



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade and Industry

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

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1.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) is responsible for leading and overseeing the implementation of Government's policy for business development, trade promotion, investment facilitation and consumer empowerment in Trinidad and Tobago towards the continued growth of the non-energy sector in Fiscal 2021.

To this end, the MTI developed its Annual Work Plan for Fiscal 2020/2021 to ensure effective management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and development initiatives which are geared towards achieving its goals and objectives and furthermore the achievements of the Government's overarching policy agenda.

During Fiscal 2021, the MTI together with its State Agencies successfully executed a number of initiatives which impacted positively in their performances, notwithstanding the pandemic situation of the Covid-19.

In Fiscal 2021, the non-energy export performance was TT\$15.7 billion, an increase by 42.3% when compared to Fiscal 2020 of TT\$11.0 billion. More specifically, in Fiscal 2021, the total non-energy manufacturing exports of TT\$10.2 billion increased by 41.2% when compared to Fiscal 2020 (TT\$7.2 billion). This increase in the non-energy manufacturing exports was mainly attributed to an increased demand for goods in the Food and Beverages, and Basic Chemicals and Fertilisers.

With respect to the investment performance, the MTI and investTT facilitated approximately TT\$6.5 billion in foreign direct investments and TT\$1.4 billion in local direct investments in sectors of construction, services manufacturing and agri-business. Foreign investment projects recorded for the period were in the construction, services and manufacturing sectors and provided over four hundred and fifty-four (454) job opportunities. With respect to local direct investment, nine hundred and sixty-four (964) job opportunities were created across various sectors - construction, manufacturing, services and agri-business sectors.

Initiatives pursued included measures to enhance and expand small and medium-sized enterprises; strengthen the national quality infrastructure; stimulate the business development and export activities of the creative industries in Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, the MTI in

collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association and exporTT developed and implemented the Export Booster Initiative (EBI) for the Manufacturing sector with the aim to increase the export value of manufactured goods. A National Action Plan was also developed with the aim to combat illicit trade in consumer goods in Trinidad and Tobago. Other initiatives included, *inter alia*, measures that would improve the legislative environment for trade and business and enhanced consumer protection and empowerment.

The detailed accomplishments during Fiscal 2021 are outlined in this Annual Administrative Report 2021 under the following headings:

1. MTI Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives;
2. Organisational Structure;
3. Policies and Development Initiatives;
4. Financial Operations;
5. Human Resource Development Plan;
6. Procurement;
7. Public and Community Relations;
8. The Way Forward; and
9. Conclusion.

2.0 MTI Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

2.1 Vision of MTI

“A dynamic, client oriented organization delivering integrated, quality services for business growth, trade and investment expansion and consumer empowerment”

2.2 Mission of MTI

“To work as an innovative team, championing business growth, trade and investment for enhanced global competitiveness and promoting consumer interests for improved well-being”

2.3 Strategic Objectives

The MTI’s strategic objectives are guided by the Phase 2 Report of the Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago: Transforming to a New Economy and a New Society; and the Trinidad and Tobago’s National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030, Vision 2030-*‘Rebuilding the Economy of Trinidad and Tobago, in particular, Theme IV: Building Globally Competitive Businesses’*.

Theme IV seeks to create a stable and predictable macroeconomic environment that contributes to long-term social and economic prosperity; entrepreneurship; investment and trade promotion; and facilitates the production of high-value goods and services that are competitive in new and existing export markets.

In this regard, the MTI developed and implemented its Annual Work Plan predicated on growing trade, business and investment in the Non-energy sector.

3.0 Organisational Structure

3.1 Organisational Profile

The MTI is the official public sector entity responsible for leading and overseeing implementation of Government's policy for trade facilitation, investment promotion, business development and consumer empowerment. Its portfolio of responsibilities is listed in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette of September 9, 2020, are as follows:

Commerce

- Anti-Dumping
- Competition Policy

Consumer Affairs

- Consumer Empowerment
- Consumer Protection
- Consumer Research

e-Commerce

Export Processing Zones

Incubating Local Industries

Industrial Parks

Industry

Metrology

Product Information

Product Quality Development

Technology Park

Trade

- Trade Agreements
- Trade Policy

3.2 Organisational Structure

The MTI's broad organizational structure is organized as follows:

1. Minister's Office;
2. Office of the Permanent Secretary;
3. Core Directorates;
4. Support Units; and
5. State Agencies.

Minister's Office

The Minister of Trade and Industry has responsibility for defining the overarching policy framework for guiding Trinidad and Tobago's non-energy business development, trade facilitation, investment promotion and consumer empowerment initiatives in line with the overall policy framework of the Government.

Office of the Permanent Secretary (OPS)

The OPS is responsible for the executive management of the MTI and its achievement of defined goals and objectives. The Office generally consists of the Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Senior Managerial Personnel and support staff. The Permanent Secretary is the accounting officer of the Ministry with overall responsibility for the routine activities of the MTI. A Deputy Permanent Secretary has also been assigned to the Ministry to provide technical support to the OPS.

Core Directorates/Divisions:

The main departments of the MTI are responsible for formulating policy, developing strategies and ensuring execution of the technical mandate of the MTI. These are as follows:

- i. **Business Development Directorate (BDD)** – plans and executes the business development portfolio of the MTI in order to contribute to the country's macroeconomic business development performance measures.
- ii. **Consumer Affairs Division (CAD)** – plans and executes the consumer guidance, protection and empowerment initiatives of the MTI in order to contribute to a fair business environment.
- iii. **Fair Trading Unit (FTU)** – ensures that the business environment is fair and free from uncompetitive business practices which hinder growth and development.
- iv. **Investment Directorate (ID)** – formulates and implements the investment portfolio of the MTI in order to contribute to the country's macroeconomic investment performance measures.

- v. **Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (M&EU)** – ensures evidence-based decision making across the MTI and its Agencies.
- vi. **Policy and Strategy Directorate (PSD)** – provides strategic planning, policy development and coordination services to the MTI. Through project management services, the PSD also ensures the efficient mobilisation of resources and execution of strategic projects such as the Single Electronic Window (SEW) for Trade and Business Facilitation (TTBizlink).
- vii. **Trade Directorate (TD)** - formulates and effects trade policy, legislative briefs, and strategies for the planning and execution of the MTI’s trade portfolio in order to contribute to the country’s macroeconomic trade performance measures.
- viii. **Trade Licence Unit (TLU)** - administers the import and export of goods in accordance with applicable laws and Government Policy.

Support Units

The Support Units provide essential services to the core directorates and the overall MTI through the development and management of corporate-wide activities. The Support Units are as follows:

- i. **Accounting Unit (AU)** - oversees and coordinates all financial operations of the MTI. The Unit ensures that accurate financial information is reported in a timely manner.
- ii. **Corporate Communications and Events Management Unit (CC&EMU)** - provides information to key internal and external stakeholders on a timely basis. The Unit also enhances the MTI’s corporate image and manages the MTI’s relationship with key stakeholders.
- iii. **Corporate Services Unit (CSU)** – provides office management, procurement and facilities management services.
- iv. **Legal Unit (LU)** – provides legal advice and support to the MTI.

- v. **Human Resource Unit (HRU)** – manages the recruitment and development of the human capital of the MTI.
- vi. **Information Management and Support Unit (IM&SU)** - provides technical and network support services to the MTI. The department is also responsible for transforming the MTI through information and communication technology.
- vii. **Internal Audit Unit (IAU)** - ensures conformity of the MTI with financial rules and regulations, instructions, policies and contract plans.

State Agencies

The implementation of the Ministry's policies is primarily facilitated through the work of its state agencies. The various state agencies under the remit of the MTI and their roles, responsibilities and services provided are outlined below:

i. Statutory Boards and Other Bodies:

- a. **Betting Levy Board (BLB)** develops and promotes horse and dog racing, including the breeding of racehorses and dogs in the country. The BLB manages the remuneration and benefits for jockeys, stable lads and monitors compliance with any rules relating to the operation of pool betting offices and pool betting outlets, including their opening and closing hours. The Betting Levy Board is governed by the Betting Levy Board Act No. 35 of 1989 which came into force on November 15, 1989. It has since been amended by Act No. 31 of 1991, and the Finance Act No. 5 of 1995.
- b. **Fair Trading Commission (FTC)** is an independent statutory body responsible for implementing the Fair Trading Act in Trinidad and Tobago. The main objectives are to promote and maintain effective competition throughout the economy, and to ensure that competition is not distorted, restricted or prevented, either by private business conduct or by public policy.

- c. **Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS)** is a corporate body established on July 8th, 1974 and governed by the Standards Act No. 18 of 1997. The TTBS has a statutory responsibility to promote and encourage the development and maintenance of standards for the improvement of goods produced or used in Trinidad and Tobago (except food, drugs and cosmetics).
 - d. **Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority (TTRA)** regulates and controls racing and the operation of race courses in the country. As such, the Racing Authority plays a critical role in the administration of Horse Racing, in particular, in ensuring that the integrity of the sport is upheld.
- ii. **Wholly-owned Enterprises:**
- a. **Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (eTeck)** manages and optimizes the use of its existing industrial parks on a commercial basis and develops and improves the infrastructure and operations of new modern economic zones through, *inter alia*, public private partnerships that can expand and diversify Trinidad and Tobago's economic base. The Company also manages the assets of the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre and the Magdalena Grand Beach and Golf Resort.
 - b. **Invest Trinidad and Tobago (invesTT)** acts as a "one-stop-shop" for investors ensuring that they are provided with all the knowledge, networks and contacts needed to facilitate new investment opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago.
 - c. **Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company Limited (CreativeTT)** stimulates and facilitates the business development and export activities of the Creative Industries in Trinidad and Tobago in order to generate national wealth. The Company is responsible for the strategic development of three (3) niche sub-sectors under its purview, namely, Music, Film and Fashion.
 - d. **Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited (TTFZ)** is governed by The Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Act Chapter 81:07 and is responsible for the operation of Free Zones in Trinidad and Tobago.

iii. Majority Owned Enterprises:

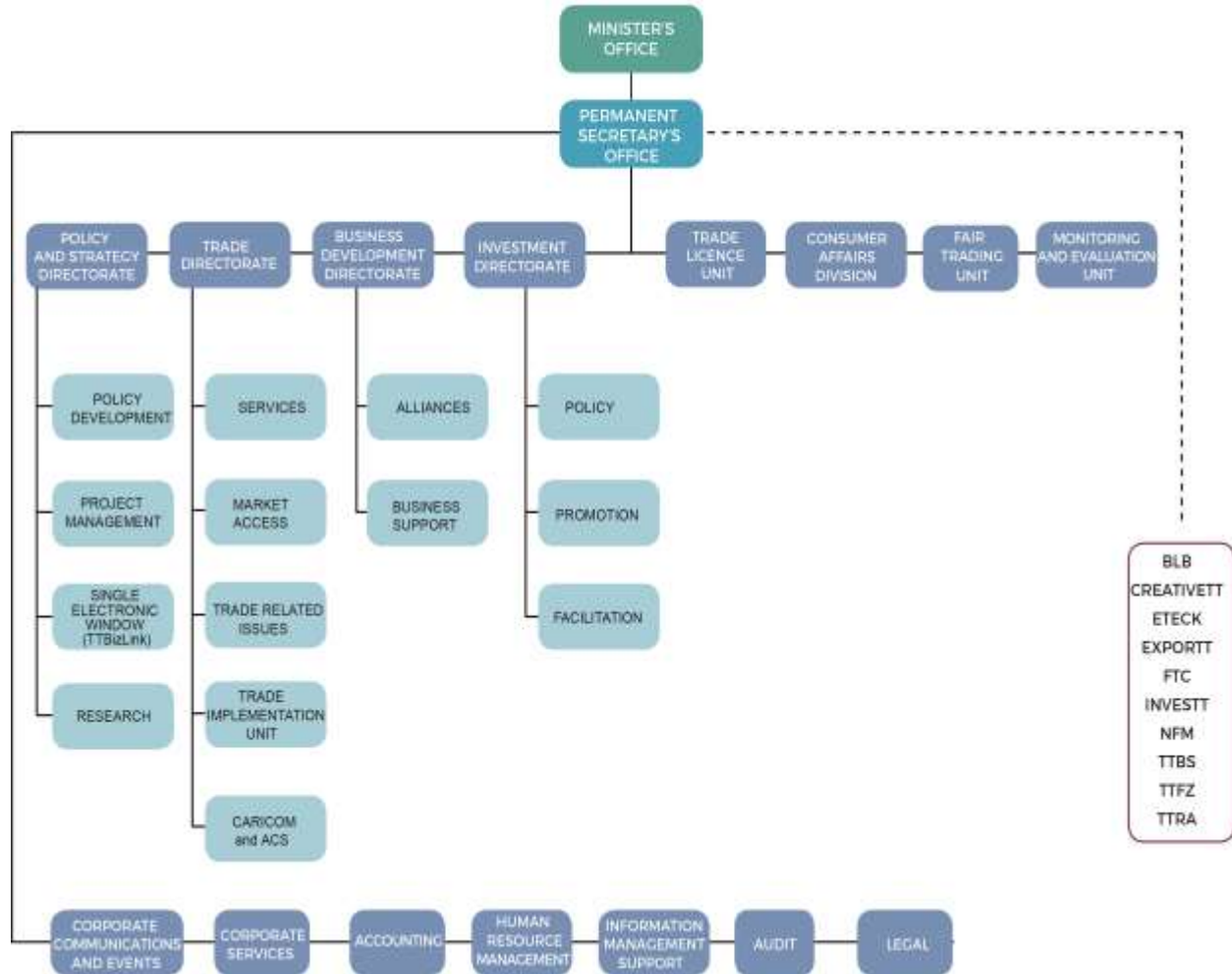
exporTT Limited is the National Export Facilitation Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago. Its mandate is to generate export growth and diversification in the goods and services sectors.

iv. Indirectly Owned Enterprises:

National Flour Mills Limited (NFM) is a local manufacturer in Trinidad and Tobago producing flour and feed products. The Company commenced trading activities in 1966 and has grown to provide services such as flour milling, rice milling, animal feed production, dry mix blending and packaging. NFM is a publicly traded Company and is partly owned by the GORTT.

The following diagram outlines the current Organizational Structure of the MTI:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



4.0 Policy and Development Initiatives

Measures pursued by the MTI in Fiscal 2021 were aligned to the National Development Strategy (NDS) (2016 to 2030) thematic area, “**Theme IV - Building Globally Competitive Businesses**”.

Theme IV of the NDS (2016-2030) targets macroeconomic stability; entrepreneurship; investment trade promotion; the creation of high-value products and services that can compete in the international markets.

In addition, the MTI in its administrative capacity continued to strengthen its institutional operations through the recruitment and development of staff amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

During Fiscal 2020/2021, the MTI effectively executed the following measures:

4.1 Enhanced Support for Small-Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

To support the establishment, operation and expansion of businesses in targeted sectors in Fiscal 2021, the MTI targeted strategic measures that would impact the business environment and firms’ ability to sustainably produce goods and services at competitive prices and quality as follows:

a) Grant Fund Facility

The Grant Fund Facility (GFF), established in 2017 and expanded in Fiscal 2019, provides funding of 50%, up to TT\$250,000.00, of the cost of new capital requirements/expenditure (machinery, equipment, technology/software, tools), excluding working capital and land and building costs including leasing, to assist SMEs in becoming globally competitive, encourage greater investment by existing companies and afford Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) access to much needed financing in the sectors listed hereunder:

- Manufacturing;
- Agriculture and Agro-processing;
- Financial Services;
- Maritime Services;
- Aviation Services;

- Fish and Fish Processing;
- Software Design and Applications; and
- Creative Industries.

Since the inception of the GFF, the MTI approved twenty-one (21) companies with a total disbursement of TT\$3,890,233.83. In Fiscal 2021, six (6) companies received grants which totalled TT\$982,722.27. Disbursements of funds facilitated the acquisition of new machinery and equipment for the manufacture of garment; dairy products; hot sauces, dip and seasonings; food processing for hand crafted sausages; Agro-processing; and packaging material for the food and agri-industry as highlighted in **Table 1**. This GFF has enabled several companies to penetrate new export markets, including CARICOM countries, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Table 1: Disbursement of Funds under the Grant Fund Facility for Fiscal 2021

Company	Sector/Activity	Amount Granted (TT\$)
Del Mano Food Limited	Manufacturing; Food processing- hand crafted sausages. Funding for the acquisition of new machinery/equipment to outfit its larger manufacturing facility.	\$250,000.00
Yumma Agro Processors	Agro-processing and food manufacture; manufacture of dairy products. Funding for the acquisition of machinery and equipment to increase the company's productive capacity to meet growing demand.	\$85,401.13
VF Packaging Limited	Manufacturing; packaging material for the food and agri-industries. Funding for the acquisition of new machinery in order to increase its productive capacity to meet a greater demand for its products and expand the markets which it supplies.	\$250,000.00
Caribbean Specialty Foods	Agro-processing and manufacture of hot sauces, dip and seasonings.	\$74,782.40

Table 1: Disbursement of Funds under the Grant Fund Facility for Fiscal 2021

Company	Sector/Activity	Amount Granted (TT\$)
Company Limited	Funding for the acquisition of new machinery and equipment as the company embarked on an expansionary project to relocate its operations to the newly built Moruga Agro-processing and Light Industrial Park.	
Three Star Sportswear Limited	Manufacturing; garment. Funding for the expansion of its business to meet the increased local and regional demand for weighted garments.	\$250,000.00
MAS Financial and Corporate Services Limited	Financial Services- BPO. Funding for the acquisition of new equipment to support the development of a new software and aid in digitalization of BPO and FAO services.	\$72,538.74
TOTAL		TT\$982,722.27

Projects of the twenty-one (21) approved companies represented a total investment of approximately TT\$10.4 Million between November 2017 and September 2021.

b) Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility

The Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility (SMGFF), launched in January 2020, was established 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 \$1,000,000.00 per qualifying applicants.

Since the launch, eight (8) applications have been approved in the amount of TT\$2,164,932.92. In Fiscal 2021, five (5) applications - Pan Crafters, Perfect Steel, Noel's Steelpan Productions, Innovative Steelpan Instruments Services and RS Sweet Pans Ltd. were approved in the amount of TT\$489,753.07.

c) Revised Research and Development Facility

This Facility was revised in 2018 to support activities promoting experimental development, industrial research, and enhanced process and system improvements. In Fiscal 2021, funds were approved in the amount of TT\$1,213,599.72 of which TT\$963,599.72 was disbursed to the following companies:

- Kings Specialties for product and process development/Improvement of King's Specialty's range of Eggless Cream Liqueurs to achieve improved shelf life, improved product quality, product stability and suitability for the export market;
- Aeon Innovative Solutions Limited AIS Limited for the development of their proprietary Pan Enterprise Medical Management Platform;
- Cocoa Republic Limited for the expansion of their range of manufactured products to include the domestic manufacturing of vegan milk;
- SMAKS for the commercialization and extension of the chai rum line; and
- Dingole E-Commerce Services Limited for the development of software and immersive technologies; and
- SafetyNet Ltd for the development of Phase 4 integrates OperAid Deploy and Test/Safety Software.

d) Co-Financing Facility

The initial Co-Financing Facility provided financing which facilitated elements such as export planning, training, standards implementation, packaging and labeling, market intelligence and other facets of export development. This Facility was revised in Fiscal 2019 and incorporated the promotion and development of e-Commerce in Trinidad and Tobago. In Fiscal 2021, funds were approved in the amount of TT\$108,216.00 of which TT\$69,569.08 was disbursed to twelve (12) companies as listed hereunder:

- SMAKS;
- King's Specialty;
- Ubergreen Organics;
- Vtoria Rhonda Vineyard;
- Habenero Pepper Sauce Company Limited;
- FAM Ltd;

- Imanex;
- Sure Qual Service Limited;
- Twigs Naturals (Twigs Naturals) Limited;
- Creamery Novelties Limited;
- Bar Estate; and
- Savour De Isle.

e) Export Capacity Building Programme

The Export Capacity Building Programme aims to build export capacity and competitiveness for existing and potential exporters within Trinidad and Tobago. In Fiscal 2021 twenty (20) export-related training programmes were executed under seventeen (17) themes listed hereunder which benefitted one hundred and sixty (160) unique exporters from one hundred (100) companies:

- Export Basics;
- Risk Assessment Training for Food & Beverage Manufacturers;
- Export Safe Food for Canada Regulations;
- Trademarks Changes and the Madrid Protocol;
- Patents and Patent Mining;
- Advanced Good Manufacturing Practices for the Food and Beverage Industry;
- 30 Minute Virtual Sales Pitch;
- Identifying & Assessing Export Markets;
- Proposal Writing for Grant Funding and RFP's;
- Negotiating Across Cultures;
- Exporting with Caribbean Airlines Cargo;
- Business Accounting;
- Marketing
- Export Planning;
- Export Marketing; and
- Intellectual Property Informative Session.

4.2 Digital Economy

a) National e-Commerce Strategy

The National e-Commerce Strategy, approved by Cabinet in November 2017, aims to reduce the time and cost of doing business, enhance convenience and reduce bureaucracy in undertaking business transactions for the domestic and international markets. To accelerate the development of digital economy and society the MTI, in Fiscal 2021, hosted three (3) webinars for businesses in key areas as part of the roll-out of the National e-Commerce Strategy as follows:

- In December 2020, *“Financing and other Opportunities for MSMEs for Digital Transformation”* provided information to entrepreneurs of existing Government initiatives offered by both NEDCO and exporTT to assist them in participating in a digital economy;
- In February 2021, the MTI partnered with the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago (BATT) and hosted the *“Digital Payments Solutions for MSMEs”*. One hundred and forty (140) entrepreneurs attended and included presentations by First Citizens Bank, Scotiabank, Royal Bank of Canada, Republic Bank Limited and Citibank detailing their specific suite of products and services available to MSMEs; and
- In June 2021, *“Digital Opportunities for MSME’s: Pivot your Business to the Next Level”* benefitted one hundred and sixty (160) Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). These MSMEs learned the value of using existing marketplace platforms to transform their business.

b) National SheTrades Hub

Trinidad and Tobago officially launched its SheTrades Hub on October 28, 2020. This is the first of its kind in the Caribbean region and is a joint venture among the International Trade Centre (ITC), MTI and exporTT in which exporTT is the implementing agency.

ITC identified seven (7) global actions to address key challenges, unlock markets and create an enabling business environment for women entrepreneurs. Four (4) global actions have been identified for Trinidad and Tobago for implementation - Championing quality data; Striking business deals; Enabling market access; and Unlocking financial services.

Four hundred and seventy-four (474) women have registered on the platform; and three (3) webinars were executed on topics as follows:

- How to navigate and use the SheTrades Platform;
- Identifying and Assessing Export Markets; and
- Sustainable, Inclusive, and Ethical Value Chains Webinar.

Notwithstanding the above, the National SheTrades Programme is being reviewed and restructured to ensure that the programme is data-needs driven and performance-oriented.

4.3 Strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure

The National Quality Policy (NQP), approved by Cabinet in April 2018, aims to overcome the difficulty of local firms in demonstrating compliance with quality requirements and trade rules. In Fiscal 2021, the MTI in collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) undertook projects identified in the Implementation and Communication Plan of the NQP and executed the following:

a) **Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Services for Conformity Assessment**

On December 20, 2018, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (TTASCA), as an independent entity with its own Act of Parliament and Regulations for the accreditation of all conformity assessment bodies.

In July 2021, TTBS completed training with the TTASCA Management and Staff in ISO/IEC 17011:2017. Twenty-six (26) officers participated which included representatives from TTLABS, Assessors and Laboratory Accreditation Committee

members. The material and experience shared provided insight into the standard, its interpretation and application. The material from the training used to develop FAQs can also be used for the ISO/IEC 17011:2017 standard training.

b) Review of the Standards Act and Metrology Act

The MTI and the TTBS engaged an international consultant in June 2021 to commence a nine-month project to update and strengthen the Standards and Metrology legislation of Trinidad and Tobago. It is envisaged that a Draft Legislative Brief would be completed in Fiscal 2022.

c) National Programme for the Accreditation of all Public Laboratories

Under the National Programme for the Accreditation of all public laboratories, launched in June 2019, public laboratories were invited to submit applications for assistance in becoming accredited for one (1) scope of their testing operations.

Consequently, the two (2) laboratories selected by TTBS in Fiscal 2020, completed the implementation of systems for accreditation in Fiscal 2021 and applied for accreditation assessment. Reports have been completed by assigned assessors of TTLABs and are under review, pending feedback.

d) Enabling A Quality Conscious Environment

On March 18, 2021, the Cabinet approved Grant Funding Agreements under the National Aid for Trade Strategy with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for two (2) projects, namely, “Building a Quality Culture in Trinidad and Tobago” and “Establishment of a Trade Facilitation Enquiry Point for Trinidad and Tobago”. The procurement process for consultancies will therefore commence in Fiscal 2022.

- “Building a Quality Culture in Trinidad and Tobago” aims to develop and implement a public awareness and sensitisation programme on the importance of quality principles, standards and practices for consumers, businesses, public sector entities and regulatory agencies in Trinidad and Tobago. Building a quality culture will assist in increasing awareness and changing the attitudes and behaviours of the public, to being more quality conscious in making decisions linked to quality parameters.

- “Establishment of a Trade Facilitation Enquiry Point for Trinidad and Tobago” aims to develop an efficient and effective operational framework for Trinidad and Tobago’s Trade Facilitation Enquiry Point (TFEP). The expected benefits of the Project will be:
 - enhanced reliability and transparency of information shared in Trinidad and Tobago’s trading environment;
 - improved ease of doing business in Trinidad and Tobago, with regard to trading across borders; and
 - increased opportunities for further integration with other CARICOM Member States and facilitate the establishment of a Regional Enquiry Point for the TFA.

Other initiatives of TTBS were as follows:

e) **First Test Event of OneWorld Accuracy Inc.**

TTBS facilitated the first test event for Oneworld Accuracy Inc. and medical laboratory proficiency testing programme. Twenty-six (26) laboratories participated in the programme. This programme allowed medical laboratories to have an insight into their ability to provide consistent reliable results (through comparison of their results to the actual result as well as to other medical laboratories from around the world).

One World Accuracy is the largest and most successful External Quality Assessment (EQA) Programme Provider and Collaboration in the world with headquarters in Vancouver, Canada and satellite office in Messina, Italy.

- f) In April 2021, the TTBS completed a three-day public training programme for the auditing of laboratories on ISO:19011:2018. It covered the methodology and recommended best practice in the conduct of internal quality audits within laboratories. Twelve (12) persons participated: two (2) from Tobago, six (6) from the Environmental Management Authority (EMA); and four (4) from private testing and calibration laboratories. Participants were educated on the auditing process; tools to be used in conducting audits; understanding the role of the auditor in the conduct of audits; and establishing and managing a laboratory internal quality audit system.

- g) Trinidad and Tobago, as part of CARICOM/CROSQ through the TTBS, has attained international recognition for Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMC) for Mass and Related Quantities on January 12, 2021. Therefore, any testing done under this category will be internationally recognised as reliable and true. TTBS has hosted and will continue to host virtual symposiums to highlight the importance and benefits of CMCs to Trinidad and Tobago.
- h) In January 2021, TTBS established a national mandatory certification programme for locally manufactured cement and will enforce the National Compulsory Standard TTS/CRS 54:2016 - Specification for Cement by engaging manufacturers in the certification process, which includes an assessment of their quality management system and testing of their product.

i) **Development of the International Standard**

The TTBS has played a lead role in the development of the International Standard, ISO 37000:2021, Governance of organisations – Guidance which was published in September 2021. The TTBS in its capacity as the National Standards Body and a Full Member of ISO collaborated with the British Standards Institution (BSI) and co-led the development of ISO 37000.

TTBS has embarked on promotional activities related to this International Standard via Media Releases and appearances on Morning Television Programmes to raise awareness of the benefits of the Standard. Good governance helps to build trust, improve business performance and contributes to social and environmental integrity. Therefore, the development of this International Standard is a key element in TTBS's National Standardisation Strategy 2019-2022.

j) **CNG Dispenser Verification Initiative**

TTBS launched a CNG Dispenser's Verification Initiative to include the verification of CNG dispensers during March 4-5, 2021. It is envisaged that this will ensure that consumers receive value for money (quantity) at CNG Service Stations.

4.4 Support for the Creative Industries

i. FashionTT

a) Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme

The Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme (FVCIP), launched in 2017, is a strategic mentoring and training programme which provides support to eligible designers and aims to improve the value chain and international competitiveness within the four (4) tiers of the Programme, namely, the Global Value Chain; the Non-Global Value Chain; Business Advisory (FashionTT and National Entrepreneurship Development Company (NEDCO) Partnership; and Strategic Training/Entrepreneurial Development Programme (FashionTT and NEDCO Partnership).

- **Non-Global Value Chain:** Ten (10) designers were selected in Fiscal 2021 to receive training as part of the fourth cohort of this tier based on the VCIP International Expert Panel Interviews. Training and mentoring for this cohort will commence in the First Quarter of Fiscal 2022.
- **Business Advisory Programme (FashionTT and NEDCO Partnership):** The Business Advisory and Financing Programme provides business mentoring, training and financing to designers who require one-on-one business mentoring support in gaining a comprehensive understanding of their business value chains.

In February, 2021, FashionTT commenced one-on-one business mentorship sessions with FashionTT's representatives and seventy-three (73) fashion designers. These sessions, conducted monthly, entailed discussions on the Designers' business value chain to highlight gaps, needs and recommendations to complete crucial action items for business efficiency improvement by stated deadlines. This session will be concluded on December 31, 2021.

- **The Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP):** This Programme targets designers who are not ready to enter the higher tiers. In Fiscal

2021, FashionTT partnered with the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business and executed a number of training programmes in core business fundamentals monthly through the following webinars:

- Business Readiness for the Virtual World.
- Commercialization and New Product Development.
- “Quality in Production for the Fashion Entrepreneur.
- Packaging in Fashion.
- E-Commerce Strategies from Niche to Global Markets.
- Fashion and Intellectual Property.
- Stock Management for Success.
- Ready Set Go! To a Virtual Trade Show.

In Fiscal 2021, during the pandemic, the VCIP helped transition fifty-seven (57) designers, identified in **Table 2**, to conduct transactions digitally via e-commerce platforms. Sixteen (16) new designers, identified in **Table 3**, began exporting their goods to markets across the globe.

Table 2: Trinidad and Tobago’s Designers on e-Commerce Platforms aided through VCIP

Name of Designer	Name of Company
Lisa Gittens	Sew Lisa
Sheldon Warner	SM Warner
Afiya Bishop	Loud By Afiya
Janelle Forde	J. Angelique
Sabrina Seurio	J Fab the Brand
Andell Mark	Gio Designs
Asha and Ayanna Diaz	Wadada Movement
Denise Scott	Scott Girl Jewellery
Kavir Mootoo	A Gardeners Heart
Kimberly Tobas	KIPT Apparel
Krista Gabriel	Krista Gabriel Designs
Liselle Frauenfelder	Frauenfelder Designs
Marlon George	Daww Designs
Nwannia Sorzano	Nwannia
Shaun Griffith Perez	Shaun Griffith Perez Designs
Kiran Knights	Kiran Knights Designs
Donna La Roche	La Roche Designs
Ti yanna Nelson	Raina Swim

Table 2: Trinidad and Tobago's Designers on e-Commerce Platforms aided through VCIP

Name of Designer	Name of Company
Jassanya Jones	Deity Lifestyle
Ecliff Elie	Ecliff Elie Limited
Meiling Esau	Meiling Inc.
Robert Young	The Cloth
Claudia Pegus	Claudia Pegus Designs
Neil Allan Phillips	The Palette Stick
Shanice Mc Donald	RackPDH
Esther Joy Callendar	The Kingz Daughter
Avien Thomas	Osanie
Antoinette Sargarent	Salt Clothing and Accessories
Dayle Angus	Linkage Clothing
Kimberly Luces	Del a Culture
Kristy Ann Maharaj	Simply Escape
Michelle Charles	Silks by Miche
Natalie Howe	Decollette by Natalie Howe
Renee Alves	SugaBrat Resort Wear
Rachel Lee Young	Land of the Hummingbird
Rhian Ramkissoon	Honamic Designs
Stacey Weekes Benjamin	Diane Carlton
Princess Semper	Royal Iza Designs
Elizabeth Francis	Christique Clothing
Ria Denoon	Ria Denoon
Reuben Gonzales	RG Clothing
Sarah Katwaroo	Sarah Jo
Avanelle Richards	Exclusively Abstract
Onika Stephen-Callendar	Os2 Designs
Ariel Choon	Ariel Choon Designs
Nikisha Moore	N Joy Life Caribbean
Azizah Mohammed	Azizah The Brand
Jenelle Belfon	Mon Belle
Madena Baird	Ashley Only 1 Bags
Quielle Bosland	Soul Rebel Paradise
Tiffani Cupid	Cupid Designs
Jaya Persad	Pumpeii Official
Bianca Charles	Suruu Designs
Christine Lorde	Christine Wearable Art
Ternika Mahabal	Issa Vybe
Hakeem Williams	Rebel Entourage Movement
La Shauna Yatali	Caribbean Artisan by Her

Table 3: New Fashion Industry Exporters in 2021

Name of Designers	Name of Company
Neha Duwar	Neha Karina
Keega Simon	The 1ndividual Aesthetic
Lisa Gittens	Sew Lisa
Sheldon Warner	SM Warner
Adiola Monsegue	Genesis Swimwear
Kavir Mootoo	A Gardeners Heart
Kimberly Tobas	KIPT Apparel
Krista Gabriel	Krista Gabriel Designs
Liselle Frauenfelder	Frauenfelder Designs
Nwannia Sorzano	Nwannia
Shaun Griffith Perez	Shaun Griffith Perez Designs
Jassanya Jones	Deity Lifestyle
Shanice Mc Donald	RackPDH
Avien Thomas	Osanie
Antoinette Sargarent	Salt Clothing and Accessories
Rhian Ramkissoon	Honamic Designs

It is noteworthy, as at September 2021, a total of one hundred and seventy-four (174) designers undertook training under the VCIP (2017-2021) as listed hereunder:

- Eleven designers (11) under Tier 1- Global Value Chain (GVC);
- Ten designers (10) under Tier 2-Non-Global Value Chain (Non-GVC);
- Seventy-five designers (75) under Tier 3-Business Advisory (FashionTT and NEDCO Partnership); and
- Seventy-eight (78) under Tier 4- Entrepreneurship Proficiency Programme (EPP).

b) Fashion Digital LookBook

In Fiscal 2021, the Fashion Digital LookBook was launched with the purpose of showcasing and marketing the fashion collections of Trinidad and Tobago's talented fashion designers to current and untapped markets regionally and

internationally. As at September 2021, three (3) editions of the Fashion Digital LookBook were published while the fourth edition will be available in December 2021. Each edition of the Digital LookBook can be viewed on FashionTT's website, **fashiontt.co.tt**.

c) Train the Trainers Ultra Bespoke Tailoring Programme

The Train the Trainers Programme (TTP), launched on November 19, 2019, is an advanced programme arising out of a concluded one-year certificate programme in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring Programme (UBTP). On January 31, 2021, ten (10) tailors completed training in the TTP in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring, Pattern Drafting, Cutting and Fitting. FashionTT worked with these tailors to build their businesses and aligned them with educational institutions to be educators in tailoring.

ii. MusicTT

a) Spotlight: Artiste Portfolio Development Programme

This Programme is aimed at creating a strong, balanced, up skilled portfolio of artistes and musicians for a range of possible international export opportunities. In Fiscal 2021, MusicTT launched an EP (a single-issue release) of the Cohort 3 participants of Project Spotlight. This compilation of original music featured the eight (8) artistes in Cohort 3. The EP is being promoted to international music catalogues for sync opportunities.

b) Therapy Island Stage South by South West (SXSW)

MusicTT sponsored the Island Stage which is a platform dedicated to bringing music of the Caribbean to the forefront of the international music scene. This was exclusively streamed by South by South West (SXSW) as part of its online festival in March, 2021.

SXSW has recognized the importance of giving Caribbean music and artistes an international platform to showcase their musical heritage and has announced that this will be an annual event.

c) The Business of Music

MusicTT and Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI) partnered with the producers of the Business of Music Initiative - Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) and the European Union (EU) to promote training opportunities to its stakeholders. A two-part series was conducted in June 2021 with a total of 137 persons benefitting from the Programme.

Participants in this initiative were provided with knowledge on how to develop an artiste development plan, music marketing plan, utilise digital technology, Intellectual Property (IP) and contracts.

Learning objectives included understanding the Business of Music; Identifying & Assessing Development Partners (Identify the various roles/who does what); Metadata, Digitization and Publishing; Music and IP; Contracts and Protection of IP Rights; and Marketing and the Elevator Pitch.

d) Live Music District (LMD)

In Fiscal 2021, MusicTT partnered with Celian International to host the Gospel Music Awards of Trinidad and Tobago (GMATT) on March 7, 2021 at Queen's Hall. The event was promoted as the first LMD event for 2021. It was subsequently broadcasted on TTT, TTT Live Online and Celian International's Facebook Page, and MusicTT had the honor of distributing three (3) awards to deserving music business stakeholders. MusicTT also subsidised payments to twenty (20) LMD artistes. This event attracted over 12,000 online viewers. On account of the pandemic and restrictions to the entertainment industry, plans for LMD were drastically altered and series were held virtually.

e) RVRB Experience – Music Business Virtual Conference

During the period September 29, 2021 - October 1, 2021, MusicTT completed its three-day music business virtual conference via Facebook and YouTube digital platforms. RVRB Experience consisted of eighteen (18) events with forty (40) speakers from eight (8) different countries: Canada, USA, Dominica, Barbados, UK, Costa Rica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. MusicTT partnered with

various organisations, both local and international, to bring RVRB Experience to life in which ninety-nine (99) Trinidad and Tobago nationals participated.

f) Music Export Academy

In Fiscal 2021, MusicTT hosted a number of REVERB (RVRB) Webinars. These were facilitated by industry experts to build the professional capacity of operators in the music industry. Viewers had the opportunity to submit their questions in real-time and get immediate feedback or advice. RVRB Webinars included:

- Crystal Ivy London: Business of Styling, October 29, 2020 - 50 subscribers;
- Gerard Ferreira: Business of Merchandising, November 29, 2020: approximately 50 subscribers;
- Patrice Millien: Business of being a Creative, December 10, 2020 - 37 subscribers;
- ROME, Gerelle Forbes, Lamar Pollard, Michelle Henry Future Proofing T&T Music, January 28, 2021 - 587 subscribers;
- DJ Private Ryan and Chantal Esdelle of the Ethnic Jazz Club, Future Proofing T&T Music Part 2, February 25, 2021 - 227 subscribers; and
- Mr. Jessel Murray, Ms. Giselle Langton and Mr. John Arnold, the 3rd RVRB webinar for the quarter was Future Proofing T&T Music Part 3, March 25, 2021 – 1000 subscribers.

iii. FilmTT

a) T&T Locations: Unseen, Unexpected

This project incorporates a number of tools to promote and market Trinidad and Tobago as a globally attractive Caribbean production location. MusicTT would leverage the production expenditure rebate programme and other incentives as well as a number of Unique Selling Points, including the fact that its locations have been relatively under-explored on screen.

In September 2021, FilmTT facilitated a feature documentary by a prominent UK company – British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The local crew was able to remotely be directed from the UK, a unique learning experience for the local crew.

In August 2021, FilmTT collaborated with Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Beijing, China and hosted a Screening Event "Culture in Us". In addition, coordinated with filmmakers and enabled the screening of the short films "Dying Swan", "Ganga Dhaaraa - Sacred Spaces", as well as "The Deliverer" and "Sorf Hair" which were all filmed in Trinidad and Tobago.

b) Film Friendly Network

The Film Friendly Network is made up of ministries, agencies and associations that have significant roles to play in increasing the film friendliness of Trinidad and Tobago for both local and international producers. These agencies will take the necessary action or provide critical top-level strategic, logistical and operational support for all relevant productions.

In Fiscal 2021, FilmTT collaborated with the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE) and showcased a one-day film to celebrate Mexican Movies. TTT showcased Mexican film content to encourage the community of local filmmakers to collaborate with Mexican filmmakers to produce films. The partnership with Mexican Movies Day is an initiative to build the relationship between the countries, producers and to promote Trinidad and Tobago as a film destination. It was the first event in partnership with the Mexican Embassy, exporTT, and the Trinidad and Tobago Television [TTT] Network.

IMCINE is an agency of the Mexican federal government that supports the development of national film production and the film industry annually on August 15. It is therefore a country to country collaboration to foster the relationship between the both agencies and to build on potential film co-productions.

c) Film Festival Partnerships

Film festivals in Trinidad and Tobago have played important roles in attracting audiences, as well as developing various aspects of the local industry. FilmTT has been a primary investor in the country's main indigenous film festivals. In the first quarter of Fiscal 2021, FilmTT provided financial support in the amount of TT\$25,000 to the following three (3) festivals:

- Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival;
- Anima Caribbean International Animation and Digital Media Festival; and
- Green Screen – the Environmental Film Festival.

d) Script to Screen Programme

FilmTT has provided training developmental support to local film stakeholders via the Script to Screen Programme. The Script to Screen programme seeks to position stakeholders at a greater advantage through access to business opportunities and professional growth. It also bridges the gaps by providing filmmakers with the proper story/script-writing skills, production tools, and marketing and distribution guidelines. In Fiscal 2021, practical components and funding incentives workshops were facilitated by local and international industry professional.

Since the launch of this Programme in May 2021, twenty-two (22) participants were selected for five (5) workshops. The virtual workshops, facilitated by Stage 32, focused on the main production areas of scriptwriting, pre-production, production, post-production and marketing. In August 2021, ten (10) of the twenty-two (22) participants presented a two-minute pitch during the preliminary pitch phase of which six (6) advanced to the final pitch. The top three (3) will receive development funding awards and will be revealed live on TTT in October 2021.

e) Production Expenditure Rebate Programme

On March 20, 2021, FilmTT introduced and uploaded rebranded rebate application forms onto its website to facilitate a more seamless and user friendly process for local and international film producers. Three (3) local and three (3) international producers submitted applications for the Production Expenditure Rebate Programme as follows:

Local Productions:

- CDW Events Ltd, Bling My Wedding Season 2 - Provisional Certificate
- UEL & TRIBE Carnival, Lavway - Provisional Certificate - Premiered February 2021; and

- Story Play Media, T&T, The Caddy Club - Provisional Certificate, in production.

International Productions:

- Pavilion Entertainment/Dovetale Media, USA, The Yacht- Provisional Certificate;
- Pavilion Entertainment/Dovetale Media, USA, Kill Kick - In pre-production; and
- TEMPO Networks Ltd, USA/T&T, The Hot Ones: Caribbean - in production, shot in June 2021.

Total estimated budget and estimated rebates of registered applicants were TT\$31,000,000 and TT\$11,500,000, respectively.

4.5 Transformation of the Maritime and Leisure Marine Sectors

i. National Maritime Policy

The National Maritime Policy and Strategy was drafted in July 2021 by a consortium of Consultants - the Lead Consultant - International Centre for Numerical Methods on Engineering (CIMME). Amendments are being made based on comments provided by various key stakeholders. The National Maritime Policy and Strategy Framework seeks to aid in the coordination and guidance of actions of both public and private institutions with regard to the successful and sustainable exploitation of the maritime sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

ii. Leisure Marine Sub-Sector (Yachting) - Single Harmonised Form

To effect the Single Harmonised Form (SHF) for entry and departure of Trinidad and Tobago, the Immigration Amendment Regulations were laid in Parliament in April 2021 and published in the Legal Notice Number 113 of 2021 dated April 27, 2021 and the Quarantine (Maritime)(Amendment) Regulations were approved by Parliament and published in Legal Notice Number 111 of 2021 dated April 27, 2021. The new SHF will aid in the provision of a more efficient and customer-oriented experience for persons entering the country by pleasure craft.

4.6 Implementation of Business Environment Reforms

The viability of the non-energy sector is dependent on the ability of businesses to competitively produce and sell a diverse set of goods and services. In order to improve the domestic business climate in the country, the MTI implemented business reforms that addressed several areas relevant to business operations as follows:

i. Ease of Doing Business

The Government through the MTI implemented a Single Electronic Window (SEW), branded TTBizLink, to simplify the processes and procedures when doing business in the country. TTBizLink, which is accessed via www.ttbizlink.gov.tt, facilitated a number of trade and business related e-services measures which resulted as follows:

a) Enhancing Processing Efficiency

- **Electronic Archiving System at the Trade Licence Unit for all Commercial files**

The Digitisation of the Trade Licence Unit (TLU) Commercial Files was finalised on January 3, 2021 signalling the completion of this project. The Electronic Archiving System project has seen over one hundred thousand (100,000) pages of current and historical data for Duty Relief, Dealer and Commercial files scanned, indexed and uploaded onto the electronic document management system. It provided the TLU's staff with easier access to information for immediate online decisions. Customers experienced shorter timeframes to obtain online approvals for permits and licences processed by the TLU which are now processed in under one (1) day.

- **Amendment to the e-Import Licence issued by Trade Licence Unit of the MTI**

- Applications for Cement:

On January 10, 2021, amendments were made to the e-Import Licence issued by TLU to allow applications for Cement to be processed electronically with the approved document sent via email to the applicant.

- **Application for Hazardous Waste:**

On January 11, 2021, applicants were able to apply for the e-Import Licence for Hazardous Waste issued by TLU online via the Permits and Licences Module on the Single Electronic Window – TTBizLink. These applications were processed electronically with the approved document sent via email to the applicant.

This has contributed to the TLU's business continuity measures as the applicant does not have to visit the office to collect the approved document.

• **Third-party payments on the Single Electronic Window (TTBizLink) – for Trinidad and Tobago Bureau Standards Goods Declaration**

On February 7, 2021, TTBizLink implemented a feature which allows importers to pay Trinidad and Tobago Bureau Standards (TTBS) fees directly via credit card. This avoids the Customs Brokers paying the fee (either online or manually) and then requesting a refund from the Importer. The ability for importers to now make the payment for the TTBS' Inspection Fees for Customs Import Declarations themselves, means that their internal processes would be further enhanced. This eliminates the need for, and the associated paperwork on refunding the Customs Brokers who conducted the transaction on the importer's behalf. In instances where importers would have made the payments themselves, it removes the need to visit a bank or the TTBS' office, thereby leading to more efficient use of the importer's time and consequently to cost savings.

• **Electronic Generation of CARICOM e-Certificates of Origin/Online Payment at exporTT Limited**

On May 3, 2021, electronic generation of CARICOM Certificates of Origin (COO) issued by exporTT Limited was fully rolled out on the SEW – TTBizLink. This refined work flow process further reduces manual intervention on the processing activities and allows for the electronically signed and stamped COO to be emailed directly to the applicant, thereby eliminating the need for the client to visit exporTT Limited. The client

therefore receives the approved document in a shorter timeframe than with the manual process which also a business continuity measure.

Online Payment for COO issued by exporTT was also fully rolled out on the SEW – TTBizLink. This refined work flow process allows the applicant to pay for the COO online via credit card, rather than at the bank or directly at exporTT Limited.

- **Auto-Approvals for Trinidad and Tobago Bureau Standards for Car Parts**

On June 22, 2021, Auto Approvals for the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau Standards (TTBS) was implemented on the e-Goods Declaration Module of the Single Electronic Window – TTBizLink – for Car Parts. This assists approving officers in screening Goods Declarations by giving an automatic decision of “Hold for Inspection at Premises”. This allows imports of Car parts to be removed from the ports of entry expeditiously which can eliminate rent charges and demurrage faced by the importer. This serves as a pilot project with the intention to include additional commodities to auto-approvals for the TTBS. When fully implemented, the auto-approvals feature may impact approximately 40% of declarations under the TTBS’ purview thereby significantly reducing the time taken to obtain TTBS’ endorsements for import declarations. This feature is aimed at reducing the volume of declarations that officers must screen while improving the efficiency at which declarations are processed on TTBizLink.

- **Remote Visual Inspection pilot project at the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards**

The TTBS with support from the MTI implemented a pilot project for Remote Visual Inspections (RVIs) on July 9, 2021. The RVI uses technology such as visual aids, video technology to allow an inspector to conduct inspections from a remote location, that is, the inspector is not physically present at the inspection site. This is being applied to items/commodity codes deemed by the TTBS to be of low and medium risks. The RVI will facilitate business continuity while also protecting the

health and safety of stakeholders and employees. TTBS expects the benefits to include cost savings as Inspectors will have less travelling to physical sites; high turnaround time for inspection and therefore increased productivity; increased inspection coverage by easily reaching places that are remotely located; and provide for greater transparency and traceability as multiple persons would be able to view an inspection as it is being conducted. Photo and video evidence can also be recorded, retained, and retrieved if required for auditing purposes etc.

- **Auto-Approvals for Trinidad and Tobago Bureau Standards for Plant Quarantine Services**

Auto Approvals for the Plant Quarantine Services (PQS) was implemented on the e-Goods Declaration Module of the SEW–TTBizLink on July 22, 2021. This uses a risk-based approach to assist approving officers in screening Goods Declarations. If the commodities in an import declaration are deemed to pose a low plant health risk, then it is automatically approved on TTBizLink without the need for a Plant Quarantine Officer to manually process the declaration. It should be noted that TTBizLink collaborated with the PQS and identified these commodities that posed a low plant health risk to Trinidad and Tobago. In this way, PQS will further increase its processing efficiency by not spending time processing low risk items which would generally be released and rarely ever queried. It is anticipated that this will reduce the volume of declarations requiring manual screening by PQS' Officers by approximately twenty-five percent (25%).

- **Automatic Fee Exemption for Foreign Missions/Embassies at Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards**

Automatic Fee Exemption for Foreign Missions/Embassies on the e-Goods Declaration Module of the Single Electronic Window –TTBizLink was implemented on August 2, 2021 for TTBS. The TTBS has a policy that exempts all Foreign Missions and Embassies from attracting any inspection and performance fees. However, at present, when a relevant e-Goods Declaration (i.e. for Foreign Missions and Embassies) is flagged to TTBS, a fee is still being automatically calculated and applied. This then requires

declarants to go through the fee exemption process which is an inefficient process. The implementation of the Automatic Fee Exemptions streamlines this process by removing the above identified inefficiency such that, consignees that are Foreign Missions and Embassies will be identified and the fee exemption automatically applied. This is expected to lead to greater streamlining of processes and further enhance the ease of doing business.

b) Automation of Construction Permitting System

The North Regional Office (NRO) of the Town and Country Planning Division (TCPD) received approximately 2,302 Planning Permission applications on the DevelopTT online platform since the launch in March 2020. In Fiscal 2021, 2,150 applications were submitted for land and building development approvals. In addition to the Planning Permission applications, two (2) services were expanded to include the acceptance of Stamp Duty Exemption and Status of Land Correspondences to the TCPD North Regional Officer and the South Regional Office on February 8, 2021 and June 28, 2021, respectively.

With the continued adoption of the DevelopTT platform, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago aims to improve the processing time for Outline and Planning Permission applications from 150 days to 95 days and to reduce the overall time taken to obtain a Completion Certificate from 253 days to 170 days.

c) Implementation of a Port Community System

In January 2020, Cabinet agreed to the implementation of a Port Community System (PCS) in Trinidad and Tobago. The Project will be executed through joint collaboration among various ministries: MTI, Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) and the Customs and Excise Division (CED) of the Ministry of Finance (MOF). The PCS will facilitate interconnectivity with the national Single Electronic Window (SEW), ASYCUDA system of the CED and the NAVIS terminal operating system used by the Port of Port of Spain (PPOS) and the Port of Point Lisas (PLIPDECO).

In Fiscal 2021, the PCS is at the procurement stage and it is envisaged a contract will be awarded to a successful consultant for its development by November 2021.

4.7 Implementation of the Fair Trading Act through the Fair Trading Commission

The Trinidad and Tobago Fair Trading Commission (TTFTC) promoted the implementation of the Fair Trading Act in accordance with its mandate to maintain, promote and protect competition. TTFTC has engaged in advocacy through webinars and press releases with stakeholders to promote competition and has also addressed topical issues relating to anti-competitive business practices.

Under the IDB Technical Cooperation: Strengthening of the Competition Policy Framework, an Aide Memoire was signed on April 28, 2021. This document signaled the commencement of activities to strengthen capacity of TTFTC. Projects will include:

- Development of a conceptual Guide to the Fair Trading Act;
- Development of Merger Regulations;
- Training in Competition Law and Policy for members of the judiciary, including virtual training of judges; and
- Market studies, training on how to receive and handle complaints, and investigation guides.

4.8 Economic Infrastructure for Investment

In Fiscal 2021, the MTI focused on delivering policies and projects that sought to improve the investment climate and increase investments in Trinidad and Tobago as follows:

4.8.1 Development and Population of Industrial Parks

i. Moruga Agro-Processing and Light Industrial Park

The Moruga Agro-Processing and Light Industrial Park, commissioned on July 14, 2020, comprised five (5) factory shells and six (6) land lots and offers leasable space for the growth and expansion of operations in the processing of primarily

agro products, and light manufacturing. In Fiscal 2021 the following activities were achieved:

- The Regional Corporation Completion Certificate for the Moruga Agro Processing and Light Industrial Park was obtained in April 2021. This Certificate indicates that the Park is 100% completed and is in compliance with all regulatory standards.
- Four (4) companies accepted Letters of Offer for three (3) factory shells and one (1) land lot in the areas of agro processing and food production representing a total estimated investment of TT\$12.3Mn and 339 new jobs.
- One company (Woodsman Caribbean Limited) a manufacturer of juice from root crops signed a lease to establish its operation at the Park.
- InvestTT is actively pursuing a pipeline of tenants for the remaining spaces – five (5) have advanced applications to eTeCK and another five (5) expressed interest in the Park.

ii. Tamana In-Tech Park

In Fiscal 2021, iQor and Shaare Business Media Limited entered into lease agreements with eTeCK. iQor is expanding its Call Centre operations which will create 200 new jobs; and Shaare Business Media will be constructing its Head Office and a Data Centre at Tamana In-Tech Park which will create a further 200 jobs.

iii. Phoenix Park Industrial Estate

The Phoenix Park Industrial Estate, located in Couva, spans approximately one hundred and thirty-three (133) acres and will target businesses operating in manufacturing & assembly, logistics & distribution and ICT industries. It is envisaged that the development of this facility will be completed in Fiscal 2022.

In April 2021, PriceSmart, a Manufacturing and Distribution company, has accepted and signed a lease for ten (10) acres of land. PriceSmart will be constructing a Regional Distribution Centre at the Estate and will be pursuing manufacturing operations to service its outlets in Trinidad and the region.

In addition, three (3) Chinese investors in the areas of logistics and distribution, manufacturing and seafood processing have submitted applications to eTeck for setting up operations at the Park.

iv. Factory Road Industrial Estate

The Factory Road Industrial Estate, located in Chaguanas, spans sixty-seven (67) acres of land for the proposed business activities of Fish Processing; Food Processing; Manufacturing, Packaging and Distribution of Food Items; Light Manufacturing; Training; and Warehousing and Distribution. In Fiscal 2021, three (3) companies (A.S. Bryden, Metal X and KenScott) engaged in agro-processing, manufacturing and distribution and engineering entered into lease agreements with eTeck with a total investment of TT\$610 million which will create approximately 825 new jobs.

The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC) and Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (eTeck) signed a Design, Engineering, Procurement, Build and Commissioning contract on August 9, 2021 for the supply of natural gas pipeline infrastructure to the Park.

4.8.2 Upgrade of Industrial Parks

The fire hydrant infrastructure at most industrial parks were either non-functional or deemed non-compliant with current international specification by the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS). In an effort to mitigate the risks associated with fires, it was recommended by TTFS that the fire hydrant infrastructure be upgraded to safeguard the physical assets of the manufacturing sector to the thirteen (13) Parks: Abattoir, East Dry River, Sea Lots, Morvant, Diamond Vale, Frederick, O'Meara, Biljah, Chase, Pt. Lisas, Debe, Harmony Hall and Pt. Fortin. Upgrades will include: the replacement of existing fire hydrant pedestals, where applicable; and the installation of new fire hydrant pedestals and supply lines based on TTFS specifications.

eTeck awarded contracts to General Earth Movers Limited; Iere Concepts Limited; Millennium Holdings Limited; and P.R. Contracting Limited. Work commenced in September 2021 at the affected Industrial Parks.

The upgraded infrastructure is expected to result in a safe, reliable and attractive destination for inward investment.

4.8.3 Facilitation of Investments

In Fiscal 2021, the MTI and investTT facilitated a series of investment projects in targeted areas of economic activity at a value of approximately TT\$6,465,127,100 in foreign direct investments and TT\$1,352,875,025 in local direct investments. These projects created 1418 new jobs opportunities across the construction, services, manufacturing, and agro-processing sectors as illustrated in **Table 4**.

Sector	FDI (TT\$)	FDI Job Opportunity	LDI (TT\$)	LDI Job Opportunity
Construction	198,200,000	200	766,802,270	620
Services	70,000,000	100	10,050,000	7
Manufacturing	6,196,927,100	154	554,352,755	233
Agri-Business	N/A		21,670,000	104
TOTAL	6,465,127,100	454	1,352,875,025	964

4.9 Improvement of Trade Competitiveness

Given the role exports play in driving macroeconomic development, the MTI strengthened its efforts to support businesses that export Trinidad and Tobago's goods and services to targeted markets as well as markets of interest. In this regard, the MTI pursued new market opportunities for its goods and services. Some of these agreements included as follows:

4.9.1 Trade Agreements

i. **CARIFORUM-UK Economic Partnership Agreement**

Trinidad and Tobago, as part of the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) signed the CARIFORUM-United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in April 2019. This is a roll-over Agreement and is aimed at preserving the Region's preferential trading relationship with the UK, of which, UK is no longer part of the European Union.

The Act to give effect to this Agreement domestically was proclaimed by the President of Trinidad and Tobago on March 31, 2021.

ii. **Trinidad and Tobago – Chile Partial Scope Trade Agreement**

On October 20, 2020, Trinidad and Tobago and Chile signed a General Framework Agreement for the negotiation of a Partial Scope Trade Agreement (PSTA). The TT-Chile PSTA intends to increase trade between the two (2) countries by providing market access at reduced rates of duty, on a limited list of products. Local exporters are expected to benefit from preferential access to a market of approximately eighteen (18) million persons.

The First Round of negotiations occurred during August 17-19, 2021. Both parties reviewed the Draft Negotiating text in eight (8) Negotiating Groups on Market Access, Legal and Institutional Issues, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures, Trade Facilitation, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Trade Remedies and Competition Policy.

iii. **Trinidad and Tobago – Panama Partial Scope Trade Agreement**

The Partial Scope Trade Agreement (PSTA) was incorporated into Trinidad and Tobago law by Act No. 5 of 2015. The PSTA was ratified and entered into force in 2016. This Agreement sets out to *inter alia*, establish Agreement Coordinators to serve as contact points for communication, establish Joint Administration Commission to oversee all matters covered by the Agreement, implement tariff reductions and conduct stakeholder awareness sessions on opportunities and requirements under the Agreement. In Fiscal 2018, Cabinet approved a five (5)-

year Trinidad and Tobago - Panama PSTA Implementation Plan for the period October 2018-September 2022. The Plan outlines the key obligations and activities to be undertaken to comply with the provisions of the Agreement. It further identifies the agency responsible for execution of the tasks and the external stakeholders to be consulted.

The First Meeting of the Joint Administration Commission (JAC) under the TT-Panama PSTA Agreement was held on April 16, 2021. The Aide Memoire for the meeting with Panama has been finalised and Trinidad and Tobago has begun implementing some of the decisions included therein such as the establishment of working groups to begin negotiations for the expansion of preferential access for goods; and the development of Unified Rules of Origin. This will result in increased export opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago's manufacturers and exporters.

iv. CARICOM – Colombia Trade Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement

In Fiscal 2021, initial negotiations commenced for the expansion of preferential market access between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Colombia.

Both CARICOM and Colombia have exchanged request lists and national consultations with ministries, agencies and the private sector are on-going to determine Trinidad and Tobago's positions on the type of access that can be offered.

The negotiation process requires agreement from all CARICOM Member States on specific product positions and also constant engagement with Colombia. This process is expected to be completed by the end of Fiscal 2022.

v. Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA)

Trinidad and Tobago has been a beneficiary member under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) from its inception in January 1, 1984 and is the leading exporter to the USA under this Arrangement since 2005. CBERA was joined by the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act of 2000 (CBTPA) which expanded the coverage of goods to include an additional 257 products for duty-

free entry into the USA. However, these preferences expired on 30 September 2020.

In October 2020, the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) between the Caribbean and the United States was renewed which represents success for foreign and commercial diplomacy efforts, led by the Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley.

4.9.2 Implementation of the Export Booster Initiative (EBI)

The MTI in collaboration with exporTT and the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) launched the Export Booster Initiative (EBI) for the manufacturing sector in Trinidad, and in Tobago on February 16, 2021 and March 1, 2021, respectively. The EBI, valued at Fifty Million Trinidad and Tobago Dollars (TT\$50 million), aims to increase the export value of manufactured goods from TT\$2.7 billion in 2019 to TT\$5.4 billion by 2024.

The EBI consists of sixteen (16) initiatives under three (3) broad strategic areas namely:

a) Export Promotion (Accelerating Internationalisation)

- Trade Facilitation Offices
- Trade Attaches
- Market Intelligence Support
- Virtual Trade Missions
- Interpreting and Translating Services
- In-Market Promotion
- Virtual Expo Platform
- Sector Profiles

b) Capacity Building

- International Certification Fund
- Product Testing
- Innovation Vouchers
- Tobago Capacity Building

Export Accelerator
Green Packaging

c) Institutional Strengthening

Modernisation of exporTT
TTMA Export Business Unit

Trade Facilitation Offices and Trade Attaches: It is the intention of the Government to establish a Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (TIPA) which will be the premier agency for promoting business opportunities in export and investment of the local and international private sector. It is proposed that the TIPA will establish Trade Facilitation/Commercial Offices with Commercial Officers with responsibility for Trade and Investment Promotion to be located within Trinidad and Tobago's Embassies and Missions in the selected markets of interest.

Market Research: In Fiscal 2021, exporTT completed the following market research surveys:

- Canada – May 19, 2021;
- Dominica Republic – July 15, 2021;
- Curacao – August 27, 2021; and
- British Virgin Islands - September 2021

The outputs of these surveys will inform the execution of virtual trade missions.

Virtual Trade Missions: Four (4) Virtual Trade Missions were executed as follows:

- Panama during January 2021 to April 2021;
- Jamaica during July 2021 to August 2021; and
- Guyana during July 2021 to August 2021.

Four (4) leads have been generated from Panama and six (6) buyers were requested to submit quotations.

International Certification Fund (ICF) formerly known as the Certification Programme for Food and Beverage Standards and other Product Compliance (CPFSPC): On March 5, 2021, the MTI in collaboration with exporTT Limited commenced the promotion of the International Certification Fund (ICF). The aim is to ensure that local manufacturers meet international standards and boost the export capacity of SMEs.

The ICF will provide financial assistance to the non-energy Manufacturing sector (including Agro-processing) for a range of applicable international standards to boost production of non-energy exports and contribute to import substitution. Funding will be provided in the form of grants and will be limited to one (1) grant per beneficiary. Funding is limited to TT \$500,000 per beneficiary and will partly cover the cost associated to meet recognised international standards.

In Fiscal 2021, four (4) applications were approved. These applicants represent companies in the Agro-processing sector, Food and Beverage, Engineering and Industrial sectors and Construction. This certification will allow companies to enter new markets such as Belize, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, Haiti and Turks and Caicos. One of the companies in import substitution will result in saving Trinidad and Tobago approximately US \$700,000 annually in foreign exchange.

Tobago Capacity Building:

- **Tobago e-Pavilion Platform:** In September 2021, ten (10) companies signed on to the Tobago e-Pavilion Platform. Six (6) companies uploaded their stores as at the end of September 2021. The Tobago e-Pavilion is designed to showcase the products of ten (10) Tobago manufacturers to increase brand awareness and expand their local and international customer base.
- **Digital Brochure:** On September 25, 2021, the MTI through exporTT launched the Digital Brochure on its webpage. It covers all the services available to Tobago companies by exporTT, Business Development Unit of the THA and the Strategic Business Support Development Unit of the Tobago House of Assembly.

4.9.3 Combatting Illicit Trade in Consumer Goods in Trinidad and Tobago

a) A National Action Plan

A National Action Plan to combat illicit trade in consumer goods in Trinidad and Tobago was developed and approved by the Cabinet on March 11, 2021. The Action Plan comprised twenty-six (26) measures aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- Strengthen the legal framework to combat illicit trade;
- Strengthen the capacity of Ministries and enforcement agencies to combat illicit trade;
- Enhance collaboration among regulatory and enforcement agencies;
- Promote public-private partnerships towards fighting illicit trade; and
- Increase public awareness of illicit trade and the associated dangers.

b) Establishment of an Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force (AITTF)

The Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force (AITTF) was established in March 2021 and is co-chaired by Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Trade and Industry and National Security. The AITTF will be responsible for implementing the National Action Plan. The AITTF comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- Customs and Excise Division (CED);
- Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT);
- Intellectual Property Office (IPO);
- Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS);
- Chemistry Food and Drugs Division (CFDD);
- Crime Stoppers Trinidad and Tobago (CSTT);
- Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC);
- Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA);
- Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS); and
- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF).

In Fiscal 2021, the AITTF held three (3) meetings in which the following were achieved:

- Approved a sectoral sub-working group on legislation that will spearhead strengthening of the legal framework to combat illicit trade and review any legislative related matters to address illicit trade; and
- Approved the Working Groups on alcohol, tobacco, cleaning agents and pharmaceuticals to further assess the impact on these sectors and provide sector-specific recommendations.

The Working Groups on Alcohol, Cleaning Agents and Pharmaceuticals met in August 2021 and discussed their roles and the activities required to combat illicit trade in the respective areas under their remit.

4.9.4 Promotion of Economic Integration

Trinidad and Tobago's participation at meetings of COTED ensures that national interests are reflected in the regional trade policy development, and necessary approvals are secured for national policy implementation where required. This includes, but is not limited to, adjustment of customs duties in the form of Common External Tariff (CET) suspensions in pursuit of policy objectives. In Fiscal 2021 the following were executed:

a) Suspension of Common External Tariff (CET)

In November 2020, Cabinet approved the suspension of the Common External Tariff (CET) on a list of over twenty (20) basic food items: dried salted pollock fillets, other Cheese (Cheddar), other black tea (fermented), other partly fermented tea, canned corn beef, canned herrings, canned sardines, canned tuna, canned mackerel, active yeasts, all edible preparations for infant use, other (Soya Bean Oil), virgin olive oil, other: Sunflower-seed or safflower oil and fractions thereof, Canola Oil, frozen french fries, refined sugar, powdered milks: in powder, granules or other solid forms, of a fat content, by weight not exceeding 1.5%; and in powder, granules or other solid forms, of a fat content, by weight exceeding 1.5%, not containing added sugar or other sweetening matter, other powdered milks.

The continuation of the suspension of the CET is necessary to provide support to policy initiatives of the Government, minimize the cost of raw material imports for the private sector, and to maintain pricing of items at affordable rates for consumers to stabilize the cost of living given the current economic conditions.

b) Increase of Common External Tariff (CET)

In Fiscal 2021, Cabinet approved the increase of Common External Tariff (CET) on Chlorine from 0% to 10% in which Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) is assessing Trinidad and Tobago's proposal. A regional assessment team is to be established to investigate and validate Trinidad and Tobago's claims of ability to supply; Almond Milk for an increased rate of duty to 50% in 2023; wrapping paper from 0% to 5%: the MTI in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries will provide the required policy space through the regional Review of the Common External Tariff (CET). This will facilitate the incorporation of higher import duties where needed.

4.9.5 Improvement to the Legislative Environment for Trade and Business

a) Amendment to the Consumer Protection and Empowerment Bill

In March 2020, a Consultant was contracted to draft a new consumer protection and empowerment legislation which will replace the existing Consumer Protection and Safety Act, Chapter, 82:34. The Consultant completed a Draft Bill in November 2020. The new Bill, *inter alia*, will provide increased powers to the Consumer Affairs Division (CAD) and will enhance the protection and means of redress of consumers such as price gouging, pyramid scheme and online retailing.

b) Amendment of the Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties Legislation in Trinidad and Tobago

A consultant was contracted on May 26, 2021 to undertake amendments of the Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties legislation. This consultancy will be completed in March 2022.

The new legislation will ensure that local industries are safeguarded from unfair foreign trade and that the legislation is in conformity with the World Trade

Organisation's Anti-dumping and Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreements. The Draft Legislative Brief was submitted by the Consultant on September 3, 2021. A stakeholders' consultation is to be held in November 2021 to review the Draft Legislative Brief.

c) Modernisation of the Legal Framework for Electronic Transactions Act for Trinidad and Tobago

In November 2020, a consultancy began the task of updating the existing Electronic Transaction Act (ETA) in order to create an enabling environment for electronic transactions. The ETA will be updated to include provisions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCTRAL) Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR) which will facilitate e-commerce by automating certain transactions through "smart contracts" which are fundamental mechanisms of a paperless trade environment. The updated ETA will afford legal protection for consumers, governments and businesses. In September 2021, this consultancy produced a Draft Amendment Bill which is being finalised by the Ministry of Digital Transformation.

d) Amendments to the Data Protection Legislation for Trinidad and Tobago

The Draft Amendment Bill to the Data Protection Legislation for Trinidad and Tobago was completed in September 2021 by the Consultants. This initiative seeks to modernise the Trinidad and Tobago Data Protection Act in alignment with international best practices. It will facilitate the full proclamation of the Data Protection Legislation and will provide greater protection of sensitive information for members of the public. The Draft Bill is being finalised by the Office of the Prime Minister.

e) Trinidad and Tobago's Obligation under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement

A consultant was contracted for the development of legislation to give effect to Trinidad and Tobago's obligation under the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). In Fiscal 2021, the Consultant completed the Draft Legislative Brief which is being reviewed. The benefits of implementing the TFA will provide greater transparency in importation and exportation procedures, reduced

bureaucratic processes and procedures at the nation's port, thereby contributing to greater efficiency and improved export competitiveness.

4.10 Protection and Empowerment of Consumers

Consumer protection and empowerment is critical to ensuring a business environment that is ethical and conducive to local trade and commerce. In Fiscal 2021, the following activities were executed:

a) Consumer Complaints and Resolutions

The Consumer Affairs Division (CAD) addresses enquires/complaints and resolves cases from consumers when suppliers refused to offer appropriate redress for goods that fail to perform the functions for which they are designed to perform. **Table 5** displays the breakdown of enquiries and number of complaints received, cases resolved and the value of resolution by the CAD for the period October 2020 to September 2021:

Table 5: Breakdown of enquiries and complaints received and cases resolved and value of resolution by the CAD - October 2020 - September 2021

Number of Enquiries			
Telephone Enquiries	Walk in Enquiries	Facebook Enquiries	Total Enquiries
2,520	40	296	2,856
Number of complaints received and cases resolved			
Received	Resolved	Percentage	
686	445	65%	
Monetary Value of Resolutions			
\$1,418,090.32			

b) Consumer Awareness Programme

In Fiscal 2021 the CAD conducted lectures to several secondary schools and other educational institutions. In keeping with public health regulations regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic, face-to-face initiatives were curtailed and lectures were limited to virtual sessions only. Appearances were also made on various television and radio

programmes which intended to reach all consumers in order to increase consumers' ability to make wiser and more informed purchasing decisions.

In addition to the above, as part of the commemoration of World Consumer Rights Day, 2021 activities, consumer education sessions were conducted at ten (10) secondary schools and other learning institutions. Thirty-eight (38) lectures were conducted which had a reach of 725 students and eighteen (18) adults. Interviews were also conducted on two (2) television stations.

c) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tobago

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed on November 1, 2019 between the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) held its second meeting of the Standing Committee on October 27, 2020 to continue discussions towards realizing the principles of the MOU.

d) Adverse Trade Practice Order 2000

Under the Consumer Protection and Safety Act Chapter 82:34, the CAD conducted two (2) Adverse Trade Practice Order 2000 (ATPO) exercises between December 2020 and January 2021 to determine whether businesses operate in compliance with the ATPO. These exercises were conducted subsequent to visits in March 2020. The ATPO is a piece of legislation that makes it an offence for anyone in the course of a business to engage in certain trade practices, which adversely affect the economic interest of consumers within Trinidad and Tobago.

Authorized officers would identify any displayed signs or statements on bill books/invoices which are invalid by law, businesses would be issued warnings accordingly.

The statements prohibited by law include:

- No Refund;
- No Exchange; and
- No Refund on Sale Items.

During the period December 7-18, 2020, CAD's officers visited 368 stores in malls and main areas of commerce, namely, Arima Town Centre, Rio Claro Town Centre, High Street Princes Town, Southern Main Road Couva, Long Circular Mall, Ellerslie Plaza,

High Street San Fernando, Main Road Chaguanas, Eastern Main Road, Sangre Grande, Main Road, Point Fortin and West Mall. One hundred and fifteen (115) or 31% were in breached of the ATPO.

During January 13-15, 2021, the CAD officers re-visited forty-one (41) businesses which were in breached in March 2020 to determine whether or not there was subsequent compliance to the ATPO. Out of the forty-one (41), thirty (30) of those were compliant, three (3) were still in breach of the ATPO and (8) businesses had either ceased operation or could not be located. This exercise was significant as it brought awareness to businesses about their obligations under the ATPO as well as the rights and responsibilities of consumers.

e) Review and Implementation of a Supermarket Code of Practice

The CAD has initiated a review of the 2011 report on the “Review of Local Supermarket Sector in keeping with International Best Practices,” and the existing draft Supermarket Code. This review seeks to critically analyse the outcomes of the 2011 report and make recommendations for improvement thus in keeping with international best practice, and meet current consumer needs and interests. The objectives of the review are to:

- Verify findings of the study conducted in 2011;
- Amend the current draft Code of Practice for supermarkets in keeping with international best practices;
- Implement an updated Supermarket Code of Practice; and
- Conduct consumer education exercises to inform businesses and consumers of the Code.

In quarter 2 of Fiscal 2021, Phase I of the project was completed. This involved a review of the 2011 Report, an analysis of relevant secondary sources and discussions with stakeholders. It is expected that Phase II, which entails the conduct of business and consumer surveys, will be completed by quarter 1 of Fiscal 2022. A press release will be executed to prepare the public for the commencement of the consumer survey and thereafter the survey aspect of the project will commence.

f) Monitoring the Consumer Environment

The Consumer Protection and Safety Act Chapter 82:34 of 1985 allows for the monitoring of all goods as it states that the CAD is responsible for keeping under review “the carrying on of commercial activities in Trinidad and Tobago which relate to goods supplied to consumers in Trinidad and Tobago or produced with a view to their being so supplied”. Through this legislative authority, the CAD conducts, on a monthly and quarterly basis, a number of price monitoring exercises in various sectors, namely, supermarket, hardware, poultry, both on the live and processed markets, and pharmaceutical as follows:

- **Supermarket Retail Price Surveys:** The CAD conducted Monthly Retail Price Surveys of 128 items listed in the CAD’s Basket of Goods, from selected supermarkets across twenty-two (22) areas in Trinidad and Tobago. The Monthly Retail Price Data was collected and collated from which Monthly Price Publications and Quarterly Reports on the movement of prices were produced. For the period October 2020-September 2021, twelve (12) Supermarket Retail Price Surveys were conducted from which twelve (12) Publications and six (7) Monthly Bulletins were produced. This is integral to the monitoring of price trends and informed policymaking. Monthly publications are posted on the CAD’s Social Media Page and the Ministry of Trade and Industry’s website which is intended to assist consumers in comparative shopping.
- **Hardware Price Surveys:** For the period October 2020 to September 2021, the CAD collaborated with the CAU of the THA and conducted four (4) Hardware Price Surveys on selected structural, electrical, plumbing and decorative items from selected hardware establishments across Trinidad and Tobago. Three (3) Quarterly Hardware Reports were generated. Revisions were made to the survey data collection form with regard to the brands of items, for a more effective reporting.
- **Poultry Price Surveys:** The CAD has also collected monthly retail prices from thirty-five (35) poultry shops in six (6) counties across Trinidad on both live and processed poultry markets. For the period October 2020 - September 2021, twelve (12) monthly Price Publications and eight (8) Monthly Bulletins were generated. Monthly Publications are posted to the CAD’s Social Media Page

and the Ministry of Trade and Industry's website. This data is critical to the monitoring the price trends of poultry prices, assisting policymakers in decision-making, and facilitating comparative shopping for consumers.

- **Pharmaceutical Price Survey:** In 2021, CAD was tasked with the responsibility of conducting a Quarterly Retail Price Survey in the Pharmaceutical Industry. The CAD collaborated with the Ministry of Health and developed a list of main essential pharmaceutical items. The Division successfully conducted its first survey of this kind between July 2021 and September 2021.

4.11 Transformed Ministry Performance and Service Delivery

a) MTI Monitoring and Evaluation

During Fiscal 2021, the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Unit continued to developed and monitored MTI's Annual M&E Work Plans; provided advice on the development of M&E Frameworks on policies and projects; and provided quarterly and annual Reports to internal and external stakeholders.

b) Improving Service Delivery at MTI

During Fiscal 2021, the MTI filled the following vacancies at the Technical and Administrative level to ensure that the human capital is available to achieve its goal of transforming the Ministry and improving its service delivery:

- Established: Project Analyst II
Clerk IV
(2) Statistical Officer II
Stenographer II
- Contract: 1 Project Support Officer
2 Trade Analysts
1 Trade Specialist
1 Legal Research Officer
1 Senior Trade Specialist

2 Business Facilitators (1 Business Facilitator is assuming
in December 2021)

1 Director, Investment

1 Senior Investment Specialist

1 Driver /Courier

The MTI will continue to liaise closely with the Service Commissions Department to ensure that all senior positions in the Ministry are filled in Fiscal 2022.

5.0 Financial Operations

Table 6: Statement of Capital Expenditure Extract as at September 30, 2021

Project No.	Item/Sub - item/Group/Project	2021 Revised Allocation	Funds Disbursed by the MoF to MTI	Expenditure as at September 30th by Agency/MTI	Unspent Balance	Percentage of Disbursed Funds Utilised
F304	Development of a Business Development Programme	\$5,000,000	\$210,369	\$310,352.14	\$0.00	100%
R001	Investment Promotion Initiatives and Development	\$2,000,000	\$972,455	\$1,020,351.19	\$0.00	100%
R007	Establishment of Research and Development Facility	\$2,000,000	\$715,149	\$451,158.92	\$263,990.08	63.1%
R014	Business Development of the Creative Industries	\$500,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A	N/A
R016	Enhancement of the Single Electronic Window (IDB Loan)	\$30,000,000	\$28,239,540	\$22,326,505	\$5,913,035 (voting pending)	79.1%
R019	Development of the Music Industry	\$1,500,000	\$405,926	\$426,964.76	\$0.00	100%
R021	Development of the Film Industry	\$1,250,000	\$0.00	\$199,929.07	N/A	N/A

R023	Development of the Fashion Industry	\$3,500,000	\$2,645,954	\$2,806,591.28	\$0.00	100%
R024	National SheTrades Chapter	\$300,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A	N/A
R026	Gateway to Trade	\$500,000	\$91,125	\$246,043.50	\$0.00	100%
B220	TTBS-Enhancing the Quality Infrastructure for Trinidad and Tobago	\$2,000,000	\$500,882	\$436,755	\$0.00	87.2%
A003	Upgrading of Information Technology and Information Systems at the Ministry of Trade and Industry	\$750,000	\$166,548	\$166,547.25	\$0.00	100%
A008	Inward Investment - Non Petroleum Initiatives	\$300,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%
A018	Feasibility Study of the Export Financing Mechanism for Service Providers and Pilot Programmes (Now, Services Exporters Registry)	\$350,000	\$201,688	\$186,950	\$14,738	92.7%

A020	Implementation of the National e-Commerce Strategy	\$200,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A	N/A
Total Consolidated Fund (CF) Projects		\$50,150,000	\$34,149,636	\$28,578,148.11	\$6,191,763.08	
Q293	Wallerfield Industrial and Technological Park (e Teck)	\$12,293,000	\$10,636,164	\$10,636,164	\$0.00	100%
Q303	Single Electronic Window for Trade & Business Facilitation	\$8,400,000	\$6,800,000	\$6,792,300	\$7,700	99.9%
Q308	Upgrade of Drainage and Fire Hydrants at Industrial Estates (e Teck)	\$3,237,000	\$724,241	\$724,241	\$0.00	100%
Total Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) Projects		\$23,930,000	\$18,160,405	\$18,152,705	\$7,700	
Total Development Programme (DP) Projects		\$74,080,000	\$52,310,041	\$46,730,853.11	\$6,199,463.08	

6.0 Human Resource Capital

The Human Resources Unit (HRU) is charged with managing the selection and development of the human capital of the MTI. To do this, the HRU facilitates the recruitment and development of staff to ensure that a competent talent pool is available to support the execution of the MTI mandate. **Table 7** provides a summary of total, permanent and contract staff at the MTI as at September 2021.

Total Number of Non-Contract positions	268
Actual Number of Persons employed in Established Permanent positions	90
Number of Vacant Established Permanent positions	178
Total Number of Contract Positions	93
Actual Number of Contract Employees currently employed	53
Number of Vacant Contract Positions	93

7.0 Procurement Procedures

In preparation for the impending implementation of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act 2016 (Amended) by the GORTT, the MTI established an interim procurement team to prepare for the adoption of the new procurement legislation. In this regard, the following activities were executed:

- i. Drafted an Internal Control Framework for Procurement, Retention and Disposal of public property to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of operations of the Public Body;
- ii. Established an organisational structure and delegation of authority for the management, and execution of procurement, retention and disposal of public property;
- iii. Established functional responsibilities and reporting relationships within the Public Body and Procurement and Disposal Units;
- iv. Established Procurement and Disposal Function and Inform the Office of the Procurement Regulation (OPR) of the 'Named' Procurement Officer; and
- v. Drafted the Annual Procurement Plan and Annual Schedule of Planned Procurement Activities.

8.0 Public and Community Relations

i. Launch of SheTrades T&T

The Ministry of Trade and Industry and exporTT, in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC), virtually launched SheTrades, Trinidad and Tobago on Wednesday October 28, 2020 which saw over three hundred (300) female entrepreneurs in attendance. The platform offers invaluable opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago's female-



owned MSME's as it promotes their inclusion into global supply chains, facilitates Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) linkages and provides an income earning avenue for our enterprising women. It provides a pathway for business expansion, enabling

female entrepreneurs to receive technical training, professional mentorship, compete in international tender and procurement processes and attend international trade and business events and workshops. Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry encouraged all female entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago to join the SheTrades movement which will assist them in building capacity and becoming export ready.



ii. VEMCO celebrates first shipment to Cuba

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry joined the executives of VEMCO on 9 December, 2020 at their Head Office to witness the

loading of VEMCO's first shipment of products inclusive of ketchup, mayonnaise and mustard to Cuba. Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, congratulated VEMCO on its first shipment to Cuba. She said *"this new relationship with Cuba is a significant achievement and a major milestone in the diversification of VEMCO's export markets and will contribute to an increase in Trinidad and Tobago's non-energy exports."*

iii. Trade Minister Visits Manufacturing Family Business

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, visited the manufacturing and warehousing facilities of Joseph J Sabeeney Ltd. on February 19, 2021. The team met with the family-run business Directors led by Anne Sabeeney and her children Alan and Sarah Sabeeney. The business has been in existence since 1988 and



over time has consolidated to distribute and manufacture a number of household and cleaning supplies. During her visit, Minister Gopee-Scoon was introduced to the range of products, which include toilet bowl deodorizers, naphthalene balls (known as moth balls), camphor blocks, reusable and disposable cleaning cloths,

sponges and scouring pads and mops. A large portion of the company's sales are local, however, 10 % of total sales are exported regionally to countries such as Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Guyana and Grenada.

iv. ABIL enters the Cyprus Market

Trade and Industry Minister, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon joined the Associated Brands Industries Limited (ABIL) Group CEO/Deputy Chairman Nicholas Lok Jack and Tricia Coosal, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association (TTMA) on June 25, 2021 to announce that its signature candy bar CATCH from the



Charles Chocolates Division will be sold and distributed in the Republic of Cyprus from September 2021. Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, said citizens of Trinidad and Tobago can feel a sense of pride as a local product can now be found on another Mediterranean island, she

said, “A chocolate such as CATCH entering a new business market in Cyprus is a great accomplishment for not only Associated Brands, but for us as a country. We feel extremely proud of this new venture.”

v. MTI Encourages MSMEs to utilize e-commerce platforms

One hundred and sixty (160) Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs)



participated in an Awareness Session held by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in its drive to promote and encourage firms to incorporate e-commerce in their business models. On June 4, 2021, Trade and Industry Minister, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon joined four (4)

local e-commerce industry experts in an informative and engaging webinar hosted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, themed “Digital Opportunities for MSME’s: Pivot your

Business to the Next Level. Participants were encouraged to closely examine their business models and consider how e-commerce platforms, or other available platforms, can build and maximize their business reach and profitability.

vi. **Launch of the Export Booster Initiative**

The Minister of Trade and Industry officially announced the implementation of an Export Booster Initiative for the manufacturing sector valued at Fifty Million TT Dollars (TT\$50 million) on February 16, 2021 via a media conference. The objective of this strategic and targeted initiative is to promote the exports of manufactured goods. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, in collaboration with exporTT and the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) developed this Export Booster Initiative (EBI) to increase the export value of manufactured goods from TT\$2.7 billion in 2019 by 10% at the end of the fiscal year 2020/2021 and to double that to TT\$5.4 billion by 2024. The Export Booster Initiative is made up of sixteen initiatives under three broad strategic areas namely:



1. Export Promotion (Accelerating Internationalization);
2. Capacity Building; and
3. Institutional Strengthening

9.0 The Way Forward

In Fiscal 2022, the MTI will continue to develop and execute those policy initiatives approved by Cabinet. It will also seek to execute initiatives designed to support the achievement of its mandate for business, trade, investment and consumer empowerment as follows:

- Negotiations for expansions of Partial Scope Trade Agreements.
- Activities within the Action Plan to combat illicit trade in consumer goods.
- Implementation of the Export Booster Initiative.
- Implementation of Trinidad and Tobago Trade Policy aimed at growing exports.
- Implementation of the National SheTrades for female entrepreneurs.
- Completion of the New Phoenix Industrial Park in Couva.
- Completion of the Natural Gas Pipeline at the Factory Road Industrial Park;
- Tenanting of Industrial Parks.
- Negotiations of Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with key strategic partners.
- Establishment of Commercial Offices and Commercial Officers in selected markets.
- Establishment of a Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (TIPA).
- Implementation of the National Services Exporters Registry Platform.
- Development and Implementation of Gateway to Trade Programme.
- Implementation of Scale Up Trinidad and Tobago Programme.
- Enactment and operationalization of the Special Economic Zones Legislation.
- Development and Implementation of the National Apprenticeship Programme.
- Modernization of the Trade Licence Unit of MTI.
- Facilitation of donors through the Aid for Trade Strategy.
- Implementation of the National Quality Policy through promotions and other development initiatives such as the establishment of a Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Services for Conformity Assessment (TTASCA).
- Development and Implementation of the National e-Commerce Strategy;
- Completion of the Framework for the development of the Maritime Sector (Commercial and Leisure).

- Implementation of the Grant Fund Facility to support small and medium businesses in the manufacturing and agro-processing sectors.
- Implementation of the Research and Development Facility to assist manufacturing and service companies develop innovative products, processes, systems and services.
- Implementation of various projects in the music industry aimed at creating new opportunities for artistes in the music industry and address concerns of local stakeholders.
- Implementation of various projects in the fashion industry aimed at building capacity in different areas in the Fashion Sector.
- Expansion of the roll-out of the DevelopTT Online Platform for online submission and approval of land and building development approvals from Town and Country Planning Division (TCPD) and other development control agencies.
- Strengthening and the expansion of the Single Electronic Window (TTBizLink);
- Implementation of Consumer protection, education and Research programmes.
- Development of a new harmonized consumer protection and empowerment legislation.

10.0 Conclusion

In Fiscal 2021, the MTI embarked on key initiatives designed to lead and oversee the implementation of the GORTT's policies for trade, business development, investment and consumer empowerment.

The MTI successfully executed a number of programmes, policies and projects which resulted in the following:

- i. Improvements in the ease of doing business;
- ii. Improvements in the national quality infrastructure;
- iii. Facilitation of investments through the expansion economic infrastructure;
- iv. Approval of cabinet on the implementation of the national Action Plan to combat illicit trade in consumer goods in Trinidad and Tobago;
- v. strengthening of export capacity through:
 - a. the export booster initiative;
 - b. grant funding;
 - c. training programmes;
 - d. engaging in trade missions and trade fairs;
- vi. acceleration of economic diversification in targeted sectors such as
 - a. creative;
 - b. maritime (marine and leisure); and
 - c. manufacturing.

Notwithstanding the disruption in the economy due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the MTI continued to be dedicated to improving and sustaining the non-energy sector.