

# Eye ON Services

Issue #8, February 2023

## CEO's Message



## T&T the Business Events Capital of the Caribbean region: *Making it a reality*

**“With the ingredients of a typical Caribbean sun, sea and sand destination, an ecotourism centre and MICE [Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition] gathering point, Trinidad and Tobago has significant potential to develop its tourism sector further...”**

**—Oxford Business Group Country Reports 2020: Trinidad and Tobago**

In this edition of “Eye on Services”, the focus is on rebuilding and rebooting the events industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

Without a doubt, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago is recognized as the industrial hub of the Caribbean. This is as result of its focus on the oil and gas sector, which over time translated into the hosting of major corporate and non-corporate events since the 1970s. In 2006, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago took a bold step to host two key international events—the Summit of the Americas (April, 2009) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (November, 2009). These events attracted over 5,000 international business tourists, and with a room stock of just 1,700 a decision was taken to lease two cruise ships to host the 4,000-plus visitors.

These events heralded a new wave of operations for local event managers and services providers. A core group of 35 budding local event planners—primarily female-led sole proprietors—were able to gain experience from working with the top international event management firms. This exposure led to avenues for collaboration and business opportunities for these micro start-ups.

Fast-track to 2013... The events market then was comprised of 220 registered businesses with 80 percent of these firms being female-owned.

Business tourism has been identified as the niche market to develop under the backdrop of contractions in the energy sector. This niche has been acknowledged as the country's competitive advantage. The event planners consolidated in 2013 and established an Association geared towards enhancing their industry's standards.

In 2019, the TTCSI commenced work on a Cluster Development Plan (CDP) for the events industry, which was demand-driven and with a two-fold focus. First and foremost, the Plan aimed to build the capacity of the 23 firms in the sector to offer “end to end” services for an industry that is rapidly evolving; and secondly, to build the export capacity of these firms, thereby ensuring they can expand globally.

The Cluster Development Plan (CDP) was developed over a nine-month period and brought together key stakeholders from the private and public sectors. Trinidad has an existing Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions/Events (MICE) industry that accounted for 36 percent of total arrivals in 2019. It is projected that this number will increase based on momentum from Business Support Organizations to place more focus on enhancing the offering of their major events and conferences—namely, the Manufacturers Association's “Trade and Investment Convention”; the Energy Chamber's two signature conferences; and the University of the West Indies' conferences on innovations in cocoa and coffee research, as well as non-communicable diseases. We projected that emphasis must be placed on expanding the reach of the long-established events/conferences to new markets, namely CARIFORUM States, Chile, ASEAN Countries and the European Union.

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Three years later, we are ever more convinced that the events industry is a viable growth pole—since it has the capacity to create sustainable employment—and that it presents opportunities to enhance the quality of infrastructure in the country.

Our CDP was shared with the both Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Trinidad Limited. We stand ready to execute this Plan.

In this issue of **Eye on Services**, we hear from three powerful industry players who in their own right have contributed to developing the sector. This publication is intended to stimulate discussion and explore avenues to achieve the goal of positioning T&T as the business and events hub of the region. Have a read and let's work together to make this a reality.

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# State of Play

At the start of 2020, Trinidad and Tobago was well on its way to developing a strong MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition/Events) segment.

According to the Oxford Business Group report on T&T for 2020, in the year to September 2019, some 45,025 visitors stated 'business/convention' as their main reason for travel—the number three choice after visiting friends and relatives, and leisure.

In 2018, that figure was 57,183. Ministry of Tourism data shows visitor arrivals in 2018 totalling some 375,485 persons.

That momentum was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the cancellation of various conferences, exhibitions, prominent festivals, concerts, weddings and sporting events, to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

A joint report by the T&T Coalition of Services of Industries (TTCSI) and the T&T Manufacturers Association (TTMA) released in 2020 indicated:

“One sector that has been negatively impacted is the arts, entertainment and recreation sector known as the creative industry. Many businesses experienced cancellations in performances; sporting events and training have been halted; workers have been laid off; and companies are struggling to survive.”

The **TTCSI-TTMA Economic Impact Assessment 2020** report went on to note that the veritable shutdown of the entertainment sub-sector, which supports the events industry, was incredibly harmful, given that this labour-intensive sub-sector contributed roughly seven per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually. Indeed, research shows the events industry has been one of the hardest hit industries during the pandemic.

In May 2020—just as the full impact of the pandemic was being felt—the Caribbean Association of Event Professionals (CAEP) carried out a survey of 170 event professionals in T&T to determine the state of the industry.

CAEP reported that some 30 per cent of the event businesses surveyed had cancelled all their events for 2020.

In addition, according to CAEP, the hardest hit people in the events industry were the lower, skills-based workers who “rely heavily on the cash-based income that they are paid immediately after an event, in order to survive”.

The Trinidad and Tobago events industry is now in recovery mode, and practitioners have been viewing it as an opportunity not only to rebuild to pre-pandemic levels, but to reboot the industry completely to ensure future sustainability.

## T&T as the regional MICE hub



**Interim President of Caribbean Association of Events Professionals (CAEP), Roxanne Pantin**, believes strongly that Trinidad and Tobago can become the MICE hub for the region by 2030.

“We have the potential infrastructure. We have the human resources to get it done. We definitely have the innovation and creativity to achieve this,” Roxanne Pantin asserts. “We have something special that we can offer that is different, innovative and individualistic enough to draw international conferences here, easily.”

But, she says, there are certain hurdles that must be overcome.

We need to change our mindset and stop viewing events as being only Carnival-centric,” she observes. “People are yet to recognize the dollar value and earning potential in hosting events right through the year.

“We need to broaden the way we market ourselves beyond Carnival, to include other events possibilities.”

Roxanne Pantin notes that while the industry is highly competitive, it also can be very lucrative, and has tremendous potential for growth post-pandemic.

According to a report issued by The Insight Partners, the global events industry market share is expected to grow from US\$958.54 billion in 2021 to US\$1,965.99 billion by 2028. It also is forecast to experience a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.1% from 2022 to 2028.

“I don’t think people understand how much potential income events can bring to this country, and how little infrastructural work you need to do to get things going,” the CAEP interim president says.

One key recommendation Roxanne Pantin suggests is the creation of a focal point with which organisers of international conferences can make contact, for events they wish to host in T&T.

“Persons interested in doing a conference in Trinidad can make contact with that focal point, which will provide them with all the logistics and accommodation and other ancillary information they need to make their conference a success in this destination,” she explains.

“At present, there is no recognised place here that an international events manager can reach out to for assistance—for example, with a four-day conference of roughly 2,500 participants, who will need social events and entertainment apart from the conference itself, in addition to the accommodation, as well as transport and logistics considerations,” she says.

“Most places specializing in MICE events usually have a conference or convention centre that can provide that kind of information and networking assistance. We don’t have that kind of support system anymore, and we definitely need to rebuild or recreate that,” she says.



# T&T as the regional MICE hub

continued...



Roxanne Pantin recalls the level of coordination, collaboration and cooperation required for Trinidad and Tobago to successfully host the Miss Universe Pageant in May 1999, as well as the Summit of the Americas, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) Meeting, in April and November 2009, respectively.

She says if we are to realise our dream of being a regional MICE hub, that level of coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and professionalism will be required, at a minimum.

“Events management and planning professionals will need to up their game if we are to successfully pull off multiple international events and conferences in any given year,” she says.

“That will include a clear understanding of protocol and an awareness of geopolitics, if you are going to have conference participants from different countries where there might be political undercurrents at play. It also means being sensitive to ethnic differences, and the impact of religion on things such as diet restrictions and preferences. It also means understanding the importance of details such as how a person chooses to identify their gender,” she adds.

The CAEP interim president wants to see the events industry do better in terms of sustainability and managing its carbon footprint. She believes this is another necessary element in making this country the MICE hub in the region.

“We must reduce our dependence on paper and single-use plastics—we know this is bad for the environment. We can do better in protecting our environment, regardless of the size of our events,” she asserts.

“We can set up water stations at our events and have participants walk with their personal water bottles and fill up at them, or use pitchers and glasses. That is much better for the environment than providing water in plastic bottles that end up either in the drains or in the landfill, which already is busting at the seams,” she adds.

“Little things like having recycling bins at your event, or using eco-friendly materials, or even trying to go paperless all can make a difference in keeping your event sustainable and environmentally safe,” Roxanne Pantin says, highlighting moves she has made in this regard.

She recalls attending an international event that hosted 70,000 people over several days, and notes that at the end of it, the venue and surrounding environment were left in pristine condition, and the waste output was kept to a minimum.

“I have seen it in action and know that it is possible to host a large event but leave a tiny carbon footprint,” she says. “The leadership at the top of the organization must embrace this, deeming it corporate culture. That’s the way to ensure everyone in the company follows through—in their everyday operations, and when they host events.”

Roxanne Pantin states security is another area that needs serious attention.

“We cannot invite 2,500 people here for a conference and tell them they cannot freely move about downtown, because of crime and criminal activity,” she says. “This is an area the authorities must deal with if we are going to be having hundreds of thousands of visitors here on an annual basis.”

The CAEP interim president notes that for most Trinidadians, the only time tourism is important is at Carnival time.

“We’ve got to change that mindset,” she argues. “350,000 people come to Trinidad over a period of 10 days for Carnival alone. There is no reason why we cannot welcome that number of visitors, and even more, during other times of the year.”

She maintains that the thinking must transform to one that sees tourism as an economic activity all year round, with a focus on being an exciting, welcoming destination—whether for leisure or MICE events.

She says this is what Tobago is doing.

“Tobago already has identified and is promoting Shaw Park as its centre for events. They’ve been hosting many big events there. However, the Queen’s Park Savannah in Trinidad still remains underdeveloped and underutilized,” she points out. “I hope Trinidad can take a page out of Tobago’s book and work on enhancing its own potential locations for events, ensuring the spaces created are versatile enough to meet the requirements for a multiplicity of events,” the CAEP interim president says.

She also points out that to properly service an expanded industry, there will be a need for more professionals operating in it at all levels, and at times collaborating with each other to make the events successful.

## Register on TTCSI’s NSEP

She is encouraging events industry practitioners to register with the TTCSI’s National Services Exporters Portal (NSEP), which she says will help give a clearer picture as to how many professionals are still operating and what specialist skills are still available in the industry, as T&T emerges from the most dangerous period of the pandemic, and attempts to rebuild.

“There is enough of the pie to go around for everyone. We won’t see true growth or sustainable development in the industry if all the opportunities are concentrated in only a few hands,” Roxanne Pantin says.

She adds: “We must bring all available resources together, sharing information and opportunities if all levels of events professionals are to build up their capacity, so the industry can reach its full potential.”



# The Romance Market



Weddings are a major feature of the Romance Market, and a highly competitive subsector of the events industry.

Founder of Trinidad Weddings and trinidadweddings.com, Simone Sant-Ghuran, reveals the weddings subsector was hit very hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and may not be back to full strength before 2024 or 2025.

She says for many years, the average T&T wedding stayed steady at around 200-250 guests, but that changed significantly with the pandemic.

“Weddings either were postponed or cancelled altogether, especially in the early days of the pandemic,” she recalls.

“Couples who chose to get married during that time mostly did so with a ‘bare bones’ guest list and by using very few wedding vendor partners/suppliers. Of course, this was very damaging for an industry such as ours, because the larger the wedding, the more wedding vendor partners in the industry get booked and in turn get to support each other, work together and be economically viable.”

She notes this has meant that the wedding and events industry has lost much of its specialised talent.

“Many rental companies have sold off inventory and some wedding professionals I know have left to do food and beverage, beauty products and real estate, to name a few,” Sant-Ghuran says.

“Right now, we are still in recovery mode, and until we are able to rebuild the wedding and events industry, finding the right wedding vendors and resources may be difficult, as many vendors would have gone out of business,” she added.



Bride University Workshop, hosted by TrinidadWeddings 2018

**Simone Sant – Ghuran**  
Winner of the Inaugural Caribbean Lawrance  
Placide Services Go Global Award 2019

To ensure a strong recovery, Government support is critical. Simone Sant-Ghuran notes that while Government did make support grants available through NEDCO and the Credit Union sector, what was provided was not commensurate with the earnings industry players would have lost.

“Remember, many of us could not work for at least 15 to 18 months, as the industry was basically shut down,” she points out.

“The maximum grant being offered was roughly \$20,000 which is what some people would have made in one month. That is nowhere near enough to help someone out of business for over a year. In addition, most people had to wait six months before they could even receive the grant they had applied for.”

The Trinidad Weddings boss says many industry players were unable to pivot within the industry itself—many were forced to go to other sectors and industries to survive.

“Unless you were in the digital arena like us, you would have had no choice but to pivot out of this industry altogether,” she says. “We were able to hold our client consultations online, and offer digital streaming of weddings and the like. However, not everyone operating in this industry could have done the same. For example, how could someone who specialises in wedding cakes pivot, when that is their speciality? It was very tough for all of us.”

She believes hybrid wedding events will remain a staple in the future, since live streaming makes it possible for family members and friends abroad to participate in a loved one’s special day if they cannot physically be there. However, she says for weddings, nothing can really replace that special human touch.

Another trend that will remain over the next couple of years is the micro-wedding.

“People seemed to enjoy the intimacy of the micro-wedding, which was one solution we came up with during the pandemic.



The only exceptions,” she says, “may come with Indian and Syrian weddings, which tend to have upwards of 500 guests. Eventually, the guest lists will increase but not necessarily to pre-pandemic levels.”

She recounts a wedding she hosted during the height of the pandemic, in which they incorporated both live streaming and micro-wedding elements.

“We created a shift system which allowed the bride to have everyone on her guest list enjoy her special day with her,” she recalls. “We live streamed the ceremony from the church, and there were guests at the home who were able to see the ceremony that way. For the reception segment, we split up the guests into different groups, allotting a specific block of time to each, so they could participate in those festivities.”

Simone Sant-Ghuran believes the Government needs to revisit its official position on LGBTQ+ relationships, given that the global weddings market is enjoying a boost from weddings in this community.

A study in the United States which was released in June 2020 revealed that since same-sex marriage was legalized in 2015 in that country, same-sex weddings boosted economies by US\$3.8 billion. According to the report from the UCLA School of Law’s Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy, the same-sex wedding industry also supported at least 45,000 jobs and generated more than \$244.1 million in state and local sales tax since June 2015.



“This may be controversial but we need the legislation to change so that marriage in this country can be more inclusive, allowing the LGBTQ+ community here to have weddings and have their unions legally recognized,” she says. “Most of the weddings happening now in the US and Europe are LGBTQ+ weddings. This is a major market we are missing out on, both from the wedding event perspective, as well as in terms of potential tourism earnings.”

The Trinidad Weddings boss points to one trend that has developed over the last couple of years—the creation and offering of private residences and Bed & Breakfast establishments, even restaurants, as intimate wedding venues.

“The reality is that the more lucrative weddings actually take place in Trinidad,” she points out. “They may do a smaller or more intimate ceremony in Tobago, but for the large-sized event, they always come to Trinidad. Often, another type of ceremony and/or reception, or a bigger one is held in Trinidad.”

### Outlook & Opportunities

In terms of future trends, Simone Sant-Ghuran is of the view that “green weddings” will continue to be a feature, as the industry moves towards being more sustainable.

“Some vendors have received legal letters from couples for breach of contract,” she notes. “In addition, more couples have begun to include wedding insurance in their expenses, which is a form of public liability protection. This seeks to reduce the extent of their liability in the event of a guest having an accident at their wedding, or a service provider failing to deliver according to their contract terms, among other things.”

“On the flip side, more vendors are incorporating force majeure clauses in their contracts,” she says, “to protect against the most unlikely event causing a cancellation or postponement of a wedding.” Noting that the wedding industry is highly unregulated, she believes this is an area where Government could step in.



Feature speaker at the Association of Bridal Consultants New York Meeting, 2017



Delivering the Wedding Planning Master Class for Ashley Home Store, Trinidad

“The Freebird Restaurant, which is located in the beautiful Wild Fowl Trust in Pointe-a-Pierre, offers itself as a wedding venue. For me,” she says, “those kinds of spaces really speak to the essence and uniqueness of Trinidad, more so than the large hotels.”

According to Simone Sant-Ghuran, while the events managers and planners in Trinidad are basically standing on their own, those in Tobago have the full support and backing of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), especially in terms of ensuring their attendance at international trade shows and familiarization tours. It is part of a larger THA strategy to market the island as a dream destination for weddings.

She notes, however, that Tobago still is not reaching its full potential in this area and makes a case for a more level playing field, in terms of additional state support for the industry overall.

“We actually highlighted this in our magazine released just before the pandemic, in 2019,” she recalls. “While there are people still doing the full-on wedding glam, we are seeing more couples caring about the environment. Many are trying to limit the amount of waste their wedding generates. Some are opting to not have wedding favours but instead are donating those funds to a charity or an animal shelter. I believe this trend will continue as more couples become mindful of their wedding’s carbon footprint and environmental impact.”

She is concerned that persons seeking the services of wedding events professionals get value for money, as the industry has become even more competitive, post-pandemic. She notes that unfortunately, not everyone operating in the industry does so with the highest ethics and more than one couple has found themselves victims of poor-quality service, leading to them taking legal action.

“Anyone could wake up tomorrow and decide to be a fete promoter or a wedding planner, with a slick marketing, branding and social media campaign, and if patrons or couples fail to do their due diligence, they can be taken for quite a ride,” the Trinidad Weddings boss laments.

“We need proper standards, not only in terms of best practice, but for entry into the industry. At the most basic level, a wedding planner or event manager should have a license to practice, based on a combination of experience and qualifications,” she says.

She adds: “Ideally, there should be a registry of industry professionals which potential clients could use to cross-check their bona fides, to ensure they aren’t defrauded.”

Like Roxanne Pantin, Simone Sant-Ghuran thinks the TTCSI’s NSEP could facilitate the creation of such a registry, as more industry practitioners and professionals sign up to the portal. “The NSEP is definitely a step in the right direction,” she says.



# “The future is *virtual...and hybrid...*”

While virtual events have been around for a long time before the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no question that their popularity increased significantly during the pandemic.

Indeed, virtual events software providers faced increasing demand worldwide, and any recovery the events industry began to experience after the first year of the pandemic would have been as a result of the increased uptake of virtual and hybrid events, globally.

Events industry practitioners expect that post-pandemic, the industry will be segmented into virtual, hybrid and physical, with the hybrid event forecast to be the fastest-growing segment going into the future.



“I’ve noticed that most people are now opting to do hybrid events,” she says, “based on what I see happening internationally. The software used to host the online components is evolving in a pretty exciting way. Virtual and augmented reality used in gaming are being incorporated more and more, especially for events attracting a younger audience.”

She recounts the experience of attending a major conference in China, virtually, from Trinidad.

“I was able to walk in freely into the virtual conference spaces, and discover the exhibits, and interact with exhibitors,” she recalls, “but that required a high bandwidth and plenty of data. I have that at my disposal, but not everyone does.”

“We will need to up the ante with our internet capability here in T&T and the wider Caribbean,” she asserts. “The way forward for the events industry is the hybrid solution, and if Trinidad is to evolve into the MICE hub of the region, offering virtual elements in our meetings and conferences, then we will have to improve our internet quality and capability.”

Lisa Shandilya observes that events managers and planners also need to become conversant with the new technologies currently available, designed to make hybrid events a success. A reluctance to embrace the new paradigm could lead to one being left behind, especially as this is the way the world is going.

“Tourism leaders really should consider having their event planners focus on getting in tune with this digitized world. Every major tourism destination has embraced this,” she notes. “Curaçao is very big in event management platforms. Jamaica used the pandemic period to gain some mastery in this area, as well.”

“I believe T&T will be able to compete very successfully against the other islands once our people become comfortable with the new technology, because we already have very talented practitioners and professionals operating in this industry,” she says. “Our event planners and managers now need to begin thinking along the technology lines, seeing the opportunities functioning in a hybrid model—both the physical and virtual worlds—can bring.”

Lisa Shandilya’s expertise as an events manager and planner straddles both the physical and virtual worlds. She is the General Manager at The Chancellor Hotel, and the founder of Revolution Conference Management and Event Solutions (CMES), a company that provides an event management portal and CALA19 Event App for event professionals to plan and execute events. In partnership with an international event software developer, Revolution CMES works to equip planners within the Caribbean and Latin American region with the latest event app technology.

According to Lisa Shandilya, hybrid events are the new normal, and the technology continues to evolve rapidly to keep up with the demand.





## Bottlenecks to address

The Revolution CMES boss notes that for businesses like hers which operate internationally, being able to easily access foreign exchange is essential.

“There isn’t a gateway the banking sector has provided that allows foreign currency to come into the country, which is important for those of us being paid in foreign currency for our services,” she says. “They need to allow people to have a gateway to a US account in Trinidad, and with reasonable charges for the service.”

She also would like the banking community to review the charges being applied to customers’ online transactions.

Lisa Shandilya observes that as with the physical world, the virtual world has its own dangers—the constant threat of cyberattacks, and the harsh reality of cyber-based industrial espionage—which must be addressed.

“It is important that users and practitioners become aware of the built-in security elements in the software they use to host their meetings and conferences,” Lisa Shandilya points out. “The top-quality applications and platforms have comprehensive encryption protocols, along with other critical security infrastructure, to reduce the likelihood of cyberattacks and espionage.”

“What we also need,” she says, “is for the police to be able to track down and deal with the person or entity behind a cyberattack, should we become a victim. Government



may need to adjust current legislation to facilitate this and support the prosecution of such persons.”

The Revolution CMES founder is concerned that the existing data protection laws may need strengthening.

“It is absolutely critical that the events software platform chosen for a meeting or conference is secure enough to prevent the meeting being hacked, spammed or bombed, as well as ensure participants’ personal and contact data is not compromised,” she explains.

In terms of sustainability and eco-friendliness, Lisa Shandilya points out that with virtual events, one is operating in a paperless environment, with everything happening online, and that means a much-reduced carbon footprint.

She says the challenge comes with the health and wellness aspect, as being ‘plugged in’ for many hours can be physically exhausting, which event organisers learnt as the virtual world was embraced more and more.

“I had to advise a client against hosting a virtual conference for eight continuous hours, but to break it down to four or five hours,” she recalls. “Even then, the conference flow needs to be broken up with pre-produced video items and entertainment, to manage the intensity.”

As the events industry leans more towards the hybrid event, Lisa Shandilya believes more opportunities will be created for technical and technology workers. She says Government has a role to play here, ensuring that such skills are taught and developed at all levels of the education system, creating the skilled workers needed to take the industry forward.

“We must ensure more young people get into and are trained in the technology field,” she urges. “Not only at the tertiary level with degrees, but at the technical level as well.”



# A final word...



The Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI) has been strongly advocating for a greater focus on and investment in the local services sector, championing its potential not only to increase its share of Gross Domestic Product, but also to earn serious foreign exchange for this country.

Such thinking is at the heart of its Gateway to Trade (G2T) Programme which was designed to create an “exporters’ mindset” in those firms in services sub-sectors with the greatest potential to earn foreign exchange and compete globally. TTCSI’s heavy investment in the programme, and its preparing vanguard services firms for the global export market, is a first yet critical step.

A systematic approach such as this must be applied to all non-energy sectors of the T&T economy if economic diversification is to be truly achieved.

One major sub-sector of the overall services sector whose tremendous potential we continue to underestimate is tourism, in which the events industry is located. The harsh reality is that Trinidad and Tobago must get serious about tourism very quickly, otherwise it will be left way behind the rest of its Caribbean neighbours who are making great leaps to cement themselves as premier destinations in the region.

The energy sector won’t always be our economic safety net, hence the need to act swiftly on opportunities inherent in tourism overall, and events in particular. Every other country in the region looks at and treats tourism as an opportunity for their economic sustainability. For Trinidad and Tobago, it could be a considerable opportunity to earn alternative revenues and reduce this country’s reliance on the oil and gas sector.

A comprehensive and holistic approach must be applied, and an important step was taken with the creation of the Cluster Development Plan (CDP) mentioned at the beginning of this edition of Eye on Services.

Our research at TTCSI has revealed that hundreds of small and medium enterprises operating in the tourism sector—especially in the events industry—are employing thousands of people, and at present, these businesses are responsible for earning at least five to seven percent of this country’s GDP.

It must become the national mission to ensure there is a healthy and sustainable environment for these businesses to grow and thrive, so they can continue to earn foreign exchange for this country, as well as continue to employ thousands of people at all levels of skill and experience. If we build the right environment for the sustainable growth of our small and medium-sized firms in this sector, then we will surely be laying a strong foundation for a resilient, diversified economy for Trinidad and Tobago.

At TTCSI, we understand this clearly, and we will continue to do our part to make such a vision a reality.

