

THE EXPORTANT

APRIL 2022

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**EXPORT BOOSTER
INITIATIVE**

**EXPORT SUCCESS:
SLIMDOWN 360**

CAPACITY BUILDING

**EXPORTT'S
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RETURN TO EXPOS
Expocomer 2022



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JOIN THE COMMUNITY



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MESSAGE FROM **GENERAL MANAGER**

2022 will mark a turning point for many individuals, agencies and companies, exportTT included.

After two years of work conducted in a mostly virtual space – we are finally beginning to see the light at the end of this tunnel created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the second quarter of Fiscal 2021/2022 we returned to in-person trade events – first in the Middle East with our Trinidad and Tobago Pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai, then in Panama for Expocomer, where our locally-made products were welcomed with open arms.

We completed a trade mission to Guyana with the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association, where exportTT was able to complete vital research and B2B meetings to help inform our Clients' consideration of this burgeoning market.

Several projects under the Export Booster Initiative – designed specifically to support manufacturers during the pandemic – were launched during this period, including our Labelling and Product Testing Fund, and Tobago Indigenous Sweets.

Indigenous Sweets we are especially excited about as the programme proposes to take ten producers of the sister isle's local sweet and snack products we all know and love and give them the guidance, training and resources necessary to break into international markets. In the coming years we expect to see Made in Tobago sugar cake, bene ball and fudge lining supermarket shelves in CARICOM, the US and Europe.




DHANRAJ HARRYPERSAD
GENERAL MANAGER, CLIENT SERVICES

The support given to companies under our Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) initiatives was also significant this quarter, with just over \$198,000 in disbursements made to companies, and two new contracts signed under the Standards Implementation Grant.

All of this work was also being done against the backdrop of a number of internal changes within exportTT.

Earlier in 2021, we embarked on a transformation process that culminated in the second quarter of this fiscal year. Teams were redistributed, staff was realigned and the entire organisation was restructured to put the Client at the centre of all the work that we are doing.

I am looking forward to coming months – we have a number of initiatives and projects on the horizon that will strengthen our funding and capacity building offering to our Clients.



The second quarter of Fiscal 22 saw a number of additions and developments to the Export Booster Initiative.

Two projects were launched – the Indigenous Sweets project and the Labelling & Product Testing Fund, new applications were approved under the International Certification Fund (ICF) and the Export Accelerator sought out companies for its second cohort under the programme, which is due to kick off in Q3.

The **Labelling & Product Testing Fund**, launched in early March, is designed to facilitate product testing, product and/or packaging modification and labelling redesign required to meet preferences and requirements in export markets. <<

Several more companies were added to the list of successful applicants to the **International Certification Fund**. The ICF, which provides financing to companies that require certifications to enter certain markets, was launched back in March 2021 as the Certification Programme for Food and Beverage Standards and other Product Compliance. Since the name revision, marketing efforts have begun anew for the fund. <<



>> **The Export Accelerator**, which launched in June 2021, is now winding up its first cohort, and is ready to take on ten new companies keen on maximising their export potential. Through their participation in the first cohort of this programme, a number of these companies have gone on to review and revise their logos and packaging, apply for necessary certifications, develop detailed export plans and strategies, made structural and process changes within their businesses to align with those export strategies and gained buyer interest in new markets.



QUALITY ASSURANCE



EXPORT BOOSTER INITIATIVE

On the sister isle, two EBI projects are in full swing.

The Tobago Indigenous Sweets project kicked off in January with ten producers of Tobago snack products such as bene ball, sugar cake, tamarind ball and fudge.

The objective of the programme is to get these ten companies ready to export by September 2022, through training and technical assistance with product development, guidelines on international food safety and packaging and labelling requirements.



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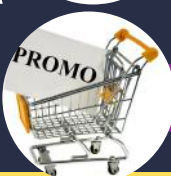
By the end of Q2, participants had received training in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Product and Process Standardization from CARIRI, who is the technical supplier for the project. In March, CARIRI conducted on-site visits to the producers in Tobago to monitor and evaluate their production processes, including the application of practices outlined in the training programmes completed to date. The Tobago Indigenous Sweets programme is preparing for the commencement of the next phase of the project, which will deal with labelling and packaging standardisation.



The other active project under the EBI, the Tobago Pavilion, is an e-commerce platform on the Shop Caribe website launched in November, 2021. Its first international sale was made in January of this year. Service provider, Shop Caribe, has developed and begun the roll out of a marketing plan to target more international customers.



GREEN PACKAGING



IN-MARKET PROMOTION



TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION SERVICES



INNOVATION VOUCHERS

CAPACITY BUILDING



The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) under exportTT has continued unabated, with several companies accessing funding and support in Q2.

Under the Co-financing Facility, over \$78,000. in disbursements were made to 11 companies across a range of industries including agro-processing, food manufacturing, and film and entertainment.

The funding covered a variety of activities such as tradeshow participation, intellectual property registration, key art development, interpretation services, shipping of samples and product testing.

One of the Co-financing Facility recipients, Rhona Jack, used her funding to secure intellectual property registration for her UDazzle fashion ruler. She went on to receive a patent for the ruler, earning her a spot in the Trinidad and Tobago Inventors Hall of Fame.

Two companies also benefited from the Research and Development Fund (RDF) in Q2 with exportTT releasing just over \$105,000 in disbursements. One company, Aeon Innovative Solutions Ltd, used the funds to continue the development of an online enterprise platform that will collect and analyse patient electronic medical records. SMAKS Luxury Group Ltd, meanwhile, used funding from Phase III of the RDF for the marketing and promotion of new SKUs developed using Phase II RDF funds.

In January and February, two new contracts for the Standards Implementation Grant were approved, valued at approximately \$146,678 in total. In March, a final disbursement of \$9,860 under this grant was made to VF Packaging.

The Export Incubator also opened for applications to its second cohort of the programme in March – attracting ten new companies with big export potential. The new cohort kicks off in May 2022.

CLIENT SERVICES



CUSTOMER
RELATIONSHIP

QUALITY

Since the beginning of Fiscal 2021-2022, exportTT has been undergoing a restructuring and realignment of its business units and roles and responsibilities with one clear focus in mind – the Client.

While the Clients have always been the intended benefactor of the work done by exportTT, the organisation required some adjustments to truly place the Client at the centre of its processes.

One major introduction to the company's structure was the Client Services Unit. This Unit is the first point of contact for all of our customers – it will serve as the one-stop-shop for export insights and connections, with the team evaluating the exporter's needs, developing a solution or plan and bringing together all the necessary resources to action a plan tailored to ensure the success of the Client.

RETURN TO EXPOS

After two years of promoting Trinidad and Tobago's products via virtual trade missions, expos and shows, exportTT finally returned to physical trade shows on March 23rd, taking Trinidad and Tobago products to Panama for the Expocomer International Trade Exhibition.



Expocomer, which is coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture of Panama, took place from March 23rd to 26th, 2022, and featured over 600 exhibitors from more than 30 countries.

Among them this year, was Trinidad and Tobago.



According to exporTT's Senior Business Advisor, Nathali Richards, who led the team in Panama, the Trinidad and Tobago booth was a popular one. A wide variety of products in the food and beverage category were on display for visitors to the booth, including candy and mints from KC Confectionery Ltd, Matouk's pepper sauce, Swiss condiments and pasta, Angostura rums and bitters, crackers and biscuits from Bermudez Biscuit Company, chocolate from Montanos Chocolate, malt drinks from the Samba Brewing Company, Toppers snacks, and Chubby soft drinks. Associated Brands, who also exhibited at the event, displayed Sunshine Snacks, Sun Mix and Charles Chocolates products at the exporTT booth.



Carib Brewery, Stuart Brothers Ltd and FashionTT had a virtual presence at the exporTT booth, providing video and written collateral to share with visitors. The exporTT team was comprised of Ms. Richards and Mrs. Kenika Baldeo from the Research and Opportunities Unit, as well as Ms. Roann David from the Capacity Building and Financing Unit. The team conducted sampling of various products at the booth, attended B2B meetings with prospective buyers and distributors, and met with government agencies, business chambers and customs and logistics agencies at the event.



Mrs. Baldeo also compiled some research on the Panama market and conducted store checks at supermarkets and stores in the city. Through exporTT's participation in Expocomer, tangible leads were generated from buyers from all over the Americas, including Peru, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and the United States of America.





EXPORT SUCCESS: Slimdown 360

20,000 pounds of cassava and sweet potato pasta.

It is the largest consolidated shipment of root vegetable derivatives to leave Trinidad and Tobago for the United States of America, and it was produced and sold by Slimdown 360, a locally owned and operated business. The shipment left Trinidad and Tobago on March 29, bound for the US, where it will be distributed to customers, mainly, via e-commerce giant, Amazon.

Jody White, Managing Director of Slimdown 360, said the considerable order came from a buyer that had previously ordered pallets of their pasta on a frequent basis. Given the success of the product in the market and some additional distribution channels that were coming on stream, the buyer suggested Jody prepare one large container of products, to save on shipping costs, and get the pasta out to buyers sooner.

Slimdown 360's success is also the success of farmers here in Trinidad and Tobago, as the company sources all of its root vegetables locally.

"We have small groups of farmers that we work with and we try our best to take from those select people. I've never processed an imported sweet potato or cassava for commercial activities. Everything is local – I like to try to develop everything local."

"Whereas a lot of companies have the problem of not having foreign exchange. We are net forex earners, which is not typical for local producers."

Jody White, Managing Director,
Slimdown 360

This non-reliance on imported raw materials means that Slimdown 360 does not need to access foreign exchange to conduct its business; rather, the company is bringing much needed foreign exchange into the country.

"Whereas a lot of companies have the problem of not having foreign exchange. We are net forex earners, which is not typical for local producers."

Slimdown 360 has been an exportTT Client for years, accessing funding through the Co-financing Facility for shipping of samples and product testing, and most recently through the International Certification Fund to verify that its products meet international standards, expanding the company's potential footprint in key markets.

He testified, "exportTT, from day one, has given us a lot of support. They've given us Co-financing funding to do product testing and I've been able to travel to other countries because of exportTT. Anything you need, you pick up the phone and call them and they give you a lot of support, I would say that for sure."



The **SheTrades Global Hackathon** was jointly organised by the International Trade Centre's (ITC) SheTrades Initiative, the International Telecommunications Union and Dubai Industries and Exports.

The objective was to find innovative technology-based solutions to accelerate the transition to an inclusive, green and sustainable future. Term Finance, a company registered on the SheTrades Hub in Trinidad and Tobago, was selected as one of the finalists for the competition, which culminated in a Final Pitching and Award Ceremony on March 21st, 2022.

CEO of Term Finance, Mrs. Sophia Stone, delivered her final pitch for the company's SME TT solution, which is a full digital lending service that uses an innovative credit scoring model. Term Finance employs cutting edge evaluations of applicants using both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

Term Finance ultimately did not walk away with the top spot in the Hackathon but was clearly an audience favourite, performing well in the people's choice polls at the end of the event and topping the poll for Favourite Pitch.



Mrs. Sophia Stone
CEO, Term Finance





Trinidad & Tobago at Expo 2020 Dubai

exporTT, the executing agency for the Expo 2020 Dubai, managed the Trinidad & Tobago Pavilion at the expo from October 2021 to March 2022.

On March 10, exporTT and invesTT hosted a Business Forum, positioning Trinidad and Tobago as an ideal place to do business. Representatives from Tourism Trinidad Ltd, Tobago Tourism Agency Ltd, and the Tobago House of Assembly all presented at the Forum. Trinidad & Tobago's National Day, hosted on March 11, put the best of the country's culture on show with dynamic and engaging performances from the National Steel Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic Orchestra, National Theatre Arts Company and two Trinbagonian entertainers - Erphaan Alves and Nishard M.

LABELLING AND PRODUCT TESTING FUND

The **Labelling & Product Testing Fund** will cover **75%** of the cost to a ceiling of **TT\$80,000** per beneficiary.

Product
Testing

Product
Modification

Packaging
Modification

Labelling
Redesign



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- A sole proprietor, partnership or company wholly owned by Trinidad and Tobago nationals and registered and operating in Trinidad and Tobago
- A firm that is an established going concern that has been in existence for a minimum of two (2) years
- Evidence of current interest from potential buyer including product testing, product modification, packaging or labelling redesign requirements for target market acceptance
- Companies that have begun the modification process based on documented buyer interest may apply*



**Special conditions apply. See website for more details.*

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