



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

Project Launch *ALUTECH Facility*

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

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OCTOBER 3, 2018

It is indeed a pleasure to address you today at what marks the successful start of yet another major project under this Government as we work towards national development, economic growth and prosperity for all. Let me also thank Professor Kenneth Julien for his work and unwavering dedication to the advancement of the national energy sector but more so today, the downstream aluminum industry.

Alutech Facility

This Alutech Facility, on which construction began under a PNM Government in 2009, was envisaged to be a catalyst for the development of new technology with the potential to revolutionize downstream aluminum production, and thereby enhance Trinidad and Tobago's competitiveness in this industry. However, in May 2010 when the PNM demitted office, construction of this facility ground to a complete halt with no activity over the period 2010-2015.

As a consequence, the customized building remained unfinished and the opportunities for foreign investment and export business were lost and substantial already secured valuable manufacturing equipment, left idle. It is the taxpayer who bore the cost for works completed as well as termination costs to the then contractor, Carillon Limited.

Today, this Government's commitment to the continued upward trajectory of the non-energy sector, in particular manufacturing, underpins the resolve to complete the Alutech Research and Development Facility on which Professor Julien and Dr. Riviere provided insight earlier.

In mid-2016, the Standing Committee on Energy under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Prime Minister did an extensive review of this downstream aluminum project, among others and Cabinet took the decision to move ahead with the project.

In January, eTecK engaged the services of KS&P Ltd, a local civil and structural engineering firm, to:

- i) review the construction drawings and specifications of the Facility to ensure that the designs meet Alutech Limited's requirements;
- ii) conduct analyses of existing structural and services design for compliance with new codes; and
- iii) prepare an engineer's estimate with a detailed report to show the derived estimated cost for completing the building facility.

According to the consultant's report of March 2017, the existing structure of the Alutech Facility was found to be in generally satisfactory condition with some restoration works needed in particular areas. However, no major discrepancies were noted to its main structure.

In May 2017, Cabinet agreed that eTeCK would complete the building structure to locate what is known as the Alutech Research and Development Facility. It was intended that the facility would be the first industry occupant at Tamana InTech Park, a project also halted by the previous People's Partnership Government. With the first phase of Tamana InTech Park now completed, our focus will be the pursuit of investments to the Park like this one.

This commercially feasible downstream aluminium entity aligns to one of the core sectors identified for Tamana InTech Park, namely high value manufacturing and assembly.

This initiative today, strategically fits into the Government's robust Development Agenda; in particular *Theme IV – Building Globally Competitive Business* and the goal of providing high value products and services that can compete in export markets.

The decision being taken to recommence works, eTeCK would later engage in a process of open competitive tender to select a suitable construction firm, with the necessary technical competencies to finish this customised building.

The S.C.G (Caribbean) Group Limited, a subsidiary of the Shanghai Construction Group, has been awarded the contract to construct the Alutech Facility at an estimated cost of just over \$87 million. eTeCK has secured a fixed rate loan facility of \$87 million from ScotiaBank. The project is to be completed within 443 days; however, we remain anxious for an earlier completion date. We are reasonably confident in the robustness of the team to so do. In securing local content, the contractor will utilize 60% local labour, including local subcontractors, and bring benefits to the people of Wallerfield and environs from the start of construction.

The development of this Facility is timely as it dovetails well with Government's infrastructural development agenda for the East-West corridor, which includes:

- the **Curepe Interchange**;
- the **Valencia to Toco Highway**, which is now moving to the construction phase, and:
- the **Churchill Roosevelt Highway Extension to Sangre Grande** which is being constructed in three phases.

It would be remiss of me if I did not mention the Arima Hospital scheduled for completion in July 2019 and the new Sangre Grande Hospital scheduled to begin construction in 2019. Ladies and gentlemen, these are all strategic development initiatives targeted ultimately at improving the well-being of the people of the East-West corridor, in particular.

In addition to these infrastructural developments, other industrial spaces are being pursued in response to the ongoing demand by the private sector. eTecK is currently pursuing the development of two Industrial Parks:

1. the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate; and
2. the Moruga Agro-Processing and Light Industrial Park.

Phoenix Park Industrial Estate

In June this year, eTecK signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Beijing Construction Engineering Group (BCEG) to develop the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate which will be completed in the last quarter of 2019. The Park will promote Government's diversification efforts as it targets firms in the areas of high-value and light manufacturing, logistics/warehousing, and emerging industries (electronic technology, information technology, energy-saving ecological building materials and biotechnology); the focus being export based products.

It is expected that 1,000 jobs will be created during the construction period, another 1,000 jobs initially and 4,300 jobs upon full operationalization.

Moruga Agro-Processing and Light Industrial Park

Work commenced on the Moruga Agro-processing and Light Industrial Park in May and this south-based Park is expected to be operationalized in mid-2019. These spaces allow for processing of Moruga hill rice, cassava and other root crops, fish, pineapple and other fruits, cocoa, hot peppers and lumber products.

Once completed, this Park will provide employment opportunities and contribute to achieving food security, reduce our food import bill and enhance the country's position as an international exporter of competitive agro-products.

Conclusion

Today we have taken the first step required to breathe new life into the Alutech project. Once completed, the Facility will serve as an employment generator in the area, but more pointedly, it will also serve as a growth catalyst for the downstream aluminum industry, bolster the manufacturing sector and exports, and deepen the diversification thrust of the economy.

I thank you.