



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
Fisheries Division

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GUIDELINES TO IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS:
REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATIONS TO IMPORT AND EXPORT FISH
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The trade in fish¹ is regulated by a range of agencies. The Fisheries Division regulates the trade in live, fresh, chilled and frozen fish or primarily processed fish (includes fish that are live, fresh, chilled or frozen; fish meat that is fresh, chilled or frozen, or crustaceans and molluscs that are live, fresh, chilled or frozen) based only on fisheries management considerations. Stringent fisheries management initiatives at both the national and international levels require that the Fisheries Division enhances the system for collection of fish trade data and information. In this regard, the following information is required when submitting your import /export application for approval.

1. IMPORT APPLICATIONS AND DUTY RELIEF LICENCE: (commonly referred to as “Minister’s Licence”)

A. General documents required:

- i. Completed Application Form (in triplicate) for Licence to Import Goods into Trinidad and Tobago
- ii. **For Duty Relief Licences (ONLY)** - A Cover Letter addressed to the Director of Fisheries requesting a Duty Relief License to import fish duty free for the purpose of processing, which it to include the following:
 - Species (common & scientific names)
 - Quantity and units of quantity
 - Customs Codes

¹ “fish” means any aquatic organism or part thereof, including any bony or cartilaginous fish, shellfish, marine turtle, mollusc, crustacean, cnidarian, echinoderm, marine mammal or marine algae at any stage of their development;

Note that the letter **MUST** be accompanied by the completed application forms described at (i) above.

- iii. First time applicant, individual:
 - Original² and copy of *Advice of Assignment of BIR Number and Account Numbers* issued by the Board of Inland Revenue
 - Original and copy of National Identification
- iv. First time applicant (company):
 - Certificate of Incorporation
 - VAT registration (if applicable)
 - Original and copy of *Advice of Assignment of BIR Number and Account Numbers* issued by the Board of Inland revenue

B. General information required:

- i. Complete address of the Applicant
- ii. Contact number and /or email address for the Applicant
- iii. Complete address of the Supplier
- iv. Scientific name (accurate spelling) comprising genus and species eg. *Thunnus albacares* (or else, at the very least, the genus eg *Thunnus sp.*) for all listed species on the application.
- v. Specify the unit of weight i.e. lbs or kg or tonnes
- vi. Specify for each species the price in TTD per weight unit
- vii. Accurate currency calculations in TTD and USD (if provided)
- viii. TTD – USD exchange rate
- ix. Purpose of import:
 - a. Export (when the fish is imported, processed and exported - customs code changed – country of origin is Trinidad and Tobago)
 - b. Re-Export – (when the fish is imported duty-free and re-exported – customs code unchanged – country of origin is not Trinidad and Tobago);
 - c. Domestic Use (e.g. when the imported fish is to be sold on the local market, whether primarily processed or not; primarily processed fish includes fish that are live, fresh, chilled or frozen; fish meat that is fresh, chilled or frozen, or crustaceans and molluscs that are live, fresh, chilled or frozen);
 - d. Personal Use (when the fish is imported by an individual for personal consumption);
 - e. Scientific Research (if fish is imported for scientific purposes);
 - f. Market Research (e.g. fish is imported for new product testing)

² The original of any document will be used for verification of the copy provided and will be returned to the applicant.

C. The following documents (‘Returns’) must be submitted **with or before** making a new application:

- i. Copy of previously approved (by the Fisheries Division) **Application for Licence to Import Goods into Trinidad and Tobago;**
- ii. **Copy of Import Licence** (issued by Ministry of Trade and Industry) with the **“Importations against this Licence”** (located at back of Licence) or copy of printout “Approval Confirmation (letter or email) from Ministry of Trade.
- iii. In cases where it is not possible to attain the “Importations against this Licence” (located at back of Licence) the **Baggage Receipt and the Official Receipts** can be submitted
- iv. Copy of **Form eC82** or **drawdown list from the Customs and Excise Division**
- v. **Packing List** (s) [if provided]
- vi. **Certificate of Eligibility for Export** (Statistical Document – see 1F(ii)), **Catch Document** (see 1F(iii)), or **other relevant document** e.g. **CITES Export Permit** (see 1F(i)) issued by the competent fisheries management authority of the exporting country which validates or confirms that the relevant management measures for the respective species are complied with.

D. A copy of the valid fishing licence issued by the flag or other State is required for any tunas, mackerels, marlins, swordfish, sharks, snappers and groupers being imported as well as details concerning the fishing vessel(s) in the following format below:

VESSEL NAME	VESSEL REG. #	FLAG OF VESSEL	OWNER	OWNER CONTACT TEL #	OWNER ADDRESS	FISHING METHOD	FISHING AREA
1.							
2.							

E. Due to their threatened/overexploited status, and in accordance with international fisheries management recommendations/measures, the following species will **not** be approved for import::

- i. Species listed under the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I - <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

These species include:

Sawfishes (*Pristidae* spp)

Pangasid catfish (*Pangasianodon gigas*)

- ii. Species managed by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) –
https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Recs/COMPENDIUM_ACTIVE_ENG.pdf

These species include, but are not limited to:

Sharks

- Bigeye Thresher Shark (*Alopias superciliosus*)
- Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)
- Hammerhead Sharks (family *Sphyrnidae*, **except** *Sphyrna tiburo*)
- Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)
- Shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)
- Fins from **ALL SPECIES** of sharks

- iii. Species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species – These species include, but are not limited to:

- Yellowfin Grouper (*Mycteroperca venenosa*) – near threatened -
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/44683/46915269>
- Jewfish or Atlantic Goliath Grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) - vulnerable -
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195409/145206345>
- Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) – critically endangered -
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/7862/46909843>

F. Due to their threatened/overexploited status, and in accordance with international fisheries management recommendations/measures, the import of the following species will **be regulated**:

- i. Species listed under CITES Appendix II -
<https://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

A **CITES export permit** (see 1C(vi)) must be obtained from the respective Competent Authority of the Country of Origin. These species include, but are not limited to:

- Queen Conch (previously *Strombus gigas*, now called *Lobatus gigas*)
- Pelagic thresher (*Alopias pelagicus*)
- Thresher (*Alopias vulpinis*)
- Eagle rays (*Manta* spp)
- Mobulis rays (*Mobula* spp)
- Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)

- ii. Species under management recommendation of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) -
https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Recs/COMPENDIUM_ACTIVE_ENG.pdf

These species include, but are not limited to:

- North Atlantic Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*)*
- Bigeye Tuna (*Thunnus obesus*)*
- Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans*)
- White Marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*)
- Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*)*

* A Statistical Document Programme is implemented for these species (see 1C(vi))

- iii. Species under the management of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Marine Resources (CCAMLR) –
- Toothfish (*Dissostichus spp*) - CCAMLR Conservation Measure 10-05 (2018) Catch Documentation Scheme for *Dissostichus* spp. applies (see 1C(vi)) - A Catch Document validated by the competent fisheries management authority of the exporting country is required.
https://www.ccamlr.org/sites/default/files/10-05_53.pdf

G. Applications for farmed fish (including shrimp, lobster, crab etc) must be made on a separate *Application Form for Licence to Import Goods into Trinidad and Tobago* (in triplicate) – i.e. wild caught and farmed products must be applied for on separate application forms.

H. Requirement for a **Health Certificate** – specifically for high risk species – the Competent Authority (Chemistry, Food and Drug Division of the Ministry of Health) should be contacted to ascertain whether or not a Health Certificate is required.

I. Requirement for **inspection by Veterinary Public Health** – the relevant application(s) will be stamped “All Shipments Must Be Inspected by Veterinary Public Health” and signed by the Director of Fisheries – this requirement pertains to all fish (including shrimp, crab, etc.) that are:

- i. Live;
- ii. Identified or notified by a Competent Authority as being a (potential) threat to human health.

J. Imports of live fish (including crabs, lobsters and other marine fauna) must be notified to the Director of Fisheries at least 48 hours in advance and may be subject to inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Customs and Excise Division.

K. Bait species – the Director of Fisheries is to be informed in writing of the intended purpose for the importation of bait species (whether fresh or processed). Section 5 of the Fisheries Regulations specifies that: *No Sardine shall be sold except to a bona fide fisherman for the purpose of bait.*

2. EXPORT APPLICATIONS:

A. General documents required:

- i. Completed Ministry of Trade Form in duplicate
- ii. First time applicant, individual:
 - Original³ and copy of *Advice of Assignment of BIR Number and Account Numbers*
 - Original and copy of National Identification
- iii. All required additional documents such as Vessel Details must also be completed in the required format and submitted in triplicate
- iv. First time applicant (company):
 - Certificate of Incorporation
 - VAT registration (if applicable)
 - Original and copy of *Advice of Assignment of BIR Number and Account Numbers* issued by the Board of Inland revenue

B. General information required:

- i. Complete address of the Applicant
- ii. Contact number and /or email address for the Applicant
- iii. Complete address of the Supplier
- iv. Scientific name (accurate spelling) comprising genus and species eg. *Thunnus albacares* (or else, at the very least, the genus eg *Thunnus sp.*) for all listed species on the application.
- v. Specify the unit of weight ie. lbs or kg or tonnes
- vi. Specify for each species the price in TTD per weight unit
- vii. Accurate currency calculations in TTD and USD (if provided)
- viii. TTD – USD exchange rate

C. The following documents (‘Returns’) must be submitted **with or before** making a new application:

- i. Copy of previously approved (by the Fisheries Division) **Application for Licence to Export Goods from Trinidad and Tobago;**
- ii. **Copy of Export Licence** (issued by Ministry of Trade and Industry) with the **“Exportations against this Licence”** (located at back of Licence) or copy of printout “Approval Confirmation (letter or email) from Ministry of Trade;
- iii. In cases where it is not possible to attain the “Exportations against this Licence” (located at back of Licence) the **Baggage Receipt and the Official Receipts** can be submitted;

³ The original of any document will be used for verification of the copy provided and will be returned to the applicant.

- iv. Copy of **Form eC82** or **drawdown list from the Customs and Excise Division**;
- v. **Packing List** (s) [if provided];

D. Details of actual exports on previous Export Licence must be submitted with or before making a new application:

E. **Shrimp** will not be approved for export to the **United States of America**

F. Due to their threatened/overexploited status, and in accordance with international fisheries management recommendations/measures, the following species will not be approved for export:

- i. Species listed under the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I - <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

These species include:

Sawfishes (*Pristidae* spp)

Pangasid catfish (*Pangasianodon gigas*)

- ii. Species managed by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) – https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Recs/COMPENDIUM_ACTIVE_ENG.pdf

These species include, but are not limited to:

Sharks

- Bigeye Thresher Shark (*Alopias superciliosus*)
- Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)
- Hammerhead Sharks (family *Sphyrnidae*, **except** *Sphyrna tiburo*)
- Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)
- Shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)
- Fins from **ALL SPECIES** of sharks⁴

Billfish

- White marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*)

- iii. Species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species - These species include, but are not limited to:

⁴ Note that several countries are taking measures to prevent entry of shark fins to their domestic market e.g. Canada prohibits the import of shark fins that are not attached to the carcass - <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/c-68/royal-assent>

- Yellowfin Grouper (*Mycteroperca venenosa*) – near threatened - <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/44683/46915269>
- Jewfish or Atlantic Goliath Grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) - vulnerable - <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/195409/145206345>
- Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) – critically endangered - <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/7862/46909843>

iv. Sea Cucumbers – *Holothuria* spp. – as a precautionary approach due to uncertainties of the impacts of removal of sea cucumbers on populations of other commercial species and the related marine ecosystem.

G. Due to their threatened/overexploited status, and in accordance with international fisheries management recommendations/measures, the export of the following species will **be regulated**:

i. Species listed under CITES Appendix II - <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

A **CITES export permit** must be obtained from the Forestry Division. These species include, but are not limited to:

- Queen Conch (previously *Strombus gigas*, now called *Lobatus gigas*)
- Pelagic thresher (*Alopias pelagicus*)
- Thresher (*Alopias vulpinis*)
- Eagle rays (*Manta* spp)
- Mobulis rays (*Mobula* spp)
- Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)

ii. Species under management recommendation of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)⁵. These species include, but are not limited to:

Tunas

- Bigeye Tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) – Under the Statistical Document Programme (see 2C(vii)) a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) must be acquired from the Fisheries Division as part of the export documentation for the species.

Swordfish

- North Atlantic Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) – Trinidad and Tobago has a quota for this species. Under the Statistical Document Programme (see 2C(vii)) a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) must be acquired from the Fisheries Division as part of the export documentation for the species.

Billfish

- Blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) – Trinidad and Tobago has a quota for this species.

H. The following additional details with respect to the fishing vessel(s) are required for **tunas, mackerels, marlins, swordfish, sharks, snappers and groupers** being exported from Trinidad and Tobago (country of origin). All vessel details must be provided in the following format below:

VESSEL NAME	VESSEL REG. #	FLAG OF VESSEL	OWNER	OWNER CONTACT TEL #	OWNER ADDRESS	FISHING METHOD	FISHING AREA
1.							
2.							

I. In accordance with the **United States Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP)** - <https://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION1415/FinalRuleTraceability.aspx> - which aims to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) and seafood fraud, US importers must retain a record of the supply chain data (traceability requirements) for **13 priority species/species groups – the following species/species groups are of relevance to Trinidad and Tobago:**

1. Atlantic Blue crab
2. Dolphinfish (Mahi Mahi)
3. Grouper
4. Red King Crab
5. Red Snapper
6. Sharks
7. Swordfish
8. Tunas
 - i. Albacore
 - ii. Bigeye
 - iii. Skipjack
 - iv. Yellowfin

Approval for the **export of any of the above species/ species groups to the United States of America** would therefore require the following additional information with respect to the vessel(s). All vessel details must be provided in the following format below:

VESSEL NAME	VESSEL REG. #	FLAG OF VESSEL	OWNER	OWNER CONTACT TEL #	OWNER ADDRESS	FISHING METHOD	FISHING AREA
1.							
2.							

- J.** Requirement for a **Health Certificate** – specifically for high risk species – the Competent Authority (Chemistry, Food and Drug Division of the Ministry of Health) should be contacted to ascertain whether or not a Health Certificate is required.
- K.** Exports of live fish (including crabs, lobsters and other marine fauna) must be notified to the Director of Fisheries at least 48 hours in advance and may be subject to inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Customs and Excise Division.
- L.** Bait species - the Director of Fisheries is to be informed in writing of the intended purpose for the exportation of bait species (whether fresh or processed). Section 5 of the Fisheries Regulations specifies that: *No Sardine shall be sold except to a bona fide fisherman for the purpose of bait.*

3. VALIDITY OF IMPORT AND EXPORT LICENCES

The validity of import licences, including Minister’s Licence for Duty Relief, is six (6) months. The validity of export licences is three (3) months.

We appreciate your cooperation with our efforts to meet international standards for import/export of fish. If further information is required please contact the Fisheries Division at the above-listed numbers.

Director of Fisheries