

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES (MALF)

**THE TWENTY- THIRD REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE
ON THE EXAMINATION OF THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE INVESTT LIMITED
FOR THE YEARS 2014 TO 2017**

RESPONSE OF THE MALF TO RECOMMENDATION: 5. EASE OF DOING BUSINESS (PG 20)

iii. The MALF should provide a status update on the Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiatives with which they are involved by November 30, 2019

Action Area: Import/Export permits from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

	Action	Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
1	Phase out of Manual System for Plant Import Permit Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) • Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty (30) planning and operationalization meetings were held with MTI and MALF • The MTI trained Plant Quarantine (PQ) Officers and 10 staff members of the Central Experiment Station, Centeno • Conducted five (5) refresher training sessions in use of the online platform/agency function/online assisted functions for online plant import permit applications • Agency (MALF) Function for the plant import permit applications - Operational at Central Experiment Station, Centeno • Online Assisted Function for the plant import permit applications - Operational at Central Experiment Station, Centeno • *Port of Spain and Point Lisas offices were provided with designated desktop computers for online processing, and wireless cards for improved internet access (Agency / Online Assisted Function) • Conduct of an Online Registration Drive (Manual Users) - 60 persons attended - March 2018 - https://trinidadexpress.com/features/local/agriculture-ministry-reduces-processing-time-for-plant-import-permits/article_09631668-2dda-11e8-8b30-afbac1fa0f4b.html • Use of Online Permits highlighted by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations - https://www.ippc.int/en/news/trinidad-and-tobago-launches-new-online-application-form-for-permits-to-import-plant-products/ • All (100%) plant import permits are processed on the online platform (TTBizlink) by the Central Experiment Station, Centeno • Reduction of the processing time of plant import permits from 5-8 weeks to 3-5 days • Cataloging the phytosanitary import conditions based on the following parameters: country, commodity and end use. <p><i>*Note: The Plant Quarantine Port of Spain was relocated to St Augustine Nurseries, Farm Road, St. Augustine due to the current building being earmarked for repairs.</i></p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>90% completed</p>

Action		Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
	The online application for Import Permits for Animals and Animal Products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF • MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import Permits for Animals and Animal Products are now processed in a timely manner, usually available within 24 hours following the receipt of the application. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the processing time and by extension a reduction in the length of time goods are detained at the Ports. Processing time has been reduced from three (3) to five (5) days for the manual application to twenty four (24) hours with online application. 	Completed
2	Improve internet connectivity at Ports and Plant Quarantine Unit (Centeno)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF • MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved internet access at the Central Experiment Station, Centeno office with the installation of a dedicated line/port for Plant Quarantine. • There have been improvements to the internet connectivity at the following Plant Quarantine Offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Port of Port of Spain (St. Augustine) and Port of Point Lisas - dedicated TSTT and FLOW lines - The TSTT Line is facilitated by the MALF while the FLOW lines are paid for by the MTI. • Piarco International Airport- FLOW installation is pending 	Completed
3	Consideration to Institute fee (policy decision) and effect online payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF • MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee for plant import permits (currently plant import permits are free of charge) 	Pending

Action		Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
4	Acquire Accessibility to TTBIZLink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF • MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTBizlink is accessible at all the ports of entry Plant Quarantine and its offices. These Plant Quarantine Offices include: Central Experiment Station, Centeno, Point Lisas and Port of Spain. • Training of 20 Plant Quarantine Officers by MTI in use of the Mobile applications and the features of the “Handheld/Tablet” devices. • MALF received 15 “Handheld” Tablets for Plant Quarantine officers with Mobile Applications for Plant Quarantine Inspections from the MTI in November 2017. • Ten (10) “Hands on Training” sessions in Mobile Application were conducted by MTI and Central Experiment Station for Plant Quarantine Officers. • Guidelines for the use of the Tablets (Standard Operating Procedures) were developed by MTI and MALF and provided to the Plant Quarantine Staff. A series of retraining exercises, 20 sessions in total were conducted by MTI on the use of the Tablets. • The Plant Quarantine Office, Central Experiment Station Centeno, continues to provide support to staff and first time use of the system in particular, with regards to any challenges being experienced with internet issues in particular. A Monitoring Form to document any challenges was developed. • Participated in the Business Process Reengineering of the Single Electronic Window (SEW). Completed the “As Is” report on Plant Quarantine and reviewed the “To Be” processes for Plant Quarantine • Citizen Charters were developed for both the Fisheries and Research Divisions of the MALF. This is intended to set benchmarks for high quality service to the public and agency clients. 	Completed
5	Use of the Handheld Tablets for Plant Quarantine Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF • MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Quarantine Officers returned the assigned Handheld Tablets to the Permanent Secretary, MALF in June 2018. • The conduct of Mobile Inspections using the Handheld Tablets were designed to eliminate the need for paper documents during inspections and increase efficiency due to instantaneous decisions being sent via mobile devices. Due to the non-utilization of the handheld devices, no data has been collected and retrieved for report preparation, since June 2018. 	Pending/On Hold

Action		Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Inspection Record provides the details of the consignment imported. Data required for the Risk Management Model was placed on hold due to the non-utilization of the Handheld Tablets and the non-collection of required data. The Plant Quarantine is currently unable to collect any reliable data in a timely manner with regards to the conduct of trade and the inspections conducted on a daily basis by Plant Quarantine Officers. 	
6	Acquire additional accessibility to Single Electronic Window (SEW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MALF MTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MALF has engaged and requested that the MTI facilitate the provision of a Portal on the Single Electronic Window (SEW) for the conduct of business related to Fisheries. The Fisheries Division, MALF is currently allowed to view the EMaritime Module with the permission of the Maritime Services Division of the Ministry of works and Transport but it is hoped that the Division would soon have its own "EFisheries" Module. 	

Action Area: Risk Management for Plant and Plant Products

	Action	Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
1	Develop database for Plant Quarantine regarding import/exports of commodities for T&T with attached Risk Matrix for commodities and training of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of information from Plant Quarantine imports (risk ratings) • Review of Documents (Plant Quarantine Interceptions 2010 – 2016) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk levels for commodity/country and end use could be informed by this data. - Risk profiling of commodities based on interceptions - Risk Profiling of commodities could not be continued due to the Tablets not being used to capture the data required. 	<p>Pending/On hold</p> <p>Ongoing (80% completed) Ongoing</p> <p>Discontinued</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MALF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of commodities according to their risk using the International Standard on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 32) – in collaboration with MTI (completed Category 1). • Removal of the inspections of commodities which pose little or no risk to plant health (used vehicles and parts, tyres) • Meetings with relevant stakeholders (Public Health, Chemistry Food and Drugs, MTI, Customs) to inform of the above as well as to determine the regulatory agency with the responsibility for these items. • The above activities allows for the ease of doing business and the removal of the requirement for plant import permits where it is not required. • E - Phytos were initiated • E-Declarations - review of the systems and implementation of online releases of consignments. 	<p>Ongoing (60 % completed) Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Action Area: Fisheries and Fisheries Related

Action		Responsibility	Status Update	Timeline
1	Industry Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MALF, Fisheries Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the delivery of services at two satellite offices (San Fernando and Sangre Grande), the Fisheries Division, MALF, instituted bi-monthly Community Office Days in selected rural communities (Cedros, Mayaro, Moruga, Blanchisseuse, Toco) to facilitate timely and efficient transactions and service to clients in remote areas. 	Ongoing
2	Inter-Agency Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MALF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August 2019, the MALF signed an inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for collaboration in regulating and fishing and fishing related activities and relevant trade. This MOU will facilitate collaboration and efficiency of operations between the MALF, and a number of Agencies including the Ministries of Trade, Finance, Works and Transport, National Security, and the Tobago House of Assembly. 	Ongoing