



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

MEDIA RELEASE

Ministry Of Trade, Investment and Tourism Advances 'Buy Local, Build Trinbago' Movement with New Innovation Signatories

The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism (MTTI) expanded its national economic diversification drive today (2 October, 2026) at Queen's Hall with the formal signing of the *Buy Local, Build Trinbago Charter* by three key innovation hubs: the Innovation Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Founder Institute Caribbean and the La Brea Association for Innovation.

These three key entities each bring specialized capabilities to strengthen the national innovation ecosystem. The Innovation Association of Trinidad and Tobago (IATT) functions as a central hub, connecting founders, industry, and government to accelerate the commercialization of local ideas. The Founder Institute Caribbean leverages the world's largest startup network to provide structured incubation and acceleration that helps early-stage ventures scale. Complementing this, the La Brea Association for Innovation (LBAFI) operates at the grassroots level, fostering digital innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship to ensure community-level innovators in La Brea are directly connected to national economic opportunities.

Speaking at the signing, Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) Mr. Neville Alexander emphasized that the initiative pairs consumer promotion with direct operational support, ensuring local MSMEs can scale production, meet quality standards and access global markets.

Highlighting the economic domino effect of supporting domestic enterprise, DPS noted:

"When a local business succeeds, the benefits extend beyond the business owner. Jobs are created. Suppliers receive orders. Skills are developed... and some of those businesses eventually become exporters."

The Ministry is also aligning support provided through signatory partners with the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards' TTS/ISO 56001:2024 innovation management standard. The standard provides a framework to help businesses, including manufacturers and agro-processors, manage innovation and improve how they develop products and processes.

The initiative supports the Ministry's drive to diversify the economy and expand non-energy exports. Greater demand for competitive local products can help sustain employment at home, while export growth creates opportunities to earn foreign exchange.

Buying local should mean choosing products that people trust and consider good value for money. By helping businesses improve production and meet quality standards, the initiative aims to give consumers greater confidence in locally made goods and help producers win repeat customers. Those sales help sustain the businesses that provide employment and income in our communities.

For more information on the Buy Local, Build Trinbago programme visit:

<https://tradeind.gov.tt/buy-local/>

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