



TIDCO

Trade Facilitation Office
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Business Owners, Manufacturers, Suppliers....

Are you interested in doing business with companies in Cuba?

Do you need information on penetrating the Cuban market?

Have you identified a source of raw materials for your products in Cuba?

Well, you should contact the Cuba Trade Facilitation Office, an initiative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago designed to increase trade and business between T&T and Cuba by acting as a conduit between Trinbagonian businesses and those companies in Cuba which are licensed to import and sell to the end user. The office is located in the Miramar Business Complex, Municipio Playa, Havana, Cuba, in close proximity to a number of foreign companies conducting business in Cuba.

Over the years, the full impact of efforts to penetrate the Cuban market had not been realised due to the unique characteristics of Cuba's State-controlled, planned economy in which the means of production are owned and run by the State. In comparison, Trinidad and Tobago businesses are accustomed to and have been successfully trading with market economies similar to our own, driven by the private sector.

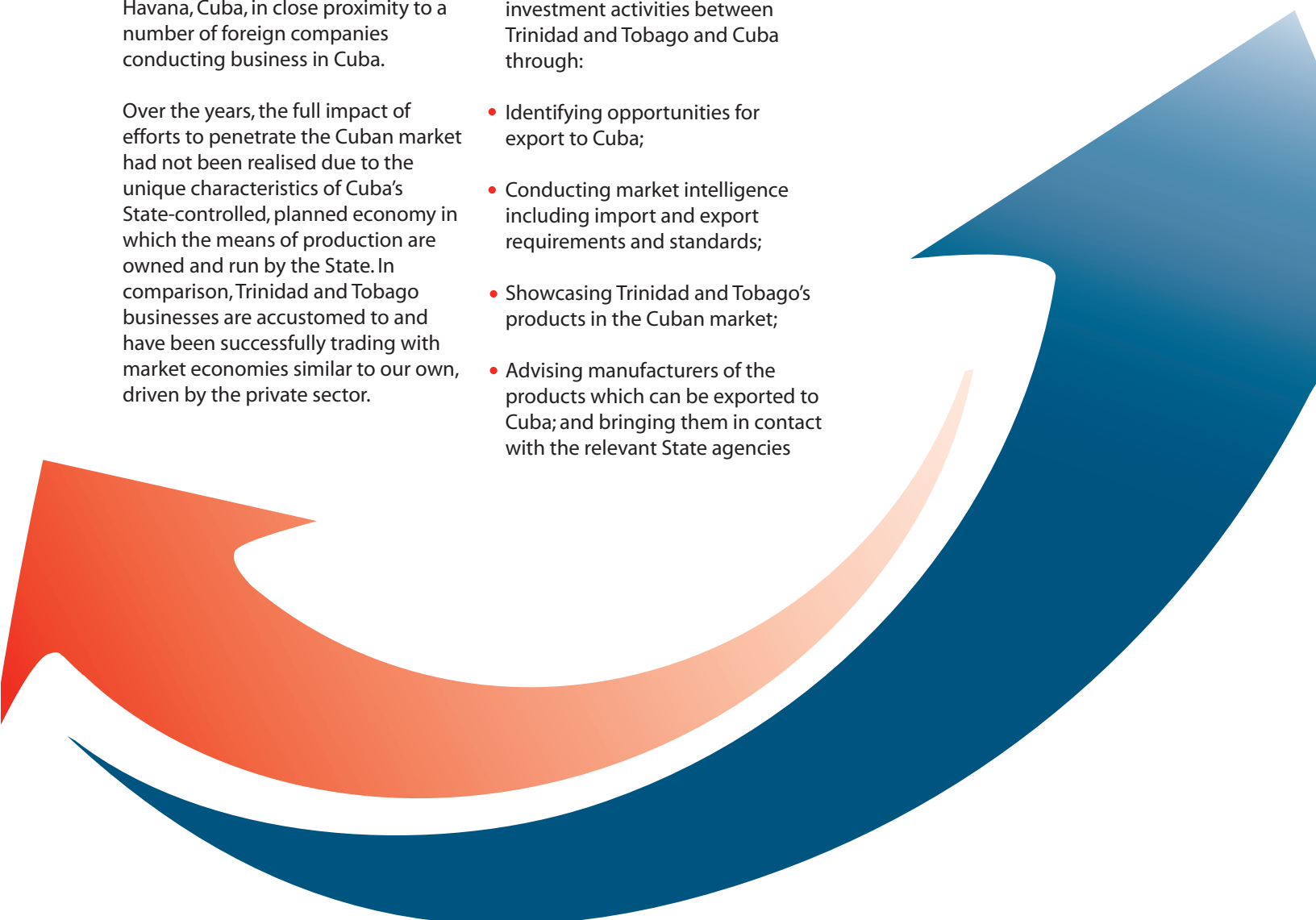
The approach to penetrate the Cuban market therefore has to be different to traditional market entry strategies, hence the establishment of the Trade Facilitation Office (TFO).

More specifically, the Office will promote and facilitate trade and investment activities between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba through:

- Identifying opportunities for export to Cuba;
- Conducting market intelligence including import and export requirements and standards;
- Showcasing Trinidad and Tobago's products in the Cuban market;
- Advising manufacturers of the products which can be exported to Cuba; and bringing them in contact with the relevant State agencies

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Establishment of the CTFO in Cuba will benefit business and trade through:

a) Better access to Cuban companies authorized by the State to import goods and services.

By establishing a listing of all the Authorized Cuban Importers for each industry and providing the link for direct contact with them, the CTFO will pave the way for Trinidad and Tobago exporters. A series of meetings are already being planned for the Manager to network with the decision makers in these companies.

b) Better access to general and industry specific market research as well as economic information essential to any market entry plan.

Being on the ground 24/7, the CTFO will have its finger on the pulse of key economic developments and opportunities in Cuba, including upcoming projects and this information will be relayed to the business community. The CTFO will also assist in conducting market research which is a prerequisite for market entry.

c) Minimising bureaucratic delays with regard to turn around time between shipments.

The TFO will be able to assist the shipment process by coordinating with the relevant Shipping or Customs agency and the Importer, with a view to resolving any problems in an expeditious manner.



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d) Alleviation of communication and language barriers.

Communication with Cuba by land lines is a challenge from Trinidad and Tobago however, local communication is very easy. In addition, the CTFO staff members are fluent in both English and Spanish and will be able to facilitate the communication process and enhance the conduct of business.

e) Providing Government support to the business community to enter this market

The presence of an entity established by the government of Trinidad and Tobago is firm proof of Government's commitment to increase trade and business activity with Cuba, as part of the overall drive to increase economic growth.

The Republic of Cuba presents a relatively untapped market for Trinidad and Tobago, which is a leading player in the arena of regional exports. Given a population of 11,000,000; consecutive GDP growth of 4 per cent (approx.) over the past four years, a highly educated population and its geographic proximity, the Cuban market presents attractive opportunities for trade and business.

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