



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Trade Ministry hosts working sessions with Local Steelpan Manufacturers

March 12 2024: The Ministry of Trade and Industry recently conducted working sessions with local steelpan manufacturers in continued outreach efforts to provide information and support to stakeholders seeking to access the government's Expanded Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Facility.

The Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility was established in January 2020 for the acquisition of new machinery, equipment, software, tools, raw material and training by local steelpan manufacturers. Through this facility, successful local applicants can access individual Grants from the SMGFF up to a maximum of \$250,000 per tranche, not exceeding \$1,000,000 per entity. In 2023, the Government expanded the Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility to include the manufacturers of sticks, stands and cases, the suppliers of steelpan chroming, as well as the provision of funding of up to TT\$50,000 for participation in local exhibitions/trade shows and up to TT\$200,000 for participation in international exhibitions/ trade shows. Additionally, to facilitate greater adoption and use of e-commerce, steelpan manufacturers can now access up to TT\$25,000 in financial support for annual subscription fees related to the use of reputable online sales platforms and marketplaces (such as Planting Seeds, Amazon, eBay) for merchandising and selling of steelpans; and the adoption and use of credible online payment systems.

The working sessions which were led by Mrs. Danielle Phillips, Industry Analyst, MTI and Mr. Crisen Maharaj, Manager, Capacity Building and Funding at exporTT, focused on the required criteria to qualify and the process to apply for the Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund. Information was also shared on expected timelines between applications, the review process, approvals, the disbursement of funds to successful applicants and the procedures required for manufacturers to access funding for local/ international trade shows and for e-commerce.

The initiative has been welcomed by the steelpan manufacturers who thanked the Ministry for its support. Mr. Michael Cooper, former lecturer at the University of

Trinidad and Tobago and President of Panland Trinidad and Tobago Limited, during some brief remarks urged manufacturers present to access the grant. He said, *“I want this facility to be used by the industry. The Ministry is very willing to assist, and accessing this facility is not as onerous and difficult as it might seem. Let’s work towards developing the industry together”*.

Also extending appreciation for the initiative was Ms. Jennifer Moore, Managing Director of Sarah’s Professional Pan Case Centre Ltd. *“The sessions are very timely, informative, and helpful and gave the clarification some of our manufacturers required to go forward with accessing the grant facility. We are very grateful.”*

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to boosting local creativity and productivity by providing the support and tools required to advance our creative industries and empowering locals to build a globally competitive steelpan manufacturing industry. Working sessions are scheduled to continue in March, 2024.

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