Case Studies of Public-Private Partnerships for Education and Workforce Development

The Case of Trinidad & Tobago: National Training Agency

Prepared for the Organization of American States (OAS)

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the literature</td>
<td>6 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Workforce Development in the Caribbean: P3s – Best Practice Cases</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case in Trinidad and Tobago: NTA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Profile of the partnership</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Institutional frame of reference</td>
<td>14-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Geographic, sector and scale ranges</td>
<td>18-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Responsibilities of participating organizations</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Financing of the partnership</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Scheme Design</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Identification of the demand for workforce development and for the sector of study</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Strategy/Planning of the partnership and the scheme</td>
<td>23-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Construction and Implementation of the education and workforce development schemes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The process to solve the need for education and workforce development</td>
<td>26-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Modus Operandi</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Outline for running the partnership program, participants and responsibilities</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Financing/funding of the activities</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Regulation/follow up/monitoring</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Sustainability of the partnership and its benefits</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Creation of value/worth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Results of the program's processes</td>
<td>30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Partnership's impact</td>
<td>31-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1</td>
<td>33-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary
Executive Summary

There are several cases of public-private collaborations that harness regional development within the context of the Caribbean. The region as it is currently prepares for the onslaught if the merging of markets and economies through the happening of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). This merger has definite implications on the Caribbean’s labour force relative to the demand for skills that will be result of the aftermath of the CSME. In response to this, Caribbean leaders have instituted a section on human resource development in their National Strategic Plan to achieve developed-country status within the next few years. By doing this, what the region’s governments have collectively realized is that the developmental goals are not possible without the input of the private sector and other interest groups. In the same breath, the private sector has come to grips with the reality that the quality of the workforce directly impacts the quality of their business and consequently has bought into the phenomenon of public private partnerships on education and workforce development.

The Caribbean as a region is plagued with many gaps that exist in its workforce and education systems. The countries under review (Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago) all have gaps that cross boundaries and others are unique to a particular country in some instances. What ever these differences are, the response to this is forgery of public private partnerships whether initiated by the public sector or the private sector. From the report, some of the gaps that exist in the Caribbean are: low certification levels, low literacy rates among adults within the workforce, low digital literacy rates, irrelevant curriculum in tertiary institutions (the supply of workers cannot suit the demand), knowledge-base rather than competency-based workers, poor management tradition among others. Within the context of these gaps, what is amazing is the process that led to the identification of need and the steps taken to design the response. What is synonymous in all the cases is the level of research that is undertaken to inform the scheme design and all the cases of similar structures of operation.

In essence, the machinery that is used to inform the mechanisms to close these gaps has within its bounds the process that adopts the following structure:

Research → Partnership Forgery → MOU Signing or Project Document Development → Scheme Design → Monitoring Partnership Forgery → Reporting Function → Evaluation Function

Based on this structure, there are institutional and external bodies that inform the process. The institutional bodies take the form of advisory councils and project officers who are assigned the task of providing technical advice and the monitoring function. The external bodies are usually industry partners who are key personnel that provide assistance through funding (cash or kind), providing manpower (staffing the projects), technical advice and acting as an auditing body. The defined roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders (internal and external) are usually documented and outlined in Memorandum of Understandings, grant agreements or any other documents that are signed by both parties. After the scheme has been designed, the implementation of the project and monitoring are
vital components of the project. These processes are usually done by the initiating organizations that have the responsibilities of ensuring that the projects are achieving the set objectives.

Evaluations are done when the projects are culminated in an effort to measure the level of impact on the focal group and in some instances on employers in the situation of enterprise-based training. These evaluations are done and facilitated mostly through independent consultants, who provide the services of tracer studies, course and programme evaluations.
Review of the Literature
Review of the Literature

Education and Workforce Development in the Caribbean – an Overview

“Nations moving from good to great require not only a healthy environment for employment but a skilled workforce. The mix is delicate. Making the process work can promote a growing economy. Getting it wrong can result in not only a lack of employment opportunities but a probable national exodus of its talented workforce” (Gemerdinger, GW, 2006).

This author aptly emphasizes the significance of a developed workforce. In the case of the Caribbean, the region has been bombarded with problems emanating from hits to its workforce that in return has portrayed damaging repercussions on its economy.

“Skills training programs can be found in all the countries [see McArdle, 2006a, b]. These programs are both institutional and enterprise-based. At the tertiary level, enrolment is much lower than in other regions. It is estimated that the regional average is about 9 percent compared with a global average of 18 percent. The Caribbean region has however sought to expand enrolment and output of the tertiary level educational institutions by setting a goal of 15 percent of the age cohort. Although the education and training component of human resource development has expanded in recent years, there are still major deficiencies in the system which have stymied the development process. Knowledge creation and skill development are vital to enhancing the productivity of workers and hence the overall socio-economic welfare of the region. Enhanced productivity is also critical in boosting the international competitiveness of goods and services, especially for countries with a fixed exchange rate regime. Surveys of enterprises in the Caribbean region point to a shortage of skilled workers in critical areas of development [see CARICOM Secretariat, 2006, chapter XII]. Skill gaps exist in such areas as tourism, information technology, senior management, health and the energy sectors. Assessments of the training system in the region point to problems associated with the unavailability of adequate training, deficiencies in the quality of training, a poor linkage between training and skill needs, lack of information on skills needs in the labour market, lack of adequately trained teachers and the lack of coordination among different training programs.

The education system also suffers from such deficiencies as inadequate access especially at the secondary level, low school achievements especially among males, some degree of social and gender equity and poor transitional arrangements from the ‘world of school’ to the ‘world of work’.

The inability to resolve these educational and training problems can constrain economic growth and adversely affect productivity and competitiveness. There is a need to reorient/restructure the education and training system to reduce wastage, enhance the quality of graduates and provide a better fit with the ‘world of work’. Such a transformation requires the cooperation of agents in the public and private sectors and civil society”. (Downes, A, 2006)
As the Caribbean forms a part of the world, the following world statistics pervades relative to the challenges within the workforce:

- Half of the world’s unemployed are youths between 15-24 years
- In the past 10 years official unemployment globally has grown by 25%
- Increases in brain-drain, which is creating national and regional tensions
- There is the conventional view by many youth and their parents that technical and vocational education systems that prepare a nation’s workforce are sub-standard and second-class employment.
- Employers are finding their aging workforce harder to replace and a limited pool of qualified workers to draw from

In order to combat the aforementioned challenges; the nations in the Caribbean have adopted an integrated approach towards workforce development through the objectives of the Caribbean Single Market Economy. This synergy must be viewed astride the issue of workforce development. What exactly does workforce development refer to or how can the region achieve this. According to Harrison and Weiss (1998), workforce development consists of a constellation of activities from orientation to the work world, recruiting, placement, mentoring, to follow-up counselling and crisis intervention. Similarly, the National Governor’s Association defines workforce development as the education, employment, and job-training efforts designed to help employers to get a skilled workforce and individuals to succeed in the workplace.

The contribution of workforce development to solving the associated workforce-related problems in the Caribbean does represent the end-all. It is important to highlight that there is a resounding challenge that affects initiatives surrounding workforce development. George Gamerdinger (2006) presents five planning options in the development process for consideration when enhancing human performance through national workforce development and these are:

- Establishing a national apex agency to facilitate and monitor occupational programmes at the private as well as public sector level
- Customizing internationally recognized workforce standards to create national vocational qualifications and occupational standards of competence
- Making education systems more relevant to all citizens
- Promoting societal valuing of workforce learning and performance
- Implementing continual recommendations for broadening workforce development by NTAs’

The highlight of Gamerdinger’s (2006) five planning options is the mentioning of engaging the private sector. This in itself opens the portal to the crux of the discussion as it relates to public-private partnerships. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs/ P3s) can be regarded as a “set of institutional relationships between the government and various actors in the private sector and civil society” (Mitchell-Weaver and Manning, 1991-2, p. 48). The literature under scrutiny revealed that public-private partnerships are indelible ventures in education and workforce development. According to Ingram et al “improving education requires the collaboration of a range of actors – government, business, civil society, independent experts, communities and families. A sound education system benefits business by providing a well-educated workforce, political stability and economic growth. Businesses can benefit by partnering with government to influence the use of public resources, education expertise, and
legitimacy; gain access to national and community leaders; enhance corporate visibility; and deliver on social responsibility commitments”. In considering the administration of public-private partnerships there are certain key aspects that have to be explored and these are:

1. Ways to promote public-private partnerships in workforce development through the attracting private sector investment
2. The institutionalization of public-private partnerships
3. Evaluating the success of the partnerships

Ways to promote public-private partnerships through the attracting of private sector investment

In the establishment of PPPs / P3s, the private sector has to be engaged in a meaningful way. Private sector engagement involves (a) the creation of collaborative funding mechanisms supported by both the private and public sector, (b) positive regulatory environments (that provide – 1. accreditation and quality standards, 2. commercial independence to set market-based fees, 3. ability to differentiate based on market demand, 4. ability to create reserves for re-investment, 5. tax relief for specified investments, 6. no restrictions on equity and ownership); (c) identification of competency models for those sectors in the highest demand, (d) collection and analysis of updated labour market information.

The Institutionalization of public-private partnerships

Emma Thomas emphasized the importance of the institutionalization of PPP and the benefits thereof. According to Thomas, the institutionalization of PPP refers to “the establishment of a standardized model of PPP, promoted by central or local government, and adopted across a range of government functions at different levels and departments. Responsibility for promotion and development of the standardized model rests with a specifically designated unit or task force”. The immediate benefit of this process is the fact that it conveys a message among investors that there is a high degree of seriousness within the government body relative to the pursuit of a particular PPP venture. For example, strategically situating the Unit within the Ministry of Finance sends signals that PPP forms part of the government’s core financing and investment measures and that financial decision makers in government are closely involved with the work of the Unit. Thomas continues to argue that institutionalization of PPP should involve a centralized monitoring function, which ensures PPPs continue to represent good value for money and ensures both the private and public sectors are meeting contractual obligations.

Evaluating the success of the partnerships

Ingram et al pinpointed that tracking performance is common practice in business and in development programs. Those responsible need to know if management is effective and if changes need to be made mid-course. There are two core assessments. One is the partnership itself – is it functioning as designed? The other is the results – are the anticipated results being achieved? The criteria for evaluating the partnership itself should be driven by principles guiding its design – joint ownership, transparency, joint responsibility, and open communication.
Conclusion

Within the ambits of education and workforce development, the Caribbean has experienced a challenge. However, there is an increase in the collaborative efforts of public-private partnerships to achieve the goals of sustainable development through education and workforce development. The birth of these PPPs represents a new frontier in development that has been adopted from advanced economies. The collaboration between the region’s government and the public sector produces benefits that are two-fold and in actuality, benefits both sectors tremendously. Not only does this lead to regional development, it adds to the issue of sustainability which is the key idea of development. It is true that there are challenges that PPPs face in relation to administration and the desired project outcomes; however these challenges exist because there is a lack of systemized data available on the operation of successful PPPs in the Caribbean. This study highlights the successful cases of P3s on education and workforce development by identifying the key players in the administration of the projects/entities and framework that forms the very essence of the success.
Education and Workforce Development in the Caribbean

P3s - Best Practice Cases
Who are they?

There are several cases of joint public-private arrangements that harness regional sustainable development in the Caribbean. The best practice cases that have been pre-selected in the Caribbean are:

**Jamaica**
- Human Employment and Resource Training Trust (HEART Trust)/ National Training Agency (NTA)

**Trinidad and Tobago**
- National Training Agency - Trinidad and Tobago (NTA TT)

**Barbados**
- Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity (BIMAP)
The Case of Trinidad & Tobago

National Training Agency
A. Profile of the Partnership

1. Institutional Framework for Education and Workforce Development

Growth within key industrial sectors in the Trinidad & Tobago economy and increased levels of private and public local and foreign investment have led to a shortage of skilled labour and the inability of the training system to quickly respond to the immediate demands. A ready supply of trained and competent manpower will attract further investment in knowledge-intensive industries which will advance efforts in both the energy and non-energy sectors.

The Trinidad and Tobago economy continued its growth momentum into 2007, with 5-year growth averaging 9.7% per annum. This growth was due in large part to the significant expansion in the energy sector, with support from the non-energy sector, particularly the construction industry. This trend has contributed to the lowest unemployment rate on record of just over 5% with the economy attaining “full employment” in the final quarter of 2006.

Results of the National Training Agency’s National Skills Needs Survey (2005-2010) indicate that skill shortages exist primarily in sectors 7 key sectors, namely, Construction (23,609), Personal Services (20,246), Distribution (15,474) Agriculture (7,737), Hospitality (6,144) and Manufacturing (5,078). Every year, 68,985 persons enter the labour market. However, the demand for labour is 81,501 per annum. This represents a shortage of some 12,516 persons per year.

Trinidad & Tobago has reached the threshold of full employment, which led to labour shortages in all sectors of the economy. At the same time there continue to exist rural unemployment, high levels of competent but uncertified human resources, and problems of poor work ethic and employability skills due to inadequate training and curricula. Consequently, all investments in training, assessment and certification of the human resource potential needs to be relevant to ensure sustainable employment.

Non-energy sector firms face several challenges including labour shortages, raw material scarcity and rising price levels. Labour shortages are also exacerbated by the growth of the construction sector which has created a competitive environment for obtaining skilled and semi skilled workers.

Alarming, for the first quarter of 2007, while the persons eligible to work were some 978,600, the labour force (persons employed or not employed but seeking employment) amounted to only 615,400- a participation rate\(^1\) of 62.9%. For most developed countries, the

\[^1\] The ratio of the labour force to the working age population (age 15+) is referred to as the participation rate.
labour participation rate varies from 75% to just over 80%\(^2\). Today, Barbados’ labour force participation rate is 80%. At the same time, the unemployment rate in Trinidad and Tobago has continued its downward trend to 5.6% by the end of 2007.

Some 17.5% of the workforce belongs to the Construction sector while the services sector accounts for 57%. Approximately 3.5% of the workforce is employed within the energy sector, the largest sector contributor to overall growth in GDP. In Tobago, 94.2% of those employed in 2006 were employed in the services sector and 5.8% in both the agricultural sector and the manufacturing sector combined. 2,475 persons employed in the informal sector.

The Government’s intent to increase the output of the non-energy sector by fostering the growth of the manufacturing sector (now engaging 9.9% of the workforce) will require more skilled and semi-skilled labour, of which there is a shortage. Attractive wages in the energy sector pull available skilled and semi-skilled labour away from other sectors. This in turn debilitates possible growth in the non-energy sector versus the energy sector – the Dutch Disease\(^3\).

The question of the breaching of the supply gap for labour is an economic and social question for Trinidad and Tobago. It involves providing market information on demand and supply to relevant stakeholders as well as improving training opportunities and making training more relevant to demand for labour. (Source - Report of the Technical Team appointed to Identify Strategies for Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Labour in Trinidad and Tobago, January 2008)

Other challenges that exist in Trinidad and Tobago’s labour force can be viewed within four facets namely secondary school leavers, post-secondary training, social sector programmes and enterprise-related problems. Within the context of the secondary school, leavers have three options that are they can choose to continue with free tertiary level education, enter into social sector programmes or enter the workforce. This gives school-leavers the ability not to contribute to the workforce in a meaningful way and this adds to the labour shortage phenomenon. In terms of the post-secondary training, the challenges faced are captured in the existence of programmes that are irrelevant to market needs further worsened by outdated curriculum and inexperienced trainers. Within the ambit of the social sector programmes, the training offered are not relevant to the demands.

In light of the gaps that exist in Trinidad and Tobago’s workforce, the Government in accordance with its Vision 2020 national development plan has established a Skills Development and Training Sub-committee to address the problems through strategic


\(^3\) The deindustrialization of a nation's economy when the discovery of a natural resource raises the value of that country’s currency, making manufactured goods less competitive with other nations, increasing imports and decreasing exports. The term originated in Holland after the discovery of North Sea gas.
repositioning and planning. As such, a framework was developed to reform the skills development and training agenda. A summary of the framework follows:

“In addressing the aforementioned issues, the Sub-Committee elaborated a framework for a reformed Skills Development and Training Agenda which gives primacy to linking skills development and training to a sustained, formalized and institutionalised job creation thrust within a collaborative framework involving inputs from key stakeholders. Within such a framework, skills development and training would be an integral part of an innovation system on whose foundation rests the achievement of sustainable development. This is reflected in the major guiding principles of the new Skills Development and Training System which is proposed, viz:

(i) The primary intent and focus of the new System must be to adequately prepare students and trainees for the world of work.

Training and Skills Development must be concerned primarily with FITTING PEOPLE TO JOBS in the world of work. Whereas education provides people with fundamental life-long capabilities, training and skills development are more job specific. They provide a set of skills, attitudes and habits that will allow the individual to function effectively in a specific work environment. For optimal efficiency, this training must be superimposed on a SOUND EDUCATIONAL FOOTING.

The System must be closely aligned to the labour market and must therefore be informed on an on-going basis by the country’s skills/human resource development requirements based on current and projected economic and social developmental activities, including Government’s development plans and priorities, private sector plans for new capacity building/expansion and identified investment/revenue opportunities.

In essence, this alignment must take cognisance of technological trends, the ascendance of knowledge as the driving force in the achievement of economic sustainability in the globalized environment of the 21st century, and the imperative, for the country’s survival, of transformation of the onshore economy into high value-added skill and knowledge intensive industrial activity.

(ii) Enabling infrastructure for effective co-ordination and sustainable job creation must be an integral part of the System, given the focus on preparation for the world of work, and should involve the establishment of:

   a) A centralized and institutionalised Co-ordinating body with responsibility for:

      ✓ overall co-ordination of the System
      ✓ providing requisite guidance/direction, including informing the future direction of Skills Development and Training by fulfilling the role of a clearing house for research aimed at identifying new areas of productive activity/employment opportunities.
b) **Centres of Excellence in all of the activity areas that are of strategic importance to the country’s development over the long term.**

The success of the System is contingent on effective co-ordination, within the framework of stakeholder collaboration, and employment opportunities being continuously generated in sufficient numbers to absorb the mainstay of its output. This is needed to ensure that there is a sufficiently large enough pool of available, trained/skilled human resources to cater for the country’s developmental needs; failing which there would be little likelihood of Vision 2020 ever materializing.

One of the things that sets developed and developing countries apart is the inability of the developing country to achieve sustainable job creation, which is linked primarily to innovation and Research & Development (R&D) capacity building.

Other guiding principles of the new, proposed Skills Development and Training System are as follow:

- Priority attention must be given to the holistic development of the student/trainee
- Thinking skills, innovation and creativity, as well as entrepreneurial skills, must be nurtured at every stage of the System
- Equal importance and emphasis must be placed on the Academic and Technical (Tech-Voc) Streams at all levels of the System and all students at the secondary and primary levels must be exposed to technology (tech-voc) education
- The System must cater for coherence in terms of all public sector post-secondary training being conducted, affording articulation among secondary schools, non-degree post-secondary providers and tertiary institutions
- Appropriate Teacher/Instructor development infrastructure must be a central part of the foundation of the System
- The ratio of instructor/teacher to trainee/student should not exceed one to twenty
- Provision must be made for enhancement of capacity and capability in educational administration
- Appropriate support mechanisms must be instituted at every level of the System, particularly at the primary and secondary levels to ensure accessibility of the System to all, i.e. that no one is disadvantaged because of social circumstances, including gender, poverty, disability and even incarceration
Given the large sums of money being expended on Skills Development and Training, there must be a stronger focus on financial accountability and transparency

- Pertinent information must be disseminated in a systematic manner to the public at large

- A national culture of lifelong learning must be developed, with the primary objective being the achievement of lifelong employability” (Source Final Report of the Vision 2020 Subcommittee for Skills Development and Training).

2. Geographic, sector and scale ranges

A CARICOM Technical and Vocational Education and Training [TVET] Strategy informed by recommendations of the Ministers of Education (May 30, 1990) identified that TVET systems in each country were fragmented by separate administrative arrangements, operated at many levels and areas, incorporated fundamentally different delivery systems, used a wide variety of teaching-training institutions and had established many different examinations and qualifications.

The implementation of the CARICOM TVET Strategy led to the development of National Training Agencies as central coordinating agencies for all TVET with responsibility for formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Government’s Policies, Plans and Programmes within the ambit of a National Training System. In the case of Trinidad & Tobago, Cabinet approved the formation of the coordinating body through Minute No. 1143 of May 5th 1994. A subsequent Report of the Committee on National Training (1998) provided a framework for setting up a system of national training and specified the direction for the National Training Agency (NTA). The NTA started operations on 4th January 1999.

The National Training Agency, as the Central Coordinating Agency for all Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Trinidad & Tobago, has as part of its mandate to develop, implement and maintain a National TVET Plan that will create a workforce that is competent, certified, innovative, enterprising and entrepreneurial. The National TVET Plan is a written statement, officially endorsed and widely recognized, elaborating how the nation’s training system will contribute to meeting major economic and social objectives. It is a statement of intent that shall guide the Government and its stakeholders in governance of the TVET sphere and all efforts at making Trinidad and Tobago a knowledge and skills based society by the year 2020.

The agency works in close collaboration with the relevant partners in industry, the professions, education and training. The National Training Agency was established in January 1999 under the aegis of the Ministry of Training and Distance Learning. To ensure that the nation is continuously supplied with people who have the competencies required for the world of work and other productive endeavour, through maintaining a comprehensive integrated training system - with a particular emphasis on the relevance, quality and standards of:
• The curriculum
• The form and mode of training
• Assessment
• Qualifications

The activities of the NTA in Trinidad and Tobago produce employees to fill the job shortages in the following sectors:

- Construction
- Distribution
- Services
- Manufacturing
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Finance
- Agriculture

Standards Setting

NTA T&T works closely in consultation with industry experts, employers, training providers and professional bodies to develop national occupational standards which clearly define the competencies which are required for effective workplace performance. Our qualified staff can also be contracted to develop company-specific standards for employers who are interested in raising skill levels in specific areas.

Developing National Vocational Qualifications

A standardized qualification for technical and vocational education and training is presently being developed and introduced by the National Training Agency, as part of the TVET reform. Based on the competency standards set by industry experts, the qualification will be offered for TVET courses at different levels. The new qualification framework will allow people at any stage in their life to have access to training which is at the right level for them.

Quality Enhancement and Auditing Support for TVET Providers Quality Enhancement

The NTA's Quality Assurance Department provides guidance and support to training providers in the widespread use of best practices and standards as it pertains to TVET. Assistance is offered in such areas as Quality Management Systems, Staff and Physical Resources, Delivery and Assessment.

Labour Market Signaling

Information on labour market demand and supply is critical to human resource planning as well as assessing training needs. We work in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Central Statistical Office, Tourism and Industrial Development Company, Ministry of
Education and the International Labour Organisation to collect and analyse data as it pertains to signals and trends in the labour market.

3. Responsibilities of Participating Organizations

The major partners to the NTA are training providers who have the following documented responsibilities:

- Train instructors & trainers
- Source assessors & internal verifiers
- Execute / Implement the Training Plan
- Supervision of trainees in liaison with contractors
- Allocate kits (tools & equipment) to all candidates
- Provide accommodation for on-site / off-site training
- Provide training material packaged by the NTA
- Assess competences On-Site
- Provide Internal Verification
- Forward candidate achievements to the Ministry
- Pay Stipend

Responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education as a Partner to the National Training Agency

- Manage specific Programme
- Advertise to fill vacancies on MSTTE Project Execution Unit
- Agree on the formation of the programme’s Steering Committee
- Assessors & Verifiers
  - Advertise (informed / prepared by the NTA)
  - Source (also from NTA’s Database)
  - Screen
  - Recommend for training to the NTA
- Identify Construction Sites with
  - Public Sector Agencies / Ministries
  - Private Sector Contractors
- Obtain Site Information
  - Type of Site?
  - How many units?
  - How many Candidates?
  - What is the allocation of Candidates?
  - How many Occupational Areas?
  - What is the duration of Contract?
• Signage
• Distribution of Application Forms – Designed / Prepared in conjunction with the NTA
• Registration
  o Advertise
  o Register
  o Screen
  o Orient
• Register and Enter into Contract with Employers
• Formalize contracts with Candidates
• Payment on a timely basis (MSTTE / Training Providers / Contractors)
• Guidance Counselors – Candidate Assistance
• Forward claims for awards to the NTA
• Financial Audit
• Project Evaluation – jointly with the NTA

4. Financing of the Partnership

NTA TT is funded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. The funds are not directly managed by NTA TT but managed by the Ministry. Where funds are requested by a training agency, the funds are disbursed directly from the Ministry. There is minimal contribution of funds from the private sector to the NTA.
**B. Scheme Design**

**1. The Process of Need Identification**

The Research and Development Department of the NTA TT plays a significant role in the need identification process. The Department is guided by its strategic objectives of:

1. To review the workforce development system in the context of vision 2020 goals leading to the development and maintenance of a National TVET Plan in partnership with stakeholders
2. To conceptualize, design, implement and execute Labour Market Research with specific relevance to the development of TVET
3. To identify priority sectors for economic growth and job creation
4. To develop a project plan for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CVQ in Trinidad and Tobago
5. To design and manage systems for the generation and implementation of innovations in TVET
6. To provide information via Labour market research on the trends and the availability of skills in the Labour Market
7. To design and manage systems for the generation and implementation of innovations in TVET
8. To develop proposals that will enable legislation for the proper registration of skilled labour that will allow for greater inclusion
9. To engage in partnership and relationship building activities with key stakeholders of the NTA

This list of strategic objectives aptly details the need identification process and the role of the Agency’s Research and Development Department. Need is identified also based on consultations with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and industry groups. The National Development Plan with focuses on Education and Workforce Development highlights the areas where labour shortages exist in Trinidad and Tobago. Partnerships are therefore established with the Joint Consultative Counsel which is a group that includes representatives from various sectors. An Industry Training Organization (ITO) is usually formed. Letters are sent out to stakeholders soliciting their involvement in ITOs so as have comprehensive representation for all sectors. The ITOs usually advise on the gaps and assist in the process of need identification.
2. Strategy/Planning of the Partnership and the Scheme

Companies / institutions called by officers to verify contents. If required, enumerators requested to redo questionnaire.

Validate returned questionnaires – random checks

Quantitative information entered into database

Data analyzed based on specific objectives / outcomes required

Is further research required for report?

Process for Data Management

Yes

Conduct further research such as qualitative studies / focus groups etc

No

Prepare draft output research document

Send draft report for review by key partners / stakeholders

Process for Project Planning and Development

Final document prepared

Information dissemination process

END

Document may include:
- Employers’ Surveys
- Sector Reports
- Training Providers Surveys
- Tracer Studies
- Workforce Quality Index
RESEARCH PROCESS
PROJECT PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

External requests may come from:
- Ministries of Gov't
- Training Providers
- Employers
- Unions
- Committees / Taskforce
- Chambers of Commerce
- Regional / International bodies

Requests may come from:
- Office of the CEO
- Management meetings
- Technical meetings
- Recommendations of Research Surveys
- Department heads
- Other project status reports

External Request for services made to NTA & forwarded through Office of the CEO

Is the request a key project?

Yes

Prepare summary of objectives, recommendations, team, outline & strategy (2-3 pages)

No

Send request to relevant Manager / Department

Seek guidance and approval of Manager(s) / CEO

Meet and discuss with Project Team. Agree on project requirements / roles & responsibilities

Develop Project Planning Document

Obtain final approval from Manager(s) and CEO

Prioritize project for implementation by various departments

Post Project Title & Gantt Chart on the Intranet

Project Planning Document incorporates:
- Task / objectives / outcomes
- Critical Success Factors
- Accountability / responsibility
- Cost / Financing
- Human Resources
- Timeline for Implementation
- Gantt Chart
- Data from Databases

Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects may include:
- M&E of NTA’s Products and Services
- M&E of External TVET environment

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Is the request a key project?

Prepare summary of objectives, recommendations, team, outline & strategy (2-3 pages)

Seek guidance and approval of Manager(s) / CEO

Meet and discuss with Project Team. Agree on project requirements / roles & responsibilities

Develop Project Planning Document

Obtain final approval from Manager(s) and CEO

Prioritize project for implementation by various departments

Post Project Title & Gantt Chart on the Intranet

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects may include:
- M&E of NTA’s Products and Services
- M&E of External TVET environment

An OAS Study

Successful Cases of Public Private Partnerships for Education and Workforce Development in the Caribbean - 24 -
Monitor & Evaluate Project

Meet as a team and produce bi-monthly reports on status of projects

Is the project completed?

Yes

Document final report and evaluate project

No

Is the project on schedule?

Yes

No

Determine possible actions to be taken and implement

Projects may include:
- Tracer Studies
- Planning for new innovations
- National TVET Plans
- Large centres for approval
- New areas for implementing qualifications
- New TVET initiatives, policies & strategies
3. Construction and implementation of the education and workforce development scheme

The National Training Agency T&T is a quasi-government organization that is privately owned with reporting functions to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in Trinidad and Tobago. The government provides total funding for the NTA TT which is primarily used to offset costs associated with labour market research which informs the national training plan. The NTA TT assumes a peculiar position when viewed comparatively across the region. NTA TT was established as an “after the fact” type of institution to coordinate training activities in Trinidad and Tobago. As a result of this predisposition, the initiatives of the Agency are geared towards a partnership environment and as such there is a high level of partnership engagement. The link between the Agency and the industry is strong as all decisions are made based on research results from consultations with industry partners. In light of the workforce gaps that exist in Trinidad and Tobago, there are skills and labour shortages in 7 industries. Programmes geared towards filling these gaps are designed and developed based on recommendations from private and public sector representatives. In terms of a partnership policy, this is not carved in stone, however; the issue of partnership are seen at a macro level where the pre-existing training providers have some form of direct or indirect link to the NTA TT in one way or another. Based on the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualifications (TTNVQ) Framework, there exist several training providers from varying sectors with the aim of closing the gaps that exist in each occupational level in the society. These levels (starting with the lowest) are semi-skilled, skilled, technician, professional and advanced professional. The NTA TT has managed to establish partnerships with representative training providers from all the levels.

The major display of partnership in terms of an established policy is the existence of Industry Training Organizations (ITOs). The ITOs are industry-represented bodies, whose focus is on workforce development. The membership for these bodies comes from employers, employers’ associations, trade unions, training providers and governmental agencies.

ITOs validate and endorse National Occupational Standards which are developed through Lead Bodies. These Lead Bodies are established on an ad hoc basis for the purpose of producing the National Occupational Standards in specific occupational areas. They include representatives from the main industry groups, having been nominated by members of the ITOs and other industry experts selected by the NTA’s Sector Development Specialist.

4. The Process to solve the need for education and workforce development

The National Training Agency in Trinidad and Tobago has put in place a comprehensive workforce development system with the following features to solve the need for education and workforce development:

a) Development of a manpower planning framework; realigning of the curricula of education and training institutions and the establishment of effective linkages with the business sector
b) identification of numbers of persons to be trained in the relevant occupational areas where a demand exists

c) recommendation of enhancing existing training providers, including social-sector programmes through monitoring and evaluation of training programmes and the quality of their graduate output (tracer studies)

d) creation of new training initiatives

e) identification of the required level of skills training and certification required

f) identification of skill sets and expected labour that cannot be sourced locally

g) reducing the number of persons accessing similar training programmes at different providers in order to gain from stipends paid (and so not making an impact on the workforce)

h) ascertain the skills and literacy gaps of semi-skilled, skilled and technical workers

i) certify persons who have the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes based on the occupational standards (using a system of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)

j) facilitate placements to jobsites through services such as Ministry of Labour, Small & Micro Enterprises “National Employment Service” and other private partnerships

k) Development of an online database, accessible to stakeholders through its website to store 1) labour market information including job vacancies, job opportunities and projections, skills gaps, skills shortages and skills demands; and 2) the graduate output from all ministries, employer-based apprenticeships and training providers/programmes including those from the secondary school system.
C. Modus Operandi

1. Outline for running the programme, participants and responsibilities

As the coordinating body for all training activities in Trinidad and Tobago; the National Training Agency (NTA) enjoys a degree of autonomy to an extent. The organization is semi-autonomous as it has reporting functions to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE). The NTA is managed by a Board of Directors that report to the MSTTE. The direct operation of the Agency is headed by a Chief Executive Officer. As established before, the NTA is a coordinating body and do not themselves offer training; hence their main partnerships are with training providers throughout Trinidad and Tobago; where most of them existed before the NTA came on stream. While the NTA faces many challenges in its coordination efforts; the MSTTE manages certain aspects of the coordinating function as the NTA is currently in the process of restructuring activities. The NTA has an internal structure that was designed to manage the coordinating function that was mandated by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. Within the organization, there exists the Research and Development Unit that manages the need identification, planning and implementation functions of the partnerships. The Research and Development Unit reviews the workforce development system in the context of vision 2020 goals leading to the development and maintenance of a National TVET Plan in partnership with stakeholders. The Occupational Standards Development Department in contributing to the overall scope of the NTA’s activities has the responsibilities of:

1. Providing occupational standards and maintain a current database of occupational standards to respond to the requests of internal and external stakeholders in a timely manner and;

2. Developing strategies that will establish and maintain National Advisory Committees that will partner with the NTA to rationalize Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the following sectors: Community & Rural, Institutions and Enterprise

The Quality Assurance Department that handles the monitoring function of the NTA has an extended role of developing, implementing and maintaining an effective national quality management system (NQMS) for technical vocational education and training (TVET).

In providing this service, the major role of the Agency’s partners, who are training providers, is to be compliant in regards to all issues set forth by the Agency. In attempting to manage the work of trainers, the NTA develop standards for the programmes and is accredited by NTA. The NTA accredits the centre for the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualification and soon to be Caribbean Vocational Qualification.

2. Financing and funding of activities

The MSTTE funds employees salaries and recurrent expenses of the National Training Agency. In terms of its core business as far as partnerships are concerned; the training providers are required to pay a minimum of US$500 per
centre to access the Agencies approving and accreditation services. The majority of funding to cover administrative costs is borne by the Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education.

3. Regulation/ Follow-up and Monitoring

The progress and results of programmes are evaluated through the following measures:

- Assigning of a Sector Development Specialist who conduct progressive audits of projects in relation to Occupational Standards Development
- Assigning of Research Officers who facilitate research and planning
- Assigning of Quality Assurance Officers who does audit of centres to determine if they have all the record keeping, health and safety requirements and the relevant facilities to deliver qualifications
- Tracer studies are employed to assess the level of impact
- Industry Experts does external verification and independent assessment
- Other general evaluations

4. Sustainability of the Partnerships and its benefits

The thrust of the NTA’s activities comes from the need to rationalize training in Trinidad and Tobago. Employers tend to be confused as to the merit of one qualification over the other. The problem emanates from the incidence of a qualification being offered by each training provider. On this note, NTA is moving in the direction of providing a national qualification that is standardized to meet the growing needs of employers and the labour market. As such, partnerships with training providers are sustainable to the extent that the NTA is providing a national standardized qualification that will reap the following benefits:

- Regional movement of skills across the Caribbean especially with the onslaught of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy which will lead to the realization of a breaking down of economic, social and cultural barriers hence leading to a larger and diversified labour force and job offerings
- This will also provide the relevant qualification that is needed by the labour market
- The process of standardization will also help the employer to fully understand the scope of the qualification.
- The TTNVQ is a certificate of competence and not academics. This therefore gives it the advantage of presenting the skills of the individual to the employer.
D. Creation of Value / Worth

1. Results of the Programmes Process

The impact that the NTA has had in Trinidad and Tobago has been magnanimous. The contributions of the Agency to education and workforce development are best seen in the implementation of three programmes and these are:

a. The Multi-sector Skills Training Programme (MuST)
b. The Prior Learning and Assessment and Recognition Programme (PLAR)
c. The Caribbean Vocational Qualification that was launched in secondary schools

These programmes have formed the crux of the activities of the NTA in attempting to coordinate training in the Island of Trinidad and Tobago. The MuST Programme has been the most successful with the following results.

- MUST - The Multi-sector Skills Training (MuST) Programme is a specialized craft training programme that seeks to develop a cadre of competent workers within priority sectors of the national economy. Its focus will be on the provision of competencies and skills development to ensure the temporary employment of nationals in the first instance leading to sustainable jobs, provision of opportunities to entrepreneurial activities, equality of opportunity in training and development, lateral and upward articulation in further education and training and progression to regional jurisdictions for employment with particular attention to the CARICOM Single Market & Economy. The core training activities over all cycles will involve a competency-based approach that will consider the following occupational areas. These occupational areas will also be clustered so as to allow for multi-skilled certification. The first cycle will see skills training and certification in:

  - Carpentry
  - Masonry
  - Electrical Installation
  - Plumbing
  - Welding & Fabricating
  - Site Supervision
  - Painting

Benefits / Outcomes

a. The project will provide immediate gainful employment
b. Participants will be certified with the Trinidad & Tobago National Vocational Qualification (TTNVQ), the recognized qualification in the construction sector, making their access to jobs easier
c. Participants will have the opportunity for employment on the construction projects or through organization’s at which they were trained
d. NTA will maintain a Database of qualified participants so contractors and employers can have access to a pool of skilled employees
e. Participants can progress to higher TTNVQs or into certificates or diplomas within a seamless system of education and training
f. Movement of skilled labour across the Caribbean through the CARICOM Single Market & Economy (CSME) and Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)
The PLAR Programme was instituted in 2007 as a pilot project and to date it has led to the assessment of 176 persons. As a result of the PLAR Programme, the NTA will launch the National Certification Drive with the intention to conduct research to identify the current labour market gaps and certify the workforce accordingly. The workforce in T&T is 600,000 and the National Certification Drive has the large objective of certifying at least 50% of the workforce within the next 5 years.

In the continued success of the programmes initiated by the agency, the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) was instituted in secondary schools across the Island in 2006. In the same year, over 600 students graduated with Units from the CVQ. Approximately 2500 students will move into full CVQ certificated and or Units by August 2008.

2. Partnership Impact

In viewing the activities of the NTA from a macro level of analysis astride its impact on the workforce, there are identifiable tangible returns. The Construction Sector was identified by the Government of T&T as one of the sectors that was experience labour shortages and other gaps. This shortage came from the massive boom in the Construction Sector based on the windfall of oil money that has precipitated the infrastructural development thrust by the Government. The NTA through partnership ventures was able to add approximately 20,000 workers to this sector within three years. Construction contributes approximately 7% to Trinidad’s Gross Domestic Product.

Health and Safety is a major environmental issue world-wide, the NTA has managed to develop the standards for the Health and Safety requirements for all workers in the Energy Sector. The entire energy sector is 20,000 workers and approximately 60% of the workforce is certified in Health and Safety. This also includes contracted workers at the lower level from the Energy Services Sector.

The National Training Agency continued to have a great impact amidst the difficulties that are currently being faced by the Agency.

Lessons Learnt from the NTA TT’s Experience

While there the NTA TT remains a force to be reckoned with in the areas of education and workforce development in the Caribbean, the Institution has its set of internal challenges. Irrespective of these challenges there are best practices that can be adopted and these are:

- Any development of programmes geared towards education and workforce development has to take into consideration the input from the private sector and other stakeholders in society.
- There has to be in existence a partnership monitoring mechanism whether formally or informally to handle relationships
- The establishment of a steering committee focusing on the broad objectives of the partnership is key as this will inform major decisions relative to workforce development.
- There has to be a state of the art research facility that will inform the following: need identification, scheme design and implementation. The key to having this facility is having it in house. When the organizing body has the research mechanism in house, this helps to minimize the costs associated with hiring consultants to do the research. The information is more readily available and is produced at a faster rate.
- Documentation is essential to the survival of any PPP venture especially in relation to detailing the expectations of partners in terms of their responsibilities. This is exemplified in the NTA’s quality assurance manuals that guide the relationship that exist between them and the Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) in the area of occupational standard development.

**Internal Challenges / Weaknesses of the NTA**

- The major challenge that affects the initiatives of the NTA is the fact that it was established after all the other training organizations were established. This in itself places the agency at a major disadvantage relative to its coordinating functions. Lack of response and cooperation from some training providers make the duties of the NTA very difficult as they are unable to efficacious monitor the functions hence ensuring superior quality. This culminates into problem of rationalization of systems. The NTA is currently restructuring its operations in order to manage this problem by coining attainable solutions.
- NTA TT is not yet the hub of all training activities in Trinidad and Tobago but they are slowly getting there. NTA is currently instituting the CVQ in secondary schools so as to ensure that the supply fit the demand in the labour force.
- There is no centralized database in existence. Each training provider has its own database. There is currently a proposal to establish a national registry that will somewhat seek to centralize the data.
- The monitoring function is weak as some trainees take advantage of the programme by registering for several programmes and collect the stipend and do not attend the programmes.
- There is no national training fund, the government pays monies directly to training providers and stipend to individuals.
ANNEX 1. Key Stakeholders

**Internal Stakeholders**

- Elphege Joseph  
  Chief Executive Officer, NTA TT
- Navneet Bhoodai  
  Manager, Research and Development, NTA TT
- Ken Traboulay  
  Manager, National Apprenticeship Programme, NTA TT
- Michelle Ghat  
  Act, Manager, Occupational Standards and Sector Support

**External Stakeholders**

**ITO MEMBERSHIP**

**Agricultural ITO Membership**

- Steve Maximay  
  Managing Director, PLANTRO Associates Ltd
- Dr. Puran Bridgemohan  
  Principal Officer, National Agricultural Marketing Development Corp.
- Gloria Simon  
  Agronomist, Central Experiment Station

**Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Association Membership**

- Robert Nunez  
  Director, Artic Air Ltd
- Stanley Tempo  
  CEO, Climate Control Ltd
- Badasee Nanan  
  Managing Director, Temp Tec Limited

**Energy ITO Membership**

- Clyde Phillip  
  Director, T&T Institute of Technology
- Michael Joseph  
  Manager, Engineering & Support Services, POWERGEN

**Food and Beverage Manufacturing ITO Membership**

- Richard Eailey  
  Production Engineer, ANGOSTURA
- Cipriani Davis  
  CEO, Metal Industries Ltd
Information Technology ITO Membership

- Anthony Pernell
  Corporate IT Manager, Telecommunications Services of T&T
- Andrew Mohais
  Senior Solutions Consultant, ILLUMINAT
- Shawn Pariag
  Ass. Manager – Technology, RBT T ROYTEC

Trinidad and Tobago Tourism and Hospitality ITO Membership

- Keith Darwent
  President, Association of Tobago Dive Operators
- Shirley Combs-McKenna
  Director, Rainbow Nature Resorts
- Chris James
  First Vice President, Trinidad and Tobago Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Associations (Tobago Chapter)
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