



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Trade and Industry**

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# *Building a Quality Culture in Trinidad and Tobago Launch*

## *Virtual Launch*

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FEATURE ADDRESS  
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON  
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2021

## SALUTATIONS

- The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Planning and Development
- His Excellency, Ambassador Peter Cavendish, Head of Delegation, European Union Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago,
- Mr. Desmond John, Director, Development Cooperation, CARIFORUM Directorate
- Mr. Daniel Best, Director, Projects Department, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB),
- Ms. Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Ms Ayleen Alleyne-Ovid, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Mr. Sanjin Soldatic, Chargé d'affaires/Political Officer, European Union Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Derek Luk Pat, Executive Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards
- Dr. Mahindra Ramesh Ramdeen, Chief Executive Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufactures Association
- Specially invited guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning,

It is indeed a great honour for me to be here this morning at the launch of yet another element of the National Quality Policy, Building a Quality Culture in Trinidad and Tobago.

As you may be aware, in 2018, the Government launched the National Quality Policy for Trinidad and Tobago to accelerate the transition towards a more diversified economy and expand business, investment and export-led trade in the non-energy sector.

Under Component 4 of the National Quality Policy, Enabling a Quality Culture and Proactive Environment, the general objective of Building a Quality Culture is to bring awareness, understanding and appreciation for the importance of quality principles, standards and practices for consumers, businesses, public sector entities and regulatory agencies in Trinidad and Tobago.

I am pleased to state that Trinidad and Tobago managed to secure funding through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Standby Facility for Capacity Building under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), for three projects.

This facility will be implemented by the Caribbean Development Bank. One of the approved projects is building a National Quality Policy in the amount of the One Hundred and Ninety Eight Thousand Euros (€\$198,000), of which, One Hundred and Forty Three Thousand Euros (€\$143,000) will be provided by the European Union through the Caribbean Development Bank and Fifty Five Thousand Euros (€\$55,000) via “in kind” contribution of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and will be effected through the TTBS.

This Project will be implemented through a three-pronged approach:

The **first component** entails the development and implementation of a public awareness and sensitisation programme which is expected to create a more quality conscious population and business sector that supports a diversified and competitive economy.

The **second component** focuses on the development and implementation of a quality intelligence programme. This component seeks to upgrade the value chains of organisations through the adoption of quality management principles and practices and good regulatory practices in operations. It is expected that this programme will assist small and medium sized enterprises, micro-entrepreneurs and female run business to reach a state of export readiness.

Additionally, manufacturers, in particular, will be encouraged to improve the quality of their goods to become more competitive resulting in increased demand, increased revenue and export earnings.

Global purchasers require products and services that meet rigorous and advanced standards of quality to ensure that such products and services integrate flawlessly with others in the supply chain. The successful implementation of this component will therefore allow manufacturers and service suppliers to attach themselves to Global Value Chains as they become versed in global best practices.

The **third and final component** looks at the sustainability of the project and will seek to develop and implement a continuous learning and improvement programme. This component will include training of the TTBS, the National Quality Council and the staff of the Ministry of Trade and Industry in the development and implementation of public awareness and sensitisation programmes. This is imperative to ensure continuity of successful quality awareness building beyond the life of the project.

### **Holistic Approach to Quality**

Since the launch of the National Quality Policy, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been implementing several programmes and initiatives. With the National Quality Policy at the core, the support of an efficient and effective National Quality Infrastructure is necessary to ensure the production of quality goods and services. Therefore, it is important that Institutions with responsibility for Accreditation, Standardization and Metrology and Quality Services for Conformity assessment meet international standards.

The launch and implementation of this project is a significant step in building a quality culture among our manufacturers, exporters, consumers and citizens. It will further encourage the participation and utilization of the existing projects being implemented by the Government to enhance the National Quality Infrastructure and implement the National Quality Policy. Some of the significant work already being undertaken includes:

- The Certification Programme for Food and Beverage Standards and Product Compliance (CPFSPC) and labelling and product testing support through the **Export Booster Initiative**. This Certification Programme covers the costs related to standards adoption and implementation, including audits and inspections, the acquisition of specialised equipment, infrastructural modifications, as well as certification costs;
- The second call for the invitation of Public Laboratories to participate in the National Programme for Accreditation of Laboratories;
- The establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (TTASCA), an independent National Accreditation body which will inspect how a body, product or service meets specified requirements. The draft legislation has been prepared and is currently being reviewed;
- The establishment of an advisory committee to support the implementation of the National Metrology Act including execution of a number of verification exercises for measuring devices at supermarkets and fuel stations and in the agricultural, manufacturing and retail sectors;
- The development of standards, specifically in the fashion, agriculture and manufacturing sectors; and
- Upgrading national laws to harmonise local standards with international standards and regulations.

The expected benefits to be derived from an improved Quality Culture include:

- deeper understanding of quality concepts and appreciation by consumers;
- incorporation of standards and quality processes in business operations to be more competitive with international goods and services;
- increased availability of information on quality management principles and practices and the services offered by the National Quality Council (NQC), MTI and the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS);
- safer and higher quality goods and services available to consumers;
- building the capacity of Micro, Small and Medium Size Enterprises to increase productivity and access to regional and international markets.

As the Government continues its implementation of the National Quality Policy, I wish to express my gratitude to the European Union for this funding through the Caribbean Development Bank for this project - Building a Quality Culture.

While each individual plays an integral role in the implementation of the National Quality Policy and the development of a robust Quality Infrastructure, the success of this Project rests on the support, coordination and responsibility of you, the stakeholders present today. I have full faith that together we can build a quality conscious society and foster inter-sectoral cooperation as we seek to develop a strong National Quality Culture.

I thank you.