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CARICOM TRADE AND COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT (A-32281)

COMPONENT WBS300 -

**WIDENING THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION BY STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES IN THE
PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING, IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THE CARICOM
SINGLE MARKET**

INFORMATION FLOWS

DRAFT NATIONAL PLAN of ACTION (WORK PLAN)

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

CSME Unit CARICOM Secretariat

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Background Statement

One of the challenges facing the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is how to effectively engage non-state actors and other stakeholders in the consultative, decision-making and implementation processes. Recognition has been made at the level of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Community of the critical role that non-state actors and the wider civil society play in ensuring the operational effectiveness of the CSME. This recognition was at the heart of the Charter of Civil Society adopted in 1997 in St John's, Antigua and Barbuda and the Liliendaal Statement of Principles on 'forward together' based on the Civil Society Forward Together Conference - a historic consultation between representatives of Civil Society in the 15 Member States of CARICOM and the Heads of Government, at Liliendaal, Guyana in July of 2002.

Article 26 of the Revised Treaty calls for a consultative Process which is necessary to *enhance the decision-making process in the Community*. The Secretariat and the Member States are to establish and maintain an efficient system of consultations at the national and regional levels.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat through funding of the Canadian International Development Agency undertakes interventions in under the CARICOM Trade and Competitiveness Project that will address this prerequisite. More specifically, the proposed activities under Component 300, Information Flows seek to create or improve the infrastructure for stakeholder participation in the CSME.

The most recent impact assessment of CSME public education was presented in late 2010 and revealed that approximately 60% of almost 4500 respondents had knowledge of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). The study revealed that *"...official sources about the CSME were often inadequately supplied with material that can be shared with the public..."* Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government would have also called for increased awareness activities for the CSME and research efforts within the Community revealed the

need for public education to be more enhanced, focused and specific to targeted audiences. Therefore, the Component 300 of the CARICOM Trade and Competitiveness Project (CTCP) bolsters not only CSME awareness but is intended for improved stakeholder participation in the CSME. This component raises the ante in CSME buy in with an incisive focus on national research and the development and execution of plans in response to national diagnoses. It makes the link with the overall CSME public awareness activities by proposing the creation of or improvement of structures necessary for stakeholder participation in the decision and implementation process.

Strategy for Rolling out National Plans

In developing the Technical Implementation and Operational Plans from the diagnostic reports, hereafter referred to as the Work Plans, it is noticed that with the exception of a few requests, that there is some repetition of the findings in most countries. This is not dissimilar to what was found in previous regional research on CSME awareness. With some exception within Suriname, Belize and Guyana the majority of findings in the Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are comparable. It is therefore proposed to use a template for activities in response to similar findings.

The Work Plans are being developed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in collaboration with national stakeholders. The proposal is to develop the outline for submission to the Member State, have initial telephone discussions to assess current relevance and then carry out in-country consultations over a period of two days to agree on the plan and ready it for implementation. This will also create buy-in, ownership and promotion for the activities and products. The following is suggested for facilitating execution:

- a) where necessary execute travel to discuss the plan sequentially with the National Stakeholders and revise it accordingly;
- b) implement activities immediately upon the sign off and acceptance of the Work Plans;
- c) where possible implement plans simultaneously;

- d) Use national consultants for some elements being coordinated locally through resources managed by the CCS.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Action Plan

The CARICOM Trade and Competitiveness Project (A-32281), has a component 300 – Widening the Scope of Participation by Stakeholders and Beneficiaries in the Process of Decision Making, Implementation and Operation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), Information Flows. This specific Work Plan focuses on St. Vincent and the Grenadines and is based on the findings and recommendations of the diagnostic report carried out by consultant Ms. Theresa Daniel. The Daniel report was signed off and accepted by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Coordinating Committee.

As outlined in the Background Statement, the diagnosis into CSME Information Flows is part of a larger structure based on the rationale for creating the CARICOM Single Market. This rationale speaks to the building of a Caribbean Community with opportunities and therefore there is the link between improving information flows for (an) objective(s) which is outlined further. The objective(s) cannot be achieved without structures and awareness. In developing activities for such structures and awareness from the Daniel study it is necessary to provide some baseline findings in terms of how the CSME is viewed by Vincentians. This data on St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be found in the 2010 CSME Impact Assessment Report.

It is the intention of the CARICOM Secretariat to undertake another CSME Awareness Study under the 10th EDF to assess any movements in the data provided from 2010 and how it was influenced by Component 300 of the CTCP. Such a study will once again present data within Member States.

Respondents Views on Important Aspects of the CSME

From the Impact Assessment Report of 2010, two hundred and forty eight (248) respondents were interviewed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 133 males and 115 females, the majority

of whom were ages 15-35 and the majority had an income of between two thousand to four thousand Eastern Caribbean dollars.

Of the 248 respondents:

1. 83% indicated that opportunities would be increased through the Movement of Skills, while 17% felt that local business would be threatened;
2. 88% said that Free Movement of Skills would increase the labour market;
3. 72% felt that a single CARICOM currency would strengthen the country's economic position; and
4. 77% indicated that the Right of Establishment would boost the national economy, and 23% felt it would threaten local business

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Information Flows

The Daniel report shows that the two main official sources for CSME information flows are the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU) located within the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The RIDU handles the implementation of decisions relative to regional integration, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade deals with the promotional and informational aspect of the CSME.

Two other government departments are also highlighted as being critical to the flow of information: the Ministry of National Security which falls under the Prime Minister's portfolio and issues CARICOM Skills Certificates and the Immigration Department which deals with issues relating to the Movement of people. The Daniel reports states that under this structure there seems to be no clear or central point and information flow is restricted with apparent confusion and seeming over lap. These bodies are considered the nucleus for information flows comprising technocrats, public and private interests and Ms. Daniel recommends improved synergies among these departments.

In summarizing, the Daniel study shares that all stakeholders confirm there is inadequate CSME information flow in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and that the media does not play a significant role in the process, although there is a plethora of media houses. The report advances that the media recognizes and accepts there is limited CSME coverage and the information is event based with no sustained structure. The media however commented that its own knowledge of the CSME issues was limited, there was scarcity of information and there was conflicting messages from politicians.

The issues and constraints are captured as follows:

- a. The local media have not bought into the CSME;
- b. The information flow is sporadic and inadequate;
- c. There is a perceived gap between and among stakeholders, in particular between the Ministry of Trade and the media;
- d. There is a gap between decision makers and implementers;
- e. Promotional initiatives have not caught the public's attention; there are inadequate resources, human and material to facilitate effective information flow.
- f.

Recommendations advanced in the Daniel study are:

1. Production of pre-packaged information in audio, video and print for regular dissemination;
2. Weekly or monthly CSME updates to media and stakeholders;
3. Training workshop for local journalists and media owners;
4. Establishment of local CSME Speakers' Bureau for speaking engagements;
5. Engagement of students and youths to determine how to best involve and maintain their interest in the CSME;
6. Encourage the Ministry of Education to include CSME on the Social Studies curriculum;
7. Increase community outreach and presence by holding town hall meetings, caravans and exhibitions;

8. Production of user friendly material specifically tailored to meet the needs of individual stakeholder groups;
9. More lateral discussion and information sharing between the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs and the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU);
10. Engage local talk show hosts to encourage them to utilize segments of their programmes to provide CSME education and information.

Objective

Discussions with national stakeholders indicate the main objective for the Work Plan is to enable the utilisation of opportunities created by the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). There is also a subsidiary objective being the strengthening of local communications capabilities to disseminate messages and create stakeholder buy-in.

Statement of Results

1. Promotion and adoption of the national Work Plan will be done via consultations for ownership and buy-in;
2. The development of a CSME web portal for St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be the continuation of creating content and utilising the St. Vincent and the Grenadines content area on csmeonline.org. This was considered more suitable for Member States rather than having many individual CSME portals. Stakeholders from St. Vincent and the Grenadines were already trained in uploading content to csmeonline.org;
3. Spokesperson workshop/Speakers bureau for presentations to the Parents Teachers Association Meetings, Non Governmental organizations, Schools, Churches and other organizations. It is intended for products to be developed from practical simulations in

these sessions and the various participants from the private and public sectors, NGOs, Youth, Media and other stakeholders;

4. The Schools CSME Education Programme is expected to be culled from the Schools CSME Resource Kit which was developed under the 9th EDF CISP. This kit was produced in 2010 and is the product of ideas from teachers and students in 6 CARICOM Member States. The activities are linked primarily to the curricula for CXC, CCLC Social Studies and CAPE Caribbean Studies. The ideas are also relevant to aspects of the syllabi for other social sciences including geography, history and business related studies. The Resource Kit has three components: a) Teaching and Learning Outlines; b) Resource Materials and c) Activities and Multi-media Resources;

The recommendation is to train teachers in the use of the CSME Resource Kit using three pilot schools. The expectation is that the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education will facilitate;

5. The creation of a radio or television discussion series, developed for weekly broadcast highlighting how Vincentian businesses and stakeholders are using the CSME. The proposal is for it to be for a 12 week period. Stakeholders acknowledged that outreach on the CSME have the greatest impact through the media;
6. The development of an implementation team among representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade and the regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU), the Government Information Service to execute the activities within the Work Plan and to sustain the channels and flows. This team will also build synergies among the official departments responsible for CSME information;

7. Series of Town Hall Consultations and work site meetings focusing on topics such as the CSME and the OECS Economic Union; the exporting of national skills and talent and integrating the OECS into the CSME. The spokespersons will bolster the centres of information flows;
8. media training focusing on both CSME and professional development will engage media workers and build capacity in that craft;
9. development of on line video training tool for media workers to engage new media workers and be a guide for those already involved in the craft;

Strategy for Implementation

It is proposed to utilise the research and data produced in CSME awareness products developed under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP). These products will assist in guiding activities taken from the Daniel report.

Two of these products are:

1. The CSME Impact Assessment Report of 2010 which gives the opinions of Saint Lucians as it relates to the ease of travel; ease of movement; a single CARICOM currency and the Right to Establishment;
2. The Schools CSME Resource Kit which is intended to help teachers or guidance counselors in bring the CSME to senior students 4th to 6th form levels or Grades 11 – 12.

There is also need for sustained collaborations and partnerships to push the work forward and sustain the momentum after the CTCP is completed.

Table 1: DRAFT Work Plan Activities: St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The table below summaries anticipated activities to be carried out and deliverables required to meet the approved objectives, expected to be completed within the project deadline of October 2014.

Subcomponent WBS	Objective	Activity	Timelines/ Duration	Responsibility	Evaluation Criteria
322 – Promotion and adoption by national stakeholders	To sensitise and secure buy in of national plans	Conduct consultations with national stakeholders to promote national Work Plan	4 days	CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Secretariat, CSME Focal Point	Acceptance and buy in from stakeholders
323 - Design and/or improve information channels	To fortify channels of communication between beneficiaries and centres of decision-making To create the mechanism for communication between/among stakeholders and beneficiaries	Creation of strategic alliances and partnerships; Private sector, NGOs, Media, Youth	4 months	Ministry of Trade, RIDU, GIS,	Programmes developed and maintained
324 – Determine and prepare appropriate information	To develop templates for private sector and other private citizens to be used as spokespersons To improve the quality and	Development of CSME radio discussion series targeting private and public sectors, other	6 – 8 months	The GIS, Ministry of Trade and RIDU, CARICOM Secretariat, CSME	Feedback and impact assessment to be conducted under the 10 th

Subcomponent WBS	Objective	Activity	Timelines/ Duration	Responsibility	Evaluation Criteria
dissemination formats and publications	volume of information transmitted in a user-friendly format	<p>stakeholders and NGOS.</p> <p>Development of CSME Web Portal targeting media stakeholders, public and private sectors and youths.</p> <p>Conduct town hall consultations and interactive presentations targeting Ministries, NGOs, Rural Communities, vulnerable groups</p>	<p>6 months</p> <p>6 – 8 months</p>	Focal Point	<p>EDF activities</p> <p>Number of hits and impact assessment to be conducted under the 10th EDF activities</p> <p>Response and feedback</p>
331 – Prepare core of national trainers	To strengthen capabilities of Government entities	<p>Development of online video training tool</p> <p>Development of schools CSME education programme using three pilot schools</p> <p>Media CSME training and professional development</p>	<p>4 months</p> <p>6 – 8 months</p>	<p>Vendor</p> <p>Ministry of Education, Vendor, CSME Focal Point</p>	<p>Number of hits and impact assessment to be conducted under the 10th EDF activities</p> <p>Teacher and student participation and impact assessment to be conducted under the 10th EDF activities</p> <p>Response and feedback in communications products in media</p>

Subcomponent WBS	Objective	Activity	Timelines/ Duration	Responsibility	Evaluation Criteria
332 – Execute training programmes in 12 Member States	To strengthen capabilities of other stakeholders	Development and implementation of Schools' CSME education programme	6 – 8 months	CARICOM Secretariat, Ministry of Education, CSME Focal Point	Level of teacher and student participation and feedback from questionnaires.

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED AREAS FOR CSME SPOKESPERSONS WORKSHOPS

- CARICOM and the CSME
- Understanding the Media
- The Media Interview
- The art of Public Speaking
- The New Media
- Dress for Success

APPENDIX II

PROPOSED AREAS FOR MEDIA TRAINING

Panel discussions:

- 1. The CARICOM and CSME Looking Ahead**
 - a) Integrating OECS and Belize into the CSME;
 - b) The OECS Economic Union and the CSME;
 - c) CARICOM and other regional integration mechanisms

- 2. Nationals doing business within the CSME**
 - a) The CTCP assisting nationals to develop export markets;
 - b) The exporting of national skills and talents;
 - c) Online Registry

- 3. The Regional Frame Work on Government Procurement;**

- 4. Free Movement of Skills and Occupation;**

- 5. Providing Professional services in the CSME;**

- 6. Establishing businesses in the CSME;**

- 7. The CSME: Getting the Correct Story;**
 - a) The CARICOM Development Fund
 - b) Competition Policy and Law

- 8. Media Professional Development in the CSME**