



Live Virtual Launch
TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile Application
Level 22 C2&C3 - Tower D
Wednesday 4th August, 2021
10:00am

TTSEC's Investor Protection Mobile Application
- 'Reaching You Wherever You Are'

ADDRESS
Lystra Lucillio, Chief Executive Officer (Ag.)

Thank you, Nicole, ...

Good morning to our online audience!

Today marks an evolution for the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission or TTSEC. I am pleased to announce an innovation in the delivery of our core mandate, to protect investors. This new development will positively impact how the investor, and the public in general, interact with the TTSEC. Today we officially launch the **TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile Application**. The first app of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago and among securities regulators in the region.

The International Organisation of Securities Commissions or IOSCO promotes three main principles of securities regulation:

- 1) Protecting Investors;
- 2) Ensuring that markets are fair, efficient and transparent; and
- 3) Reducing systemic risk.

As a member of IOSCO, the TTSEC has been proactive in ensuring our compliance with these international standards.

The launch of the TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile App, expands on the many ways in which individual investors; and the public, can engage with the TTSEC - as it allows for the submission of complaints, along with, the anonymous delivery of tips on financial fraud or investment scams.

Technology is in fact driving the transformation of our service delivery to our stakeholders, investors and the general public.

As we have all come to realise, mobile technology is fast changing the way we relate to the world. It goes beyond just mobile devices, to represent an entirely new digital lifestyle, which is always on the verge of 'what next?'. These electronic and mobile channels have become integrated into our business processes, and have also changed the way in which we enable the public to interact with us at the TTSEC.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 Pandemic has forced us to transition quicker than we probably may have, as our day to day activities are now largely defined by what can be achieved via digital means. Last year, in the midst of the pandemic, we saw an increase in the number of Ponzi/pyramid type financial scams being reported in the news and circulating on social media.

The TTSEC collaborated with the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, to issue a joint statement, alerting the public to these scams. The TTSEC also partnered with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on the sharing of educational information about investment scams to the public.

In addition to this, we implemented investor education and awareness campaigns on national television and on social media; specifically targeting pyramid type investment scams that were being marketed as a form of, 'sou-sou'.

Interestingly, notwithstanding the many reports and posts on social media of individuals claiming to have been victims of scams, thus far, we at the TTSEC, are not in receipt of a single complaint from a member of the public.

Currently, investor complaints and tips can be submitted to the TTSEC via:

- Our corporate website;
- Email;
- Telephone; and
- Official correspondence - delivered either by hand or through the postal service.

Despite these many avenues, none are being fully utilised by the public.

The TTSEC therefore, in reviewing its complaint system, sought to expand the available options for the submission of a complaint, by introducing a more expedient and convenient means for users. Based on data provided by the Mutual Fund Association of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange, it is estimated that locally the retail or individual investing population, is in the vicinity of 750,000 - out of a population size, of 1.4 million.

So Why go Mobile?

According to Statista, an online market statistics website,¹ “In 2021, mobile phones made up approximately 46 percent of the web traffic in Trinidad and Tobago. Meanwhile, desktop computers accounted for almost 46 percent.” They further stated that, more than three out of four residents of Trinidad and Tobago had access to the internet; and that there were “approximately 940,000 active social media users.”

This mobile online audience is our target. By leveraging the use of mobile devices to enable the submission of investment complaints and to receive ‘tips’ related to financial scams, we expect to see an increase in the number of persons contacting the TTSEC.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/934678/trinidad-tobago-web-traffic-share-device/#:~:text=Trinidad%20and%20Tobago%3A%20web%20traffic%20share%202020%2C%20by%20device&text=In%202020%2C%20mobile%20phones%20made,accounted%20for%20almost%2045.8%20percent.>

The TTSEC Investor Protection App has four primary functions:

1. To facilitate the submission of Complaints about investments;
2. To facilitate the anonymous submission of a Tip – to alert the TTSEC to possible fraudulent financial activity;
3. To facilitate easy and ready access to information about registered investments and those who deal in securities in Trinidad and Tobago; and
4. To quickly disseminate alerts and investment tips to the public.

Individual investors and members of the public can now easily submit real-time information or tips to the -TTSEC (which may assist with new or on-going investigations) as well as alert the TTSEC of any fraudulent financial scheme or activity that may be occurring. Unlike the formal complaints process, the submission of tips to the TTSEC will be anonymous, and allow for the submission of information such as images, documents, video and audio files.

The TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile Application is user-friendly, and features a chatbot, aptly named, '**Investobot**' to help guide and navigate persons on its use.

As previously stated, the TTSEC is leveraging the use of technology to become more responsive to the needs of the market, investors and the public when engaging with us. One of our fundamental duties is to protect individuals from fraudulent financial transactions.

During challenging financial times, money-making scams become more prevalent; and therefore, we must work harder to ensure that individuals are made aware of what exists, what to look out for, who to complain to or where to send a tip.

Investors and potential investors have rights but they also have a responsibility to know and apply the ABC's of investing i.e. to --- **Ask** pertinent questions to understand their investment; --- to **Beware** of Investment fraud, know the signs of a fraudster, and to **Check** with the TTSEC to ensure that the company, the persons and the securities or investments are all registered.

Today is an important day for investors and potential investors alike, as the TTSEC continues to adapt and evolve so that we can become a more agile and responsive Regulator. This challenging time requires resiliency in business frameworks, in addition to financial resiliency in our personal lives. Being financially resilient means looking after and protecting your money and also taking a keen interest in how and where you save and invest your hard-earned money.

The **TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile Application** will help **you** to protect your money by '*Reaching you Wherever you are*' with easily accessible and helpful information on financial fraud and scams, and providing a new expedient mobile means to submit complaints and tips.

We encourage everyone to download the TTSEC Investor Protection Mobile Application, and should you encounter any fraudulent type of investment, whether it be via social media, WhatsApp or in person, send us the files, images, audio recordings via the App.

The app is available for Android and Apple devices and you can download it for free via the **Google Play Store** and **Apple Store**.

We need your support to stop investment fraud and financial scams.

Have an enjoyable day and stay safe. Thank you.