



Doing business in Trinidad & Tobago



Are you a member of a UK company wishing to export overseas?

Interested in entering or expanding your activity in the Trinidad & Tobago market? Then this guide is for you!

The main objective of this **Doing Business Guide** is to provide you with basic knowledge about Trinidad & Tobago; an overview of its economy, business culture, potential opportunities and an introduction to other relevant issues. Novice exporters, in particular will find it a useful starting point.

Further assistance is available from the UKTI team in Trinidad & Tobago. Full contact details are available at the end of this guide.



Important Information - Sanctions and Embargoes

Some countries maybe subject to export restrictions due to sanctions and embargoes placed on them by the UN or EU. Exporting companies are responsible for checking that their goods can be exported and that they are using the correct licences.

Further information is available on the [Department for Business, Innovation & Skills \(BIS\)](#)

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Introduction

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) comprises of two islands at the southern-most end of the Caribbean archipelago. Trinidad – the larger of the two islands – has an area of 4,828 sq km (1,864 sq mls) and is situated 10 km (7 miles) from the east coast of Venezuela. The capital city and main centre of government, Port of Spain is a hub of business activity and a major financial centre. San Fernando is the second largest city in the country, and is considered the industrial capital.

Tobago is 32 km (20 miles) off the north-east coast of Trinidad and has an area of 300 sq km (116 sq mls). Its principal administrative centre is Scarborough, and is situated in the southern region of the island.

T&T is the largest single site exporter of ammonia and methanol in the Western Hemisphere and a significant exporter of urea. T&T now perceives itself as a gas economy (oil production is somewhat declining while gas output is rising) with much of its production converted into LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas). Trinidad now has four LNG trains (processing plants) and provides over 75 to 50% of US LNG imports via a joint venture.

As one of the most industrialised Caribbean countries, T&T has positioned itself as a regional hub for business, finance, transshipment and investment. Its strategic position at the crossroads between the Caribbean, North and South America will offer UK investors a good base from which to penetrate these markets. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market (CSM) came into operation on January 1st 2006 removing longstanding legal and bureaucratic restrictions and allowing the free flow of labour, capital, goods and technology among participating member states. The CSME allows CARICOM states to negotiate as a single entity in multilateral trade negotiations as well as obtain efficiency and productivity gains through the more effective sourcing and utilisation of inputs.

Strengths of the market

- No market barriers to trade
- Largest CARICOM economy
- Largest GDP in the English-speaking Caribbean
- Second largest GDP per capita in Latin America & the Caribbean
- Second largest recipient of US Foreign Direct Investment in the Western Hemisphere
- Largest methanol plant in the world
- World's largest producer & single-site exporter of ammonia & methanol
- Largest regional manufacturing base
- Largest regional expatriate population
- T&T ranks fifth in the world in LNG production.
- Bilateral investment (IPPA) & taxation treaties (DTA) with the UK
- MOU with the UK for the promotion of trade & investment relations in ICT
- Strategic geographic location: Gateway to South & North America
- English widely spoken
- Educated, highly skilled and trained English-speaking workforce
- Advanced education & training facilities
- Enabling legislation based on UK Common Law
- A strong democratic tradition
- Base for many successful British firms – Over 40 British interests
- Pro-investment business climate
- Regulated financial system
- Good transportation & communication links
- Low energy costs
- Competitive raw material costs & availability
- Highly developed industrial sector as well as oil, petrochemical & steel industries
- Competitive fiscal incentives
- Access to developed & emerging markets
- Excellent infrastructure & support services for heavy & secondary industries
- Good living standards & communities for foreign nationals & families

Opportunities in Trinidad & Tobago

The economy is enjoying a period of growth, and Trinidad and Tobago offers significant prospects for UK exporters. Priority sectors are:

- Oil & Gas
- Security & Defence
- Construction & Infrastructure
- ICT
- Education & Training
- Health
- Finance
- Water & Wastewater

A priority for the Government of Trinidad & Tobago (GorTT) remains to diversify the economy away from the energy sector of which certain sectors have been identified for further development. As such a number of non-energy sectors for investment include:

- Downstream petrochemicals
- Food & Beverages
- Fishing & Fish Processing
- Film
- Music & Entertainment
- Merchant Marine
- Yachting; &
- Printing & Packaging

These sectors already have a significant resource base and competitive advantages. Strategic plans have been developed for these sectors.

Trade between UK and Trinidad & Tobago

The UK's trade & Investment relations with Trinidad & Tobago are quite good. The country is the UK's largest export market in the Caribbean. Conversely, the UK is the sixth largest supplier to the country in the Caribbean and South & Central America.

In 2009, T&T took goods worth £105 million from the UK. The top three exports were manufactured articles, road vehicles and beverages. Over the same period, UK imports were valued at £327 million.

Trade statistics - Top 10 UK Exports to Trinidad & Tobago in 2009

Description	£million
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	9.73
Road vehicles	8.90
Beverages	7.94
General industrial machinery	7.66
Machinery specialised For particular industries	7.43
Power generating machinery & equipment	7.34
Chemical materials & products	7.13
Cereals and cereal preparations	5.55
Metals	4.96
Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	3.48

Source: BIS analysis of HM Revenue & Customs data

Economic Overview

Trinidad & Tobago, like most of the Caribbean, operates in an open market economy. During the early 1990's one of the key barriers to free trade was lifted with the removal of foreign exchange controls. There is no negative list restricting foreign goods and services from entering Trinidad & Tobago since liberalisation of the economy. Importers thus have much easier access to foreign currency to engage in international trade.

At present, the exchange rate (selling) of the Trinidad & Tobago dollar (TT\$) to the pound sterling is approximately TT\$10.00 = £1. Trinidad and Tobago nationals have cited the relatively high cost of the pound sterling as a constraint for them to purchase goods and services for resale and for their own use from the UK. However, it is generally believed that British standards of quality are among the highest available. This, and Trinidad & Tobago's historical links with the UK, ensures the existence of end-users willing to do business with UK companies.

Trinidad & Tobago is the Caribbean's strongest economy, due to abundant oil and natural gas resources, having made a transition from an oil-based economy to one based on natural gas. Natural gas production continues to expand and should meet the needs of new industrial plants coming on stream over the next few years, including ones producing iron, aluminium, ethylene and propylene.

Other sectors showing growth were education, manufacturing, construction & quarrying, finance, insurance, real estate and cultural services. Tourism, mainly concentrated in Tobago, is also important. The services sector contributes annually on average TT\$43 billion (£4.3 billion) and covers business services (professional, computer), construction, transport, communications, financial services, tourism/travel and government operations, amongst others, and employs an average of 80% of the labour force (some 422,000 people). Services have also been a net contributor to the balance of payments.

The country's financial sector is relatively well developed. State influence in the sector is not substantial and credit is allocated on market terms. Financial regulations and supervision are generally transparent and improving.

There are no restrictions on foreign banks or foreign borrowers and all banks may offer a wide range of services. There are six commercial banks, including one state-owned bank and several

foreign banks. Insurance is dominated by several major players and capital markets are well developed but small and are centred on the stock exchange.

Population

Trinidad & Tobago's estimated population is 1.3 million. The population of Trinidad and Tobago is regarded as the most cosmopolitan of the West Indian islands with 40.3% of East Indian descent, 39.6% of African, 18.4% Mixed, 0.6% European, 1.1% Chinese and other. The average life expectancy is 70.3 years, with 68% of the population between 15 and 64 years.

Trinidad & Tobago's relatively flexible labour regulations enhance overall employment and productivity growth. The non-salary cost of employing a worker is low, but dismissing a redundant employee can be relatively costly. Regulations related to the number of work hours are flexible.

Political Overview

Trinidad and Tobago maintains close relations with its Caribbean neighbours and major North & South American, African and European trading partners. As the most industrialised and second-largest country in the English-speaking Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago takes a leading role in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), and supports CARICOM economic integration efforts. It is also active in the Summit of the Americas process and was one of the first CARICOM states to formally enter into the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) in January 2006.

After independence in 1962, Trinidad joined the UN and the Commonwealth. In 1967, it became the first Commonwealth country to join the Organisation of American States (OAS). In 1995, Trinidad played host to the inaugural meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and has become the seat of this 35-member grouping, which seeks to further economic progress and integration among its states.

Snap elections were called in 2010, almost 2½ years earlier than they were constitutently due 2012. Elections were held on Monday 24 May 2010 and The People's Partnership (a coalition of the United National Congress (UNC), the Congress of the People (COP) and the Tobago Organisation of the People (TOP)) won by a 28-12 majority, over the People's National Movement (PNM). The voter turn-out was just under 70%, 4% higher than the general elections held in 2007. Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar was installed to office as the first female prime minister of the country and was sworn in on 26 May 2010.

In 2009, Trinidad & Tobago hosted the Summit of the Americas Meeting and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Prime Minister Patrick Manning is now the incumbent chairman of the Commonwealth.

Government

From 1962 until 1976, Trinidad and Tobago, although completely independent, acknowledged the British monarch as their head of state. In 1976, the country adopted a republican constitution, replacing Queen Elizabeth with a president elected by parliament. The general direction and control of the government rests with the cabinet, led by a Prime Minister and answerable to the bicameral parliament. The 36 members of the House of Representatives are elected to terms of at least five years. Elections may be called earlier by the President at the request of the Prime Minister or after a vote of no confidence in the House of Representatives. The President from among outstanding members of the community appoints the Senate's 31 members. Professor George Maxwell Richards was voted in as President by the Electoral College for a second consecutive five year term in March 2008.

Elected councils administer Trinidad's seven counties and four largest cities.

The country's highest court is the Court of Appeal, whose Chief Justice is appointed by the president on the advice of the Prime Minister. Final appeal on some matters is decided by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. Trinidad and Tobago house the Caribbean Court of Justice, which was established to act as a court that can handle trade disputes amongst

CARICOM member states (Original Jurisdiction), and that will eventually serve as a supreme appellate court to replace the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London (Final Appellate Court). The court's jurisdiction is currently limited to only Barbados and Guyana.

Tobago was given a measure of self-government in 1980 and is administered by the Tobago House of Assembly. In 1996, Trinidad and Tobago's Parliament passed further legislation giving Tobago a greater degree of autonomy.

Getting here and advice about your stay

FCO Travel Advice

The FCO website has travel advice to help you prepare for your visits overseas and to stay safe and secure while you are there.

For advice please visit the FCO Travel section

By air

There are two international airports: Piarco International Airport which is located in Trinidad, about forty-five minutes (25 km) from Port of Spain, and Crown Point Airport which is located in Tobago, about fifteen minutes (11 km) from the capital, Scarborough.

It takes 20 minutes to fly between Trinidad and Tobago. The ferry from Port of Spain to Scarborough takes approximately 2½ hours.

There are non-stop daily or scheduled flights to and from major international cities. Trinidad & Tobago's national airline, Caribbean Airlines, serves Toronto, New York, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Jamaica, St Maarten, Antigua, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and London Gatwick via codeshare agreement* with British Airways. International and regional airlines that fly to Trinidad & Tobago include:

- American Airlines - www.aa.com
- Air Canada - www.aircanada.com
- **British Airways** - www.britishairways.com
- Caribbean Airlines - www.caribbean-airlines.com
- Continental Airlines - www.continental.com
- Delta Airlines - www.delta.com
- LIAT - www.liatairline.com
- **Virgin Atlantic** - www.virgin-atlantic.com
- Spirit Air - www.spiritair.com
- Several charter flight companies.

International flights are also available direct from Tobago's Crown Point International Airport.

***NB: End of Code Share Agreement:** Caribbean Airlines Limited code-share arrangement with British Airways expires on 27 March 2010. The airline is currently pursuing other arrangements to offer direct service to/from London, UK. In the interim, Caribbean Airlines will continue to offer timely connecting services to London via Barbados and any of its international gateways.

At the airport

On arrival, there is a Tourist Information Office located at the Piarco International Airport, Trinidad (to the right, upon exiting the Customs Area of the Arrival Terminal). Tel: +1 868 669 5196 / 6044.

Airport taxis into the city center cost around US\$30.00 for car hire. No extra charges for luggage. The journey may take up to 30 – 45 minutes, depending on traffic.

Car rental companies are also located at the airports. A valid driving permit and passport allows you to drive for up to 90 days. In Trinidad & Tobago, driving is on the left-hand side of the road.

Visas

UK residents do not require a visa to enter Trinidad & Tobago and visitors must possess valid passports and return on ongoing tickets for successful entry. Most Commonwealth countries do not require visas for entry, however, there are some exceptions. Visitors from several other countries are allowed to enter Trinidad & Tobago for periods up to 3 months without a visa. However, the time given may be less, depending on the discretion of the immigration officer at the time of entry.

Work permits

UK nationals may enter T&T without a work permit either to engage in a legitimate profession, trade or occupation for a single period not exceeding 30 days in every 12 consecutive months. If a person wishes to stay in T&T for a period exceeding 30 days to engage in a legitimate profession, then persons must obtain a work permit which may be sought by the prospective employer and which is issued for a fixed period. There are no formal restrictions on the number and duration of employment of foreign managers brought in to supervise foreign investment projects. Work permit forms can be obtained from the Ministry of National Security, Temple Court, 31-33, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain – www.nationalsecurity.gov.tt. Details of the work permit process can be obtained from the British High Commission, Port of Spain UKTI Section.

Your stay

The following useful links will help you plan your trip.

- Travel, events, tourist sites, dining, accommodation: www.gotrinidadandtobago.com
- Tobago Division of Tourism: www.visittobago.gov.tt

Preparing to Export to Trinidad & Tobago

EPA

On 16 December 2007, an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was concluded between CARIFORUM (CARICOM and Dominican Republic) and the European Community (EC). The EPA is a permanent instrument of trade partnership between CARIFORUM and the EC. It replaces the trade component of Lomé IV and its successor Cotonou (2000). It is more than a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), as it contains a strong development component with clear links to development aid for adjustment and modernisation of CARIFORUM economies.

Business Environment

There are no barriers to trade in Trinidad & Tobago and it is a market-driven economy. As one of the most industrialised Caribbean countries, Trinidad & Tobago has positioned itself as a regional hub for business, finance, transshipment and investment. The government has enacted legislation to remove restrictions on foreign investment, foreign exchange control and provide various business incentives.

Double Taxation

In 1983, Trinidad & Tobago ratified a Double Taxation Agreement with the UK. The object of this Treaty was to eliminate double taxation either by taxing the income only in one country or by providing a tax credit in the country of residence where the income has been taxed at source. The agreement addresses the issues of income (including interest, royalties and technical fees) profits and dividends. The DTA appears to be in force and functioning well.

Business Entity / Structure

British companies can choose from a variety of structures to carry out its investment activity to include limited liability, branch office, share/asset acquisition in existing company, partnership, joint venture, sole proprietorship, and agency. It is advisable to seek professional advice, particularly on legal and fiscal issues. The most suitable route often depends on the nature of the intended business to be done.

Some important facts to note:

The political system: Stable democratic nation.

The legal system: Law is based upon the Common Law of England.

The financial system: Financial system is well-organised and soundly regulated.

The economic system: Economy is the most diversified in the English Speaking Caribbean.

British companies wishing to approach the Trinidad & Tobago market are advised to undertake as much market research and planning. *This is a market where networking and relationship building are key success factors.*

UKTI's team in Trinidad & Tobago can provide a range of services to British-based companies wishing to grow their business in the T&T market. Our services include the provision of market information, validated lists of agents/potential partners/key market players/potential customers; establishing the interest of such contacts in working with the company; and arranging appointments. In addition, they can also organise publicity and networking events for you to host and meet contacts or promote a company, or launch new and updated products/services.

How to do business in Trinidad & Tobago

What companies should consider when doing business

- Investigate the market in area(s) of speciality and/or focus on what goods or services are right for export.
- Seek to form business alliances through partnering with local firms as such companies may not possess the full suite of skills, expertise, experience etc.
- Be placed on lists of internationally registered contractors, depending on sector activity.
- Demonstrate to have the ability to deliver quality goods and/or services.
- Be aware of issues surrounding local content and expertise/technology transfer to local workforce.
- Understand the employment and industrial relations climate, i.e. recruitment, wages, unions, workman's compensation, tax, national insurance etc.
- Determine occupational health, safety, and security standards.
- Exercise corporate social responsibility (CRS).

Gateways/Locations – Key areas for business

Trinidad & Tobago is strategically located at the southern end of the chain of Caribbean islands and just off the north-eastern shoulder of South America. Trinidad is only 11 km (6.8 miles) off the eastern coast of Venezuela. Tobago is 32.2 km (20 miles) to the north-east of Trinidad.

Trinidad & Tobago is approximately:

613 km (381 miles) from Caracas - flying time: 1.2 hours

2598 km (1614 miles) from Miami - flying time: 3.75 hours

3200 km (1988 miles) from New York - flying time: 4.8 hours

4000 km (2486 miles) from Toronto - flying time: 5.5 hours

6400 km (3977 miles) from London - flying time: 8.7 hours

Port of Spain is the largest city and administrative capital of the Republic. San Fernando is the second city and industrial capital. The most important industrial centre is located at the port of Point Lisas with the surrounding Pt Lisas Industrial Estate, in Central Trinidad. Most oil and gas entities operate in the central/southern area of the island. Scarborough is the administrative capital of Tobago and overall, Trinidad is seen as the industrial and business centre with Tobago being more tourist oriented.

Market entry and start up considerations

British companies can approach the Trinidad & Tobago Market in several ways:

- Limited liability
- Branch office
- Share/asset acquisition in existing company
- Business alliance – partnership or joint venture
- Sole proprietorship
- Agency, Distributorship, Licensing and Franchise Arrangements

All agreements between United Kingdom enterprises and Trinidad and Tobago agents, are subject to common law principles of Trinidad and Tobago and must be put in writing.

Generally, if a market is unfamiliar to a British company, it would be prudent to appoint a local distributor prepared to take the risk of operating in such a market that would be more familiar with the customers' requirements.

Promotion

Radio is the preferred advertising medium, followed by print advertising (mostly newspapers), and television. Given Trinidad and Tobago's small size, word of mouth also serves as an important sales factor. There is little or no direct telephone marketing or door-to-door sales. However, it offers direct mail marketing services.

There are no regulations governing sales, service or customer support, but all companies doing business in Trinidad and Tobago are required to have a registered agent or representative (may be a lawyer) who can be held liable in the event of legal disputes.

Consumer Protection

The Consumer Affairs Division (www.consumer.gov.tt) is a consumer protection agency which provides education and information, advisory, and dispute/resolution services for goods and services that are advertised and purchased in Trinidad & Tobago. (See Legalisation and Local regulations).

Customs and Regulations

These are levied at varying rates on customs entries in respect of imported goods according to their classification in Schedules to the relevant legislation. There are exemptions in relation to specific goods. In all cases the basis is the c.i.f. value of the goods at the time of import.

The rates of Customs Duties (as per Common External Tariff) have been reduced gradually since 1995. Rates vary from 0% to 30% on specified items. Duties on non-competing Capital Goods have been reduced to 2.5%. Import surcharge is imposed on selected items.

The returns are made on specified forms at the port of entry to the Comptroller of Customs and Excise and goods are released after the taxes are assessed and paid.

Legislation and Local Regulations

British companies need to be aware of the prohibitions on unfair competition in Trinidad and Tobago. Unfair competition may arise through the dumping of goods into the local market, or through unfair competitive practices conducted by dominant business enterprises. Legislation has been introduced to afford a remedy to local manufacturers who face unfair competition in the form of (1) imports of dumped or subsidised goods where the local manufacturer suffers material injury caused by such imports; and (2) anti-competitive practices. Fair Trading legislation has been introduced to promote and maintain effective competition; however, much of this legislation has not yet come into force but will only require proclamation by the President, and as such, can be brought into force at practically a moment's notice.

Other pieces of legislation to be aware of include:

- Anti Dumping Act
- Foreign Investment Act No. 16 of 1990
- Finance Act 1998
- The Companies Act 2003
- The Immigration Act 2001 and 2003
- T&T Free Zones Act 4 of 1997
- The Telecommunications Act 2001
- The Tourism Act

Existing policies include:

- Local Content Policy (Energy sector)
- Services Trade Policy of Trinidad & Tobago 2006 – 2010
- Industrial Policy 2001 – 2005
- Consumer Policy for T&T

Consumer Protection Legislation

- The Consumer Protection & Safety Act No. 30 of 1985 As Amended by Act No. 22 of 1998
- The Trade Descriptions Act No. 7 of 1984
- Sale of Goods Act 37 of 1895 as amended by No. 11 of 1983
- The Adverse Trade Practices Order, 2000

Taxes

The principal taxes levied in Trinidad & Tobago are:

Direct Taxes	Indirect Taxes
Corporation Tax	Value Added Tax
Income Tax	Customs and Excise Duties
Unemployment Levy	Import Surcharge
Business Levy	Stamp Duty
Health Surcharge	Financial Services Tax
Petroleum Profits Tax	Motor Vehicles Tax
Supplemental Petroleum Tax	
Refinery Throughput Tax	
Lands and Buildings Taxes	
Withholding Taxes	
Green Fund Levy	

Responding to Tenders

Generally, expressions of interest (EOI) and tender notices appear in the local newspapers. Some companies also post these on their websites, and others, in particular state agencies, also send them directly to the UKTI section in Port of Spain.

State organisations also undertake selective tendering, therefore it is useful to obtain introductions to public sector contacts.

British companies should seek to register on the UKTI portal, through which tender opportunities are fed via the 'Business Opportunities' section. Interested bidders can also contact the UKTI section in Port of Spain directly for information and further guidance about these tenders.

Recruiting and Retaining Staffing

Recruiting Employees Locally

Personnel may be hired through private employment agencies which charge for their services, or by placing advertisements in the newspaper. As well, there are several labour contractor companies which handle employment of an entire work force for a flat fee.

Recruiting Foreign Personnel

Foreigners may enter Trinidad & Tobago without a work permit either (i) as a tourist or visitor; or (ii) to engage in a legitimate profession, trade or occupation for a single period not exceeding 30 days in every 12 consecutive months.

Generally, work permits will not be granted to non-residents unless there are no locals who are capable of filling the specified post. However there have been exceptions due to ability, skills, expertise etc. Work permits are issued for a specific time frame during which a local resident will be expected to be trained to assume the post held by a foreign employee.

Staffing

Employment relationships are governed by contracts of employment. Ideally these contracts should be in writing, however they are often partly oral and partly in writing. Frequently the

contract is embodied in an employment letter which sets out the basic conditions of employment. It usually contains a job description or indication of the required tasks along with a general provision that the employee is to do such other tasks as may be required.

Termination

There are two parallel regimes relating to the dismissal of employees. The Industrial Court operates the regime which applies only to “workers” as defined in the Industrial Relations Act. Persons other than “workers”, as defined, have the rights specified in their contracts of employment or implied into same in the absence of express provision and may seek redress in the High Court. In the event that the Court finds that an employee has been unfairly dismissed, it can grant the employee reinstatement and compensation, or compensation alone. There is no right of appeal from a decision of the Industrial Court except on a point of law in which case an appeal lies to the Court of Appeal.

Documentation

Shipments to Trinidad and Tobago require three copies of a commercial invoice and a bill of lading (or air waybill). Health certificates are required for certain vegetables, fruits, meats and meat products.

Labelling and Packaging Regulations

Goods entering Trinidad and Tobago are required to bear an indication of the country of origin while the import of goods bearing false markings or any description calculated to deceive is prohibited. Imported goods should be marked with the country of origin, particularly medicines and raw materials, while the name of the importer should also be made clear. If the marking is not made before shipment, it must be done immediately before the goods are claimed from customs.

Getting your Goods to the Market

The main options for Trinidad & Tobago are airfreight, sea-freight, post, air parcel post and express or courier service. There are various cargo airlines servicing Trinidad and Tobago including Caribbean Airlines, DHL, Florida West, Polar Air, VENSACA, Amerijet and Laparkan. Their schedules depend on demand. In addition, Caribbean Airlines offers cargo services on its scheduled flights.

Standards and Technical Regulation

The Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) has a statutory responsibility for the quality of all goods and services in Trinidad and Tobago, except food, drugs and cosmetics which The Chemistry, Food and Drug Division of the Ministry of Health monitors. TTBS operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The primary role of TTBS is to develop, promote and enforce standards to improve the quality and performance of goods produced or used in Trinidad and Tobago. It also aims to ensure industrial efficiency and development, promote public and industrial welfare, health and safety and protect the environment.

The TTBS uses the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000 series of standards and is a member of International Standards Organisation Information Network (ISONET).

The CARICOM region and Trinidad & Tobago are working towards establishing a new and improved standards level.

Detailed information on TTBS services and the laws that govern standards and measurements in Trinidad and Tobago can be found on www.ttbs.org.tt.

Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property rights in Trinidad and Tobago are managed by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) (www.ipso.gov.tt). The World Trade Organisation certified Trinidad & Tobago as being compliant with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) in June 2000. Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property legislation protects:

- Trademarks;
- Patents;
- Copyright;
- Industrial Design;
- Integrated Circuits;
- Geographical Indications;
- New Plant Varieties.

Business Etiquette, Language and Culture

Language

English is the official spoken language with Spanish emerging as the first foreign language.

Meetings and Presentations

Business people doing business in Trinidad and Tobago should be aware that despite the warm climate, and the fact that the country is part of the Caribbean, business attire is conventional business wear. Business offices and taxis are generally air-conditioned.

For office wear, men should wear long or short sleeved shirts, with a tie. Jackets are used on more formal occasions. Women are advised to wear conventional business suits, or skirts/trousers and blouses. Outside business hours, lightweight casual clothing is the norm.

Women business travellers

There are no special issues or problems regarding women business travellers, although very short skirts or shorts should be avoided in the major towns. If travelling outside major towns, women should make sure they are not travelling on the roads alone late at night.

Modes of address

It is advisable to address new business contacts using Mr, Ms or Mrs. After a few meetings one or other of the two parties may suggest first names be used. Exchange of business cards are encouraged at the first meeting.

Negotiations

Negotiations are a norm when and if distributorship or business representations agreements come to an end. However, companies that are unionised will have usual union representation for worker's rights re: salaries, wages, terms and conditions of work etc.

What are the challenges?

Generally speaking, there are few major restrictions or disincentives to investing in T&T for UK businesses. The main obstacles are cultural and bureaucratic. However, the most problematic factors for doing business in T&T in order of priority are: crime; inefficient government bureaucracy; poor work ethic in the national labour force; inadequate supply of infrastructure; corruption; and access to financing.

Getting Paid – Terms of Payment

Credit is an important feature of the market and many companies normally work using 30-90 days. The most common means of payment in Trinidad and Tobago are cash, cheques, payment cards, and electronic transfers through Point of Sale terminals, the Automated Clearing House (ACH) and the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) systems. Currency notes and coins (cash) are legal tender and value is immediately transferred with this means of payment.

Please note, the High Commission cannot intervene directly in commercial disputes on behalf of UK companies. Lists of local lawyers are available on request from the UKTI Section of the British Commission in Port of Spain.

How to Invest in Trinidad & Tobago

Foreign investment receives national treatment but must be approved by the government. Some projects (construction, energy & maritime) are screened for their impact on the environment.

Foreign investment in private business is not subject to limitations, but a license is needed to purchase more than 30% of a publicly held business. Residents and non-residents may hold foreign exchange accounts.

There are no restrictions or controls on payments, transfers, or repatriations of profits. Foreign ownership of land is restricted

Contacts

If you have a specific export enquiry about the Trinidad & Tobago market which is not answered by the information on this report, you may contact:

Telephone: 00 1 868 350 0444 Ext. press 5

Fax: 00 1 868 350 0427

Email address:

CommercialEnquiries.ptofs@fco.gov.uk

Website: <http://ukintt.fco.gov.uk/en>

UK Trade & Investment Enquiry Service

Tel: +44 (0)20 7215 8000

Fax: +44 (0)141 228 3693

Email: enquiries@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

UKTI Caribbean Desk

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UK Trade & Investment

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UKTI Trinidad & Tobago

British High Commission

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Resources / Useful Links

Country Information:

BBC Website:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

FCO Country Profile:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/>

Culture and communications:

CILT – National Centre for Languages - Regional Language Network in your area:

http://www.cilt.org.uk/workplace/employer_support/in_your_area.aspx

Kwintessential culture guides:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/>

Customs & Regulations:

HM Revenue & Customs: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Import Controls and documentation (SITPRO): <http://www.sitpro.org.uk>

Economic Information:

Economist:

<http://www.economist.com/countries/>

Export Control

Export Control Organisation:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/europeandtrade/strategic-export-control/index.html/strategic-export-control/index.html>

Export Finance and Insurance:

ECGD: <http://www.ecgd.gov.uk/>

Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property Office:

www.ipo.gov.uk

Market Access

Market Access Database for Tariffs (for non-EU markets only):

<http://mkaccdb.eu.int/mkaccdb2/indexPubli.htm>

SOLVIT – Overcoming Trade Barriers (EU Markets only)

www.bis.gov.uk/EUMarketAccessUnit

Standard and Technical Regulations:

British Standards Institution (BSI):

<http://www.bsigroup.com/en/sectorsandservices/Disciplines/ImportExport/>

National Physical Laboratory: <http://www.npl.co.uk/>
Intellectual Property - <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>

Trade Statistics:

National Statistics Information: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html>
UK Trade Info: <https://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/>

Travel Advice:

FCO Travel: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>
NHS: <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcareabroad/>
Travel health: <http://www.travelhealth.co.uk/>

Business Link: International Trade

Business Link's International Trade pages provide an overview of export basics including licensing, customs procedures, classifying and movement of goods, other regulatory information and export paperwork issues. It also introduces exporters to the UK Trade Tariff.

Essential reading for exporters!

Find out more at:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&r.lc=en&topicId=1079717544>

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Last Updated: March 10 2010