



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

# *Envisioning the Future of the Music Industry of Trinidad and Tobago*

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MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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Good Evening,

On behalf of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its state agency and subsidiary company, the Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company Limited and the Trinidad and Tobago Music Company Limited, it is my distinct pleasure to address you at this National Stakeholder Engagement Event, an annual forum that allows music stakeholders to put forth invaluable contributions towards the business development of Trinidad and Tobago's music sector. Having so many of you present today is a testament to your unwavering commitment to the successful growth of the sector and the national economy as a whole. I thank you for your presence and your input into the discussion later.

The 2013 Creative Economy Report published by the United Nations Development Programme emphasizes that "Human creativity and innovation, at both the individual and group level, are the key drivers of these industries, and have become the true wealth of nations in the 21st century." To this end, Trinidad and Tobago is well poised to be an exceptionally wealthy nation through the undeniable genius of our creative resources that lie within our people. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago seeks to drive the transformation that will place our creators upon the global stage.

Through the Government's Official Policy Framework and the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 (Vision 2030), the creative sector has been targeted for priority development towards Trinidad and Tobago's economic diversification. This prioritisation is indeed warranted as the creative industry possesses great potential to generate increased revenue and employment, earn foreign exchange and create export opportunities in international markets for creative products and services.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is mandated to develop globally competitive businesses to contribute to the sustainable growth and diversification of the economy, and to expand exports, particularly in the Non-Energy sector. The December 2015 Report Cultural Times, the first global map of cultural and creative industries by Ernst and Young point out that in 2013, the creative industries (CCI) generated US\$2,250b of revenues and 29.5 million jobs worldwide. The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in that Report, affirmed that *"the cultural and creative industries are major drivers of the economies of developed as well as developing countries. Indeed, they are among the most rapidly growing sectors worldwide. It influences income generation, job creation and export earnings. It can forge a better future for many countries around the globe."* The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is also focusing on the Orange Economy – that is, the contribution of the creative industries to economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB reports that in 2015, the sector generated more than \$124 billion in revenues and provided jobs to more than 1.9 million people in the LAC region.

It is crucial for Trinidad and Tobago to capitalize on this growth. The role of CreativeTT and its subsidiary MusicTT is, therefore, pivotal in preparing the local music sector for international market penetration. The first and most critical priority in this preparation is the bridging of the identified industry gaps to ensure the music sector is being built upon a strong foundation.

Based on the Music Professionals Survey conducted in April 2017 through MusicTT, there was a call by stakeholders for a sustainable industry that champions and protects diversity. Upon analysis of the survey's results, five major challenges were raised. There was an appeal to address the fragmented landscape which currently obliges artists to manage their careers and distribute their work with minimal structure, collated information and industry guidelines. There were expressed needs for business capacity and market development so that the industry could be more sustainable for its stakeholders, with an emphasis on performance spaces and revenue generation through live music events. There were requests for a solution that would address the seasonal nature of local music that currently circulates around the Carnival season and concentrates only on indigenous genres, leaving a large portion of the wider music industry without competitive opportunities for the rest of the calendar year. There was a call for music business skills training and it was seen as one of the largest educational and training gaps in the music industry as it is necessary in becoming more solely sustainable through music. Lastly, there was a call for local content to be recognised, supported, monitored, monetised and significantly present in local broadcasting.

Through envisioning the future of the music industry of Trinidad and Tobago, MusicTT's implementation projects for this fiscal year 2018 are a direct strategic response to the most critical success factors identified by the industry's stakeholders. These four flagship projects will serve to build and strengthen the sectoral infrastructure to support the independent artist's path to self-actualisation.

Trinidad and Tobago's first Live Music District begins in the City of Port of Spain and will create the performance spaces and revenue influx needed for a robust and sustainable music industry. From Ariapita Avenue to the Queen's Park Savannah, there are a large number of existing, bustling venues that are primed for live music. Each of these venues can potentially become a part of the Live Music District, the pilot of which is due to launch on March 1st, 2018. Deliberately scheduled after the Carnival season which already boasts of a high number of live performances, the district will seek to create a vibrant live music scene for the rest of the year.

A partnership has been created with the Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association in order to gain the buy-in of the spaces and to coordinate venue assessments. To date, site visits have been conducted with over twenty-five restaurants, lounges and hotels in the City and these will continue in the weeks to come. These site visits focus on detailing the key characteristics of each venue through a proper sound and performance analysis that includes an assessment of the acoustics, audio system, electrical accessibility, space capacity, venue dynamics and purpose, and the venues' current suitability for various types of live performances. No amount of attention to detail will be spared in ensuring its proper execution, and we have welcomed the City of Port of Spain, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts as well as the Ministry of Tourism in our joint approach and commitment to the success of this creative, cultural and entertainment hub.

Exporting musical talent is key to this industry's sustainability. The Artist Portfolio Development Programme is another flagship initiative that will be implemented in this fiscal year beginning with the inaugural Music Showcase in December 2017. This Programme will intake a cohort of ten to twenty artists on the cusp of export-readiness each year, and provide them with customized capacity development training in areas needed to advance their careers. This will include music business and entertainment law training, brand and artist development, stage presence and performance training, pitching strategies, developing business and marketing plans, developing a robust online presence, and monetizing music intellectual property. This training will be done through the Music Export Academy, our third flagship initiative, with cohorts for each year being transparently chosen by international, independent industry executives at a public music showcase. While focused on the cohort's targeted development, the workshops within this Academy will be open to the wider music industry. Our artists must be enabled to successfully export their music products to international markets and secure well-deserved returns. We expect fifty to one hundred artists to benefit from this Programme over a five-year period.

Lastly, but certainly not least of all, the Ministry of Trade and Industry will fill two significant gaps in the music industry through the creation of a Music Tech Platform. The first major arm of this platform will address the lack of readily available sector information across the currently fragmented space. MusicTT will create a Platform that will connect all the various arms within the entire music sector through an interactive, online music roadmap aimed at directing both the aspiring and the experienced to anywhere they seek to go and any knowledge they seek to gain. This online hub, which will launch in May 2018, will contain a gamut of music-related resources including performance venues and booking opportunities of the Live Music District and the nation as a whole, service providers, educational tools, government resources and funding, studios, copyright management organisations, publishers, labels, distributors, and digital aggregators. With an emphasis on music business knowledge, processes and opportunities, these resources will be accessible to anyone from persons interested in a career in music, to established artists to international Artists and Repertoire (A&R's) and producers seeking new talent.

The second important element of this Music Tech Platform will seek to address one of the pressing challenges which you, as dedicated music practitioners, have identified: the issue of local content promotion, for which the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts has the primary lead. Concerns have been raised regarding the Copyright Management Organisations and existing Copyright Laws in the protection, exploitation and monetisation of music. Following the well-subscribed Workshop this year entitled "Making a Living from Music" – a collaboration between MusicTT, and the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, in particular the Intellectual Property Office, with support from the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), I am confident that these matters are receiving attention.

The Music Tech Platform is focused on developing systems in the immediate term that can support the industry in fulfilling its most critical needs. As such, the Music Tech Platform will be technologically capable of independently monitoring broadcast media in order to quantitatively ascertain the amount of local content currently being played on our radio stations. We need to enable the independent, entrepreneurial artist by giving them the power to manage their music. As such, artists will be able to

upload their catalogues, have them audio-fingerprinted through the Platform, and will have detailed access to every instance that their music is broadcast on our nation's airwaves. MusicTT will be charged with accurately assessing the statistical state of local content broadcasting and will begin the drive towards accurate radio charting of our local music.

Collectively, these four flagship projects will begin to fill the gaps upon which we can build a sustainable, lucrative and successful local music sector. In closing, I emphasize the Government's commitment to creating this enabling environment that is needed for continuous growth. I invite you to join us on this exciting journey.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.