

TRADEWATCH

Official E-Newsletter of the Caribbean Export Development Agency

VOL. 8 NO. 2 MAR-APR, 2014

Caribbean Export Hosts Financial Services Conference



(L-R) Ambassador, Mikael Barfod, Head of EU Delegation to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean; Pamela Coke Hamilton, Executive Director, Caribbean Export; the Hon. Ryan Pinder, Minister of Financial Services, Bahamas; Dr. Orlando Smith, Premier, British Virgin Islands; the Rt. Hon. Perry G. Christie, Prime Minister, Bahamas; the Hon. Philip Belgrave Davis, Deputy Prime Minister, Bahamas; the Hon. Dorville O. Inriss, Minister of Industry, International Business and Small Business Development, Barbados; Ambassador Paola Amadei, EU Delegation for Jamaica, Belize and the Hon. Levi A. Peter, Attorney General, Dominica.

The services sector once again took top place on Caribbean Export's agenda when the Agency, in partnership with the Government of The Bahamas, hosted the 3rd Caribbean Conference on the International Financial Services Sector in the Caribbean Region under the theme "The Caribbean Engaging the World in Financial Services".

The high-profile summit featured key figures in the both the regional public and private sector, who engaged in dialogue on the state of the regional and global economy, and its impact on the financial services sector. The event took place at the British Colonial Hilton Hotel, Nassau, The Bahamas from March 31 - April 2, 2014.

The financial services sector continues to be a vital component of the development of Caribbean economies. In fact, the financial services are the second largest contributors to gross domestic product (GDP) in the Caribbean region. The exponential growth of this sector is therefore of major concern

to the Agency as it seeks to engender an economic environment which supports private sector development across the region. The forerunners of CARIFORUM involved in international financial services are The Bahamas and Barbados, along with Antigua and St. Lucia who also register the largest contribution of financial services to GDP of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries. It was fitting, then, that the conference was convened in one of the leading financial capitals of the region.

The significance of the financial services sector to the region is made evident through the over 20% of the GDP which it contributes in Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and the Bahamas. The upward trajectory of the sector's growth is clear considering that it represented 17% of GDP for the CARIFORUM region as a whole in 2011. In light of these trends, Caribbean Export has established the Task Force for the Promotion and Protection of the Caribbean Financial Sector (TFP-CFS), on which the Executive Director of the Agency Pamela Coke Hamilton sits as the Chair.

Caribbean Export endeavors to provide a supportive environment while CARIFORUM countries aim to remain competitive through a restructuring of their industries in accordance with constantly evolving international standards. The content of the conference therefore, sought to address a number of the immediate issues such as global policy measures and initiatives that directly affect the Caribbean international financial services centers (IFCs).

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Delegates were treated to a cultural presentation during the opening of the 3rd Caribbean International Financial Services Conference



The Hon. Ryan L. Pinder, Minister, Financial Services, Bahamas, making a presentation to Dr. Orlando Smith, Premier, British Virgin Islands



Pamela Coke Hamilton, Executive Director, Caribbean Export, addressing delegates during the 3rd Caribbean International Financial Services Conference

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In her address at the conference, Executive Director Pamela Coke Hamilton stated that: "Given the significance of this sector to this region's development, it is clear that we as a regional agency must work with your stakeholders to find solutions to the myriad challenges facing this sector. The challenges this vital services export faces, places us in a precarious position and affects our growth as a region. Many countries in the region have sustained their share of criticism as tax havens which have led to a distorted and negative perception of the work undertaken in the region." (TW)

Caribbean Network of Coalition Services Forum Convened in Barbados

The services sector was the focus of another event when Caribbean Export and the Caribbean Network of Coalition Services (CNSC) partnered to stage the Caribbean Network of Coalition Services Forum from March 17-19, 2014 in Bridgetown, Barbados. The forum was designed to be a targeted discussion on two highly pertinent topics in services sector development: the construction of a viable sustainability framework for National Coalitions of Services Industries (CSIs) and the evaluation of a proposed training-of-trainers programme for the services sector.

The three-day symposium, which featured some of the region's foremost authorities on finance and economy, provided a crucial opportunity for players in the industry to network and form partnerships as well as to provide tools for capacity building for regional financial sector firms. In order to achieve these objectives, the forum consisted of a series of presentations followed by individual consultations with firms in order to assist them with operational strategies. Finally, consultations were held with the relevant stakeholders to garner feedback on the Sustainability Framework for CSIs.

Caribbean Export has been collaborating with its developmental partner, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), specifically to stimulate the growth of the services sector through programming and institutional support of the CNSC and, by extension, the CSIs. The CSI Sustainability Framework, which was commissioned by Caribbean Export and GIZ and was prepared by Global Links Network (GLN) was based on consultations with the CNSC Executive and individual CSIs. The commissioning of this framework was a continuation of the work of the Agency and its partners in the support for the services sector. The programme has direct relevance to the Services Fiche project which was recently funded by a 3.2 million euro grant from the European Union (EU).

Through initiatives such as this forum, the Agency aims to carry out continuing consultations with Caribbean CSIs and the CNSC on the Services Fiche and other programme areas and activities under the 10th EDF which are supported by the EU. The forum's end-objectives were to finalise the sustainability framework as well as the program structure and outline for the training-of-trainers programme. Additionally, the forum also served as a congregation of the national CSIs. (TW)



To view Break Point episodes, click on the image (internet connection required)

Regional Private Sector Participates in Caribbean Competitiveness Forum

Caribbean Export teamed up with two forerunners in regional private sector development, the Caribbean Centre for Competitiveness (CCFC) of The University of the West Indies and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) to host the 2nd Caribbean Competitiveness Forum. The two-day conference rallied a conglomeration of some of the most successful trailblazers in business from the Caribbean and its diaspora, to share their experience in the business sector and on the world market as well as to critically examine the elements which make these ventures viable economic contenders. The event took place from March 18-19, 2014 at the Jamaica Pegasus under the theme "A New Innings: Competitiveness through Global Value Chains, Clustering and Innovation".

The theme and the presentations during the forum focused on four critical areas: services, Caribbean cuisine, manufacturing and emerging industries such as green initiatives and animation. These sectors had been identified by the majority of regional governments as sectors with significant potential for growth based on economic indicators. The keynote presenters on each of the days spoke to one of the sectors. Their presentations differed in style and content but were connected by the essential elements of innovation, distinctive branding, aggressive marketing and currency or relevancy which ran as a common thread throughout their stories. One such presenter was Jamaican-born, British national, Levi Roots who has become famous for his Reggae Reggae sauce and range of culinary products.

The forum, which catered particularly to private sector enterprises, incorporated the contributions of key stakeholders such as the public sector, academia and non-governmental institutions. This diverse pool of participants ensured that the discourse of the forum was multi-faceted and comprehensive. The all-compassing attendance meant that firms had the opportunity network with and to learn from some of the region's business tycoons as well as to establish connections amongst themselves. From the experience, attendees were able to gain practical insight into marketing, export and distribution strategies as well as to gain a full appreciation for the less tangible qualities for success such as innovative and adaptability. These lessons were concretized by clinics which were conducted after the each forum session to allow firms to troubleshoot and to workshop solutions to problems that they were currently facing. The clinics were modeled based on a collaborative concept and facilitated by industry experts.

At the conclusion of the event, the attending SMEs had gained an appreciation of the importance of industry clustering, which has been adopted to a great extent by the Jamaican private sector, value chain analysis and other business development strategies. Above all, and most in keeping with the Agency's mandate for private sector business development, the firms had the opportunity to strengthen and build their networks. ^(TW)



Delegates and participants from the 2nd Caribbean Competitiveness Forum



Mr. Christopher Reckord during this presentation on use of ICT for Business Competitiveness



Pamela Coke Hamilton, Executive Director, Caribbean Export addressing participants at the 2nd Caribbean Competitiveness Forum

CARIFORUM ICT Firms Participate in CeBIT Exhibition

Caribbean Export in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH validated the significant role of information and communication technology (ICT) within the region's private sector when it supported a mission to the CeBIT ICT exhibition in Hanover, Germany March 10-14, 2014. CeBIT is the world's largest international computer expo held each year at the Hannover fairground Germany and is considered to be a centre for new Information and Communication Technologies. The attendance of six CARIFORUM firms from the ICT sector at the trade fair gave the participants an opportunity to explore possible business partnerships with German as well as other EU and international partners.

In cooperation with GIZ, Caribbean Export was able to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer through the CeBIT experience. Participants, had one on one meetings with key German business stakeholders such as Databund which represents major public sector clients in Germany as well as with software clusters like the House of IT, an organization which represents hundreds of German SME members. The Barbadian company West Apps Inc. trading as Simplified Apps was able to leverage the CeBIT opportunity to initiate business talks with SAP Deutschland, the world's leading provider of enterprise software and services, towards the licensing of his disability software application.

The mission further allowed for the exposure of the beneficiaries to new technologies in order to help expand their production and export activities. The Global Marketing Group Company Limited of Belize, was able to gain access to cloud solution technology the international firm SoftLayer have developed, that could be used to support the Belizean firms website development services within the Caribbean region. The mission also facilitated intra-regional trade expansion through the Belize and Barbados participants. As a result of their experience the Barbadian company West Apps Inc. trading as Simplified Apps entered into discussions with the Belizean company Global Marketing Group Company Limited to provide their software in Belize.



Exhibitors and participants during the opening of CeBIT 2014 in Hannover Germany



Aerial view of the exhibition gallery CeBIT 2014 Hannover Germany

The firms involved in this mission represented 6 CARIFORUM countries and were; the Global Marketing Group Company Limited of Belize; West Apps Inc. trading as Simplified Apps of Barbados; CamaraTIC-RD who also represented the 'Dominican Chamber of ICT' from the Dominican Republic; the BrainStreet Group from Guyana; Zed Jamaica Ltd. of Jamaica and Lab 206 Studios from Trinidad & Tobago.^(TW)



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Caribbean Export and CALABASH Collaborate for a Creative Opportunity

Caribbean Export and the CALABASH International Literary Festival got CREATE-ive when they jointly launched the annual festival and Caribbean Export publication 'CREATE' on Thursday, March 20, 2014 in Kingston, Jamaica. CREATE is a dynamic publication which applauds the successes of entrepreneurs in Caribbean creative industries. Appropriately, the twin launches took place in tandem at the Red Bones Blues Café in Kingston, Jamaica. Red Bones is a cultural nucleus, particularly for the performing arts, in the capital city. The event also marked the genesis of a synergetic partnership between Caribbean Export and the CALABASH Festival, which will manifest itself in a variety of mediums at during the three-day festival from May 30 - June 1, 2014 at Jakes in Treasure Beach, Jamaica.

There is significant evidence to suggest that creative industries are major contributors to growth and development in the global economy. In the Caribbean, these sectors have the same potential to become catalysts for economic diversification, growth and competitive export production. The creative industries represent a truly multi-faceted range of disciplines from the most traditional handicraft to the most cutting edge animation. The CREATE publication showcases but a sample of the wealth of talent and skill which practitioners in the region encapsulate.

Since its inception in 2001, the CALABASH International Literary Festival has grown to become the most well-attended and respected international literary festival in the English-speaking Caribbean. Those who have presented their work at the festival not only encompass some of the most prolific living luminaries from the region and the wider diaspora but across the globe. The event has also played host to similarly accomplished songwriters and musicians. The scene also calls forth and nurtures the development of new talent in literature, music and also in visual art. In addition, it provides a platform for carefully selected artisans to sell their products in an artisans' plaza for the duration of the festival.

Caribbean Export and CALABASH have decided to exploit this platform in order to promote the work of CARIFORUM creative entrepreneurs that have expressed a proactive interest in bringing further awareness to their brands and in penetrating new markets. The Agency has designed a Design Caribbean umbrella pavillion to be mounted at the artisans' plaza which will provide an attractive, structured setting for the participating artists, including: Very Vanita, and Avark from Barbados; Kay Expressions from Belize; Belzeb Incorporated from Grenada; Rainforest Pottery and Arawak Leather of Guyana; Haitian Creations Dorees; Hands in Clay, and Reve Jewellery and Accessories of Jamaica; and St. Lucia-based Designs by Nadia.

Two CARIFORUM musicians, who are featured in CREATE, have also been incorporated in the initiative. Xiomara Fortuna, a recording artist from the Dominican Republic entranced the audience at the launch event with her intoxicating rhythms. Offering something distinctly different, Haitian artist BeLO will be one of the performers on the CALABASH main stage in May.

"We see our role, made possible by the 10th European Development Fund as giving structure and support through opportunities and exposure in publications like CREATE and at events such as Calabash, and for creative talent across the region to become strong exportable products for the rest of the world to embrace" commented Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, Caribbean Export.^(TW)



Xiomara Fortuna during her performance at the launch of the CALABASH Literary Festival 2014



To access CREATE online, click the image above
(Internet connection required)



To view the Design Caribbean website, click the image above
(Internet connection required)

Caribbean Export and CAIPA Facilitate Study Tour to Nicaragua



ProNicaragua Study Tour participants and organisers take a group photo on the opening day of the Mission in Nicaragua

In an innovative move, Caribbean Export facilitated the execution of a study tour by the Caribbean Association of Investment Promoting Agencies (CAIPA) to the trade fair, PRONicaragua in Managua, Nicaragua. The tour was designed to offer the members of CAIPA, along with other investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and relevant governmental bodies, the opportunity to visit the organization and to be exposed to best practices in investment promotion and facilitation and to promote cooperation among IPAs. In 2012, PRONicaragua was ranked as the leading investment promotion agency (IPA) in the world by the World Bank; therefore, the body represents the epitome of an optimally operational IPA. The delegation visited the facility from March 17-21, 2014 during which they gained a fully comprehensive sense of the operations of the agency.

The study tour was intended primarily as an educational initiative which would speak directly to the challenges which national IPAs face in their daily operations and in executing their mandate to attract and facilitate investment opportunities in the region. Specifically, the informational sessions were geared towards the exposure of participants, particularly CAIPA members, to the most beneficial and efficient good practices in investment promotion.

The tour also presented the opportunity to refine existing action plans to improve on their investor facilitation mechanisms. Additionally, the attendees were able to gain increased knowledge on the operation of special economic zones. The overarching impetus of the initiative was to promote cooperation, exchange of information and best practices on investment promotion between CAIPA, the Centre for Facilitation of Investments (CFI), the Centre for Export and Investment in the Dominican Republic (CEI-RD), and PRONicaragua. The resultant network could potentially have a progressive impact on the investment sector across the region.

Caribbean Export's involvement in the PRONicaragua study tour forms a part of its mandate to support and the strengthen the ability of the IPAs to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) into the region. CAIPA has been a strategic partner in the carrying out of this mandate. Through their collaboration, CAIPA members can ultimately restructure their institutional action plans and functioning, incorporating the best practices learned during the tour with follow-up and evaluation from the agencies. This will result in a better service provided by the IPAs and thus increased investment in the region as reflected in the region's Global Investment Promotion Best Practices ranking.^(TW)

Haitian Cocoa Sector Undertakes Study Tour to the Dominican Republic

The Bi-National programme, which is ongoing between Haiti and the Dominican Republic (DR), took on a new dimension when the two countries' cocoa sectors met over a two day period last month. The Haitian visit to the DR, which was facilitated by the sub-regional office for Caribbean Export, was intended as an educational opportunity for the representatives of the Haitian cocoa sector as they strategize the formulation of a cocoa cluster, similar to that of the Dominican Republic. The four-day visit, from March 23-26, 2014, included discussions between representatives from the public and private sector around the creation a binational committee to develop a cocoa industry standardization strategy in coordination with the Dominican Republic Cluster of Cocoa and the Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIH), who represent the cocoa sector (exporters, transformers and some cooperatives).

The countries, which share the same island and the same genus of cacao tree, have differing industrial structures for the exploitation of the valuable natural resource. The Haitian cacao industry seeks to develop its capacity to produce and operate at its highest proficiency by establishing the structured networks and support systems which a cluster model provides in order to increase the market competitiveness of the cocoa brand and export product. In order to enable the construction of such a model in Haiti, it was necessary to adopt a value chain approach to the existing industrial infrastructure.

The implementation of the value chain approach requires the development of a HR strategy to train their producers in post-harvest production, quality standards and fermentation processes. The latter could be especially beneficial as the demand for fermented cocoa is increasing as a niche international market. In order to take full advantage of this, the Haitian cocoa industry aims to develop the Bi-National cocoa offer for marketing to specialty markets in European countries. In the Binational programme, Private Sector component, Cocoa was proposed as one of the priority sector to develop SME and export in Haiti and DR.

The Agency's approach to the successful integration of the two territories cocoa sector involve integration meetings with both countries to start the dialogue and benchmarking with the production process and post-harvest technique to guarantee quality; development of a training system in creole for Haitian producers; creation of a Haitian Cocoa Cluster; and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Dominican Cocoa Cluster and the CCIH.^(TW)



Participants of the Haiti-DR Cocoa Study Tour during a site visit to the county of San Francisco de Macoris

Intellectual Property Clinics to Focus on Knowledge and Security

Caribbean Export's latest initiative on the subject of intellectual property (IP) directly correlates to a critical component of the 10th EDF. The intervention also responds to a specific need in the entertainment industry: the need for knowledge and correct observance of intellectual property rights and procedures. The clinics are the second phase of a developmental project which was initiated through an intensive workshop entitled, "The Use of Intellectual Property as a Tool for Business/Export Enhancement" which the agency hosted in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 2013.

Despite the presence of bodies responsible for the regulation of IP in numerous CARIFORUM territories, there is still a lack of awareness and follow-through at the ground level when it comes to the rights which are so critical to artists' protection and potential success. This lack of regulation has resulted in the exploitation and violation of the rights of both burgeoning and established entertainers and artists across the region. Caribbean Export has, therefore taken an active role in the education and certification of regional regulatory bodies in the observance of IP standards at the international level in order to alleviate this concern.

The clinics seek primarily to create awareness of IP regulations and tools which, when correctly utilized, can result in more profitable operations for entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. The clinics look specifically at the licensing and franchising tools and IP mechanisms which would be relevant to the optimization of business operations and enhancement of export opportunities.

A series of clinics are scheduled to take place over the next three months, the first session was held from April 29-30, 2014 in Belize, and will be in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica in May. The two-day events will encompass a variety of topics delivered through several media including case studies from local markets and well as presentations from local experts, tertiary institutions, law firms and IP offices, among others.

Ultimately, the clinics endeavor to equip firms with the tools to be better able to execute their IP policy and procedures and to utilise this IP knowledge as a tool in enhancing their businesses. Additionally, Business Support Organisations (BSOs) are better able to provide advice and support to private sector firms in the identification, registration and utilisation of their intellectual property. For more information, contact Gayle Gollop, Special Advisor, Trade and Legal Affairs at ggollop@carib-export.com or visit www.carib-export.com/events.^(iv)



Caribbean Export Launches a Series of Regional Market Intelligence Training



Participants of the Market Intelligence Training Workshop in Dominica



Mr. Zamani Moodie, Advisor - Market Intelligence addressing participants during the MI Training Workshop in St. Lucia



Section of the training participants during the Market Intelligence workshop in St. Lucia

Caribbean Export, with the support of the European Union, aims to take a proactive and practical approach to preparing CARIFORUM state firms for international export opportunities. One way in which the Agency endeavors to increase the market competitiveness of the regional private sector is through a variety of interventions which focus specifically on education and capacity building. Following in that vein, the Agency is hosting a series of intensive Market Intelligence Training Workshops between March and July 2014.

These workshops are targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a view to provide them with a working understanding of the concept of market intelligence, which is relatively new to the Caribbean. They will simultaneously introduce the SMEs to the most current tools, including the recently launched Market Pointer Tool which was developed by Caribbean Export, for research on information relevant to the SMEs' specific market intelligence needs. Ultimately, with the use of these tools and the technical assistance of qualified regional experts, the firms will be equipped to procure their own high quality market intelligence information from reliable sources and to effectively use this information to their advantage.

The Marketing Intelligence Training is one of the interventions which have been centered on creating awareness of, and competency in, the utilization of market intelligence. Regional firms have been severely affected by this lack of information: this information deficit has impacted negatively on the potential competitiveness of their brands and has hampered their ability to effectively penetrate regional and international markets because they lack the knowledge and know-how to fully take advantage of the export opportunities available to them.

Therefore, the material which will be presented during the workshops has been specifically designed to communicate the content in the most effective and efficient way possible, using easily understood jargon as well as practical exercises. The majority of the theoretical material will be contained in a comprehensive training manual which has been developed and will be used to administer the training, along with the use of interactive audio-visual elements. This manual will be issued during the training and, in the spirit of inclusiveness which Caribbean export seeks to foster, will be available in English, Spanish, French and Dutch.

The first of the workshops was held on April 4, 2014 and April 9, 2014 in St. Lucia and Dominica respectively followed by Belize from April 24-25, 2014. The upcoming workshops will take place in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica in May preceding the stagings in the The Bahamas and Trinidad in June and Suriname and Guyana in July. For additional information, contact Alana Reilly, Research Officer, Market Intelligence at areilly@carib-export.com or visit www.carib-export.com/events.^(TW)

ProNET Training Continues Across the Region

Caribbean Export continues the roll out of its flagship training programme, the Productivity Network (ProNET) in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The agencies are committed to improving the basic business skills of SMEs, as a vehicle to increase productivity and competitiveness.

The eventual goal of the training is to make regional firms export ready and positioned to take advantage of the opportunities available under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). These objectives are in keeping with the institutional goal of enhancing private sector development to create an enabling environment for businesses, and are directly related to Caribbean Export's mandate under the EU's 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

ProNET is a modular training programme designed specifically for manufacturing enterprises that want to improve the competitiveness and export-readiness. The programme aims to increase productivity and profitability in SMEs, allowing owners and managers to operate their businesses more efficiently and effectively. The programme consists of 9 modules which cover Business Strategy, Quality Management, Production Management, Management of Resources, Product Development, Information and Knowledge Management, Human Resource Management, Cost and Financial Management, and Export Marketing. The workshops are conducted across the region by 27 specially certified trainers who are experts in their designated fields in both English and Spanish.

From 2012-2013, ProNET has seen participation from two hundred ninety-seven (297) SMEs. Additionally, for the first time, the Agency in partnership with the Grand Bahama Port Authority has commenced a 3 part series of ProNET in Freeport enabling registered businesses to sign-up and participate in training over a period of three months. The first session was held on March 25-26 on the Business Strategy module focusing on profitability, competitive advantage, customer strategy and product strategy. The following sessions were held on April 28-30 and May 27-29 and covered cost and financial management and export marketing respectively.

On April 28-30, 2014 the Agency also hosted ProNET training in Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association (TTMA). This session focused on Resource Management and Quality Management.

ProNET has become a hugely popular suite of intensive programmes and the Agency's seminal developmental intervention attracting firms from across the region. ProNET will continue to be available across the region through collaborations with national Business Support Organisations.

For additional information or to participate in ProNET, contact Kevin Jones, Advisor, Competitiveness and Innovation at kjones@carib-export.com or visit www.carib-export.com/events.^(TW)



Participants in ProNET Training viewing product samples on display during the session



Facilitators and organisers of ProNET pose for group photo after training session

A short documentary featuring three entrepreneurs who are looking to shape and innovate how the Caribbean uses sustainable energy. The documentary reveals each person's story and motivation for embarking on their projects and what they hope to achieve. Coming soon to a station near you.



THE GREEN INITIATIVE

"If we could transform our economies to independent economies, based upon the investment in alternative energies...the future is limitless."

Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Executive Director, Caribbean Export



Caribbean Export Facilitates Regional Participation in Iberoamerican Handicraft Seminar



Participants listen keenly during presentations at the Iberoamerican Handicraft Seminar in Colombia

The content of the five-day programme examined policies with regards to commercialization, export control and quality standards, in particular and operational effectiveness in general. After expounding on these tenants in detail, the sessions went on to critically assess the current state of operations locally. The standards of the AECID were used as a bench mark for the unification of processes, policies and legislature which structure the craft sector and promote traditional craft exports. The principal constraints identified as a result of this benchmarking process were the need of quality standardization and more structured training programmes with qualified facilitators in the various subsectors.

The Agency, through engagement with ONART and CENADART, aims to integrate the handicraft sector in a strategic into the tourism sector, one of the Dominican Republic's major exports. The craft sector, through this partnership, would gain the much needed boost to visibility and potential consumption that a strong presence in the tourism industry affords. However, the sector has the potential to develop independently of tourism, as indicated in the private sector component of the Caribbean Export Binational programme, where handicraft was identified as one of the priority sectors for development and export in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

This programme is a continuation of an ongoing developmental project, in which ONART and CENADART since its inception. The workshop represents the fourth phase of the project, which aimed to improve the functionality of the handicraft sector in Hispaniola through a focus on: creating a base line for productivity; the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic; the benchmarking of the current state of the sector using the Colombian model as reference for the standardization of the national products and the development of a training and certification programme. Both ONART and CENADART agreed to focus on the architecture of the subsectors of papier mache, jewelry, cut metal, and ceramics in order to optimize their market potential.

Through this workshop, and other collaborative efforts, the organizations are working towards the standardization of quality and norms for the handy craft in the island.^(TW)



Iberoamerican Handicraft Seminar 2014 facilitators and participants

The creative industries took a front seat once again when the sub-regional office (SRO) of Caribbean Export located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic gave the island's handicraft regulation authorities, ONART and CENADARTE, the opportunity to participate in an international Iberoamerican Handicraft Seminar. The workshop, which took place from March 10-14, 2014 in Cartagena, Colombia, was developed in order to equip the organizations with the knowledge of, and tools to implement, the best practices of the region in accordance with The Spanish Agency of International Cooperation in Colombia (AECID), which is the body which dictates these standards and procedures within the Latin American region. The agencies would then be better able to offer technical and structural support to the independent craft artisans of the Dominican Republic, thus creating a conducive environment for competitively viable trade and export in the craft industry.

SME Development through Training and Certification

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are central players in the dynamics of international economies. These bodies are increasingly gaining prominence as significant engines of innovation and employment generation, typically contributing to about 90% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), outside of government, and, according to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), over 70% of employment in the Caribbean. As such, SME development has emerged as a key instrument in regional poverty reduction efforts.

Globalisation and trade liberalisation have ushered in new opportunities, as well as challenges, for SMEs. Therefore, enhancing the environment within which SMEs interact with the economy is central to stimulating continuous growth and development. Consequently, it is critical to strengthen the human and institutional capacities of these firms in order to take advantage of trade and investment opportunities.

The primary assets of any firm, especially SMEs, are their human capital. These assets are even more valuable in the knowledge-based economy, where intangible services and variables are of growing importance. As such, augmenting the capacity of SMEs, through a focus on human capital, will not only improve the skills of the overall population but also stimulate continuous innovation within firms and, ultimately, drive economic growth.

Caribbean Export recognises the challenges that SMEs in the Caribbean face and has set about to undertake a series of programming in regional private sector development, which seeks to ultimately integrate Caribbean firms into the world economy. The Agency provides SMEs in select industries with the training and certification, which the enterprises need to expand their markets, diversify their exports, and enhance their product or service offering. Additionally, this training is delivered with a view to develop private sector capabilities in a range of areas pursuant to intra-CARIFORUM and CARIFORUM-EU trade in goods and services.

Caribbean Export has delivered training and certification programmes in a gamut of disciplines, under the 10th EDF RPSDP. The concentrations of these programmes include benchmarking and assessment, brand packaging and development, branding and marketing for investment promotion, copyright, economic partnership agreement (EPA) awareness, export marketing, grant proposal writing, intellectual property, management consulting, spa and wellness, and trade information, among others.

During the first three years of 10th EDF implementation, Caribbean Export delivered sixty-five (65) training and certification programmes. The most heavily requested and subscribed programmes for SMEs were Brand Development and Packaging, Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS) Proposal Writing, and Productivity Network (ProNET). Collectively, these training programmes have served one thousand eight hundred and ninety (1890) beneficiaries, accounting for 81% of all training activities.

The most recently executed of the three training programmes is the Brand Development and Packaging workshop. Implemented in 2013, this workshop was developed in conjunction with internationally recognized Brand42, based on the understanding that establishing a strong brand is fundamental for any business to compete and grow.

However, many CARIFORUM firms are not aware of the roles branding and packaging play in building a successful enterprise. Similarly, many of these SMEs lack knowledge of the European labelling and packaging standards and guidelines required for entry into those markets and also require the requisite skills or resources to develop their brands and package their products to appeal to an international consumer. Given this reality, Caribbean Export assembled a series of topics aimed at addressing these challenges, ranging from brand analysis and narratives to market insight and packaging design. A total of one hundred and fifty-one (151) beneficiaries were trained in these concepts.

Of all the training and certification programmes delivered by the Agency during the first three years of the 10th EDF, the DAGS Proposal Writing workshop saw the greatest level of participation, with one thousand four hundred and forty-two (1442) beneficiaries, which accounts for 62% of all participants. The grant proposal writing workshops, delivered in collaboration with key regional Business Support Organisations (BSOs), cover a range of areas including technical writing styles, understanding the concepts of objectives, results, approach and methodology, activities, and budgets, thus determining the appropriate content for each category of information. Caribbean Export's underlying approach to this training is ensuring that all participants ultimately have the ability to access grant funding from any donor programme using the provided guidelines. The workshops have proven to be successful, as 31% of the one hundred and forty-two (142) firms receiving grant funding under the 1st and 2nd Call for Proposals in 2012, had participated in the proposal writing workshops.

Another area of capacity building, which is of paramount importance to SMEs, is institutional strengthening and training in export marketing, which is delivered via the Productivity Network (ProNET) training programme. ProNET is a modular training programme designed specifically for manufacturing enterprises that want to improve the competitiveness and export-readiness. The programme aims to increase productivity and profitability in SMEs, allowing owners and managers to operate their businesses more efficiently and effectively. Modules range from business strategy and quality management to human resources and cost and financial management. From 2012-2013, the 9-module programme has certified twenty-three (23) regional trainers using the "Train the Trainer" concept and has seen participation from two hundred ninety-seven (297) SMEs.

With each of these interventions, Caribbean Export aims to provide technical support to regional SMEs as they prepare to compete in the ever-dynamic global economy. Through its training and certification programmes, the Agency address the elements which encompass a successful exporting enterprise: sound infrastructural architecture and procedural operations, a distinctive and well-marketed brand, the exploitation of intellectual property and copyright tools in order to protect that brand and, adherence to the export requirements for entry into new markets. The Agency continues to take a proactive approach to ensuring the standardization of these practices in the regional private sector in pursuit of its vision of a globally competitive Caribbean brand. For more information about the training and certification programmes offered by Caribbean Export visit www.carib-export.com. ^(TW)

Woods-man Caribbean: From Local Restaurateur to Regional Exporter

What began as a small take-away restaurant offering mainly Jamaican foods, quickly moved into the commercial production of frozen pre-seasoned meats, frozen soup and shelf stable Caribbean wet seasoning and sauces successfully targeted at the domestic and export market. This is the story of Woods-man Caribbean Ltd.; a family-owned agri-business company established in 2006, in Diego Martin, Trinidad and Tobago, which currently exports to Curacao, St. Maarten and Martinique.

In seeking to enter the export market, Woods-man obtained support from the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) and benefitted from participation in several of the Agency's private sector development support programmes; these include the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme, Break Point, and the 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum in London. Woodsman also participated in the Specialty Food Industry Consultation and Intellectual Property Workshop.

In 2012, Woods-man received a Regular procedures grant, under the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme, for the procurement of multi-dimensional mixers in accordance with international processing standards. To date, the investment has led to improved productivity to maximise outputs for the company, as production has increased from approximately 600lbs to 2000lbs of frozen root crops and vegetables daily with monthly sales also increasing by 80%.

"We were successful in being awarded a reimbursable grant for investment in machinery and registration of our brand in selected international markets. This has allowed us to expand the scope of our operation to include products targeted at the Speciality and Health Food market segments", commented Vassel Stewart. "With the increased competitiveness and capacity that the new machinery will allow, we are now confidently engaged in discussions with a major local distributor who also has a United States-based import and export operation to distribute our products locally and in the US. This grant has also strengthened our financial position, and our attractiveness to investors" Stewart concluded.

Woods-man Caribbean Limited was also a finalist in Caribbean Export's innovative business competition, Break Point. As one of 30 regional firms participating in the competition, Stewart saw the process as extremely useful, as it prepared firms about the importance and level of research required when seeking to pitch ideas to potential investors. He further noted that the competition also provided an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge about the investment opportunities that exist regionally and within Europe.



Vassel Stewart, Director, Woods-man Caribbean Ltd. during one of the regional Break Point pitches in Barbados

"The objective of the company's involvement in Break Point was to allow us to obtain a contractual agreement with a major distributor to market our seasoning and sauces in the European market. Even though we weren't successful among the investors, participation led to us undertaking a comprehensive and critical re-assessment of our business strategy, focusing on the attractiveness of the company based on innovativeness of the business concept, strength of its market demand, product uniqueness and quality of the management".

Subsequent to participation in Break Point, Woods-man has made a collaborative link with the British Agri-food Consortium, a knowledge-based organisation assisting in the development of agrifood economies around the world who is interested in assisting regional agro-producers in the development of markets, products, policies and agri-food security.

As President of the Caribbean Agri-business Association (CABA), Stewart sees the work of Caribbean Export as pivotal to the continued growth and diversification of the agricultural sector across the region.

"Interventions from Caribbean Export have given SMEs in the agricultural sector the prospect to attract investments, either by improving exportability, such as product improvement and brand development, or through the facilitating access to finance. In the case of Woodsman, we are very confident that we will obtain the level of debt and equity financing being sought because of the development opportunities to which we have been exposed."^(TW)

Contact Details:

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Consultancy: Development of a Not-for-Profit Business Plan

Caribbean Export in carrying out its mandate recognises that it operates within a challenging regional and global environment that has the potential to impact on its ability to effectively carry out its role. Sluggish or negative regional economic growth, the rising prices of food and fuel, diminishing income from key economic sectors, the growth in unemployment rates and the reduction of foreign investment and development aid are part of the environmental realities that Caribbean Export faces.

The current environment warrants a discussion on the sustainability of organizations like Caribbean Export which receives, in large measure, funding from the European Union and other Donor Organisations. This is especially important in light of the needs of the region's private sector. In order to continue enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector and promoting trade and export development, Caribbean Export must seek ways of diversifying its funding base to ensure sustainable operations.

The Agreement establishing Caribbean Export makes provision for the development of specific services for the purposes of commercialization. Therefore, in response to its external environment, Caribbean Export proposes the establishment of Caribbean Export Inc. (CE Inc.); a not-for-profit arm of the Agency that generates revenue from the design and delivery of a suite of services targeted to the Region's private sector.

For full details on the requirements please download and read the full terms of reference.

Instructions for submissions:

Only submissions from ACP-EU Member States will be accepted. The selected candidate will be asked to provide evidence of this before contract is signed.

Proposals should include, at a minimum:

- Understanding of the project
- Approach/methodology
- Timelines
- Financial proposal (please separate professional fees from other expenses)
- Qualification, expertise and examples of past clients/jobs of a similar nature

Each Application will be evaluated on both the technical and financial elements of the proposal based on an 80:20 technical to financial split.

Submissions and questions are to be submitted, electronically, to Chris McNair (cmcnair@carib-export.com) with copy to Robertha Reid (rreid@carib-export.com).

The deadline for submission is June 2nd, 2014 at 4:30 PM EST (Barbados). Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 2014		
Femmes, Création et Production artistan trade fair	Haiti	May 2-4
MI Portal Consultation	Barbados	May 5
Council on Trade and Export Development Meeting	Guyana	May 6-7
Grant Proposal Writing Training Workshop	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	May 8
UNCTAD Workshop of Green Foreign Direct Investment	Colombia	May 6-8
Agribusiness Private Sector technical trip	France/Brussels	May 9-16
Curacao IPA Launch	Curacao	May 12-13
WAIPA Annual Conference 2014 and Investment Mission	Turkey	May 13-16
I P Private Sector Clinic	Jamaica	May 15-16
Market Intelligence Training Workshop	Dominican Republic	May 19-20
I P Private Sector Clinic	Dominican Republic	May 22-23
CAFEIN Technical Workshop	Barbados	May 26-27
Coconut Cluster Stakeholders Consultation Meeting	Guyana	May 26-30
Food Safety Preparedness Meeting	Barbados	May 28,
WIPO Regional Workshop on Geographical Indicators	Antigua	May 29-30
ProNET Workshop – Export Marketing	The Bahamas (Freeport)	May 27-29
Market Intelligence Training Workshop	Jamaica	May 29-30
CALABASH International Literary Festival (Design Caribbean)	Jamaica	May 30-June1
JUNE 2014		
BELTRAIDE/Benchmarking Self Assessment	Belize	June 9-13
JAMPRO/Benchmarking Self Assessment	Jamaica	June 9-13
15th Annual Call Center Week	Las Vegas	June 9-13
UK-Caribbean Business Conference	UK	June 17
Market Intelligence Training Workshop	The Bahamas	June 17-18
FCOR High Level Technical Meeting on Octroi De Mer	Cayman Islands	June 24
CARIFORUM/FCOR/OCT B2B Forum	Cayman Islands	June 25
9th CARIFORUM/FCOR/OCT Taskforce Meeting	Cayman Islands	June 26-27
Market Intelligence Training Workshop	Trinidad & Tobago	June 30-July 1

Dates and locations subject to change.

Caribbean Export Development Agency

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 www.youtube.com/TheCaribbeanExport

Caribbean Export's Key Result Areas And Goals

- Fostering an enabling environment – for trade and investment within the region through regional integration, cooperation and advocacy initiatives designed to position the region more effectively in the world economy.
- Enhancing Competitiveness – Increase the competitiveness of firms in CARIFORUM countries in selected sectors through investment, management and product development, market expansion and export diversification.
- Promoting Investment - Promote the Caribbean region as a prime destination for intra and extra-regional investment.
- Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Networking - Enhance the capacity of public and private sector BSOs, particularly sector associations, trade promotion organisations and investment promotion agencies, and support the development of vibrant Caribbean business networks to improve services to clients.

We are very interested in your feedback.

Please email your comments to: tradewatch@carib-export.com.
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TradeWatch is made possible through the kind support of the European Union.