

Civil service remote work policy under review



File: Minister of Public Administration, Allyson West

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The Ministry of Public Administration has received the first draft of the remote work policy for T&T's Civil Service, which is currently under review pending approval by the project's steering committee. Approval is expected to take place shortly.

However, the project is at phase three of a five-phase framework and upon completion of phase five, the final remote work policy framework and implementation plan will then be submitted to the Cabinet for its consideration.

Public Administration Minister Allyson West indicated this in the Senate yesterday replying to UNC Senator Wade Mark's call for an update and timeline for the implementation of the remote work policy for the civil service.

West said PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory Services (PwC) was contracted on January 22, 2024, by the ministry to provide consultancy services for the development of the remote work policy for T&T's Civil Service.

PwC emerged as the successful consultant out of three in the approved procurement process. Project launch was January 26, 2024.

The first phase has been completed with the first deliverable, the 'inception report' approved by the ministry's steering committee on June 6, 2024.

Phase two, which required the complete diagnostic of the civil service, has also been completed. That involved meetings by PwC and the ministry with key stakeholders affording PwC a greater understanding of the civil service. That helped determine the level of interest in remote work; level of readiness for this (inclusive of technological infrastructure, organisation culture, employee capability to independently work etc); type of work, demographics; and level of efficiency/ productivity.

West said the project is now in phase three and "the draft policy and the proposal for pilot testing is currently before the Cabinet's finance and general purposes sub-committee (F&GP) where it is the subject of robust review and enquiry. The completion of the other phases is dependent on whether and when Cabinet's approval is received to proceed."

The final draft policy will be informed by, but not limited to, a number of activities including issuing baseline surveys to all civil service employees to ascertain their view on the impact of remote work as it pertains to efficiency, productivity, work-life balance and commute distance.

The final draft remote work policy and framework will, on completion, signal the end of phase four of the project and feedback will be obtained on it along with ministerial review.

West said on completion of phase five, the final remote work policy framework and implementation plan will be submitted for Cabinet's consideration. She said while there is a timeframe for the project as agreed between the project team and ministry, the timeframe for completion of the plan is very dependent on the timeline within which the Cabinet reviews and approves the testing as well as the final product.

A final test is supposed to be in the next phase and F&GP's comments and recommendations on that are awaited, West said.