

'T&T receives US\$17.3B from energy in 14 years'



Sherwin Long, Head of the Secretariat of T&T Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI)

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Energy companies generated an estimated US\$17.3 billion in foreign exchange between 2011 and 2024, underscoring the sector's continued centrality to T&T's economic stability despite growing volatility, according to data presented by the Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (TTEITI).

Head of the secretariat at the TTEITI, Sherwin Long, said the energy sector remains the country's single largest source of foreign exchange, with BP and the National Gas Company (NGC) alone contributing a combined US\$14.8 billion over the period.

The figures are based on reporting from the five largest contributors, BP, Shell, EOG, Woodside and NGC.

“Foreign exchange availability affects import costs, financial planning and country risk,” Long said, noting that this type of data is critical for businesses assessing exposure in a constrained forex environment.

Long was speaking at TTEITI: Insights for Decision Making, a breakfast forum hosted yesterday by the TTEITI in collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

He told the audience that transparency in the energy sector is not an academic exercise but a practical business tool that can help firms assess risk, anticipate policy shifts and make informed decisions in an increasingly volatile environment.

Long explained that the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is the global benchmark for transparency in oil, gas and mining and is often described as an “ISO for transparency”.

He said the EITI framework is designed to answer three core questions. How much do we earn from our resources? Who do we partner with to develop them? And do our systems work optimally to ensure we get value for our resources? Long said.

To answer these questions, Long said the TTEITI conducts a reconciliation exercise comparing what extractive companies report paying to the State with what the government reports receiving.

Any discrepancies are identified and explained by an independent auditor. The initiative also focuses on beneficial ownership disclosure, identifying the controlling interests behind companies operating in the sector, and assessing whether tax, audit and data management systems are delivering value.

He said participation in the EITI sends a strong signal to investors.

“When a company or a country signs up to EITI, you want to signal that you want the right type of businesses, those willing to disclose their tax information to the public,” Long said.

He outlined three strategic priorities guiding the TTEITI’s work: strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation, informing the energy transition using ESG-related data and tackling corruption.

Turning to broader economic trends, Long said TTEITI's reporting, which dates back to 2011, allows users to track longterm shifts in fiscal performance and policy outcomes.

"Data sends signals," he said.

"It tells you what's happening in the tax space, what's happening in the policy space, and it supports ESG analysis."

Using a "bird's-eye view" of the economy, Long showed that contractions in the energy sector almost always coincide with weaker overall GDP performance.

He pointed to the swing from a 10 per cent contraction in energy GDP in the third quarter of 2023 to growth of 6.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024.

"These movements matter for businesses. They affect consumer spending, hiring decisions and investment planning," he said.

Despite diversification efforts, Long said energy revenue remains a major, though volatile contributor, to Government income, driven largely by external factors such as global energy prices, supply-demand imbalances and geopolitical tensions.

He also highlighted the fiscal burden of fuel subsidies, noting that between 2011 and 2025, subsidy liabilities totalled TT\$22.3 billion, even after accounting for the petroleum production levy paid by crude oil producers. That sum, he said, was equivalent to nine years of GATE funding. Over the same period, levy contributions declined by 62 per cent due to falling oil production.

At the firm level, Long said Shell, BP and NGC have been the largest contributors to Government revenue, with Shell overtaking others in recent years due largely to extraordinary "enhanced revenue payments" linked to 2020 negotiations.

He also drew attention to production-sharing contracts, noting that while Government profit shares generally covered tax obligations at the aggregate level, deeper analysis showed that some individual contracts failed to generate sufficient value.

“In a country that doesn’t practice contract transparency, this sends a signal about the value we retain from these contracts,” Long said.

Also addressing the forum, TT Chamber CEO Vashti Guyadeen said TTEITI’s verification work provides confidence in the integrity of energy sector data. She said more than \$2 billion in payments have been reconciled over 15 years, with unexplained differences of just \$4,500.

“Transparency data is not just about compliance,” Guyadeen said. “It is a strategic business input.”

She said the Chamber partnered with TTEITI to move “from data to dialogue, and from dialogue to better decisions.”