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IMPROVING TRADE AND CUSTOMS BORDER TRANSPARENCY

17 June, 2021 In advancing the Government's Trade Facilitation agenda and transparency in the Border Clearance process, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) has commenced the publication of monthly reports on the operating efficiency of Border Agencies involved in the processing of Electronic Customs Declarations (e-C82) on the TTBizLink platform. Border Agencies play a critical role in processing the importation of goods under their respective legislative responsibilities.

The publication of monthly reports on the operating efficiency of Border Agencies will provide data related to the following:
- Plant Quarantine Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
- Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Inspectorate, Ministry of Health
- Food and Drug Inspectorate, Ministry of Health
- Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Trade Licence Unit, Ministry of Trade and Industry

The reports highlight the number of declarations submitted to each agency, the number of decisions made in relation to customs declaration processing, the number of auto approved declarations, average processing time, and the overall monetary value of the declarations processed by each agency. These reports provide valuable information for investors and can be utilised for analysis of agency processing efficiency and market related decision making.

In 2019, the average processing time by the above border Agencies per Customs Declaration was 23.7 hours. This has been reduced by fifty two percent (52%) and currently stands at 11.2 hours per declaration in 2021. Improvements such as these, contribute to the Ease of Doing Business as it positively impacts the Trading Across Borders performance index.

Border Clearance is a multifaceted process that Customs Brokers undertake to obtain the necessary regulatory approvals from Border Agencies for the importation of goods. To aid in the digitization and efficiency of this process an e-C82 Declaration is prepared via the ASYCUDA system and is automatically sent to the respective Border Agency via TTBizLink for electronic processing. ASYCUDA is a customs management system whereby Customs Brokers and Clerks can prepare import and export declarations as well as electronically communicate decisions with the TTBizlink platform. The Border Agencies review and provide feedback on the platform. If required, Customs Brokers can also make payments with credit cards on TTBizLink, eliminating the need for in-person visits to the bank or Border Agency. This end-to-end digitization has resulted in significant time savings for the trade community.

This initiative not only enhances transparency and accountability for the citizens but also positively impacts the ease of doing business in Trinidad and Tobago for both local and foreign investors. Furthermore, this digitized system ensures business continuity beyond regular working hours. The reports can be accessed on the MTI's website at ***https://tradeind.gov.tt/goods-declaration-reports***

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