



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES

Cor. Narsaloo Ramaya Marg Road and Soogrim Trace, Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies,

Phone: 220 – 6253

Governance Framework for the Operationalization of the Youth “Fast Track” Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive)

A. Background

1. **Vision 2030- The National Development Strategy 2016-2030** has identified building globally competitive businesses as one of the thematic areas where development efforts would be focused on the economic transformation of Trinidad and Tobago. A strong, modern competitive agriculture, agro-processing and fisheries sector has the ingredients for successful penetration of regional and international markets and will allow the country to attain diversification and promote economic growth.

2. At the heart of the stability and potential growth of agriculture is the **Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries** (MALF Policy) to reverse decades of poor agricultural land administration and the collapse of land tenure. Current reforms and Government’s aggressive approach towards modernizing the system of land administration will bring relief to food producers who are heavily dependent on State land for production. But beyond that, more has to happen on these lands. New techniques, equipment and technology must improve farm efficiency, productivity and lower reliance on labour. Primary production - the traditional form of farm income must now also take advantage of value-added opportunities, driven by consumers too busy to prepare their own food. Increased productivity of the agriculture, agro-processing and fisheries sector can be achieved through more innovative combinations of people, ideas and resources. The right skills and capabilities coupled with Government policy initiatives targeting the prospects for stability and growth can improve the viability of these sectors

B. MALF Policy

1. To promote these objectives, in September 2018, the Minister of Finance has introduced a new **Agro-Incentive** to be funded in the first year out of an allocation of TT\$20Mn targeting agro-producers with the aim of encouraging rational, efficient and methodical applications to agriculture. A key element of this strategy is the transformation of the agriculture sector through increased focus on on-farm

investments in protected farming; safe and healthy post-harvest packaging; reduction in post-harvest losses; value-added initiatives; agro-processing; renewable energy; climate-smart agriculture; Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Food Safety Management Systems such as Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and waste reduction. The incentive may also be available to qualified licensed woodcutters who wish to acquire specialized forestry equipment the advice of the Forestry Division and qualified saw millers who wish to improve health and safety in licensed sawmills under the guidance of the Occupational Safety and Health Agency.

2. The idea is to encourage new and existing farmers who wish, among other things, to invest in modern farming technology or other efficiency upgrades on their farms to resist the effects of changing weather patterns; reduce labour reliance; introduce more efficient use of water; reduce cost of production or improve health and safety as well as food safety. In addition the Government of Trinidad and Tobago wishes to encourage farmers to improve their breeding stock, pursue value-added initiatives, access research and development support and develop new products. Finally, the Government wishes to encourage younger farmers and provide improved access to the combination of training, land and financing.

3. In order to make it easier for young persons between the age of eighteen (18) to thirty-five (35) to access grant funding under the Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive), the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, proposes that in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) has created a window from October 20, 2021 to December 15, 2021, where youth applicants will enter a fast track process and have a decision made on their application by January 14, 2022. The principal applicant must be aged eighteen (18) to thirty-five (35) as at December 15, 2021. This programme is the **Youth “Fast Track” Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive)**.

4. Successful applicant can access a grant of **up to TT\$100,000**. Priority financial support would be directed to the shift towards protected farming; the introduction of energy-saving and labour saving technology and efficiency improvements; the acquisition of specialized equipment; value-added initiatives, particularly those related to on farm improvements to support the packaging of primary production. Priority will also be given in the first year to brand building; packaging; space expansion; research and product development; protection of intellectual property; and food safety compliance requirements. Grants would not be available for the purchase of vehicles and other non-essentials such as consultancy fees and regional and international travel.

The specific areas eligible for funding under this Programme are as follows:

- i. Upgrade of Facilities/Farms- Existing farmers who wish to perform farm upgrades with the intention of reducing labour via mechanization, reducing the cost of production, implementing new technology and improvement of health, safety and food safety in operations.
- ii. New Farm Start-Up for new or younger farmers- the incentive can be used as a guarantee to the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) to access financing.

- iii. Livestock Farmers for upgrade of breeding stock.
- iv. Dairy Farmers- farm upgrades with the intention of increasing productivity, efficiency and food safety.
- v. Fish and fish processing- for value added activities.
- vi. Licensed woodcutters and saw millers for investment in specialized equipment to improve health and safety

C. Qualifying Criteria

1. The Incentive would be available to agricultural producers who:
 - i. Are registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries as a “farmer”, “fisherman”, “licensed woodcutter”, “licensed saw miller”, or any other form of registration or licensing recognized by the Ministry. **In any other case** the applicant must be able to demonstrate to the Agro-Incentive Assessment Committee that they are involved in productive agriculture.
 - ii. Possess formal training or certification in agriculture/farming/agri-business/fish processing/forestry from the University of Trinidad and Tobago- Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) or the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute (CFTDI). **In any other case**, applicants may also be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Assessment Committee that they possess the appropriate level of experience and expertise in the particular agriculture activity.
 - iii. Proof of access to land. Applicants may also be to demonstrate that they are currently pursuing regularization by the Ministry or any other agency of the State.
 - iv. Wish to enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of new products.
 - v. Produce products that can aid in import substitution or access export markets
2. The applications for funding under the Incentive are to include but not be limited to:
 - i. completed Application Form
 - ii. proof of access to land
 - iii. evidence of formal training or certification in agriculture/ farming/ agri-business/fish processing/forestry or experience and hands on expertise;

- iv. a five (5) minute video uploaded to a flash drive or CD on current operations (if applicable) or the proposed business plan/ proposal; and
- v. any other information capable of supporting the application

All necessary planning, approvals and/or permits must be in place before the application can be considered.

D. Assessment Criteria

1. Applications for support under the Agro-Incentive will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria	Maximum Points	Explanation
Quality and completeness of documentation	20	Organization information that is commensurate with the eligibility criteria and application requirements.
Alignment with Government and MALF Policy objectives	50	Application should be strongly aligned to the outputs/outcomes of Government and MALF Policy
Value for Money	30	Value for money will be determined by consideration of all aspects of an application, including timeliness, relevance, quality and scope of the project, as well as the potential value and benefits of the proposed activities. The budget should be reasonable and relevant to the eligible project activities
Total	100	

Proposals must achieve at least 60 points to be approved for funding under the Grant Facility. Applications that do not meet the minimum score for assessment criterion can only be deemed ‘unsuitable for further consideration’ if the quorum of the Assessment Committee agrees.

E. Assessment Committee

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) will establish a **Youth “Fast Track” Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive) Assessment Committee** with a mandate to assess proposals/applications and present recommendations to the Permanent Secretary, MALF. The Committee shall comprise **five (5)** members:

- (i) Three (3) representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

(ii) Two (2) representatives from the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service.

F. Approval Process

1. Initial call for applications will be published in the print media and on the websites and social media pages of the MALF and MOF, its affiliated Agencies and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA). The use of media such as television and radio interviews shall also be considered.
2. Applications are to be deposited in boxes placed at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries Head Office, Corner Narsaloo Ramaya Marg Road and Soogrim Trace, Chaguanas, the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service Head Office, No. 2 St. Clair Avenue, Port of Spain or the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries (DFPFF), Milshirv Administrative Complex, Cor. Milford & Shirvan Road, Tobago.
3. The assessment, approval of applications, disbursement and administration of the grant will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance. Applications will be accepted from October 20, 2021 to December 15, 2021. A decision made on their application by January 14, 2022. The principal applicant must be aged eighteen (18) to thirty-five (35) as at December 15, 2021.
4. The process for the approval of applications is outlined as follows:
 - a. Proposals are submitted to the Youth “Fast Track” Agricultural Finance Support Programme (Agro-Incentive) Assessment Committee for evaluation based on the stipulated criteria. In the event the Committee considers it necessary, the Committee will request additional information or request reports of site visits as required to assist in the deliberations.
 - b. The Assessment Committee will submit an Evaluation Report with its recommendations to the Permanent Secretary-MALF for consideration and onward transmission to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries for approval.
 - c. MALF will notify applicants of the outcome of their applications. A Grant Agreement will be executed between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the applicant that is to govern the disbursement of funds and any specific terms and conditions that have been approved. Following this, disbursement will be arranged.

G. Reporting

1. The Ministry of Finance will monitor and review the performance of the Facility and bi-annual reports are to be submitted for the information of Cabinet.

2. Applicants would send regular financial and performance reports. The Grant Agreement will outline frequency for submission and the contents of the reports.

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES**

**APPLICATION FOR THE YOUTH
“FAST TRACK” AGRICULTURAL
FINANCE SUPPORT PROGRAMME
(AGRO-INCENTIVE)**

**APPLICATION FOR THE YOUTH “FAST
TRACK” AGRICULTURAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT
PROGRAMME (AGRO-INCENTIVE)**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. All relevant sections must be completed and submitted with the requested documents.
2. The completed application form must be signed by the APPLICANT.
3. All completed application forms must be addressed to the Agro-Incentive Assessment Committee- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.
4. Applications are to be deposited in boxes placed at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries Head Office, Corner Narsaloo Ramaya Marg Road and Soogrim Trace, Chaguanas, the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service Head Office, No. 2 St. Clair Avenue, Port of Spain or the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries (DFPFF), Milshirv Administrative Complex, Cor. Milford & Shirvan Road, Tobago.

For further information or queries please contact: agroincentive@gov.tt

FOR OFFICIAL USE

ITEM	DATE	OFFICER
<input type="checkbox"/> Application Form Received		
<input type="checkbox"/> All required documents appended		
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional documents/information required		
<input type="checkbox"/> All additional requirements satisfied		
<input type="checkbox"/> Application accepted		
<input type="checkbox"/> Report Completed		

IN THE MATTER OF THE STATUTORY DECLARATIONS ACT

CHAPTER 7:04

I, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

I am located at, and in support of this Application for the Agricultural Financial Support Programme, I attach the following documents:

- Application form duly completed
- Documents relating to land tenure
- Information on training/certification in agriculture/farming/agri-business/ forestry or fish processing
- Information on experience in agriculture/farming/agri-business/ forestry or fish processing
- Business Plan (where appropriate)
- Five (5) Minute Video Submission
- Other (*please specify*) _____

Signature

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

Date

GENERAL PARTICULARS

(To be completed by ALL applicants)

1. Name of Applicant _____

2. Address: _____

3. Telephone No: _____

4. E-Mail: _____

5. Type of Agriculture Activity: _____

6. Type of Land Tenure:

Leasehold (State)

Freehold (Owned)

Other

Leasehold (Private)

Freehold (Rented)

7. Location of agriculture activity/business:

8. Investment to date:

INVESTMENT	(TTD\$)
Land & Building	
Machinery & Equipment	
Working Capital	
Other	
TOTAL	

9. Annual Production:

PRODUCTS	ANNUAL		
	Production Quantity	Local Sales Value (\$TTD)	Export Sales Value (\$TTD)

10. Any other information in support of application:

I make this declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and according to the Statutory Declarations Act and I am aware that if there is any statement in this declaration which is false in fact, which I know or believe to be false or do not believe to be true, I am liable to fine and imprisonment.

Declared to at _____)

In the presence of _____) _____

This day _____ of 20__) **Declarant**

Before me,

Commissioner of Affidavits