

**ABSTRACT****INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND THE IRON AND STEEL  
INDUSTRY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: A MICROECONOMIC  
ENQUIRY OF ISCOTT/CIL**

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The Pt. Lisas steel facility is one of several energy-based projects that was given the responsibility of 'monetizing' Trinidad & Tobago's abundant natural gas reserves. The complex formed an integral part of the Government's resource based industrialisation (RBI) strategy of the mid-1970s and led to the incorporation of the Iron and Steel Company of Trinidad & Tobago (ISCOTT) in 1975. From its inception however, ISCOTT was plagued by a host of technical, managerial and marketing problems. Consequently, the company remained an inefficient enterprise for most of its operational history.

Arising out of a decision in 1988 to lease the facility, Caribbean Ispat Limited (CIL), assumed control of the steelworks in 1989. Upon assuming control, CIL invested in new technologies, re-appraised the managerial system, and broadened its market base among other improvements. This led to continued production increases coupled with falling production costs, which have undoubtedly enhanced the company's profitability.

In light of these operating results, the perception is that CIL has transformed the steel plant into an internationally competitive steel entity.

By employing both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the thesis concluded, on the overall balance of measures, that CIL is an internationally competitive steel making entity. Further, in examining whether the strategies by CIL for achieving international competitiveness were consistent with those advanced in the literature, the thesis concluded that they were; notwithstanding the fact that a few of the strategies advanced were not fully adopted by CIL.

Given the potential for further development of the industry in the post-ISCOTT era, as evidenced by recent foreign direct investment in the industry, policies and programmes should be aimed at developing a well integrated industry. In this regard, policy recommendations for facilitating the development of small, medium and large-scale enterprises have been suggested.