. CCRIF has also made twelve payments totalling around US\$1 million under member governments' Aggregated Deductible Cover.

There are currently 22 country members of the facility: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Maarten, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Source: [www.ccrif.org](http://www.ccrif.org)

## 5 Social Protection in Trinidad and Tobago

The social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago includes both contributory and non-contributory schemes. The National Insurance Board administers the social insurance (contributory social protection). Since Trinidad and Tobago is a high-income country with a strong formal economy, contributory social protection – which is linked to current or past formal employment – has substantial coverage: approximately 67% of the labour force contributes to social security. A World Bank Public Expenditure Review (2018) found that social protection spending in Trinidad and Tobago equalled 5.1% of GDP in 2016, and 4.6% of GDP for non-contributory social assistance, far above the global and LAC average of 1.5% of GDP.

Most of the main non-contributory social protection programmes are implemented by the Social Welfare Division of MSDFS. Other ministries also implement social assistance programmes, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

In recent years the MSDFS has renewed efforts to improve the administration and delivery of grants and services including a restructuring of targeting mechanisms, standardising application processes, developing a one-stop shop Social Services Empowerment Unit and the training of staff. There is, however, no national social protection sector strategy that guides the implementation of these different programmes and schemes towards common objectives. The absence of such a strategy and of adequate coordination mechanisms makes the social protection system very fragmented.

A national policy on gender and development - a green paper setting out proposals which are still in their formative stage - was initiated in 2002, updated in 2009, 2015 and 2018 but never approved. The policy recognises that female-led households with dependent children are amongst the poorest and most vulnerable in the country, and that the provision of social protection may be too 'rigid or generic' and in need to be gender-aware to address the specific realities of poor women and men. At the time of conducting the research, there was no confirmation nor timeframe on when the policy may be approved.

The section below presents the main social protection programmes in Trinidad and Tobago.

## 5.1 Main programmes

**Table 3: Main social protection programmes<sup>17</sup>**

Programme	Implementing agency	Target group	Targeting mechanism	No. of beneficiaries	Benefit amount	Delivery mechanism
<b>Food Support Programme<sup>18</sup></b>	MSDFS	Indigent and vulnerable households	SMT	23,000	Depends on the household size: 1 to 3 members: US\$60-75 (TTD 410 to 510) per month 4 to 5: US\$81-96 (TTD 550-650) per month 6+: US\$103-118 (TTD 700-800) per month	Electronic cards
<b>Public Assistance Grant</b>	MSDFS	Unemployed, persons unable to work, or who have little means of financially supporting themselves and guardians of children	SMT	19,304	Maximum amounts depending on household size: 1 person: US\$192 (TTD 1,300) per month 2 persons: US\$229 (TTD 1,550) per month 3 persons: US\$259 (TTD 1,750) per month 4+ US\$281 (TTD 1,900 per month)	Transitioning from cheques to bank transfers

<sup>17</sup> There are other social protection and relief programmes that are not covered by this research, like for example: the disability grant (MSDFS), the Emergency Home Improvement (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development), the Unemployment Relief Programme (Ministry of Work and Transport), and the National Commission for Self-Help, among others.

<sup>18</sup> Formerly known as the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme.

Programme	Implementing agency	Target group	Targeting mechanism	No. of beneficiaries	Benefit amount	Delivery mechanism
<b>Senior Citizens' Pension</b>	MSDFS	65+ Income-tested	Monthly income below US\$814 (TTD 5,500)	97,911	Maximum of US\$518 (TTD 3,500) per month	Transitioning from cheques or bank transfers
<b>Temporary Food Support Programme</b>	MSDFS	Vulnerable households and victims of disasters	Assessed by social workers		Not available	Electronic cards
<b>Disaster Relief</b>	MSDFS	Victims of disasters (mostly floods)	Assessed by social workers	10,366	US\$1,480 (TTD 10,000)	Cheques to beneficiaries
<b>General Assistance Grant</b> <b>(household items, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, school supplies, clothing, home care help, education, dietary, rental assistance, prosthesis and burial assistance)</b>	MSDFS	Victims of disasters as well as persons and households living in poverty and other beneficiaries of social welfare who need support	Assessed by social workers	1,466	Average of US\$382 (TTD2,585) <sup>19</sup>	Cheques

<sup>19</sup> The Social Sector Investment 2020 reported an expenditure of TTD3,789,813 and a total number of beneficiaries of 1,466.

Programme	Implementing agency	Target group	Targeting mechanism	No. of beneficiaries	Benefit amount	Delivery mechanism
<b>Old-age retirement pension</b>	National Insurance Board	60+ Minimum of 750 weeks of contributions	NA	116,500 <sup>20</sup>	TTD 3,000 per month (US\$444)	Bank transfers (98.93%) and cheques (1.07%)
<b>School Nutrition Programme</b>	Ministry of Education	Deserving students from primary and secondary schools	Schools (i.e. principals) identify children in need	Approximately 100,000 <sup>21</sup> at 800 schools	NA	Breakfast and lunches are produced and delivered by caterers

Sources: ILO (2017) and GoRTT (2019)

<sup>20</sup> 2020

<sup>21</sup> Reported by the School Nutrition Programme.

The Food Support Programme and the Public Assistance Grant are the main unconditional cash transfer programmes supporting the poor. The target population of both programmes is similar (i.e. the poor) and they rely on the same targeting instrument: the SMT (Box 3). The main difference between the two programmes is the delivery modality: an electronic card to purchase food items in the case of the Food Support Programme, and a bank transfer in the case of the Public Assistance Grant. The similarities between the two programmes are such that, at least in Port of Spain, all Public Assistance Grant beneficiaries are entitled to the Food Support Programme as well<sup>22</sup>.

The National Insurance Board retirement pension is paid at age 60 to anyone who has been insured with a minimum of 750 weeks of contributions. A retirement grant in the form of a one-off lumpsum payment is paid to those insured persons who have made less than 750 weekly contributions. The retirement pension is calculated based on the categories in which contributions have been paid. However, 97% of pensioners receive the minimum monthly amount US\$444 (TTD3000) (ILO, 2017).

The Senior Citizens' Pension is a social pension which is income-tested, although it does not rely on the SMT. Since the eligibility criteria for the Senior Citizens' Pension stipulates that the monthly income has to be lower than US\$814 (TTD 5,500), a person can receive both the National Insurance Board and the Senior Citizens' Pension if eligible<sup>23</sup>.

MSDFS offers three types of grants for people affected by shocks:

- **The Temporary Food Support Programme**, which gives one-off electronic cards to people in need in order to purchase food items. The extent of need is assessed by social workers.
- **The General Assistance Grant** offers a range of grants to people in need of temporary assistance as a result of a disaster (manmade or weather-related) as well as individuals and households living in poverty and other beneficiaries of social welfare programmes who may need additional support. The grant is meant to compensate, at least partially, for damage or loss (i.e. clothing, household items), for extraordinary expenses (e.g. funerals), medical equipment, school supplies, rental assistance and other categories.
- **The Disaster Relief grant** is provided to victims of disasters (manmade or weather-related), whose items are damaged or destroyed.

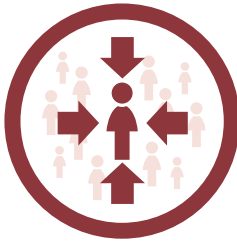
These grants, and in particular the General Assistance Grant and the Disaster Relief, seem to pursue similar objectives and to rely on similar eligibility conditions. In addition, MSDFS shock-response grants are normally linked to concrete expenses arising from damage to, or loss of, household items or extraordinary expenses, but are not intended to compensate for the negative effects of shocks on income, employment, and livelihoods.

Below, three key processes of the social protection system are described further: targeting, information systems and delivery.

<sup>22</sup> Reported by the Social Welfare Division – Port of Spain Local Board.

<sup>23</sup> We did not have access to statistics about the number or percentage of people receiving both pensions.

## 5.2 Targeting



All the non-contributory social protection programmes covered in this assessment are means-targeted in some way. The Public Assistance Grant and the Food Support Programme use the SMT for assessing poverty while people are eligible to the Senior Citizens' Pension if they are more than 65 years of age and have a monthly income level below US\$814 (TTD 5,500). In the case of the School Nutrition Programme, the poverty level is assessed subjectively by the schools. Finally, both the Disaster Relief and the General Assistance Grant are paid against actual losses.

A recertification of all Food Support Programme beneficiaries was conducted in 2018, following the launch of the SMT. The purpose of this process was to update data and reassess eligibility. A total of 24,670 beneficiaries were identified for recertification.

The box below describes how the SMT works.

### Box 3: The SMT

The SMT was launched in 2018 by the MSDFS with the objective of improving and streamlining the targeting of its programmes. The SMT consists of a simple two-page paper form that collects data about the applicant's household income. The eligibility of the applicant is determined by comparing the net household income with the poverty line: if the income is equal to or lower than the line, the household is considered eligible. The MSDFS is currently considering revising and improving the SMT methodology, with the objective of improving the targeting accuracy.

It is important to highlight that it is rare to find flagship cash transfer programmes in LAC that assess eligibility with a means test mechanism. Many poverty- and income-targeted programmes in the region use a proxy means test (PMT). A PMT is a statistical method which uses proxies of income, such as health, education, employment and dwelling characteristics, among others, to estimate the wealth level of the applicant. These proxies are more observable and verifiable than self-reported income. The effectiveness of PMTs has been questioned in global debates, based on evidence of high errors of inclusion and exclusion in cash transfer programmes around the world (Kidd *et al.*, 2017). However, this methodology is popular in the region because, in contexts of high informality and limited capacity to verify people's income (i.e. access to tax and revenue databases with high coverage), self-reported income can be an unreliable source of information. The accuracy of the self-reported income of the SMT should be assessed.

Applications to the Disaster Relief are made via the DANA form. The DANA captures generic and sectoral information on damage and needs of affected households in the aftermath of a disaster. Collected information is then utilised to onboard eligible recipients into the grant programmes. Most of the DANA information consists of a written description of the damages and the needs. DANA forms were traditionally filled out by social workers of MSDFS but more recently this has



become a responsibility of the Disaster Management Units, although the ministry staff still provide support to the assessment and information collection process.

### 5.3 Information systems



The MSDFS has initiated a procurement process for the development of an Integrated Social Enterprise Management System to store and share data within the ministry and with other ministries and entities. The lack of such a system is widely seen as an obstacle to the effective delivery of social protection in the country (GoRTT, 2019). Meanwhile, a temporary MIS is used in MSDFS to store and manage programme data.

The National Insurance Board has its own MIS. In 2019, an MoU was signed between MSDFS and the National Insurance Board for data sharing. The MSDFS also has a data sharing MoU with The Registrar General's Department of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

### 5.4 Delivery



The MSDFS Direct Deposit Initiative allows recipients of the Senior Citizens' Pension, the Public Assistance Grant, and the Disability Assistance Grant to receive the payments in their own bank accounts. A total of approximately 55% of persons accessing these grants receive their benefits via the Direct Deposit Initiative. The rest are still paid by cheque. Payments under MSDFS programmes, either by cheque or bank transfer, are usually made on time.

Under the National Insurance Board, virtually all the pensioners receiving old-age pensions are paid monthly with direct deposits.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> NIBTT, 2020

## 6 Shock-responsive social protection in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago has social protection programmes in place for providing cash support to people affected by shocks: the Disaster Relief, the General Assistance Grant, and the Temporary Food Card. This support is generally linked to actual loss or damage (i.e. household items), based on the DANA assessments, and it is not meant to provide full compensation for the items lost or damaged. The country has not been affected by any major disasters in recent years and therefore the capacity and suitability of these programmes to provide support in such circumstances have not been tested. Due to the lack of a national social protection strategy and of up-to-date DRM plans and legislation, the role of social protection in shock responses is driven by custom and practice, rather than by a strategy.

In addition to the grants that provide temporary support, there are a few experiences of shock-responsive social protection that are worth highlighting:

- In 2013, the School Nutrition Programme **expanded horizontally** to provide support to people affected by floods. Emergency meals were prepared and delivered by the programme to approximately 1,000 persons. This type of response is not part of the programme's protocols or regular actions.
- In 2018, the Red Cross responded to the floods by **piggybacking** on the MSDFS lists of people affected. The Red Cross provided 1,000 families with vouchers to support food consumption.<sup>25</sup> Since the Red Cross did not have time to implement a separate targeting mechanism, they relied on the lists of those who sought support from the MSDFS and who were assessed via DANA.
- In response to the ongoing economic downturn (Section 3), MSDFS was mandated to develop a National Social Mitigation Plan to respond to 'the potential psychosocial, social and economic effects' of the economic shock (GoRTT, 2017). The NSMP has three main objectives: i) strengthening the social protection system; ii) promoting community and civil society action; and 3) enhancing productivity and innovation. The main areas / action involving social protection are as follows:

Unemployment assistance through the public works programme Unemployment Relief Programme (Ministry of Works and Transport) and the National Employment Service (Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development); the National Insurance Board was also commissioned to study the feasibility of introducing an unemployment insurance scheme.

Basic needs support through most of the MSDFS grants and the School Nutrition Programme; and exploring the expansion of the National Insurance Board to the self-employed.

<sup>25</sup> This response was supported by the IADB.

However, the National Social Mitigation Plan does not provide concrete lines of action in terms of scaling up or adapting existing programmes. Moreover, the plan, which was launched in June 2017, has not yet led to a substantial use of social protection in response to the economic downturn, beyond the regular support provided by programmes as per their mandates.

#### **Box 4: Trinidad and Tobago's social protection measures in response to COVID-19**

The government of Trinidad and Tobago implemented a number of social protection measures to mitigate the social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among these measures, the newly introduced Salary Relief Grant provided for monthly payments of TTD 1,500 for a period of up to 3 months to persons registered under the NIS who lost their job or income as a result of COVID-19 health and safety measures. To assist parents who were unable to report for work because there is no one to supervise their children during the closure of schools, the government introduced a new type of paid leave that applies to short-term employees and temporary workers who only have sick leave but no provision for extended sick leave.

In order to assist vulnerable groups, the government increased benefits for recipients of social assistance. Beneficiaries of public assistance received additional income support ranging from TTD 150 to TTD 500, depending on the size of the family, for a period of three months. Food card recipients were provided with a top-up ranging from TDD 150 to TTD 600, depending on the size of the household, for a duration of three months. Recipients of Disability Assistance Grants benefited from additional monthly payments of TTD 150 for a period of three months.

The government assisted vulnerable people and those affected by the pandemic by expanding the coverage of existing social assistance. Self-employed and other persons not registered under the NIS were eligible for income support under the Public Assistance Grant for a period of up to three months, if they suffered loss of employment. For households with children, this assistance could be extended for another three months. Households with children registered under the Ministry of Education's School Feeding Programme as well as households where a member suffered job loss or reduced income received food cards worth TTD 510 for a duration of three months. In order to reduce the financial burden on households affected by the pandemic, Rental Assistance for up to TTD 2,500 per month for an initial period of three months and up to six months, in accordance with the established policy, was made available to households where a member suffered loss of employment or reduced income as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

MSDFS working with the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Police Service and local government bodies, instituted a "move along system" for street dwellers to go to shelters. The MSDFS provided additional financial support to NGOs to ensure the increased provision of meals at shelters, and the MSDFS and the MOH provided other necessary support services at these facilities.

## 7 Toward a more shock-responsive social protection system

Social protection already plays an important role in the provision of support to people affected by shocks in Trinidad and Tobago. However, this support would have to be adapted and improved in order to be adequate and holistic, and to respond to the various types of shocks and stressors affecting the country. This section provides some recommendations for this purpose.

**The main recommendation is to develop an adequate regulatory framework for DRM, which can also enable shock-responsive social protection.** The lack of an adequate regulatory framework, and of recent strategies and plans, is one of the main constraints affecting the DRM sector. The regulatory framework should provide ODPM with the mandate to lead and coordinate DRM actions in the country in line with the ‘comprehensive DRM approach’ currently being implemented *de facto* and should also establish the roles of other key actors.

**It is recommended to develop a DRM national strategy,** which should cover all phases of the DRM cycle and include the role of social protection as well as other actors. It is also recommended that this strategy brings clarity to the division of roles between institutions, and in particular between central and local actors (Disaster Management Units and ODPM).

Another key recommendation is to **develop a national social protection strategy, which includes the role of the sector in emergency preparedness and response.** This strategy should promote the strategic collaboration of different actors and programmes in the sector, and aim at exploiting synergies and reducing the fragmentation of programme and service delivery including for emergency response




It is also recommended to consider **merging or streamlining programmes with similar objectives, target populations and operational processes, to avoid fragmentation and promote efficiencies.** This could be the case for example with the Disaster Relief, the General Assistance Grant, and the Temporary Food Card, where possible and appropriate, as well as with the Public Assistance Grant and the Food Support Programme.



The ongoing influx of Venezuelan migrants calls for swift action in Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of **how migrants and refugees may be able to benefit from and contribute to the social protection system in a sustainable way.** This is a difficult and urgent challenge affecting various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Trinidad and Tobago is among the most affected.

### 7.1 Preparedness

Below we present some recommendations for investing in the preparedness of the social protection system. Such preparedness actions will depend on the role that the DRM and the social protection policies establish social protection will play in shock responses; however, we recommend considering the following menu of options.

**Table 4: How to prepare the social protection system: Recommendations**

Preparedness category	Short/medium-term recommendations	Long-term recommendations
<p><b>Information management</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue investing in the development and implementation of the Integrated Social Enterprise Management System (ISEMS) for the MSDFS and share data with other relevant entities</li> <li>• Establish data-sharing agreements with other ministries and agencies (e.g. NIBTT, Immigration, TTConnect/iGOVTT, social sector partners and others)</li> <li>• Revise and improve the DANA's data collection process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developing a social registry and, if one is implemented, collect information that allows for assessing vulnerability and exposure to shocks and operational data that are useful for rapid responses</li> <li>• Consider geo-referencing the location of people registered in the MIS / social registry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Targeting</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise and improve the DANA's form</li> <li>• Revise the SMT to minimise inclusion and exclusion errors and ensure it captures vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Develop protocols for the provision of grants to affected populations</li> <li>• Consider revising the eligibility criteria of programmes to ensure that migrants and refugees – if eligible – are also included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider making the targeting criteria and methodologies more risk-informed (i.e. SMT capturing not only the chronic poor but also the vulnerable)</li> <li>• Use the information from the DRM sector to improve the understanding of hazards and risks, and their effects in social protection design and delivery</li> <li>• Align the targeting criteria of different relief programmes and consider merging some of them</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivery mechanisms</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue transitioning towards electronic payments across MSDFS</li> <li>• Establish a continuity plan that allows for the transfer of regular benefits during crises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess, learn from, and improve the delivery mechanism</li> <li>• Develop business continuity protocols for the School Nutrition Programme and assess whether it can play roles in future responses</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish protocols and build capacity for the delivery system to scale up in times of crisis</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Coordination</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create or re-establish sectoral committees with clear objectives and roles in terms of preparedness and response</li> <li>Strengthen coordination mechanisms for central and local actors</li> <li>Develop protocols to strengthen the linkages, roles and responsibilities between social protection and disaster risk management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish MoUs and protocols with different actors (including non-government) for joint preparedness and response work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financing</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a disaster risk financing assessment to evaluate the extent to which the existing financing mechanisms are adequate given the risk profile of the country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider creating a protocol for the use of the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund to finance disaster response including through the social protection system</li> <li>Identify alternative financing mechanisms to fund emergency preparedness and response actions through the national social protection system</li> </ul>

In addition to the points above, it is important to assess the benefit adequacy of the various grants delivered by MSDFS. The values of some grants may be too low to achieve the effects desired. Further evidence in this area is required.

Finally, most of the stakeholders interviewed for this case study shared a concern about how prepared the country is to face severe shocks on par with Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2018 or Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas in 2019. The fact that only small- and medium-sized natural hazards have affected Trinidad and Tobago in recent years has resulted in a DRM system that has not been tested in the face of major disasters. It is recommended to continue to learn from the preparedness actions of other countries that have faced large-scale events and to further develop capacity and protocols to respond to different scenarios.

## 7.2 Response

**It is recommended to explore the possibility of expanding the Food Support Programme vertically** (i.e. temporarily increasing the benefit amount provided to households) **in response to**

**large-scale shocks.** Such events may challenge the capacity of conducting DANA assessments and therefore may delay social protection responses. In such cases, a quick top-up to Food Support Programme beneficiaries living in affected areas could provide timely support to the poorest, until the DANA information is available. This type of response assumes that the poor are worse affected, and although it may lead to errors of inclusion and exclusion, it may be the easiest and fastest way of providing support. Complementary actions would be required to support those who are not in the Food Support Programme.

In the same line, **it is recommended that a strategy involving the vertical expansion of National Insurance Board transfers is considered.** Given the high coverage of the National Insurance Board system, the provision of top-ups (i.e. temporary benefit increases) to people living in areas affected by a large-scale shock may be a timely way of responding to immediate needs, until DANA data is available.

In relation to small- and medium-sized events, the existing programmes are suitable for providing support to affected populations, although they would have to be improved. In addition to the preparedness actions mentioned above, and to the recommendation about merging or streamlining similar programmes, **it is recommended to consider creating a grant (or adapting an existing one) that provides support that is not just linked to the actual loss of, or damage to, household items and property.** There are three reasons for this: i) people are affected in other ways beyond the loss of, or damage to, assets and other items –for example, their income or livelihoods may also be negatively affected; 2) assessing the level of damage or loss can be cumbersome and costly; and 3) the Disaster Relief and the General Assistance Grant are capped and are not meant to compensate for all losses, but rather to provide support to people who experience some losses. Consequently, it is advisable to introduce grants, or adjust the design of existing ones, to address the different needs that may arise following a shock more comprehensively.

Keep **piggybacking** on the capacity of MSDFS to collect data after a shock (DANA). The capacities of DMUs for data collection during emergencies are limited, and hence depending on the scale of the shocks, MSDFS support may allow conducting more rapid and accurate assessments. It is recommended, however, to define clearly the roles of MSDFS and DMU staff, and to provide them with adequate training.

The National Social Mitigation Plan recommends conducting a **feasibility assessment in respect of introducing an unemployment insurance scheme.** Given the size of the formal sector in Trinidad and Tobago, an unemployment insurance could provide protection to many workers in the country, against different types of shocks.

**It is recommended to revise urgently the entitlements that the work permits given to Venezuelans in 2019 provide.** Venezuelan migrants and refugees are currently excluded from social protection. Moreover, those Venezuelans who have formal employment under the work permit given in the registration process are exempt from contributing to social security. This creates two main problems: i) Venezuelan workers do not contribute but also do not benefit from social security, so they are unprotected; ii) firms are incentivised to hire Venezuelans and this may create

tensions with nationals and migrants from other countries. It is also recommended to consider designing a social protection programme that gives temporary assistance to migrants and refugees, for the transition period until more permanent / long-term strategies are implemented. This temporary support could include the provision of cash transfers or employment in public works, for example, and should be linked to responses from other sectors, and should promote access to key services like health, education, and housing.



## 8 Conclusions

This report provides an analysis of the social protection and disaster risk management system in Trinidad and Tobago, one of the most developed countries in the Caribbean and with a high-level of exposure to hydrological and seismic events, economic shocks and more recently a high influx of migration. Purpose of the research is to generate evidence on the linkages between social protection and disaster risk management and to identify opportunities to strengthen social protection's role in emergency preparedness and response. At the time of publication, Trinidad and Tobago was among several countries in the Caribbean and globally turning to social protection to address the social and economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning from these experiences will be crucial in its own right and also provide groundwork for putting in place systems and processes in the future for shock-responsive social protection.

Social protection systems and programmes already contribute to disaster risk management in Trinidad and Tobago. In the event of an emergency, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services administers temporary food, relief and assistance grants to eligible affected households. Staff from the Ministry provides support to disaster risk management authorities in conducting post-disaster needs assessments. A National Social Mitigation Plan has also been developed to improve access to social protection programmes and boost people's capacities to better manage risks and other stressors, and there is interest in making the overall social protection and disaster risk management systems more shock-responsive.

While social protection's current role in disaster risk management is significant, this function would have to be adapted and improved if it were to respond more adequately to the shocks and stressors affecting the country. This research has identified several opportunities to better prepare social protection systems and programmes to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the impact of these events. Recommendations have been grouped around six aspects for capacity and system strengthening: institutional arrangements and capacity, data and information management, beneficiary targeting, delivery mechanisms, coordination and risk financing. Investments across these six areas are important for improving the regular provision of social protection programmes, but also to strengthen administrative and programmatic capacities to address additional needs driven by major shocks.

One of the key recommendations towards a shock-responsive social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago is the development of an adequate regulatory framework for disaster risk management and of a national social protection strategy, including the role of the sector in emergency preparedness and response. It is recommended to consider merging or streamlining programmes with similar objectives, target populations and operational processes, to avoid fragmentation and promote efficiencies. Improving targeting criteria and strengthening information management systems, as well making them more risk-informed, is another area for consideration to enhance social protection's regular programming and its support role within disaster risk management functions. This also includes the transitioning towards electronic payments for faster and more efficient disbursements, and the establishment of continuity plans to allow for the transfer of regular

benefits during crisis. Finally, evaluating the extent to which existing financing mechanisms are adequate and identifying alternative financing instruments to fund responses linked to social protection, is another preparedness area to ensure predictable support to people vulnerable to the impacts of shocks.

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## Annex A List of interviewees

Date	Place	Agency/Dept/Org	Name and position
<b>20Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS	Dr Wendy Johnson – Director of the Social Investigations Division Michael Reid
<b>20Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS	Jill Abdul – NGO Unit
<b>20Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS	Jacinta Bailey-Sobers – Permanent Secretary
<b>20Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS	Troy Pollonais – Director of the Social Welfare Division
<b>20Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS	Patricia De Leon-Henry – Director
<b>21 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	Ministry of Planning and Development	Sean O'Brien – Director of Statistics, Central Statistical Office Marion Lewis – Senior Officer, Socioeconomic Policy Planning Division
<b>21 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	Office of the Prime Minister – Gender and Child Affairs	Antoinette Jack-Martin – Director, Gender Affairs Division
<b>21 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	ILO	Ariel Pino - Social Protection and OSH Specialist
<b>22 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	National Insurance Board	Donell Cuffie - Manager Research and Development
<b>22 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	School Nutrition Programme	Stacy Barron - Executive Officer
<b>22 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	ODPM	Major General Rodney Smart – Chief Executive Officer Jaishima Gowandan – Preparedness and Response Unit – Regional Coordinator/Point of Contact for the Unit Denise Anderson –Preparedness and Response Unit – Regional Coordinator

			Shaina Khan – Preparedness and Response Unit – Regional Coordinator Rhea Pierre – Mitigation, Planning and Research Unit – Hazard, Mitigation Specialist
<b>25 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	UNDP	Isele Robinson-Cooper – Programme Officer, Inclusive Growth and Social Policy Rosemary Lall – Programme Officer, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management
<b>25 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	UNHCR	Ruben Barbado – Protection Officer
<b>25 Nov 2019</b>	Remote call	Ministry of Labour and Socioeconomic Development	Kevar Williams – Deputy Permanent Secretary Rosa-Mae Whittier – Director, International Affairs Valetia Clement – OJT Trainee, International Affairs Unit
<b>25 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society	Jill De Bourg – President, Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society Stephan Kishore - Disaster Management Coordinator Chris Chin - Migration Program Officer
<b>26 Nov 2019</b>	Remote call	Tobago House of Assembly	Allan Stewart – Director TEMA Carisse Thompson – Senior Operations Clerk Melissa Yearwood Jack – Public Information and Education Supervisor
<b>26 Nov 2019</b>	Port of Spain	MSDFS – Social Welfare Division of Ministry of Social Development – area office for Port of Spain - Local Board	Rouplekha Sukhdeo – Social Welfare Advisor

<b>27 Nov 2019</b>	Tunapuna	Tunapuna Regional Corporation Field Visit	Mr Hayden Alexander – Head, Disaster Management Unit, Tunapuna Regional Corporation
<b>27 Nov 2019</b>	Remote call	MSDFS	Adesh Seegobin – IT Specialist
<b>3 Dec 2019</b>	Remote call	UNICEF	Maya Fachrani Faisal – Social Policy Adviser

## Annex B Research questions

In this annex we present a list of research questions that was used to guide the mapping of stakeholders, the literature review, the interviews and field visits. These are not questionnaires, but umbrella questions to guide the interviews and the review of literature.

### A. Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Code	Question
<b>A-01</b>	Who are the different actors and stakeholders responsible for the design, implementation and coordination of a) social protection and b) DRM policies and systems?
<b>A-02</b>	What are the formal and informal roles and mandates of these different actors and stakeholders in relation to the design, implementation and coordination of a) social protection and b) DRM policies and systems?
<b>A-03</b>	Is there an effective agency 'home' for a) social protection and b) DRM systems? Are roles and responsibilities clear? Is there competition over resources, power and authority associated with social protection and humanitarian systems between line ministries? What are the recurrent key points of contention? What effects have these had?
<b>A-04</b>	What are the interests and levels of power / influence of these different stakeholders—local, national and international? How have these power relations affected (positively or negatively) the design and implementation of social protection, humanitarian and DRM interventions?
<b>A-05</b>	Which stakeholders (public, private, communities, donors, etc.) support and which might oppose the use of social protection systems to respond to shocks, or closer collaboration between the social protection and humanitarian communities, and why?
<b>A-06</b>	How influential has the presence of stakeholders who are 'sector champions' been on securing and maintaining a higher priority for a) social protection and b) DRM investments and maintaining services?

### B. Institutional mapping and analysis

Code	Question
<b>B-01</b>	What is the institutional relationship between national and subnational governments? Are subnational governments accountable to the national level or local electorate? Do these relationships vary according to sector (e.g. social protection, humanitarian response, other relevant sectors)?

	What is the degree of decentralisation in the provision and financing of, and authority over, social protection, humanitarian response and DRM?
<b>B-02</b>	How have the relationships between national and sub-national government affected (positively or negatively) the design and implementation of social protection and humanitarian systems, and their prioritisation at different levels of government?
<b>B-03</b>	How is the relationship between the government and humanitarian actors, development partners and NGOs? Who in the government is in charge of leading this relationship? How effectively this is done before and after a shock?
<b>B-04</b>	What factors have promoted and/or hindered the effective coordination of social protection with humanitarian interventions for effective policy shock response?

### C. Organisational capacity assessment

Code	Question
<b>C-01</b>	What are the main administrative and organisational constraints to effective a) social protection and b) DRM delivery?
<b>C-02</b>	What organisational and administrative measures and arrangements and incentives facilitate effective a) social protection and b) DRM delivery?
<b>C-03</b>	What main resources exist to carry out the functions of a) social protection and b) DRM under its current form (consider eg. staffing levels, network of offices, transport if details are available)? What is the size and nature of any capacity gaps between what exists, and what is required both now and under a reformed shock-responsive social protection system (consider eg. requirement for additional resources at time of crisis)?

### D. Risks

Code	Question
<b>D-01</b>	Which are the typical shocks affecting the country? What have been the specific major covariate shocks in recent years? What are the characteristics of shocks affecting the country (natural vs man-made, onset, etc.)?
<b>D-02</b>	How does vulnerability to shocks relate to poverty? Do shocks tend to affect areas / sub-groups characterised by higher poverty rates? How?

### E. DRM

Code	Question
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<b>E-01</b>	What relevant national and local laws, regulations and policies exist in relation to DRM? How and by whom is legislative / policy reform initiated? What changes are planned, if any?
<b>E-02</b>	Once in place, are laws, regulations and policies being implemented? How well have they been applied? If they have not been (fully) implemented, what are the reasons (who or what is blocking it and why? What do they stand to lose? How big a role is corruption playing in this)?
<b>E-03</b>	What are the implications of these observations for the future design and implementation of shock-responsive social protection laws, regulations and policies?
<b>E-04</b>	What kind of support does people affected by shock receive? How adequate and timely this support is?
<b>E-05</b>	Is there an Early Warning System? What agency implements it? What data does it use? What indicators-alerts produces?
<b>E-06</b>	Do early warning indicators - indexes trigger automatic responses? How are they used?

## F. Social protection

Code	Question
<b>F-01</b>	What relevant national and local laws, regulations and policies exist in relation to social protection? How and by whom is legislative / policy reform initiated? What changes are planned, if any?
<b>F-02</b>	What is the spending on social protection? Has it been increasing? Are there plans of increasing it in the future?
<b>F-03</b>	What proportion of the population is covered by social security? What kind of support does social security provide? Are the poor and vulnerable covered by social security?
<b>F-04</b>	What proportion of the population is covered by social assistance programmes? And what proportion of the poor? What are the main programmes? What type of benefits do they provide?
<b>F-05</b>	What is the public opinion about social assistance? Is there a support for it? Has it been questioned because of corruption or clientelism?
<b>F-06</b>	What are the targeting mechanisms used by the main programmes? Are they effective? Have they been assessed? Are these mechanisms flexible?
<b>F-07</b>	How is social protection data collected, stored and managed? Who does it? What programmes use this data? How frequently is updated? What's the perception of the quality of data?

<b>F-08</b>	What type of information systems is in place, if any? Social registry, beneficiary registry, etc. How does this work? What proportion of people/households are included in the registry?
<b>F-09</b>	What are the delivery mechanisms used by the main cash and in-kind programmes? How effective they are?
<b>F-10</b>	How have these delivery mechanisms been affected by recent shocks? Have programme managed to keep delivering benefits during emergencies? If not, why so?

### G. Shock/disaster risk financing

Code	Question
<b>G-01</b>	How emergency responses are typically funded? (domestic vs foreign resources)
<b>G-02</b>	Is there budget flexibility to reallocate resources to fund responses?
<b>G-03</b>	Are there ex-ante financial mechanisms for emergency response such as regional or private insurances or contingency funds? (e.g. CCRIF) If yes, for what can it be used? And how is it triggered?
<b>G-04</b>	What are the main financing and budgetary constraints to timely and adequate social protection shock response according to the literature and experts? In planning future responses, how can these be resolved?

### H. Shock-responsive social protection

Code	Question
<b>H-01</b>	Are you aware of any experience in the country in the use of social protection to respond to shocks?
<b>H-02</b>	What SP schemes would be better placed to flex and respond during emergencies? What design and implementation features of the SP system have elements of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid and adequate shock response?
<b>H-03</b>	Has there been any recent experience of coordination between, or integration of, social protection and DRM policies?
<b>H-04</b>	Is there space for dialogue and collaboration between these two sectors? How could this dialogue be promoted?
<b>H-05</b>	Have Early Warning Systems been used to trigger SP or HA responses? What kind of responses? Have these responses been effective and timely?
<b>H-06</b>	Do national emergency response plans provide a role for SP in the immediate response? What kind of role?





**World Food Programme**  
**Caribbean Office for Emergency Preparedness and Response**

UN House, Marine Gardens,  
Christ Church  
Barbados

**Tel:** +1 246 467 6085

**Email:** [wfp.barbados@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.barbados@wfp.org)

**Website:** [www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean)