

ABSTRACT

After the downturn in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago during the early to mid 1980's, the Government adopted a policy of encouraging industries with the potential to earn foreign exchange through exports, save foreign exchange through the utilisation of indigenous raw material resources and technology, and create employment. The non-metallic mineral resources sector was identified by both local and international agencies as a sector with the potential for diversification and expansion to achieve Government's objectives.

The present study concludes that this sector in Trinidad has not realised its full potential and identifies several factors constraining overall development of the sector. The State's perception of the sector has been limited to the quarrying industry only, and quarry outputs have largely been limited in application to construction only. However, quarrying should be perceived as only the first phase in the development of the value adding activities of a larger sector, that could lead to the achievement of Government's economic objectives.

Specific problems constraining development of the sector include inadequate data on the distribution and allocation of the mineral resources, poor land allocation policies, fragmented and sometimes ineffective legislation, inappropriate institutional arrangements for management, an inability to monitor the sector and enforce legislation, conflicting economic policies and development objectives, and a lack of political will to implement legislative and other changes

to improve the present state of affairs.

This study therefore recommends that the State review and expand its definition of the sector, with a view to restructuring the legal and administrative frameworks at present governing the sector, reformulating economic policies that are compatible with development objectives for the sector, and managing the sector's entire development through the full process of extraction, processing and manufacturing. These changes are necessary to optimise the use of the non-metallic mineral resources of Trinidad, and to arrest and control the environmental degradation that occurs as a consequence of inadequate management of quarrying activities.