



## Learn Your World: Trinidad and Tobago

**Skills and Professional Development**



To support your global practice, *ACC Docket* offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



**Economy**

GDP (purchasing power parity in USD)

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<b>Population</b>	\$43.415 billion
<b>Corruption</b>	1,349,667 (2015 estimate) According to Transparency International's "2015 Corruption Perception Index," Trinidad & Tobago is the 72nd "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) country out of the 168 surveyed.
<b>Economic forecast</b>	Trinidad and Tobago's essential energy sector is struggling to recover from a deep crisis. Output in the energy sector continued to decline in the first quarter of this year. The contraction in oil output prompted a sharp rise in unemployment at the end of 2015 and further job cuts in the first months of 2016. The bleak economic outlook is expected to persist amid rising unemployment and depleting foreign reserves. Analysts expect that the economy will contract 1.4 percent this year, which is down 0.4 percent points from last month's forecast. In 2017, the economy is expected to see a 1.6 percent expansion, according to Focus Economics.
<b>Additional resources</b>	<a href="#"><u>Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, English-language newspaper</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Trinidad Daily Express, English-language newspaper</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Trinidad and Tobago tourism</u></a>

With a population of approximately 1.3 million, I think it would surprise those who have never traveled to Trinidad and Tobago to discover its high standard of living and high level of industrialization due to its extensive petroleum and natural gas production. In fact, the country has one of the highest GDPs in the Caribbean.

The official language of Trinidad and Tobago is English, and Trinidadians are known for being direct and to the point. Although there is a level of familiarity, there is also quite a bit of humor in practice while doing business in the country.

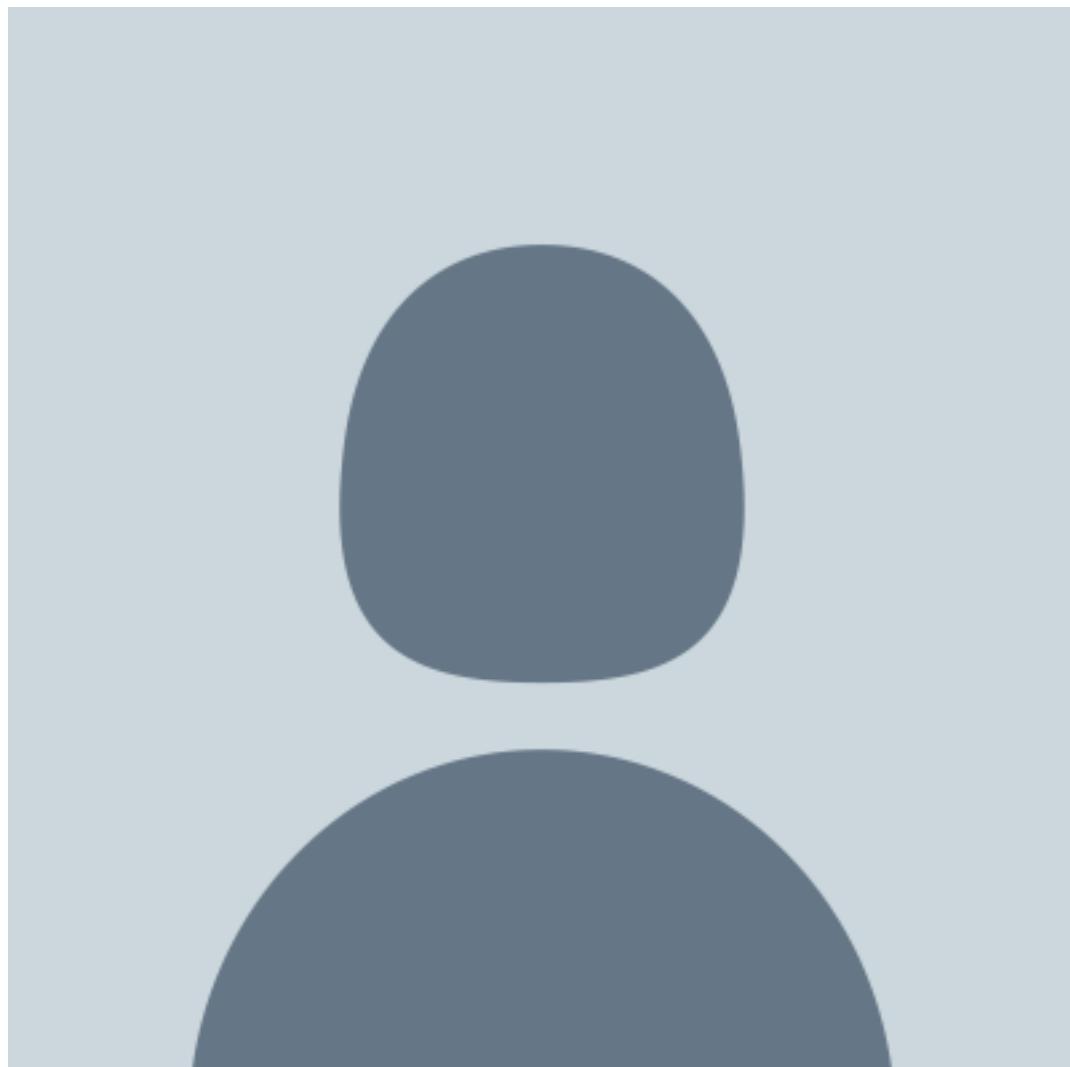
Despite our tropical weather, most attorneys and business professionals dress in suits, which are mostly comprised of dark colors. Trinidadians are famous for their lack of punctuality. In business settings, however, there is still a high level of expectation to be on time.

External legal advisors are no strangers to Trinidad and Tobago, but breaking into the market can be difficult for a law firm that has never traveled to the country or doesn't understand the culture. Socializing is an important part of developing business partnerships. Businesses in Trinidad and Tobago, especially for external attorneys, run on relationships that have developed over time. In-house counsel will find that if they deal with external counsel in the region, they get a better response if they have already developed a relationship with them.

Decisions can often be based on the personal preferences of decision makers, so developing trust and personal relationships is crucial. You should pay attention to hierarchy structures and seek decisions from those in authority. Network with other local attorneys from time to time to assist in getting things done in a timely manner.

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