



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

# *Development and Implementation of Technical Regulations Including Methods of Referencing Standards*

ACP TBT PROGRAMME, CROSQ, TTBS

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R E M A R K S

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TRINIDAD HILTON

Good morning to all

Let me first begin by extending a special welcome to our visitors from across the Region. It is an honour for me to address you this morning at this Regional Workshop aimed at the Development and Implementation of Technical Regulations including Methods of Referencing Standards under the auspices of the African Caribbean Pacific States (ACP) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Programme, the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS).

Traditionally, when we speak of success in trade and business as a nation, there is great emphasis on the volumes and quantities of our goods being traded. However, one important factor which lies at the cornerstone of such success is quality. Ladies and gentlemen, as small and vulnerable economies, while we recognize that our goods and services need to be dynamic and differentiated to survive in this globalized environment, the emphasis on producing quality goods and services should be our focus. We have come to realise that despite the preferential market access provided by our respective trade agreements, the inability to meet international standards and technical regulations serve as impediments to trade.

Today, quality has taken on a multi-faceted approach, with all players along the value chain being responsible for the delivery of quality. As a Government, we also recognize our role in the area of quality, through the development and implementation of effective private-sector driven policies and initiatives.

### **GOOD REGULATORY PRACTICE**

According to the OECD, **Good Regulatory Practices** (GRP) are internationally recognised processes, systems, tools and methods for improving the quality of regulations. GRP systematically implements public consultation and stakeholder engagement as well as impacts analysis of government proposals, before new measures or regulations are implemented to make sure they are “fit for purpose” and will deliver what they are set out to achieve.

Discussions in the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) have also been focused on the importance of good regulatory practice (GRP) towards a practical and efficient implementation of the TBT Agreement.

Many countries such as Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Uganda and the United States, as well as inter-governmental organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are recognizing the merit in the adoption of GRP and are working to implement its principles.

On the trade agenda, GRP and regulatory cooperation have also formed part of negotiations in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union and the United States. The Report of 15th Round of Negotiations for the TTIP elaborated that discussions on GRP included in particular, provisions related to early regulatory planning, impact assessment and transparency.

Ladies and gentlemen, our challenge nationally, in brief is to:

- diversify and deepen the production base;
- improve competitiveness;
- improve export capability;
- strengthen the framework, institutions and infrastructure; and
- promote social inclusion.

In the present economic climate, the need for a cost effective and responsive regulatory system that anticipates future problems and opportunities cannot be overstated. A regulatory system which adapts quickly and effectively and has the capacity to detect and analyse emerging issues can greatly assist policy makers with addressing these challenges.

I wish to acknowledge the work of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) aimed at introducing the concept of Good Regulatory Practice to Government officers locally through the staging of four (4) previous workshops which provided training to representatives of several agencies within the state sector, including my Ministry.

### **THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY AND TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

Instruments of Trade policy such as Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment Procedures must be effectively implemented through best practices as a means to support the development of trading activities while avoiding the creation of unnecessary obstacles. Regulations must also be based on and guided by public moral principles, and should respect the commitment of the government, to bilateral and multilateral international agreements.

Overall, the principles of GRP can also be extended to overall government decision-making and policy development, and not just limited to technical regulations. For instance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry is at the forefront of creating an enabling trade and business environment, through inter alia the drafting and implementation of policies and strategies to support the growth of the non-energy sector.

In particular, the Ministry has embarked on work to develop:

#### **1. A National Export Strategy (NES) aimed at:**

- addressing the trading environment and cross-cutting issues including Non-Tariff Measures and border agency inefficiencies;
- providing strategies for government assistance to exporters to penetrate targeted markets; and
- sector support in technical and financial areas as well as training.

**2. A National Quality Infrastructure Policy** – This is expected to lead to the establishment of state of the art laboratories and improve the overall quality infrastructure with the aim of enhancing export competitiveness.

#### **3. A Services Sector Expansion Policy which will focus on:**

- Strengthening the data collection system
- Improving Domestic Regulation or legislation for service providers; and
- Promoting the export of a group of Services.

I wish to acknowledge that through the adoption of GRPs which:

- i. promote the use of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) to assess the potential impacts of future regulation/policies;
- ii. encourage continuous stakeholder engagement; and
- iii. the conduct of ex-post evaluations,

we can significantly increase the effectiveness and **quality** of government policies and initiatives.

While we may have been applying some aspects of these practices in the past, such as stakeholder consultations, I endorse the full adoption and application of GRP in Trinidad and Tobago, as critical to strengthening Government policy-making. GRP and Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) are important tools to evaluate the potential economic, social and environmental implications of policies, as well as assist with screening policies for potential negative impacts on competitiveness, and the facilitation of investment.

To this end, I look forward to the outcome of your efforts at this Workshop on the preparation of a GRP Guide, which will provide a coherent framework for the adoption of GRP in our respective countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to reiterate that the Government recognizes the importance of transparency and accountability in the development of regulations and policies, as well as the importance of cooperation between and among regulatory bodies. This is evident in our support to such initiatives and the presence of key Ministries today, such as the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, which is critical to the Legislative Process.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I close, I see that you have assembled an impressive schedule of events over the two (2) days and I am hopeful that the exchange of information and lessons learnt from the pilot projects of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago will contribute to strengthening the Region's regulatory framework. I also look forward to the input of the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) as we chart a regional approach going forward.

As such, the Ministry of Trade and Industry remains committed to supporting TTBS in promoting and adopting measures to increase the alignment of national standardization policies with international norms and improving our technical regulatory process. It is hoped that such development of regulations for goods and services will result in increased confidence of our trading partners in our regulatory processes. We will continue to look to TTBS to spearhead the adoption of GRP, as we seek to develop an effective National Quality System.

I thank you.