



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

.....

Launch of the Enhanced TTBizLink Platform

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FEATURE ADDRESS

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

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Salutations:

- Honourable Penelope Beckles - Minister of Planning and Development
- Senator the Honourable Hassel Bacchus - Minister of Digital Transformation
- Honourable Richie Sookai - Minister in the Ministry of Works and Transport
- Senator Amrita Deonarine
- Ms. Ayleen Alleyne-Ovid - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry and other Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries
- Mr. Roger Roach - President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association
- Ms. Kiran Maharaj - President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- Other Members of the Private Sector
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

It is my distinct pleasure to be here with you today, to mark another significant milestone for the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Today, we celebrate the launch of our much anticipated Enhanced Single Window Application Software, branded as TTBizLink, which is testimony to the government's commitment to digital transformation and enhanced service delivery.

Before I delve into the details, I want to underscore the importance and value of streamlined processes and effective communication within government systems.

Over the years, we have recognized the need to bridge gaps, eliminate redundancy, and provide a seamless experience for citizens, businesses, and all stakeholders. The Enhanced TTBizLink platform, that we are launching today embodies this vision and marks a new era of efficiency and transparency.

Background

TTBizLink, when launched in October 2009, was the first of its kind in the Caribbean. This pioneering initiative arose out of efforts to improve Trinidad and Tobago's ease of doing business. Today we are here to recognize the ongoing development of this major IT platform that provides 24/7 access to over 40 trade and business-related government services, which allows parties to do business, and lodge standardized information and documents at a single point of entry in order to fulfil import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements online. The platform currently provides services to 23 government agencies across 8 separate Ministries and, to date, has registered 4,623 companies, 36,914 individuals and 399 approvers on the system.

Over the years the TTBizLink platform has been recognized for its innovative approach to improving public services and for outstanding service delivery. Most notably, these include:

- Category winner for *Innovation in Institutional Co-ordination* in the 2019 Inter-American Award in Innovation organized by the Organization of American States (OAS).
- Second place at the Inter-American Development Bank's 2018 *President's Award for Service Excellence and Innovation in the Public Sector*; and the

- *Diamond Standard Certification* in 2015 from the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) for excellence in service delivery in the public sector.

Enhanced SEW Platform

Allow me to shed light on the many benefits of TTBizLink. As you may be aware, the platform already eliminates the hassle of navigating multiple government departments and their respective processes, promotes transparency and accountability, and by digitizing and automating key processes, ensures faster, more accurate service delivery. Moreover, data-driven insights derived from this system enable us to make informed policy decisions, optimize resource allocation, and enhance our overall governance.

The new Enhanced TTBizLink Application Software has several new features including:

- a modernized, mobile responsive and user friendly interface;
- inherent security features and a self-audit facility, which improves transparency;
- available data in real time, which aids in decision-making;
- digital approvals which allow applicants to download signed and stamped approval documents;
- document verification via QR Code which allows anyone with a mobile phone to verify the authenticity of approval documents issued on TTBizLink;
- increased processing efficiency and knowledge sharing among multiple agencies;
- improved interoperability with other government systems such as the Customs and Excise Division ASYCUDA system and the Immigration Division's Border Management System;
- a pre-payment feature where users can draw down on payments when submitting applications; and most importantly
- the ability of users to make payments online for permits and licences. These include:
 - i) Individual and Group Work Permits from the Work Permit Secretariat at the Ministry of National Security;
 - ii) Licences of Premises and Import and Export Licences from the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Inspectorate of the Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division of the Ministry of Health;
 - iii) Import and Export Permits from the Animal Production and Health Division at the Ministry of Agriculture
 - iv) Certificates of Origin from exporTT and Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce; and
 - v) E-Goods Declaration from the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards all using their credit or debit cards.

This is expected to result in:

- time and cost savings through the elimination of physical visits to Ministry offices;
- faster service delivery as applications would be instantly routed to the relevant approvers for processing; and
- timely payments, which can now be made 24/7, including weekends and public holidays.

IDB Programme

The Enhanced TTBizLink Project was initiated with the Inter-American Development Bank for the *Strengthening of the Single Electronic Window for Trade and Business Facilitation Programme*. This Programme which commenced in April 2016 has supported the development of a number of digital transformation projects for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago such as:

- the establishment of DevelopTT at the Ministry of Planning and Development which allows for the online processing of construction permits;
- the Upgrade of the Central Statistical Office website and data collection systems which provides for easier and more accessible data collection and dissemination as well as the
- Digitization of over 152,300 paper records of the Town and Country Planning Division; and
- the recently initiated Port Community System of Trinidad and Tobago.

Additionally, to assist in refining and enhancing service delivery, investments in ICT equipment such as desktops, laptops, printers, scanners and tablets were made in order to ensure that the stakeholders are fully equipped and that there was a seamless adoption of these systems.

Stakeholder Engagement

By actively involving stakeholders in the development and enhancement process, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has been able to tap into their collective knowledge and expertise. Our stakeholders on the platform include participants from the public and private sector, such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; Works and Transport; National Security; Health; Finance; Labour; and Energy and Energy Industries; as well as designated persons from the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Customs Brokers and business associations. Their contributions and support have been invaluable, by among other things, providing their specific requirements for the system and participating in User Acceptance Testing and Training activities.

TTBizLink Enhancement Project

Bringing this project to fruition has been a collaborative effort, involving countless hours of planning, coordination, and dedication from various departments and people. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has left no stone unturned in our pursuit to improving this robust platform that revolutionizes the way services are accessed and delivered.

From the initial stages of requirements gathering and analysis, through extensive development and rigorous testing with our key stakeholders, we have ensured that this single window platform aligns with the evolving needs of our citizens and businesses. We have worked closely with the consultant CrimsonLogic (Panama) Inc. and CrimsonLogic (Trinidad and Tobago), engaged stakeholders, and harnessed the power of cutting-edge technology to provide a comprehensive and user-friendly solution.

Competitive Edge

With modern and emerging technologies, it is critical for us as a country to maintain and enhance our IT Systems, to ensure we have the best available tools to get the job done. TTBizLink is a world class solution that provides easy access to information, transactional e-services and quantifiable results, while also being agile, scalable and powerful. This gives the Government the ability to stay ahead and keep ahead, in a highly competitive and dynamic environment.

TTBizLink demonstrates that even small developing economies are capable of being leaders in the implementation of transformative public sector projects that are as inclusive as they are transformative. By leveraging technology, we have made our services accessible to a wider range of users. Everyone, regardless of business size or location, can now access these government services with ease and convenience.

Conclusion

The launch of Enhanced TTBizLink platform is a significant leap forward in our mission to create a digitally empowered nation. This project not only transforms the way government services are accessed, but also demonstrates our unwavering dedication to fostering economic growth.

As we embark on this new chapter I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the hardworking individuals of the SEW team at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the consultants who have devoted countless hours to the development and implementation of this advanced system and the Trinidad and Tobago International Finance Centre (TTIFC) for its contribution to the development and implementation of the online payment facility. Your dedication has brought us to this momentous occasion, where we can witness the transformative power of technology at its finest.

Thank you all for your presence today, and let us embrace the opportunities that lie ahead as we embark on this exciting digital journey together.