



Trinidad and Tobago's Tamana InTech Park: The Flagship Location for Knowledge-based Industries

Atiba Philips speaks with Angela Hordatt, Vice President Business Development, Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (e Teck)

Ms. Angela Hordatt, Vice President Business Development

Vision 2020, the Government's National Strategic and Development plan calls for the achievement of developed country status in just ten years. That requires a near doubling of the GDP and sustained strong economic growth over the period. This type of growth cannot come from traditional activity only, but must be achieved through economic diversification. Such a plan for sustainable economic development must leverage the power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), innovation and entrepreneurship as platforms from which to launch Trinidad and Tobago's new economic era.

The role of Technology Parks: Technology parks or "cyberparks" have been looked to in the diversification puzzle for many economies, and Trinidad and Tobago is pursuing its own customised version at the Tamana InTech Park. This specialised infrastructure project, led by e Teck, has an ambitious agenda: "...this Science and Technology Park will be central to the creation of the leadership that will shape the next economy and by extension, the quality of life in Trinidad and Tobago. It will be the hub for new communities and a Central Business District like no other. Its impact and influence will stretch beyond its boundaries into the very core of our socio economic advancement".

Ambitious goals indeed: These "technology zones" are designed to strengthen local ICT businesses and attract foreign companies by creating a microcosm of efficiency and connectivity that surpasses the traditional business environment in the rest of the country. When parks are customised for a specific sector, such as ICT, they also promote the type of clustering and shared services, information and resources that foster competitiveness as well as cooperation. e Teck's new VP of Business Development, Angela Hordatt, took some time to share the organisation's vision for Tamana InTech Park and the transformative role it will play in developing this country's non-energy sector.

Q. Angela, how does the development of this Park contribute to this country's National Agenda of economic diversification?
AH: The Country's Vision is to develop innovative people, to diversify the economy, to create a knowledge-based society, and to create wealth for

its people. Tamana InTech Park is the structure within which the Government and e Teck will deliver such a society.

This park is about creativity...

The park will have several key features – the co-location and collaboration with the UTT, an entrepreneurial university established to produce industry ready graduates and entrepreneurs, the commercialization of R&D and the creation of a "hot-bed" for innovation. With UTT located on the park, the presence of professors, faculty and the Innovation Centre, (which is an incubator connected to the University), spin-off businesses from all Universities can be nurtured and grown until they are ready to be welcomed as tenants of the park. The Centre will provide young businesses with the professional marketing, legal, HR and other competences that they require to be successful. UTT also has links to several universities worldwide, including the University of Cambridge, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Texas. In collaboration with these affiliates, the UTT and the Innovation Centre will be seeking to commercialise several technologies. This is the purpose of Tamana, to seek out and pursue emerging technologies and bring them to market. That is why our tag line is - "the power of ideas!" There will be no boundaries and no borders between the university and the businesses.

Businesses will be able to access both students and faculty. The businesses that we want as tenants are those that will focus on ICT, agro-tech industries, and high-value manufacturing. We need to leverage the success of our energy sector to build these other sectors – We are also looking for multi-nationals leading in their space, and businesses that have a strong R&D focus to locate their research capability in Trinidad and Tobago. It is envisioned that 10 years from now we will have blossoming high-value activities on which our economy will be based.

The vision for the park is that Tamana InTech Park will be the epicentre for ICT, high-value manufacturing and agro-technology. We will also have developed commercial clusters in renewable energy, environmental technologies, bio technology and others that evolve. If we could harness the energy and creativity of our people then we would have a strong basis for economic diversification!

Q. What is the Vision for Tamana InTech Park?

AH: The Vision is that the park will be a catalyst for knowledge-based industrial development in Trinidad and Tobago. Both international and local businesses would have located their operations at Tamana InTech Park so as to join peers that are on the cutting edge of R&D. They will be benefiting from the ready availability of a talented workforce, inviting business climate, and high-quality infrastructure.

Q. Why do we want to attract knowledge-based business?

AH: Technological innovation drives about half of economic growth. When you are talking about generation of wealth, it comes from doing things a new way – this comes from knowledge activity. What makes a company knowledge-based is that it is doing something in a new way, or doing a whole new thing. We are putting the systems in place-funding and business support services- which will allow businesses to persevere to the point of commercial viability.

Q. What type of office accommodation will Tamana InTech Park offer?

AH: Build-to-suit or ready-to-occupy leasing options are available. Potential investors ready and willing to build their own premises will be accommodated by third quarter 2010. For tenants wishing to lease, the park will be opened for business by the end of 2010.

Q. What are the unique ecological features of the Park and why this focus on the environment?

AH: The park will employ smart-building and efficient energy- utilisation technologies for its construction. Thirty per cent of the park is devoted to green space. As a policy decision, we want to be in harmony with the environment.

If the passion and sincere energy of this e Teck Vice President are anything to go by, then Trinidad and Tobago's knowledge-based future is secure. The Tamana InTech Park will indeed fulfill its promise to be the premier location for companies looking to establish a presence in the Americas or for those who wish to expand their current R&D efforts in a cost-effective manner. Tamana InTech Park will indeed become the mecca for investing in and developing alternative energy and "green" technologies in the hemisphere.